

SUMMARY NOTE OF A HORSERACING BETTORS FORUM MEETING

Monday 17 July 2023, 1.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Holborn Gate, Southampton Buildings, London and via Teams



Those Present:

Sean Trivass
Simon Rowlands (via Teams)
George Ryley
Tim Dredge
Ben Fellows (via Teams)

Invited Guests:

Tom Byrne, Head of Racing & Betting, BHA
Krista O'Hara, Racing & Betting, BHA
Victoria Morgan, Head of Policy & Advocacy, BHA

In attendance:

Fi Carlin (BHA secretariat)

Apologies:

Tanya Stevenson

Item	Action / Discussion
Chair's Update	<p>The Chair provided his update and discussed recent engagement with the media and government.</p> <p>The meeting considered engagement with the groups Justice4Punters and the Gamblers Consumer Forum. It was agreed desirable for the HBF to continue to act as the official forum for bettors on horseracing.</p> <p>The meeting agreed it had been disappointing that the planned meeting with the Minister to discuss the outcomes of the White Paper was cancelled at short notice; and an alternative date for early September will be finalised. Matters to be raised with the Minister were also considered, including the protection of bettors' funds, and account restrictions and closures.</p>
Tom Byrne, BHA Head of Racing & Betting	<p>Tom Byrne and Krista O'Hara joined the meeting to discuss Premierisation and the results of the HBF Survey.</p> <p>The following points were also raised by HBF members as issues of concern to bettors, and actions agreed where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day of Race withdrawals• Small Fields and race competitiveness• Epsom Dash stalls incident• Sectional Timing• Horse Weights• Published Riding Instructions• Centralised Stewarding• Non-Triers• Whip
Victoria Morgan, BHA Head of Policy & Advocacy	<p>Victoria Morgan, recently appointed to the BHA, provided background on her career, and discussed her remit to progress Racing's relationship with policy makers in government, MPs, Shadow Ministers, and the Devolved Nations.</p> <p>VM explained current activities and lobbying campaigns focussing on equine welfare (including National Racehorse Week), Levy Reform and the Gambling Act Review / White Paper.</p> <p>The meeting considered changing societal attitudes towards gambling and reiterated the importance of educating government on the risks of conflating gambling on horseracing with casino-type betting and FOBTs.</p>

HBF Business	<p>The meeting discussed the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Public Engagement – it was agreed that HBF members will write to their local MPs to outline current concerns. (ii) Data – further consideration to be given to the use of data to show the compression at the top of the market and long priced outsiders. (iii) Going – lobbying to be maintained with the RCA and racecourses on public confidence in going descriptions, going stick readings and the use of watering. (iv) Bookmaker Bonuses – consideration of next steps and approach to bookmakers, in light of the priority given to this in the results of the HBF survey. (v) Bookmaker reviews – further consideration of approach to be agreed including protection of funds. <p>A proposed list of guest speakers to be invited to future meetings was also agreed.</p>
AOB	<p><u>(i) Recruitment</u></p> <p>The meeting noted that Jayne Leggett and Neil Bramall have recently resigned from the HBF and formally thanked them for their commitment and input during their tenures.</p> <p>The meeting discussed timescales for an open recruitment process. Advertisements will be progressed for two vacancies, and ideally appointments will be confirmed by the Autumn.</p>
Date of Next Meeting	<p>The next meeting will take place on 6 September at Holborn Gate. It was also agreed to arrange a meeting on a racecourse in early November to increase engagement with bettors and rails bookmakers.</p>