



Gareth Davis, Chairman

Q: You're announcing some exciting news today.

A: Indeed we are. We are all very excited that James Henderson is appointed as William Hill's new CEO. He is appointed CEO Designate today and we're all very much looking forward to that. James is a great guy and I think it'll be terrific for William Hill.

I'd also like to say, though, that this marks the end of an era with taking over from Ralph Topping and, as we all know, Ralph's been with William Hill 44 years, an industry veteran. He's been a tremendous asset to William Hill and has transformed the company in his period as CEO over the last six years or so.

So I'd very much like to pay tribute to everything that Ralph's achieved and the mark that he's left indelibly on William Hill for a long time to come. He leaves James a very strong base from which to take the company forward.

Q: How will that handover process work?

A: I think it'll be fairly straightforward. Ralph will be available for some time to be able to help out wherever the board feels it's necessary and where James needs any help. Just based, really, on Ralph's tremendous and long experience in the industry. He could be very helpful in that initial phase for James.

Q: So tell us a little bit about that selection process.

A: Well it was a classic selection process, really, and very much in line with best practice these days. That is, we conducted parallel processes; an external process and an internal process. For the external process, we hired a well-known international headhunting consulting company and they provided us with a number of excellent candidates. I interviewed a good number of people.

On the internal side, we conducted our own evaluation and James came very much to the top of the pile there. Additionally, I have also, as an

individual, taken a great deal of interest in the whole subject of CEO succession for a number of years now. I've studied a lot of the academic work that's been undertaken by Harvard and various other institutions. The general rule that comes through is that the more successful a company is and the stronger its culture, then one would tend to favour internal succession in those situations.

I suppose if it ain't broke, don't fix it. But that's very much the rule. Where the culture is broken, the company's not performing very well, very often people go externally. In our situation, that wasn't necessary, we've got a strong culture, a successful company and James was clearly head and shoulders above other candidates.

So I think we're in a fortunate position and very lucky to have James taking this company forward for years into the future.

Q: You say James is the clear leader in the process, but tell me, why is he the right person for this job?

A: James, despite his youthful good looks, has got over 30 years' experience in the business. He's done most of the jobs - he started as a trainee manager, he's run retail, he's been in charge of online in Gibraltar for a while, he's integrated our American businesses and latterly our Australian businesses.

So James has got the full suite, as it were, of experience and he's a natural bookie, as well, which I think has to be borne in mind. He understands gambling, he understands how technical it's become and he understands all the channels.

In that context, James is a very, very good choice to take William Hill into the future.

Q: Should we expect any large changes?

A: I don't think you'll see a massive change in the strategy. Our strategy's a fairly well-trodden path now. Our multi-channel dimension of the business, our international growth is very important to our strategy and, of course, our level of product innovation. All these things are key strategies which I'm sure James will take forward.

I think we'll get better at them as we go through more iterations. Our organic growth rate is particularly strong at the moment and I see that strengthening even further. I would expect our international growth to carry on and for us to go into more territories ultimately. Our product pipeline of innovations is just tremendous.

So I think James will build on all those things. I think he'll bring the added dimension of very, very strong teamwork. Because we have a tremendous cadre of senior management in William Hill. In fact,

throughout the whole organisation, we've very fortunate to have a great workforce. I think James will prove to be a tremendous leader of that workforce because he's a real team-builder, a real team man. I think he'll do exceptionally well.