

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CROSS PARTY GROUP ON
SCOTTISH HORSERACING AND BLOODSTOCK INDUSTRIES
HELD ON TUESDAY 30th OCTOBER AT 5.30PM
IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

PRESENT

Miles Briggs MSP
John Scott MSP
Eleanor Boden (EB), Scottish Racing
Delly Innes, Scottish Racing
Stacey MacPherson, Scottish Racing
Stephen Orr, William Hill
Gary Cornes, William Hill
Donald Morrison, Association of British Bookmakers
Mike Flynn, Scottish SPCA

APOLOGIES

Neil Bibby MSP; Rachael Hamilton MSP

1. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

It was decided that the following will continue as office bearers for 2019.

Convener: Miles Briggs MSP

Dep. Convener: Neil Bibby MSP

Members of the Group:

Rachael Hamilton MSP; Richard Lyle MSP; John Scott MSP; Tavish Scott MSP; Mark Griffin MSP.

**2. UPDATE ON SCOTTISH RACING'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGY FROM
ELEANOR BODEN**

Scottish Racing is planning to implement sustainable programmes that improve awareness of the opportunities within horseracing as well as train and retain committed racing professionals within Scotland.

Currently, 300 members of qualified staff are entering the racing industry in Britain, and loses 1700 staff per year.

This proposal from Scottish Racing has been developed based on evidence and specific to Scotland. There are currently two training providers in England; in Newmarket and Doncaster, which are not suitable for Scottish based staff. Students from Scotland who attend the training schools in England, are then guaranteed a work placement in England, rather than bring their skills back to Scotland.

Scottish Racing wants to build an education strategy that is world class, innovative, fit for purpose and with teaching and learning at its centre.

The proposal from Scottish Racing includes a phased approach, with the first phase focusing on a feasibility study with a view to developing a high-level industry qualification specific to Scotland.

In 2018, the BHA recognised qualification, the 1st4Sport qualification, has been withdrawn from Scotland, so now there is no dedicated Horse Racing specific qualification offered in Scotland. Scottish Racing is planning to develop a Scottish specific qualification, recognised by the SQA, that can attract Government funding. Discussions are also taking place to develop multi-campus' at Dumfries House in Ayrshire and Borders College.

Application for funding for Phase 1 of the Project will be submitted to the Racing Foundation on 29th November and, if successful, a Project Board will be appointed to provide governance to the project and to recruit a project manager.

MB asked why the 1st4Sport qualification had been removed from Scotland. EB replied that take-up in Scotland was low due to distance and logistics to carry out assessments, and the BHA could not justify funding for a Scottish qualification on an annual basis. The BHA are fully supportive of a Scottish qualification that is tailored and fit for purpose for students in Scotland.

The Scottish qualification will be recognised under Land Based and Environmental Space. The strategy will use the national certificate and national diploma that is already established in Horse Care and submit an add-on.

Racehorse trainers are very supportive of this initiative as currently, the onus is on them to train their staff to an adequate level, thus taking away their focus of training the horses, buying more horses and securing more owners. Whilst this is an education and training project, it is felt that the positive effects of the project will be felt across the wider industry.

Current courses at Oatridge and Elmwood, do not include a horseracing division. The vision of this project from Scottish Racing is to create a course that can be picked up by the SRUC, and for it to become part of the regular equine course.

Miles Briggs added that it would be useful to have an update at a future meeting of the Cross Party Group.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Donald Morrison updated the Group on the previous day's budget, as the Chancellor announced two issues that have an impact on horseracing.

The remote gaming duties will now increase from 15% to 21%.

The FOBT stake cut to a maximum of £2, and the increase in remote gaming duties will both take effect from October 2019.

This gives a degree of certainty to British bookmakers who can now work to these deadlines. Ladbrokes and Coral have predicted 1000 of their shops will close. In Scotland, this translates to around 200 betting shops. Scotbet have already closed 5 of their 47 shops, with another 18 at risk, potentially leaving them with 24 shops in the next couple of years.

William Hill have predicted around 50-60 shops will close over the next three to four years.