

## NORTHERN REGION

**Minutes**  
**THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**

### **Attendees**

Rupert Arnold	Chief Executive
Ann Duffield	Chair
Ruth Carr	
Helen Ward	
Shaun Harris	
Noel Wilson	
James Moffatt	Deputy Chairman
Steve Brown	
Alan Creighton	(item 1)
Rudolph Arno	(item 8)
Gavin Pritchard-Gordon	(item 8)
Stephen Padgett	CEO Northern Racing College (item 5)
Berni Parr	Ann Duffield's P.A /Minutes

### **Apologies**

Lucy Normile, Patrick Holmes, Jedd O'Keeffe, Andrea O'Keeffe, Brian Ellison, Karen McLintock, Michael Herrington, Karen Tutty, M Easterby, Barry Murtagh, Eric Alston, Jackie Stephen, Ollie Pears, Rose Dobbins, Brian Rothwell, Michael Dodds, Jim Goldie, Chris Grant, Anthony Brittain, TD Easterby, Kevin Ryan, James Bethell, Lee James, Sarah Hollinshead, Karl Burke, Nick Alexander, John Norton, Lisa Harrison, Micky Hammond, Ian Jardine, John Balding, Ray Craggs, Martin Todhunter, B Smart, Mark Campion, Alistair Whillans, John Quinn, Phil Kirby, W Storey, R Whittaker, Julia Brookes, Paul Johnson (BHA), Nigel Tinkler

#### 1. Update from Previous Meeting

- **Proposal for a £1Million Ebor Handicap**

There was mixed reaction to the decision as it could have an effect on other races. Another handicap may be turned onto a £100,000 race for horses that

may miss out. Generally, it was discussed that the benefits outweigh the negatives, and this could be a positive move for the North.

[Ann, Berni – the BHA has told us this proposal is still confidential and hasn't been finalised yet so good we have kept it brief. I think also it would be best if we describe it as a “proposal, not a “decision”.]

- Rules on Non-Runners

The BHA have been persuaded by NTF to change its initial proposal of standardising going descriptions such that a trainer could only withdraw without penalty based on a ground change if the description had moved at least two points on the scale. AD raised a concern that this proposal could come back again in the future.

There was a discussion regarding the inconsistencies across racecourses in relation to the going reports, and this caused some trainers not to declare horses rather than risk affecting their percentage of non-runners. RA reported that BHA are aware of inaccurate going descriptions and will be monitoring this with a view to holding Clerks of the Course to account. It was also commented that trainers seem to get an unfair negative publicity about non-runners

- Racecourse stable hygiene

Since the last meeting, three racecourses; - Pontefract, Ripon and Catterick [are the racecourses happy ot be named?] kindly agreed to take part in a pilot exercise which involved Alan Creighton an Environmental Scientist at Irish Equine Centre visiting each racecourse and performing a Microbiology Test Report.

All three courses agreed to share results to look to improving the overall standard across the country and put a case to BHA to update its protocol on hygiene practices.

Discussion then took place about the cross-contamination risk when horses go to the racecourses.

A meeting was held prior the main meeting with Alan Creighton, Ann Duffield and James Hutchinson. The meeting was videoed to be shared with Fiona Needham at Catterick and Norman Gundhill at Pontefract. [ditto above re naming courses]

It was felt that the current BHA protocol on hygiene is outdated whereby the disinfectant product simply needs to be approved by DEFRA. These products are very generic, wide spectrum and cover a whole range of animals and are not purely targeted at equine hygiene.

AC explained how IEC was originally set up as a Foundation to improve the health of horses in Ireland and work with trainers. They now also work regularly with trainers in England on improving their bio security.

When Alan first worked with the racecourses and trainers in Ireland he initially faced some friction but his recommended protocol now helps everyone and has become part of their routine.

Alan stressed that the protocol was a speedy and efficient way to maintain excellent bio security.as follows:

- Use of a new style high pressure fogger which costs approx. £500 and will last for approx 3 years.
- Powerwash 2 x yearly
- Racecourses to fog before every meeting
- This fogger can completely cover a box in 30-40 seconds and will cover every surface.
- Use of a recommended disinfectant- Steri 7 gives 14 days protection and Equizar provides 30-day protection.
- Consider quality of bedding
- Consider the use of paint on the surfaces. 'Stablesield' although more expensive than normal paints can last for up to five years and greatly reduces the growth of mould and bacteria and makes great savings on labour costs

**The effectiveness of any regime** relies on the staff following protocol and for this reason AC has agreed to produce a 15 minutes video for all racecourses to view with the intention that staff will carry out procedures more thoroughly if they understand the implications and consequences of not doing so.

