



**MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL HUNT COMMITTEE
AT 75 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON
ON MONDAY 7TH AUGUST 2017**

Present : Mr S Mullins (Chairman)
Mr N Alexander
Mrs D Grissell
Mrs L Hill
Miss S Smith

In Attendance: Mr R Arnold (Chief Executive)
Mr P Johnson (Head of Racing BHA) Item 6 only
Mr N Dartnall (Jump Race Planning) Item 6 only

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON THURSDAY 13TH APRIL 2017

Apologies were received from: Miss E Lavell, Mr C Longsdon, Mr C Mann, Mr J Moffatt, Mr D Skelton and Mr T Vaughan.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 2 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the recommendations of the Novice Chase review and stated that the final of the proposed Novice Chase series should be a WFA novice chase, not a handicap.

ACTION – GN

ITEM 3 FIXTURE FUNDING

The Committee noted the outcome of the Fixture Funding discussions. Mr Alexander questioned how racecourses' media rights payments were affected by reductions in field sizes. [Note: it is thought that the SIS deal revolves around 10 runners. There are bonuses for runners above 10 and penalties for each runner less than 10.] Mr Alexander was concerned that guaranteed flat rate appearance money payments may be a threat to integrity and should be tiered. Later in the meeting P Johnson said that it was too late to make this change for 2017 but the BHA would monitor the situation.

ITEM 4 ITEMS FROM REGIONAL MEETINGS

Encouragement for horses at start and going down: the Committee asked the Executive to get the BHA to change the rules prohibiting anyone from using physical or verbal encouragement for horses to go down to the start or jump off at the start. **ACTION - GN**

Adjustment to weights in jump handicaps: regions had responded to this in relation to handicaps where runners included a horse or horses rated 1lb or 2lbs above the band. The Committee thought policy should favour the horses within the proper rating band. Later in the meeting Mr Johnson explained that the BHA needed to know the NTF's policy for all jump handicaps. He would send the NTF a paper to reconsider its response.

Low sun protocol: the Committee was satisfied with the current protocol. The Executive was asked to remind the PJA to tell jockeys to act responsibly. **ACTION - GN**

ITEM 5 REPORT FROM THE BHA RACING GROUP

5.1 48-hour decs at Cheltenham Festival

The Committee supported the principle of 48-hour decs for all races at the Festival on condition that there were reserves in the handicaps.

5.2 Hunter Chase rules

The Chairman described the changes the Racing Group had agreed. These included

- Licensed Trainers may continue to support Hunter Chases
- Cessation of the November to December blackout period for horses running in the following year's Hunter Chases
- No change to the Hunter Chase eligibility that is based on previous race performance

The BHA also wanted to stop horses that run under the care of a licensed trainer in a Hunter Chase from running in a normal handicap chase and then returning to a Hunter Chase but the NTF had asked for more time to discuss this proposal. The Committee did not support the change in ruling not allowing them to run horses back in handicap chases after running in a hunter chase

The Committee discussed the health of Hunter Chases and Point to Pointing, concluding that there needed to be more grass roots handicap chases. **ACTION – GN**

5.3 Mares' programme

Mr Johnson explained that despite the work done in recent years to improve the mares' programme, the number of mares in the horse population was not increasing as much as had been hoped. He reported that the Mares Challenger Series had worked well with 12 runners in the final and there would be two more qualifiers in 2017/18.

ITEM 6 RACE PLANNING – QUARTERLY DEBRIEF

Amateur riders' races

There had been feedback from regional meetings that the programme was restricting amateur riders from progressing. Mr Johnson said that the Racing Group had agreed to there being a minimum of 40 amateur riders races and more were being programmed in PB4.

Programme Book process

Mr Johnson asked the Committee for its support for an initiative to measure the performance of the Racing Department. This follows on from the Holistic Race Planning and Optimum Race Programme work. It aims to analyse to what extent the Department is able to put on races where they are needed. The BHA would like to work with the NTF to compare the ideal programme against what is being achieved. One outcome might be an improved ability to influence racecourses' choice of races.

The Committee agreed to support the initiative and the BHA will come back to the NTF with a set of questions to take it forward.

ITEM 7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Jockeys agents

The Chief Executive asked the Committee for guidance on addressing trainers' problems with jockeys agents. The Committee said that the problem was not just about agents reneging on booked rides but also agents booking jockeys on horses when the agent had not confirmed the jockey would in fact attend that race meeting. It was agreed the NTF would do a formal paper for the BHA. **ACTION – RA**

The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 5th December 2017** at 11:00 am at the BHA, 75 High Holborn.