

**Briefing Note of the 68<sup>th</sup> Horse Sport Ireland Board Meeting held  
at 10am on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in HSI Offices in Naas**

**Minutes of the 67<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting and Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the 67<sup>th</sup> Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) Board meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were approved by the Board, proposed by Hugh McCusker and seconded by Tony Hurley.

The Chairman welcomed new Board member Rita Dunne as the nominee of the Association of Irish Riding Establishments (AIRE).

**Board Correspondence**

Correspondence received from Damien Kenny, Vice Chairman, IDHBA

The Board noted this correspondence but decided it should be dealt with by the Breeding Sub Board in the first instance.

**CEO Report**

Press Office- new arrangements

A contract has now been concluded with Brian Hennessy. He will primarily be issuing Press Releases and updating our Social media with the successes of Irish athletes and horses at weekends and outside offices hours.

Horse Sport Ireland will not have a named Press Officer but will instead operate a Press Office overseen by Director of International Marketing Elaine Hatton. The results issuing and social media updating service will mainly be provided in-house during the working week.

**Jumping in the City- proposed dates**

Friday, June 10 <sup>th</sup>	Limerick
Friday, June 17 <sup>th</sup>	Cork
Friday June 24 <sup>th</sup>	Shelbourne Park

Finding dates on which to have three legs of Jumping in the City has been challenging with the compressing of the show jumping calendar as the RDS is now in July. While there was a reluctance to run the legs three weeks in a row, the above dates are now preferred to the original dates which would have seen the series start on May 26<sup>th</sup>. This is subject to the contract being concluded with the Irish Greyhound Board and discussions are ongoing.

Connacht Rugby have indicated their willingness to explore having a leg of Jumping in the City in Galway. This will be discussed in the context of a possible 2017 series.

**Horse Sport Ireland Foundation**

During the recent visit to Wellington for the Owners reception we met with representatives of a law firm called Proskauer lawyers. This firm were recommended to us by the anonymous donor to the eventing team. They have agreed to pursue the establishment of a vehicle to receive donations for the benefit of the Irish Equestrian sector. Some or all of the Directors would need to be US citizens.

### Pony Show Jumping High Performance Manager

Gary Marshall has been appointed as the Pony High Performance Manager. Gary is a Horse Sport Ireland level 3 Coach.

### Appointment of High Performance Show Jumping Committees

Following nominations from the SJI and appointments by the Chairman the following is the make up of the High Performance Show Jumping Committees for 2016.

#### Senior

Chair: James Kennedy (appointed by the Chair of HSI)

Team Manager: Robert Splaine

Member: James Tarrant (nominated by HSI and Team Manager)

Member: Taylor Vard (nominated by SJI and Team Manager)

#### COH, Junior/Young rider

Chair: James Kernan (appointed by the Chair of HSI)

Team Manager: John Ledingham

Member: Michael Blake (nominated by SJI and Team Manager)

Member: Sally Anne Tobin (nominated by HSI and Team Manager)

#### Ponies

Chair: Keith Griffin (appointed by HSI Chair)

Team Manager: Gary Marshall

Member: Liz Brennan (nominated by SJI and Team Manager)

Member: Kieran O' Gorman (nominated by HSI and the Team Manager)

### Dressage High Performance Committees

The Chairman has appointed Kevin Mc Guinness as the Chair of the Dressage High Performance Committee.

### CSIO4\* Nations Cup in Florida

The Irish team won the four star Nations Cup in Florida on Friday night last. The team consisted of Conor Swail/Martha Louise, Shane Sweetnam/Buckle Up, Richie Moloney/Carrabis Z and Cian O' Connor/Sam du Challois.

Four Irish teams competed there at the weekend with COH, Junior and Young Rider teams also competing successfully. This was a fantastic opportunity for these young riders.

### 2019 European Eventing championships

The FEI have advised that the bidding for the 2019 European Eventing Championships will open before the end of March. Horse Sport Ireland has received expressions of interest from two venues who wish to bid for these championships. It was acknowledged that it would be very difficult for Eventing Ireland or Horse Sport Ireland to favour one of these potential bids over the other, but that supporting two applications from Ireland could compromise our chances of winning the bid.

### **Finance Report**

The Director of Finance presented the revised budget for 2016 and advised that the HSI Finance Committee have recommended that a €150K surplus needed to be achieved which was reflected in the budget.

James Kennedy advised that as HSI Finance Committee had set a target for Horse Sport Ireland to build up a reserve of approximately 10% of its total income.

This was also one of the issues raised in the Sport Ireland audit undertaken by Deloitte. He advised the Board that this audit was not yet complete but that the Finance Committee had seen drafts of the document. As previously advised there would be some issues which HSI would have to address but there were no major issues emerging. Overall, he felt the integrity of the organisation and its financial procedures had stood up well to scrutiny.

He pointed out that, since its establishment, Horse Sport Ireland had a policy of expending all of its income on initiatives or on supporting projects. However, he noted that some affiliates had built up significant cash reserves over the same period.

The Director of Finance advised that Horse Sport Ireland's auditors Grant Thornton were currently on site carrying out their routine Annual Audit. He hoped the audit would be completed before the next board meeting.

