

Members Meeting Minutes
Sunday 5th March 2PM

Attendees: Barry Delaney, Carol Jenkins, Charles Inglis, Jason Podmore, Julie Park, Will Evans, Hayley Cassells (Minutes), David Edwards, Chloe Wakefield, Garry O'Grady, Llyr Davies, Ric Park, Graham Smith. Anthony Fettah, Andrea Barker, Geoff Robson, Georgina Nicholson, Helen Langford

Apologies: Darren Owen, Emma Langford

Approval of Minutes

Everyone was happy with the minutes of the previous meeting and no matters arising.

Update on the Office

Hayley has now settled into the secretaries job. She is currently still working from home but we have found and signed a lease for an office space which is local to where Hayley lives with parking, communal service space and the option to book a conference room, they have also included some office furniture. Due to a small building issue we are unable to move in currently but have taken advantage of a discount so signed the lease but will not be paying rent until we move in.

The directors are also monitoring the office workload in the hope that Hayley will manage without support but this will be reviewed throughout the season. The positive is that many of the directors have experience from last season helping to run racing so will be able to help Hayley if necessary.

Financial Statement

There has been some discussion about the current financial position of the BHRC. The directors constantly monitor the financial position of the company with support from the accountant. A sum of £68,000 has been quoted as being raised by the increase in licence fees two years ago. At the time it was thought that insurance for directors liability would need a large injection of cash as well as an expected increase in general racing costs. Some people who considered standing as a director did not do so mainly because they were unable to obtain that insurance cover. It was hoped that we might be able to reduce licence fees, but it became clear that the money we thought we had in the bank was, in fact, not all ours. A system of accounts had been set up in the office where many of the larger trainers and owners kept hundreds of pounds of credit in our bank and just used the money as required. It has taken over a year to rectify this. Unfortunately, the bank balance is considerably less than we believed. Everybody will also be aware that numbers of owners, trainers, and drivers and horses, have declined, and are still declining.

The BHRC has become leaner in terms of administration and the new database has cost money however the old system was not fit for purpose i.e. incorrect handicapping, extremely slow backups (several hours) which was draining office time and resources and rendering the database unusable whilst the backup was taking place.

The BHRC are now in a position where they can reliably produce a cash flow based on meaningful figures but this does not lead us to believe that we are able to reduce licence costs

however with continued frugality we should be able to keep licence fees static whilst maintaining our level of service, integrity program and development of a computer system that works.

Cash Flow

The draft cash flow was shared with members. It will change as we receive more accurate figures throughout the year.

Licence fees, overseas horses, track fees, membership fees, fines and fines have been based upon the figures from 2022.

Integrity recoverable costs cover any tests, lab fees which will be covered by the responsible person.

Trot Britain have agreed in principle to pay £3,000 towards the cost of insurance.

Total projected income of

Insurance figure is based on actual 2022 figure and projected as an estimate for the end of year renewal.

Wages included but increased the figure in the racing season for key months.

Rent is included as we have found a premises but not included for January and February as we have not had use of the property.

Drone is estimated based on how many tracks we think will use the drone.

Vet is an estimate based on how many tracks we estimate to subsidise the vet at qualifying meetings.

Legal and professional fees is a provisional amount should we require a solicitor, the accountants fees, handicapping costs and website hosting costs.

Calendar is a large expense at around £6,000, this may be a cost we look to reduce by going digital.

Stationary covers the printing of stewarding, integrity and rule books.

BBL Loan is the repayment of the bounce back loan.

Integrity is based on last year's figures as is world pay which covers card transaction fees. We are currently negotiating these costs with World Pay.

Prakas is the annual repayment of this fund.

There is around a £7000 deficit unless we can identify further savings which we can make.

Update on Integrity

In 2022 there were 163 pacers tested compared to 165 in 2021 tested. There were 97 full blood tests in 2022 compared to 106 in 2021 and 66 blood gas tests in 2022 compared to 59 in 2021.

In 2022 we received the most positive tests in any racing year with 8 positives. All cases have now gone to panel and 6 are available to view on the website. The other two will be available as soon as they are out of the appeal period.

When a positive test is received the integrity team investigate the case and produce detailed paperwork for the external panel who then decide on the outcome and penalties. The BHRC would like to thank the external panel members for their hard work and the licence holders for their continued support.

