

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CROSS PARTY GROUP ON
SCOTTISH HORSERACING AND BLOODSTOCK INDUSTRIES
HELD ON TUESDAY 19th JUNE AT 5.30PM
IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

PRESENT

Miles Briggs MSP (MB)
Richard Lyle MSP (RL)
Rachael Hamilton MSP (RH)
Eleanor Boden, Scottish Racing (EB)
Delly Innes, Scottish Racing (DI)
Jonathan Garratt, Kelso Racecourse (JG)
Donald Morrison, Association of British Bookmakers (DM)
Chris Hector, Ladbrokes Coral (CH)
Bruce Hunter, Ladbrokes Coral (BH)
Garry Fenton, William Hill (GF)
Andrew Jamieson, William Hill (GF)
Julie Williams, Freddie Williams Bookmakers (JW)

APOLOGIES

Neil Bibby MSP
John Scott MSP

MB welcomed new members Tavish Scott MSP and Richard Lyle MSP to the Group.

1. Update from Eleanor Boden on Scottish Racing's Community Engagement

EB was appointed in March and works across all five Scottish racecourses to promote Community Engagement from the racing industry in Scotland. The racecourses in Scotland have a social responsibility to engage with their local communities, and diverse projects are now being carried out which include work with the elderly, young people and with those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The vision for these projects is for racing to be known as a force for good by helping diverse communities in which the sport operates.

EB is the only dedicated Community Engagement Officer across the whole of the UK making Scotland unique in its approach to this area within the sport. EB has always worked in racing and is also a qualified teacher and has also worked in the third sector for the past three years.

On starting this new role, EB discovered that all the racecourses were already very active in community engagement giving EB foundations to expand on, such as Year of Young People 2018 and Alzheimer Scotland.

Racing Together Community Day

Each year, British racing identifies a day for voluntary community engagement, and this year, 11th May saw a wide range of racecourses offering their help to their local communities.

Musselburgh Racecourse worked with Musselburgh Grammar School and invited pupils to carry out hospitality services, whilst the racecourse hosted British Racing's Industry Update meeting.

Hamilton Park registered and volunteered with South Lanarkshire Voluntary Services, to help with their soup kitchens, gardening and group volunteering.

Kelso Racecourse provides a charity café at every fixture, where local charities can sell refreshments for their own profits.

Staff from Perth Racecourse volunteered their time to help in the Beautiful Perth Community Gardens.

Ayr Racecourse nominates a charity of the year and they also arrange a 'Retraining of Racehorses' Parade.

Year of Young People 2018

The Year of Young People 2018 provides a platform to promote and celebrate the talents, achievements and contributions of Scotland's incredible young people.

Every racecourse in Scotland, offers free entrance to anyone aged 17 and under.

Hamilton Park Racecourse is hosting an event for their local Pony Club, on the 2nd July, and is also promoting 'Stable Staff week' to highlight career opportunities in racing yards, for young people.

Musselburgh have developed and delivered a longitudinal project with Musselburgh Grammar School, with the aim of every student visiting the racecourse for curriculum work projects at least twice during their school career.

Scotland hosts 24 Racing to School days across their tracks, whereby students visit a racecourse, to find out more about the sport, and as a unique location to carry out curriculum based projects.

- **Take The Reins**

'Take the Reins' project is part of the 'Flying Futures' initiative, currently funded by the Racing Foundation. Schools in disadvantaged areas, are visited by racing representatives to inspire and educate the students. Children who show an interest are then taken to visit a racing yard or racecourse, and from there are put in touch with a potential employer for an apprenticeship. This project aims to encourage young people to enter work, and reduce unemployment.

- **Curriculum Alignment**

Two projects have taken place at Kelso Racecourse regarding comparative exercise and physiology.

- **Pony Club and Riders Event**

Events are taking place to attract those already interested in horses into a career in the racing industry, particularly in the Borders Region where Reivers Festivals are so popular.

- **Racing to School**

School children are taken to racecourses to carry out curriculum work on site. Last week EB instructed a group of children with low-level Maths ability and saw their confidence grow when they were able to equate how many metres were in a furlong.

