



National
Trainers
Federation

Scotland and the Borders Part of the Northern Region

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT KELSO RACECOURSE ON TUESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT: N. Alexander (Scottish Representative) Chairman
R Dobbin
H Graham
M Smith
P Steven
S. Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE: R. Arnold (Chief Executive)
G Noad

APOLOGIES: S Corbett, K Dagleish, I Jardine, K McLintock, L Perratt, K Scott and J Stephen

ITEM 1 Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on Wednesday 10th October were approved as an accurate record.

Ownership and Scottish Racing – NA picked up that there had been no progress from last year's meeting and it was still predominantly trainers attracting owners into the sport. It was suggested that there needed to be better coordination between Scottish Racing and the ROA. The Region concluded that the central ownership strategy needed to be better coordinated. M Smith highlighted the good work by some racecourses to encourage their own Racecourse Syndicates.

ACTION – NTF to pick the ownership strategy with the ROA

Fixtures - At last years meeting it was noted that Ayr racecourse had fewer fixtures than expected. This was due to fewer BHA fixtures. However these fixtures still remained in the fixture pool. The Region expressed concern that fixtures were being lost from Scotland and at the level of prizemoney on offer at Ayr.

ACTION – NTF to write a letter to Ayr expressing concerns held by the Region

Transparent Entries and Declarations – MS and NA felt it was working well. The Region felt the only potential problem is when the race may divide. RA asked the region to continue to provide feedback as the season gets busier.

British Bred Incentive Scheme - This has not been announced yet but it will be introduced in 2020

Jump Race Shoeing – It has been put on hold at the Racecourse Committee.

Ownership - At the previous meeting it was highlighted how undesirable owners can maintain an interest in ownership through syndicates and clubs. Syndicate membership is only checked by licensing when it is registered. The BHA is aware of the loopholes and is looking to close them.

ITEM 2 NTF Council Meeting with BHA Executive

RA reported that following some tensions between trainers and the BHA, the BHA executive came to the NTF Council Meeting. One of the main topics was stewarding. The Council expressed concerns over the BHA Stewards Twitter feed creating unnecessary controversy. The Region agreed that the information should be freely available on the BHA website but not published through the twitter feed. The BHA have agreed to limit what goes out on twitter. NA highlighted concerns over the stewarding model and the training of the new stewards. At the Council meeting Brant Dunshea reported that 60% of stewards failed the assessment. However the stewards taking part felt the assessment was mainly procedural not about reading a race.

In addition the Region noted the disfunction of the veterinary and racecourse departments at the BHA. RA outlined that the Racecourse Department was undergoing a restructure to bring it into the race planning department management.

ITEM 3 Trainers Feedback for the BHA on the Programme Book

The Region noted that the programme was working well but there is still a lack of variety of different opportunities at different courses. Furthermore the programme needs to appreciate the geography of the north region. However this has improved through the race planning forum.

ITEM 4 Fixture List 2020 - 2021

GN highlighted that there was potential opportunity in Scotland to capitalise on the Scottish Bank Holidays and ring fence a fixture on those days specifically for a Scottish track. NA and RD suggested that many businesses operate on English bank holidays and there were a number of local ones as well making it difficult to facilitate.

NA and RD suggested for the 2021 process the number of jump fixtures in the region should be maintained and clashes should be avoided. In addition it was suggested the fixture reallocation process needs to be improved to keep fixtures in Scotland and Borders. GN highlighted that the fixture reallocation process now includes a Scotland and Borders region to try and keep the fixture in the area. NA felt this was an improvement but reallocation is restricted by the ground and funding.

ITEM 5 Review of Buying and Selling Bloodstock

RA highlighted that the report had been leaked and as a result the industry group has been put on pause while the BHA was investigating the leak after one meeting. The key issues are:

- The way agents behave (taking money from both sides)
- The licensing of agents (providing this gets the backing from the sales houses)
- The bidding practices on reserves
- Transparency of the ownership of the horse as it goes into the ring

RA highlighted how trainers often act as agents therefore any new regulation or a code of conduct trainers will need to adhere to. MS suggested the practices would be a hard cycle to break as luck money is so ingrained in auction house culture. RA agreed but highlighted the report investigates when luck money becomes an inducement. NA highlighted that any new regulation needs to be enforced and the sales houses need to cooperate. The Region concluded that small measures should be taken to make the process more transparent for example all owners having an owner card. NA informed the Region of a point made at the NTF Council whereby the BHA actually has more regulatory power than it thinks over the bloodstock industry due to the TBA being stakeholders.

ITEM 6 Lycetts Team Champion

RA highlighted that a number of changes have taken place to the award following feedback regarding the accreditation and nomination forms. The award will run through into 2020 and will evolve into an accreditation process and a benchmark for trainers' businesses. As a result the star system is being changed and two levels introduced. Furthermore the awards ceremony will no longer be at the NTF AGM but during racing staff week in July. This will assist with the publicity of the award.

RA showed the Region how trainers who have completed the award have improved recruitment and retention rates. This research shows retention rates go up with yards doing the award and those trainers are having job requests due to the promotion of the award. HG suggested the award needs to take into consideration those trainers who are not the best at communicating the work they do in a nomination form. RA highlighted that the way the Lycetts Award works has a focus on the team and the submission the team put in.

ITEM 7 Any Other Business

Flu Vaccination Policy – The BHA's official line is 8 month booster plus 1 months grace period for the remainder of 2019. For 2020 the aim of the BHA is to try and get harmonisation between Britain, Ireland and France. However there is a lack of consistency between the three jurisdictions. The NTF position is 9 months provides satisfactory cover and provides a horse with cover throughout the flat turf season. The region agreed the policy but highlighted the inconsistency among other equestrian disciplines in Britain.

Going Reports – NA felt going reports need to be far more consistent when they are updated and if the going stick is a mandatory requirement, racecourses should provide one. HG highlighted that the goingstick is 10 years old. GN highlighted that the goingstick is under review and 75% of readings are being reported. This will determine if the going stick will remain a mandatory requirement.

Vetting – ST suggested BHA Vets are taking a greater interest in horses following a fall. However there seems to be a lack of consistency by vets. RA reported that other trainers had raised a similar point and the NTF would be raising it with the BHA for a consistent policy across all tracks.

ACTION - NTF

The next meeting will be in the autumn of 2020