In 2022 there was just over £34,000 spent on integrity, £6000 of this was recoverable as it has been passed back to the responsible person in a positive case, leaving a net figure of approx. £28,000.

In 2022 income from the horses in training and the overseas horses, as well as 3 private tests carried out for individuals came to £29,000. So even without the fine money the integrity team has managed a balanced budget.

Julie Park thanked everyone who played a part in the integrity team.

Graham Smith asked if there are any outstanding fines do we account for this as an accrued figure. The BHRC does try to come to agreements with people fined so that they can pay their fine in an affordable way, if they do not meet that plan then we would pass the debt to small claims court or a collections company.

One item of feedback is the lack of training for new trainers in integrity. From 2023 any new trainer, a trainer returning after a period of absence or returning after a ban will be required to complete a Train the Trainer module.

The integrity team have been working with the BHA and the National Trainer Federation to produce a medication book which will be supplied to all trainers free of charge, which will be checked throughout the year on any stable visits or as part of an integrity investigation or monthly random desk based sample. The integrity team have already met with the public trainers to explain these changes and will be meeting with other trainers in the coming weeks. The integrity team are having virtual meetings with colleagues in America and Ireland to hopefully help improve integrity practices.

The integrity team would like to thank Andrea Barker, Craig Stevenson, Jackie Maguire and Garry O'Grady for their hard work throughout the year.

Anthony Fettah asked if there is a positive test if all the costs are recoverable such as lab costs, panel fees etc. Julie Park explained that the external panel decides on the penalty, the BHRC puts forward all of the costs and the panel decides on the penalty and whether there is guilt or not.

Garry O'Grady asked who would be doing the training with new licence holders. Julie Park and Charles Inglis will carry out the "train the trainer" module.

Update on Harness Racing GB

We are in discussions with Trot Britain regarding sharing the insurance policy. We are still discussing the wording of the policy and agreement. If it goes ahead they have agreed to pay 15% of the cost which is around £3,000.

Update on the Database

The database is now fully built and functional with the handicap system in place. We have done some preliminary testing which is coming back with the correct handicap marks that we were expecting.

David Edwards carried out all of the handicapping in 2022 manually which was invaluable but unsustainable. He has agreed to continue monitoring the handicap marks for the first part of the season so that we can monitor the database and ensure that it continues to produce the correct handicap marks for horses before we decide to fully rely on the database.

David Edwards asked if we will be able to monitor the Irish horses handicap marks. Hayley explained we are not currently able to do this other than manually inputting their history. We are looking to see if we can export from one database to another as they run on the same database as us but it is not available at this point.

Garry O'Grady asked when the database will come into play. Hayley Cassells explained that the database is ready to go.

Garry O'Grady asked if this will mean that the website will now show horse histories. Hayley Cassells explained that the website is linked to the old database but there are other issues, such as the online entry system, with the website. In the cash flow there was money budgeted for getting a new website built.

Garry O'Grady asked if we could afford to build a new website based on the cash flow showing a loss. Julie Park explained that the website development has been factored in from the bounce back loan which was always the plan with the loan.

Update on Stewarding

There is a review of the rulebook currently underway which the group are halfway through. Rather than pick on certain sections of the rule book the review has from the start of the book on every section. Once the review is complete the changes will be advertised on the website for people to feed back.

The Y section is being reviewed separately by the integrity team.

We are always welcoming of new people may want to put their name forward as a track steward.

Sire Stakes

This was put on the agenda by Brett Corbett but he was not in attendance so moved on.

Acceptance of NISA

Put forward by Graham Smith.

Graham would like to see the acceptance of NISA go to one man one vote. He feels it would be a plus with the additional licensing fees gained. He thinks the Northern Irish are in Great Britain and we do not accept them as an association.

Carol Jenkins explained in a meeting they had discussed that the ITA, International Trotting Association, recognises the IHRA as the governing body of Ireland. If we recognise the NISA then there could be implications from the ITA. If NISA got recognition by the ITA

Will Evans explained that for one man one vote Graham would need to put forward a written proposal. Hayley asked for clarity in what the proposal was.

Graham proposed this and Anthony Fettah seconded this. Will Evans re-iterated that we would need the proposal in writing and that the BHRC would put in a counter proposal.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 8th June at 7:30PM