



National
Trainers
Federation

South West Region

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD AT TAUNTON RACECOURSE
ON MONDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2017
AT 2:00 PM**

PRESENT: Mr S Mullins (Chairman)
Mr J Barber
Mr V Dartnall
Mr H Derham (representing Mr P Nicholls)
Mr J Frost
Mr P Hobbs
Mr A Jones

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr R Arnold (Chief Executive)
Mr G Noad (Racing Executive)

APPOLOGIES WERE RECEIVED FROM: Mr P Burgoyne, Mr C Down, Mr S Earle, Mrs R Ford, Mr S Kittow, Miss E Lavell, Mr R Millman, Mr N Mulholland, Mrs A Murphy, Mr D Pipe, Mr J Scott, Mrs K Stephens, Mr M Tregoning and Mr B Turner

Item 1 – Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2017 at Taunton Racecourse were approved as an accurate record. Proposed by P Hobbs

- **Moorcroft** – R Arnold informed the Region that the information required to be on the Moorcroft website following the investigation last year had not been uploaded. R Arnold asked the Region how best to proceed given the sensitivity of the topic. V Dartnall suggested that Tim Fox could be invited to the next Regional Meeting as he outlined this in one of his communications with the NTF. The Region approved the proposal.
- **Hunter Chases** – 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. P Hobbs asked if a horse runs in a normal handicap chase on its first start of 2018 can it then run in a hunter chase.

ACTION: NTF to investigate [since the meeting it has been confirmed that it is only from the date a horse runs in a Hunter Chase that it is prevented from returning to a standard handicap chase until the Stratford HC meeting.]

- **Non Runners** –As of Wednesday 1st November the two day stand down will be implemented for trainers using veterinary and self certificates. R Arnold highlighted that the BHA were already gathering statistics on trainers non-runner rates so suggested members be sensible about declaring non-runners.
- **Racecourse Biosecurity** – R Arnold informed the Region of the good work being undertaken by Ann Duffield on biosecurity by testing three racecourses in the north. The results have come back fairly positive and there was a high level of cleanliness. However it highlighted how disinfecting routine could be improved. The results and the full project will be published following a meeting with the three racecourses involved.

Item 2 – Highlights from the NTF Council and Committees

2.1 - Apprentices – R Arnold informed the Region of the ongoing discussions between the NTF, PJA and BHA regarding the Apprentice Agreement. During the last meeting no conclusions were made so the NTF has been asked to come up with a solution. During this meeting the BHA highlighted that the number of Conditional Jockeys were declining. H Derham suggested that this was the BHA's intention due to the number of conditionals not riding out their claim. V Dartnall felt this was the wrong policy and conditional jockeys were a positive way of encouraging people into the industry. P Hobbs suggested that a conditional not riding out their claim was a better system for developing jockeys rather than the British Racing School making the decision for them at the start of the process. The Region agreed and also proposed some of the courses should be moved away from Newmarket.

2.2 - Kempton Redevelopment – R Arnold asked the Region how they felt about the proposals and have there been any change in attitudes since February. P Hobbs felt the development was very far away from being approved and it would be better to have a more informed discussion once the plans have been finalised. However the Region felt the National Hunt fixtures should not leave the programme.

Item 3 - Race Planning

3.1 - Weights in Jump Handicaps - As part of the discussion on including horses rated +1lb or +2lb above the top of the rating band in jump handicaps, the BHA Racing Group has considered the Rule governing the raising and lowering of weights in Jump handicaps. From 1st November, if the top weight (excluding penalties) remaining engaged in the race is raised above 12st 7lb in jump handicaps or 10st 7lbs in flat handicaps, the top weight will be lowered to a maximum of 12st 7lb in jump handicaps and 10st 7lbs in flat handicaps, and all other weights lowered accordingly.

3.2 - Grand National Prize Money Distribution – S Mullins showed the Region the existing prize money distribution, the Jockey Club proposal and the NTF proposal. The new prize money distribution is a compromise based on the NTF proposal where the main bulk of the prize money still goes to the first four but the placings down to 10 reflect the effort made to complete the course.