- **U18s Go Free**

A social media campaign involving David Walliams and his on-screen son, explain a race meeting, and racing's terminology to viewers.

Alzheimers Scotland Partnership

- **Dementia Awareness Week**

All race meeting from 1st to 8th June issued 'dementia awareness' badges to racegoers, and information in their racecards.

- **Dementia Friends**

All racecourses will now be providing a trained member of staff to offer additional support to a racecourse visitor with dementia, or a dementia caregiver. All courses will also be offering meeting rooms at their courses for dementia support groups.

Environmental Responsibility

All racecourses will be identifying a member of their staff as a 'Green Champion' to ensure that all electrical equipment is turned off at the source, that all plastics and papers are recycled. EB aims to remove all use of plastic straws from the racecourses, and to create a deposit scheme for plastic cups,

whereby racegoers pay £1 for the use of a cup that can be refilled throughout the day, which is reimbursed on return of the cup. EB will also be encouraging racegoers to use public transport, or to walk to a racecourse, rather than using their own vehicle.

Volunteering/Racemakers

Volunteering is part of the Olympic legacy 2016. Voluntary positions on a raceday, not necessarily to proffer racing knowledge, can be accredited to Duke of Edinburgh, Youth Achievement and Saltire Awards. There may be concerns regarding the use of volunteers on a raceday can determine whether visitors have a good or negative experience, however, there are also opportunities to volunteer on non-raceday events.

Future Opportunities

- There is scope for further education opportunities at Oatridge and the Borders College for people wanting a career within racing or racing administration in Scotland, with the nearest racing college being in Doncaster.
- EB is in discussions with Help for Heroes for adult learners who have recently retired from the Armed Forces for how they might be able to start a new career in the racing industry.

MB raised the link with Sporting Memories, an organisation that helps dementia sufferers remember notable sporting events, such as Red Rum winning the Grand National. EB replied that Sporting Memories has been in contact with her, and she will liaise with them in progressing this.

RL added that he is Convener for the CPG on Dementia, and would like Eleanor to present to the Group, and complemented the work that she is doing in that sphere. He raised the likelihood of National Lottery funding for a national sport such as racing and its social responsibility work. EB replied that the National Lottery could be approached for funding via the many pillars that the sport encompasses.

DI commented that a number of trainers have expressed a wish for further qualification opportunities for racing yard staff, with a view to investing in staff from Scotland, to continue to train, and work in Scotland. As such, Scottish Racing will be seeking funding to create a training programme for those who wish to work in the many sectors of the racing industry.

MB asked for an update on racecourse community engagement at a CPG at a later date, and that EB share her work with the bookmakers represented at the meeting, so that this can be circulated amongst their own staff.

2. Gambling Legislation Reform

MB has received a response from the Minister for Sport regarding the DCMS announcement that maximum stakes on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) will be reduced from £100 to £2.

CH commented that the value of bookmakers' businesses will dip significantly, particularly on the back of recent Levy reform. Bookmakers will be remodelling staffing structures and strategy plans but, given that the implementation date has yet to be announced, it has been difficult to forecast potential losses. The ABB met the Gambling Commission last week and expects to receive a clearer indication regarding the implementation date before the end of July. It has been reported that the implementation date will be April 2020, but this has yet to be confirmed.

JG commented that there may be opportunities for the betting industry to invest in overseas racing, which may not be of benefit to British racing, and it would be helpful if those in Government could assist bookmakers in keeping as many of their shops open as possible.

JW highlighted the costs of obtaining pictures from SIS for small bookmakers, whereby bookmakers with 5 or more shops pay less for images than those with 2 shops, and should these bookmakers have to close their shops, this will have a detrimental effect on British racing.

DI pointed out that Matt Hancock has written to the Chairman of the BHA outlining that the decision is not at all straightforward for the horseracing industry and his Department will be working with the BHA regarding a potential Levy on overseas racing bets placed in Britain to relieve the reduction in income to racing following this announcement.

MB, on behalf of the Cross Party Group, is happy to raise any concerns that bookmakers may have with his colleagues in Westminster.

3. Date of Next Meeting

The Group will next meet on Tuesday 30th October at 5.30pm in TG20/21.