**George Noad is representing the NTF** at a RCA meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and AC will ensure the video is available for the attendees at the meeting to see with a view to changing the protocol.

AD suggested to 'spread the word' that Racecourse added a foot note to their letters to owners when entering horses to state that they are taking bio security seriously and hopefully adopting AC recommendations.

IEC offer a monitoring service which is very popular in Ireland and the south of England racecourses where they make two checks-ups per annum. One date picked by the client and the other unannounced. This service offers a method whereby the client can monitor their own bio-security routines and safe guarding against blame culture from trainers in case of ringworm or similar outbreak. AC said IEC would be very happy to support this in the north. Further information from [acreighton@irishequinecentre.ie](mailto:acreighton@irishequinecentre.ie)

All other items are covered on this agenda

## 2. Highlights from the NTF Council and Committees (RA)

- **New Levy:** The new replacement Levy is bringing in more money than expected; in the region of **£90m on an annual basis**, almost double the previous amount. This will start to be used from 2018 with a minimum race prize to start at **£6,000**.

- Employer Led Training (ELT). This is a pilot programme developed by BHA and NTF with support from NASS that enables new recruits over the age of 19 to enter the racing industry by learning on the job with a trainer. It is independent of but complements the work of the Racing Colleges. The trainer can receive up to £2,500 for taking on unskilled new entrants which will provide a cushion for employers against the cost of taking on older employees.

### 3. Race planning

Unfortunately, Paul Johnson had to give apologies for this meeting. It was decided that a separate meeting should be arranged to discuss the following: -

- Race Planning, BHA Racing Department to attend
- Your feedback for the BHA on Programme Book 3

### 4. Regulation

- Declaration of wind operations

NTF Council put to BHA that there should be a period of time that trainers should advise BHA about wind operations. Over 2 years, BHA can assess the number of operations and monitor the improvement to the horse.

BHA rejected this suggestion and decided that WO should be treated the same way as cheek pieces/ tongue ties/ blinkers when making declarations.

The rule from next year will be that wind surgery (WS) will appear on race cards on the first occasion the horse runs after surgery. Trainers will have to note this on a new section that will appear on the Racing Admin site.

There was then discussion that a trainer may not know when buying a horse if it had had the operation or in fact any way of policing this.

- Forthcoming rules changes

There is currently work being carried out to incorporate Training Agreements being signed by owners when giving the trainer authority to act.

Also, there is work being done on introducing a 'gallops style' payment system for owners via their Weatherby's accounts.

Both should help in trainers receiving their fees from owners timelier.

- Stewarding Model

[I would like to change this because this information was not meant to be public. I have rewritten in red.]

It is understood that the BHA received a large response to the first phase of the consultation on the future of stewarding. There is anecdotal evidence that there was strong support from across the industry for maintaining an element of independent stewarding.

In the next stage BHA will make proposals following the consultation and plans may be modified.

Handicapping is being reviewed and changes are going to be made. Suggestions were made to computerise this. JM has some individual issues regarding this and will contact RA direct.

## 5. Racing staff

Stephen Padgett, Chief Executive, Northern Racing College, came along to give an update of the College since his appointment.

NRC's vision is to support British Horseracing by being sustainable, resilient and responsive in their mission of delivering trained staff to trainers.

They currently train 500 people with 15,000-person training days per year. They have had a recent 4 days visit from OFSTED which reported 'good across the board' and 'outstanding' in some areas.

They train from foundation level upwards with residential learners. They currently have a retention rate of 80% after the 12 weeks course. 30% of new students have no experience with horses when they start. The residential course tries to simulate a working environment of a yard. After the 12 weeks course, 96% of students are placed in racing.

## Finances

The revenue of the College has dramatically improved on the last year as follows:-

	2015/2016	2016/2017
Government source	60%	35.3%
Industry/ other	18%	34.7%
Raised by the College	22%	30%

In the last financial year, the College raised £638,000 and the year-end profit was £68,000 which is far healthier than of late.

The net assets for 2016/2017 is in excess of £1,000,000 and the mortgage of £500,000 on the premises will be repaid by 2024.

