

**MINUTES OF THE NTF FLAT FORUM
ON WEDNESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2020
VIA ZOOM**

Present	Ruth Carr Susan Corbett Luca Cumani Tim Easterby Liam Elvidge (representing Simon and Ed Crisford) Rae Guest William Haggas Eve Johnson Houghton Mark Johnston	Dan Kubler Rod Millman Hughie Morrison Amy Murphy Tony Newcombe Bryan Smart James Tate Roger Varian Stuart Williams
In Attendance	Rupert Arnold George Noad	Paul Johnson Mike Waring

ITEM 1. Race Planning (BHA Race Planning Department In Attendance)

a. Restricted Maiden and Novice races from 2021

For the beginning of the 2021 flat season the new restricted maiden and novice programme will put horses into bands according to the auction value or median auction value.

The bands are subject to review following the sales but would be similar to

Class	Category	Auction Value	Median Auction Value	Races
4+	Open	N/A	N/A	565
4+	Band A Restricted	£50,001-£80,000	<£60,000	35
5	Band B Restricted	£30,001-£50,000	<£40,000	65
5	Band C Restricted	£15,001-£30,000	<£25,000	150
6	Band D Restricted	£1 - £15,000	<£12,500	75

PJ and MW confirmed eligibility would be based on the Auction Value first then Median Auction Value rather than an option of the two. This is for 2yo only for 2021 with the intention to look at 3yo for 2022 and will provide the same number of restricted races. Race planning confirmed the programme would remain the same for 3yo in 2021

DK asked how to deal with horses that get sold in training. MW outlined the BHA would look at the most recent sale price. RV asked if a horse in a lower band run above its band? Yes and it will probably get an allowance of 2lb per band to a maximum of 6lb. Concerns were raised around a nice horse being sold privately with a low median value but the impact value should be minimal.

b. Programme Book schedule

Race Planning is still working on PB1. This is due to the delay in the publication of the fixture list. The index has gone out to racecourses and PJ confirmed the aim is produce an index (ambition is 24th November) and then going online a few weeks later.

PJ highlighted PB2 is going to be delayed because of the funding strategy in 2021 being done on a programme book by programme book basis.

c. Use of Race Forum

MW wanted to highlight and encourage trainers to use the race forum to enable the race planners to be more responsive to the demands of the horse population. Furthermore it provides opportunity to create a conversation between trainers.

MJ gave up on the forum and suggested technology should be better to identify the horses and demand for races through the entry systems. PJ explained the Racing Admin system is probably harder than expected. Furthermore BHA are looking at rewriting the racing admin system to make this more feasible. MJ highlighted how Easy Entry can do this and know exactly the number of horses in any given category

WH asked if the races had been programmed for the 12 new flat fixtures. The Forum felt there should be some more low grade nurseries and more 4yo+ races. SW suggested 4yo+ races should be increased throughout the season.

d. Maiden and Novice Programme During the Winter

Through January to March it is a fairly low grade flat programme. Therefore should there be a greater number of restricted Maiden and Novice races rather than the majority being open. EJH asked if the existing restricted races fill in the winter? DK suggested there was no demand in the winter. The Forum concluded it was better to keep the number of restricted Maiden and Novice races the same.

e. Low-grade Races (particularly 0-50)

MW informed the Forum that there are a number of 0-50 horses in training and therefore need to be catered for. The Racing Group has decided there will be specific races for them in January to March and June to August. Outside of this they will not be catered for.

f. Handicap Qualification from 2021

The changes made to flat handicap requirements following the resumption of racing to help more horses become eligible for a rating after two runs will be coming to an end on 31 December 2020. Therefore from 1 January with the exception of horses that won on their debut, twice-raced horses that qualified for a handicap mark under the 2020 two-run criteria will not be eligible for a rating from 1 January 2021. In such cases, the previously awarded mark will no longer apply, and these horses will be required to run for a third time before being eligible for a handicap rating.

