



## South East Region

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
HELD AT EPSOM RACECOURSE  
ON THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**

PRESENT: D Grissell (Deputy Chairman)  
S Smith (Deputy Chairman)  
M Attwater  
J Best  
J Boyle  
P Crate  
T McCarthy  
S Mullins (President)  
M Pattinson

IN ATTENDANCE: R Arnold (Chief Executive)  
G Noad (Racing Executive)  
G Harris (Chief Executive, British Racing School)

### **ITEM 1 – Apologies for Absence and Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Apologies were received from: JJ Bridger, S Dow, P Hedger, R Ingram, W Knight, D Menuisier and L Richards

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

### **ITEM 2 – Update from the Previous Meeting**

Nasal Strips – R Arnold reported Jim Chiapetta is coming to the UK to ask the BHA to explain its decision on the use of nasal strips. Unfortunately comparing nasal strips to a tongue tie is not a satisfactory argument in the opinion of the BHA because a tongue tie would not be allowed now. J Boyle highlighted other areas similar to a nasal strip such as a spoon bit which the BHA were not regulating. R Arnold informed the Region the NTF would continue to support nasal strips to be used in British racing.

Fixture List – R Arnold informed the Region of the additional prize money coming in and the qualifying races. It was highlighted that the additional prize money is only showing up on the new admin site. At the time of the meeting all racecourses were aiming to unlock the additional funding.

Balance of Median and Maiden Auction and the auction cap – There was no consensus across all the regions and the BHA required a strong view from the NTF to reverse the change. R Arnold informed the Region that at the East Region the feeling was that the reduction of Median Auctions had gone too far. However the South East Region had no comment.

Levey Replacement – R Arnold outlined the progress with the replacement levy and the estimated income. There will be a delay in the setting up of the new Racing Authority due to complications with the constitution.

Cleaning of Racecourse Stables – R Arnold highlighted the work being undertaken by Ann Duffield and the Irish Equine Centre into the biosecurity at racecourse stables. The recommendations going forward to the RCA and BHA are to use equine specific disinfectant and modern fogging machines. It has also been mentioned that the stabling at Kempton Racecourse requires improvement. J Boyle felt the yearling sale held at Kempton highlights the problems with stabling.

Training Agreements – R Arnold outlined the developments with the BHA for mandatory training agreements. T McCarthy said they need to be uploaded onto the admin site. This would form part of a package, including the authority to act and a payment structure linked to the forfeit list.

Apprentices – Following the media attention in the summer the PJA, BHA and NTF met to discuss the apprentice agreement; particularly the payment of expenses. Richard Fahey and Richard Hughes assisted the NTF in these discussions but no conclusion was reached. Therefore the BHA has asked the NTF to come up with a solution to the problem. R Arnold highlighted that this could be a good opportunity to address some of the issues regarding full time employment of 3lb claimers. However the NTF needs to come to a position where all trainers can be confident.

### **ITEM 3 - Highlights from NTF Council and Committees**

Non Runners – R Arnold highlighted that following the last regional meeting the NTF had persuaded the BHA not to introduce penalties in relation to changes in the going.

Hunter Chase Eligibility - R Arnold informed the Region of the new rules relating to Hunter Chases. From 1 January 2018, once a horse in the care of a licensed trainer has run in a hunters' steeple chase, it may only run in other hunters' steeple chases for the remainder of the season (i.e. to the Stratford HC meeting.)

Declaration of Wind Operations – R Arnold informed the Region that the NTF Council opposed the new rules making wind operations declarable. J Boyle highlighted the NTF opposition was based on the lack of research into the operations that should be declared, policing it and the inconsistency on the international stage. The policy was driven by the Horseracing Bettor's Forum due to trainers attributing an improved performance to wind surgery.

#### **ITEM 4 - Race Planning**

Racing Admin Site – S Smith wanted to highlight that the race search facility on the new site was poor in comparison to the old one.

Novice Chases – the region felt there was a lack of opportunity in the south east compared to the rest of the country. Classified races for horses rated up to 130 would work.

There needed to be more 3m handicap chases for horses rated up to 135.

All Weather – the Region concluded that the All Weather Programme is not a national programme and there is a lack of opportunities for lower rated horses at Kempton and Lingfield.

#### **ITEM 5 – Regulation**

Stewarding - R Arnold informed the Region of the background to the proposed changes in the stewarding model. From the industry wide consultation the BHA has received over 100 replies. The main message from the industry is that the stewarding model needs to maintain a level of independence in the decision making process

Forthcoming Rule Changes - R Arnold highlighted a number of rule changes taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018. These include:

- Non Runner
- Self Certification
- Identity Checks
- Ability to run without hind shoes on Flat Turf
- Ringworm Certification
- Shockwave Therapy
- Manipulative Therapy (the use of massage and ice)
- Theobromine
- Micro Chips
- EVH in France
- Gurgling Reports
- Pregnant Mares

#### **ITEM 6 - Racing Staff**

Defining the working week – R Arnold highlighted the practices being undertaken by a number of trainers to improve the working hours for their staff. As a result the old consolidated wage was no longer reflecting the working practices in the majority of yards. Therefore is there a way of changing the wording to reflect modern working practices while still maintaining the guarantees for weekend work. R Arnold said the majority of Newmarket trainers had concerns that they would not be able to get staff to work weekends. The Region concluded that the current MOA worked well as it enabled

trainers to adapt the system to suit their requirements and improve staff working conditions. R Arnold thanked D Grissell for assisting the NTF in the pay negotiations.

Update from the British Racing School – R Arnold welcomed G Harris from the British Racing School (BRS) to talk to trainers about developments at the school. G Harris outlined the funding for the BRS resulting in the programme of courses being aimed at 16-18yo on apprenticeships. Currently the BHA requires the school provide 142 stable staff to the industry, but G Harris aims for this to reach 200 a year. He reminded trainers that the Government pays an employer £1000 for taking on an apprentice. G Harris highlighted the life skills taught at the BRS and the recent employment of a school nurse.

G Harris showed the Region where the recruitment of apprentices came from and how the BRS tries to place graduates within two hours of the family home. However despite the aftercare provided there is only a 50% retention rate after five years. There are 50 trainers on the waiting list for staff and the number is always growing and suggested trainers come to the BRS to see the working being carried out.

#### **ITEM 7 – Review of the NTF Legal Expenses Insurance**

R Arnold informed the Region that the NTF Legal expenses insurance is coming up for renewal. Although the scheme has its limitations through the merits based system, it has provided assistance to a number of trainers and the legal helpline for when there is insufficient cover in the NTF office. S Smith felt the current scheme was working well.

#### **ITEM 8 - Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting**

Novice Chases – S Smith felt the proposed split between Handicaps and Weight For Age (WFA) was not helping the Novice Chase programme develop. R Arnold informed the Region that only 2 or 3 handicaps were being dropped from the programme each month and replaced with WFA. So in Programme Book 4 there will be 97 Handicaps in 2017 compared to 105 in 2016. This has resulted in 104 WFA in 2017 compared to 83 in 2016.

S Mullins felt that to find a good novice handicap, trainers would have to be prepared to travel. Furthermore S Mullins highlighted how the new rule that meant only the handicap mark of the winner could be altered was a positive step forward.

The next meeting will be in July 2018 at Epsom Racecourse