The draft audit for the last financial year puts the College in a very good position financially.

## **Recruiting**

Recruiting of staff is becoming more difficult as due to demographic changes there are less 16-18-year olds to target.

From 2015, all 16-18-year olds must stay in some form of education **or training**. Schools are keen to retain the pupils at their own schools as they receive funding for these per head.

SP reported however that there had been a 40% **increase?** in enquiries for courses.

## **New Doncaster Equine College (Delivered by NRC)**

This is a separate course offered by the college that delivers Level 1 diploma in equine care. It is not aimed at racing qualifications, but the accreditation is transferable to the racing course.

This opened in September 2017 and is a 12-month course. There are currently 23 students on the course and the College received £5,500 per learner. The projected profits for 2017/2018 is £100,000.

There will be an ideal racing recruiting opportunity to invite the students to transfer to the racing course

## **Forward planning**

To ensure the financial resilience of the College the 2017/2020 plan will focus on retention and recruitment. There may be opportunities for the new Levy to cover the loss of Government funding.

Currently there is no system in place to monitor the retention rates once the students have left the College. SP is working on producing these statistics in the future.

SP said the College do everything they can in the short time the students are with them to prepare them for the world of work. This is a challenge at times as a high percentage of students are of low ability.

SP confirmed that NRC have no intention of charging a 'finders' fee for placing students.

JM queried whether NRC can help to do the course away from the college with the support of Roving Assessors. He has a nervous girl at the yard that he did not want to lose but she is not confident to go on a residential course. SP invited JM to discuss this outside of the meeting.

SP is very open to look at suggestions that overcome people's barriers to learning and the **College's mission** is to get people into racing.

SP was congratulated on his excellent work.

## 6. Review of NTF Members Legal Expenses Insurance

See 7) below

## 7. Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

- There was a general discussion in relation to the north/ south divide in relation to the size of some of the southern trainer's yards now. Some trainers in the south now have 250-400 horses. The trickledown effect is that they take owners and attract staff from smaller yards.

AD suggested that consideration could be given to have a series of races for small trainers. RA responded that previously NTF Council rejected this as members did not want to be categorised as 'small trainer'. There does not seem to be any solutions to address this at the moment.

- NW raised the issue of BHA fining culture and did not consider that this was supportive of trainers. RA replied that there had to be regulations to monitor issues and make trainers adhere to the rules.
- The next meeting will be in July 2018.

## 8. Arno Rudolph of AR Legal Collections/ credit management service for trainers

AR updated the meeting on what his companies can offer trainers by way of debt management due to non-payment from owners. Recognising that slow payers have always been a problem in racing, for over 25 years now AR Legal Collections has been working with individuals and organisations throughout the racing industry. Poor debt management can destroy trainers and give a bad name to the industry.

AR has worked in the industry so long that regular offenders are known to him and he is able to help trainers to nip them in the bud.

His companies work in a number of ways: -

- No win/ no fee in which he charges a percentage of the recovered debt.
- Or his alternative company- Group 1 Credit Management, which is based on a monthly fee of £99 plus vat. (please see appendix 1)

AR could not stress enough the importance of obtaining a signed training agreement from owners.

RA confirmed that NTF are working on putting a business support package on their website. ~~RA is willing and able to supply a list of bad debtors to be published and trainers are also encouraged to add to this list from their own experiences. [This is inaccurate. Arno said he knew of regular bad debtors and we agreed he and the NTF would approach the BHA about them.]~~

It is also vital that trainers support each other when an owner with bad debts moves to another trainer. Care must be taken in relation to confidentiality however, in the same way as trainers seek references for staff that have moved from another yard.

AD suggested that a system similar to the current Legal Cost cover with NTF membership also be applied to AR's credit management service. AR confirmed that if enough members were interested then costs could be drastically cut. RA will look into this suggestion. ~~when he meets David Hunt in the near future. AR is willing to make a presentation to David Hunt if this would be helpful.~~

~~RA is working with David Hart at Weatherbys to create a system that would generate an audit trail beginning with Training Agreements and extending through the payment system to the BHA's sanction of the forfeit list.~~

AR also has another company that deals with Weatherbys credit control which includes contacting owners to 'top up' their Weatherbys account when required.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm

**Berni Parr**  
**P.A to Ann Duffield**  
**12<sup>th</sup> November 2017**