3.3 - Novice Chases - Jeremy Scott asked for the changes to Novice Chases to be discussed at the Regional Meeting. The Region felt the proposed split between Handicaps and Weight For Age(WFA) was not satisfactory. 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. P Hobbs felt the changes had not resolved the problem of finding races for Novices rated 120-130.

3.4 - Programme Book Review - S Mullins pointed out that at Fontwell on 19th November two very similar races were programmed:

Novices Handicap Hurdle (Cl5), Rated 0-100 (2m 5½f)

Handicap Hurdle (Cl5), Rated 0-100 (2m 3f)

Item 4 - Regulation

4.1 - Declaration of Wind Operations – R Arnold informed the Region of the upcoming rule changes relating to wind operations and listed the 5 operations which under the new rules will have to be declared before the horse has its first run after the operation. This will be listed in the racecard as WS. S Mullins outlined one of the main concerns by the NTF Council was overseas runners complying to the same rules. Foreign trainers will be proactively asked if any of their horses have been operated on. V Dartnall asked how this new rule would be policed. Horses will not be scoped but the stewards will be collecting information after the race from interviews. R Arnold highlighted that the ROA and TBA were also involved in the consultation and opposed the rule change.

4.2 - Rule Changes - R Arnold highlighted a number of rule changes taking place on 1st 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

V Dartnall asked if the NTF had made any progress on the use of Gastro Guard. R Arnold confirmed the NTF continued to push for its use and informed the Region that the BHA's new Director of Equine Health and Welfare was open to the proposal.

4.3 - Stewarding Model - 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.

Item 5 - Racing Staff

5.1 - Update on recruitment and retention

R Arnold informed the Region of the ongoing work to encourage more people into the sport to fulfil the stable staff shortage. The new digital marketing campaign has been generating a lot of interest with hits onto the websites however this was not being converted into applicants.

A new initiative to give equine college students a sample of working in racing has been a success. The first scheme of its kind saw 16 students go to the BRS and NRC, 12 students are now in full time employment in racing. This has linked into the work being done by Racing to Schools to promote the sport in Equine Colleges. S Mullins encouraged trainers to go to their local schools and colleges to help promote the sport and highlighted the success of a work experience in his own yard. R Arnold highlighted the work being undertaken by the NTF to assist trainers in taking on work experience pupils.

5.2 - Defining the Working Week

R Arnold highlighted the ongoing work by trainers to improve the working hours and conditions for their employees. This includes a number of trainers adopting working one weekend in three. As a result the consolidated wage outlined in the MOA is becoming outdated. The Region felt the new agreement needed to be flexible and include guarantees for weekend work. NARS raised the point at the latest round of wage negotiations that working hours is the biggest concern for staff not pay.

5.3 - Lycetts Team Champion

R Arnold outlined the judging process and criteria for the Lycetts Team Champion Award. S Mullins stressed the importance of the toolkit as it will help trainers in the operation of their business even if they do not enter the award.

Item 6 – Review of the NTF Members Legal Expenses Insurance

R Arnold opened the discussion surrounding the legal expenses insurance. Aspects of the scheme are not perfect including the communication and speed of the response from the solicitors. However it is better than nothing and is very good value. R Arnold highlighted there may be an added complication due to the BHA providing free legal advice. This has come as a result of the Quinlan Review but the provision of the BHA legal assistance will be means tested and the NTF needs to investigate how this will affect the NTF insurance.

S Mullins asked how much money the insurance had paid out. R Arnold informed the Region that in 2017, 12 claims were made with most being under £5000 but also highlighted the legal helpline which helps spread the load for the NTF office. V Dartnall felt the helpline needed to be quicker. S Mullins suggested it would be worth exploring alternatives to the current legal assistance scheme but it should aim to provide a similar level of cover.

Item 7 Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

P Hobbs asked more clarity on the rules relating to horses running with hind shoes. G Noad highlighted that the rules relating to horses running fully shod are for Flat races conducted on turf only. NH Flat Races conducted on turf are excluded from the provisions.

Date of next meeting.

The Region asked for the meeting not take place during the horses in training sale. This was duly noted and the next meeting will be held in July 2018.