

Controversial Devon property raffle couple reject solution to thwarted prize draw

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Press Release: London, 1 December 2008 – Reverse auction Humraz offers Wilshaw couple a reprieve from Gambling Commission scrutiny.

Online reverse auction Humraz (www.humraz.com) has offered an under-fire Devon couple the chance to realize their dream of offloading their £1m home in a competition – without further antagonizing the Gambling Commission and risking prosecution for operating an illegal lottery.

In September the Wilshaws achieved their target to sell 46,000 £25 raffle tickets for their Devon home. However, their random draw to select the winner was postponed after they received a letter from the Gambling Commission querying their raffle. This has left ticket holders wondering whether they'll be refunded for their stake. The misery will be compounded for the several thousand entrants thought to have bought multiple tickets.

Unfortunately for the Wilshaws their efforts to persuade the Gambling Commission that they are not running an illegal lottery may be in vain. As the Law Society recently expressed in a note on the issue, "This is a question of law for the court, so the Gambling Commission cannot give clearance to individual schemes."*

Humraz offered to help by running a reverse auction, which would enable entrants to the Wilshaw raffle the opportunity to compete against each other to win the property. The participants would not need to part with any more money and the winner would not need to pay the winning bid price – that sum would be donated to charity.

Humraz auctions are based entirely on skill and are totally transparent. The name of the auction winner is instantly visible to all participants the second the auction closes. Humraz appear to have delivered a perfect solution to the Wilshaw's dilemma, which makes the rejection of their offer to help all the more surprising.

Mrs Wilshaw cited her reason for rejecting the offer to be the quality of their ticket sale data. In particular, she was worried about contacting entrants as she was not confident about their email addresses. She was also concerned about the 'cross-checking' that would be needed to identify entrants who had purchased more than one ticket.

'We are surprised by the reason behind the rejection. Surely Mr and Mrs Wilshaw need this basic information to complete their draw even if the winner is selected randomly?' asks Humraz founder Asmat Monaghan.

For further information, images and interviews please contact:

Sami McCabe

m: +44 (0) 7789 777 440

t: +44 (0) 20 8849 8180
e: sami@forgelondon.com

*Law Society Practice Note: House Competition

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/practicenotes/housecompetitions/1436.article>

Prize competitions and free draws: The requirements of the Gambling Act 2005 - November 2007

<http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/UploadDocs/publications/Document/Prize%20competitions%20and%20free%20draws.pdf>

Reverse auctions - Frequently Asked Questions, June 2008

<http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/UploadDocs/publications/Document/Reverse%20Auction%20FAQs.pdf>