WH supported the proposal and felt that was a good date to do it from.

g. Amateur Races

MW informed the Forum of the challenges due to COVID and the number of lost amateur races throughout the programme. Therefore should a rule be introduced (similar to apprentice races) so racecourses have to run one amateur race for every X fixtures. RM supported this and highlighted apprentice and amateur races do help you keep staff. SM supported the proposal due to the expense in obtaining an amateur license. PJ outlined the difficulty in programming them because of limited betting turnover and media rights revenue so you are relying on a racecourse's good will. TE

highlighted that there are a few horses in training kept specifically for amateur riders and there are always plenty of runners. The Forum suggested that if something is not put in place the number of races will continue to decline as racecourses are ever more driven by media rights money.

ACTION - There is enough support to take this forward to the Racing Group.

h. Open Forum

RA – Ruth Quin presented a paper on the danger to the pattern due to minimum values dropping. Therefore a conversation is starting to get those values up so the UK maintains the quality of its top races. The Levy Reform Steering Group are very aware of the problems facing the funding of British racing and the pattern.

WH asked about the success rate of horses running 2lb out of the handicap and suggested more some more creative bands e.g. 0-77. JT suggested horses at the top of the handicap perform better. PJ highlighted that the problem as a race planner is the funding of 0-77 because that goes up in class. HM felt this should not be insurmountable and a funding package for in between classes should be created. ACTION – Racing Group

SW highlighted that evening fixtures during firework week have been very difficult. The forum agreed and it has to be discussed that evening fixtures are not held during firework week.

ITEM 2 Covid-19

a. Training operations and Racing Behind Closed Doors

- JT – are there going to be changes to the MOA. No changes this year
- TE - owners bills are 3 times more expensive for night racing. 8:30 is still far too late. AMS needs to be reflected in this
- RM - provision of hot food and drink has improved but the shelter during the colder weather is very poor

RA highlighted how BHA are really making sure everyone is following the protocols to make sure we avoid the local public health officials raising questions. Have to remember despite what the government is saying the local authorities have the ultimate power over local matters such as racedays.

b. Racehorse Relief Fund

The Racehorse Relief Fund was launched a few weeks ago to support horses in yards when owners have abandoned the horse. Will there be much demand. The Forum felt it was good to have this in place but hoped it would not be used too often. TE – going to have to be policed as it is open to abuse.

ITEM 3 Commercial agreements with racecourses

There is a fairly detailed discussion going on with ARC and very soon the rest of the Horsemen's Group will be able to see the terms. The key areas are the definition of the value of the media rights. However there are obligations from Horsemen and BHA. Things are not quite as advanced with other racecourses but the hope is to get one across the line then others will follow.

There have been three meetings so far of the Levy Reform Steering Group. The main aim is to try and get bookmakers to take a collaborative approach to this. Government have suggested not much

can be done before the end of the year. Charlie Parker and Philip Feedman are Horsemen representatives.

ITEM 4 Prize money distribution

RA reported the result of the survey was clear cut with 66% in favour of the changes and 63% supporting a change to the Appearance Money scheme. However only 12.5% of members voted. Despite this the Council felt the survey should not be ignored and the NTF should support the proposal. This will go to the Horsemen's Group to be introduced in 2021. EJH asked if the distribution between O,T&J would change. There would be no change

ITEM 5 Brexit – end of transition

RA highlighted the communications regarding the end of transition and the key issues of horse and people movement is about to go out to the industry.

Key messages are

- 1) don't plan to move horses in the first two weeks of the new year because the lab for blood testing will be closed
- 2) highly recommended trainers use a shipping agent
- 3) if you employ EU nationals encourage them to apply for settled status.

A complicating factor is the introduction of the EU animal health law in April. E.g. booster vaccines every 6 months to go into Europe

ITEM 6 NTF strategy

The NTF strategy is looking at restructuring and extending the help the NTF offers trainers on the business side. The first step would be to see how the NTF can support newly licensed trainers. This would be similar to jockeys being professional athletes so NTF can support trainer's businesses.

National Racehorse Day – Richard Phillips' idea of a positive news story for racing and showcasing the high standards of welfare.

ITEM 7 Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

RA asked for feedback on holding a zoom call. RC supported the idea because it is easier than travelling. TE agreed. HM felt it was a good dynamic because trainers could get a national feel rather than a local feel and more representative.