



John David Group (The) PLC
21 July 2005

21 July 2005

THE JOHN DAVID GROUP PLC

AGM TRADING STATEMENT

At the AGM of The John David Group Plc ('the Group'), to be held today at 1pm, the following trading update will be provided to attending shareholders:

On 11 May 2005 in the Preliminary Announcement of the Group's results for the year ended 31 January 2005, we reported like for like sales growth of 2.4% (Sport 2.7%; Fashion 0.3%) for the thirteen weeks ended 30 April 2005.

Since that time, as widely reported, there has been general weakness on the high street as a result of the economy tightening. In addition, the Sport Fascias benefited last year from Euro 2004 during May and June. Whilst such combined influences have resulted in a decline in performance over the last eleven weeks in total, we are pleased to report that the like for like sales performance has been positive over the last four weeks, despite the adverse influence of the London bombings.

The rationalisation of stocks and brands relating to the original JD Fashion chain and the recently acquired Scotts business has been largely completed with a resultant improvement in the overall stock position; however this exercise has adversely limited sales in the short term. We expect that the coordinated approach to the Autumn ranges currently being delivered will produce a more positive performance.

Like for like sales for the 24 weeks ended 16 July 2005 were up in the Sport Fascias (0.2%), but down in the Fashion Fascias (-3.4%). Overall like for like sales for the 24 weeks ended 16 July 2005 were marginally down at -0.1%. Notably however, overall gross margins improved in both divisions and operating costs are within expectations.

The Board remains confident that current market expectations will be met for the year.

Progress continues to be made with the store portfolio reorganisation and a further thirteen stores (9 Sport; 4 Fashion) have been closed since the year end. We have also opened one JD store. The rebranding of the original JD Fashion stores (ATH- and AV) to Scotts has commenced and will be a priority over the next 12 months.

The Fashion Fascias are now autonomously managed by a team, based in Cheshire, led by Rob Frost who was the Managing Director of Scotts when it was acquired in December 2004. The move onto new systems and the consolidation of the division's warehousing requirement in Middlewich have now been successfully completed.

Following the Pentland Group PLC's ('Pentland') offer for the entire share capital of the Group ('the Offer'), approximately 57% of our shares are now held by them through their Manchester Square Enterprises Limited subsidiary. The Board composition remains as before, but Pentland may appoint a representative to the Board in due course.

Two members of the current Board retain share options under the old share option scheme, which, following the Offer, have to be exercised before 30 November 2005 or they will lapse. Given that a large part of the remaining exercise period will be a close period it is expected that those Directors will exercise these options in the near future.

The Board expects to present its interim results on 5 October 2005.

Enquiries: Tel: 0161 767 1000

The John David Group Plc
Peter Cowgill, Executive Chairman
Barry Bown, Chief Executive
Brian Small, Finance Director

Hogarth Partnership Limited Tel: 020 7357 9477

Andrew Jaques
Barnaby Fry

This information is provided by RNS
The company news service from the London Stock Exchange