

January 2022 Update

We hope everyone has had a lovely festive period.

As mentioned in our December members meeting we will be putting out a monthly update to keep our members informed of what is happening behind the scenes at the BHRC.

A reminder that our AGM has been moved to Sunday 5th March for 2023. The main reason for this change is the moving of our accounting period. In previous years that accounting period has run from April to March meaning it was across two different seasons and licensing years. We hope with the move the accounts will show a more accurate picture of a full season by now running from January to December which will in turn help us to more accurately analyse our revenue and expenses each year. The venue booked is the Holiday Inn Express Haydock however the option will still be available for members unable to travel to join the meeting via zoom.

This year we have also made some changes to our annual awards. Drive of the Year is now being selected by an overseas panel made up of commentators and drivers from America, Canada and New Zealand. We would like to thank all members who took the time to vote. The videos are now with our overseas panel and the winner will be announced at the annual Awards Evening on the 4th February.

Another change for this year's awards is the introduction of the B & C Class Driver of the Year as well as an award for Permit Trainer of the Year. We hope that by introducing these new categories it allows all to recognise and celebrate the achievements of all categories of members.

We have now begun to carry out our annual review of the rule book in the hopes of improving it ahead of the 2023 season. A panel has been organised to carry out this review, made up of both directors and stewards, taking into account the rule change suggestions, which were sent in when asked for by a few of our members as well suggestions we have had throughout the year from stewards. After the review has been completed all rule changes will be published for members to see. Once the rule book review has been completed we will also be holding Stewarding Seminars to help improve the consistency of stewarding across the sport.

The Integrity team has also been hard at work over the winter months working on an Out of Competition Testing Protocol which will be implemented in 2023. Another change for the year ahead is the introduction of an official BHRC Medication and Treatment book, this should hopefully assist our members in keeping up-to-date and accurate records for their horses. The books are currently in production and will be provided (free of charge) to all licensed trainers.

Licence fees are a point that has been raised several times in the last month. The BHRC has, as promised in the December members meeting, looked at the licence fees ahead of the 2023 season. Having completed a cash flow we unfortunately have been unable to reduce the licence fees for 2023 however the positive news is that we have been able to keep them the same figure as the two previous years.

Although licence fees were originally reviewed due to the increase in insurance costs it soon became apparent, as per the Facebook/website post in January 2021, that in order to maintain a balanced budget we would have to increase licence fees to ensure the future viability of the sport. These have been, and will continue to be, used and reinvested into the sport, for example but not exclusively, over the last year by helping to supplement the drone costs at tracks to improve problems caused by the dwindling number of stewards and a lack of different camera angles on the ground, the purchase of veterinary screens for tracks so that there is some privacy in the event of an accident, subsidising the veterinary costs at qualifier meetings as well covering items such as regional steward expenses, handicapping costs, the production of The Calendar (and postage) and the general running of the business. The Club has only just managed to maintain a balanced budget over the last two years, and will struggle again this year, and has therefore no wiggle room to reduce fees.

Insurance update – a long standing on-going claim has now been settled. As in many cases an insurance company settles out of court, to avoid further costs, not as an admission of guilt. This is frustrating, but unfortunately a way of the world.

Insurance for Drivers: the insurance company in late 2021 questioned how we ensured competence of our drivers when they drove very infrequently, or had not drove for a period of time, hence the ruling that for some they had to re-drive in a qualifying race, and for a few they had to re-sit their test. We had feared (because of conversations), that this year they would be putting further

requirements on us for our more senior (over 65) drivers. Fortunately they have not done so. Can we please, however, remind all drivers that they do need to read the terms of the policy to ensure that the level of cover provided for them meets their personal need. We have heard stray comments about the insurance not providing much cover, especially for our senior drivers, however, we only look for the minimum level, to ensure 3rd party coverage whilst keeping the price to you as low as we can for you the individual. We would always advise that you read the policy and if necessary take out additional cover, just as you would if you were involved in any other dangerous sport like rugby or skiing.

Fines and debts: where people are experiencing genuine hardship, we the BHRC always work with licence holders to agree a payment plan. Individuals are expected however to then meet the agreed terms of that payment plan. Where debts are unpaid, the BHRC has a duty to other licence holders to pursue these debts either through the Small Claims Court or through debt collection agencies.

We would like to wish a speedy recovery to Jackie Maguire who is a key member of our Integrity Team as she recovers from surgery, and we hope to see her out and about very soon.

It is also pleasing to welcome new tracks to the racing circuit at Golden Valley (W&W) and Middleton One Row (near Darlington), well done to promoters, and also welcome back to Aberystwyth, which was a much loved venue by so many.