



20<sup>th</sup> January 2005

### **Gala Group Reports Strong Christmas Trading**

Gala Group is today providing details on its trading performance over the Christmas period. In the seven weeks to 7th January 2005, total group sales increased by 6.9% to £71.5 million, an increase of 5.9% on a like-for-like basis. Total sales for the full year to September 2004 were £544.4 million, an increase of 17.9% on the previous year.

#### **Gala Bingo**

Gala Bingo, which operates 166 bingo clubs in the UK, grew sales by 7.2% to £55.0 million for the seven week period, an increase of 6.8% on a like-for-like basis. The bingo business paid out £181m in prize money during the period. This performance has been shaped by the successful execution of the "Gala Way" service programme, which has sought to implement the highest industry standards in customer care and staff satisfaction.

#### **Gala Casinos**

Gala Casinos, which operates 29 sites in the UK, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar, grew sales by 5.7% to £16.5 million, an increase of 3% on a like-for-like basis. The division, which has 1.2 million members, benefited from a growth in new members due to the relaxation of membership rules, and a popular pre-Christmas marketing campaign with a Mini as the main prize.

Neil Goulden, Chief Executive of Gala Group said: "I am delighted with such a strong performance by both businesses. These are a great set of numbers, despite a challenging time on the high street, and show that Gala is a strong draw for people who want a good night out at a reasonable price. The combination of meeting friends, enjoying a meal and having a flutter is proving to be consistently popular.

"Gala continues to successfully convert its strategy of focusing on quality of service and good value into a strong financial performance. This is the foundation for what we believe to be a strong year ahead for the company."

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Gala Group

Gala Group is one of the UK's largest gaming companies operating both casinos and bingo clubs. Gala Bingo is the UK's largest operator, with a 40% market share. Gala has 166 clubs in the bingo portfolio attracting 29 million admissions per year and paying out £18 million in prize money every week. Gala Casinos has 1.2 million members and is among the UK's largest casino operators currently with 29 sites across the UK, Isle of Man and Gibraltar.