#### Foal Registration Fees and Breeding Sub Board Grant Allocations for 2016

The Finance Director reported that the HSI Breeding Sub Board had requested that he examine the possibility of reducing fees charged for registering foals as an alternative to distributing funding for sponsorship initiatives. The document had been discussed at the most recent Breeding Sub Board meeting who suggested that the document should be discussed at the main Board to obtain their views as it would have an impact on a number of stakeholders.

One of the most specific recommendations in the 'Reaching New Heights' strategic plan is to *'Increase the number of horses registered with verified pedigree, facilitated by an incentivised registration fee structure for breeders'*.

By using the planned allocation of €123,000 for the reducing the price of pedigree foal passports instead of being allocated to events the price of pedigree foal passports could be reduced to €40 which would be €3 less than the current price of non-pedigree passports (White books). This outcome would be consistent with the relevant recommendation in the Strategic Plan and it was considered that it would be well received by breeders.

The board also discussed the impact not having the funding available would have on those organisations and events who received funding in previous years. If the option to use the money to make the green books cheaper were implemented there would then be very little funds to allocated to events around the country.

The Finance Committee Chairman advised that if the Breeding Sub Board decided against making the green book registration cheaper and opted to distribute the funding as usual, the fund should be advertised and that there should be clear criteria with a scoring system. He said that while he understood that the Breeding Sub Board members were elected breeder representatives that, where funding was being allocated to third parties, a robust, open and transparent, process should be in place.

The board noted that this would have resource implications, it would also be administratively burdensome and that it was likely that there would be lot of disappointed applicants, however agreed that openness and transparency was the only approach to adopt if this option is taken.

### Taxation

The Director of Finance advised that the Finance Committee have requested a quote be obtained from Grant Thornton in relation to making a submission to Revenue for a sporting exemption/charitable tax status for HSI, particularly regarding obtaining tax deduction status for potential patrons to HSI.

### Commercial Rates

The issue of the level of commercial rates on equestrian Centres was raised by Rita Dunne. It was agreed that this was a complex item as different criteria appeared to apply in different counties. It was agreed that the Director of Finance would meet with AIRE to agree a strategy on how the matter could be pursued.

### **Breeding Sub-Board Report**

The Director of Breeding and Programmes presented the Breeding Sub Board report which had been circulated. The board were advised that the Breeding Sub-Board have agreed a document setting out a new system for classification and inspection within the Irish Sport Horse and Irish Draught Horse Studbooks. The document has been published with comments sought. Meetings are also due to take place with daughter Irish Draught Horse Studbooks.

They also decided to lift the suspension of the 2016 spring stallion inspections and to run the inspections under the current regime as the new system would take time to implement the new system.

### **Sport Sub-Board Report**

The CEO presented the Sport Sub Board report which had been circulated to the Board. A number of the items discussed will feature later on the agenda.

One of the main items of discussion was in relation to hat standards. This issue is causing difficulty for affiliates as there is now no clear EU standard. The Managing Director of Charles Owen Roy Burek, Team Ireland Equestrian Official hat supplier has been invited to attend the next sub board meeting to provide a detailed briefing for the affiliates.

The affiliate show case parade will go ahead in Punchestown on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

The next HSI Sport Sub-Board meeting will take place on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

### **Director of International Marketing Report**

The Director of International Marketing presented her report which had been circulated to the board. HSI Board member, Sally Ann Tobin was asked to join the 'Jumping in the City' Organising Committee to provide input on the amateur classes.

The Director of International Marketing noted the recent success of the CPBS in exporting ponies to South Korea.

The board were updated on the owners and riders reception in Wellington, Florida. This event was organised by Tamso Doyle who co-ordinates Horse Sport Ireland's owners programme. The event was very successful and was well received by the owners.

While the visit to Florida had been a useful fact finding mission the Director of Marketing advised that in her view the focus in the US should primarily be on eventing.

The Director of International Marketing gave a special thanks to Michael Stone, Managing Director, of Palm Beach International Equestrian Centre for all his help and hospitality during the week.

### **Reaching New Heights**

The CEO presented a document updating the meeting on the implementation of Reaching New Heights. Responsibility for implementing the strategy rests with an implementation group chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

A number of initiatives have been implemented to date chiefly the establishment of the International Marketing Division by HSI while a network of Equine Discussion Groups is being rolled out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine through the Knowledge Transfer Programme.

These new initiatives were implemented due to the provision of extra funding. However, the CEO advised that it will simply not be possible for Horse Sport Ireland to implement many of the recommendations without significant additional funding.

He presented an outline document setting out the potential cost of implementing the report in full. He advised the document needed more work but that he intended it would form the basis of a submission Horse Sport Ireland would make at the next meeting of the Implementation Group. The board agreed that this was a good approach and that the document should be further developed.

The Chairman advised the meeting that there was an expectation in some quarters that Horse Sport Ireland could implement the plan from its existing resources and that this was simply not possible. He and some board members expressed frustration that the roll out of the Knowledge Transfer programme was taking so long. The Chairman emphasised that these Discussion Groups would be very positive for the sector. He said he had also been in contact with the Minister about the proposed structural review of Horse Sport Ireland and other organisations but while he expected it would happen shortly there was no definite timeframe on this.

The Chairman advised that he had recently met with Pavee Point and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to discuss projects in relation to horses in the travelling community which was also highlighted in the strategy.

### **HSI Strategic Plan – updated Draft Document**

The CEO circulated an updated draft of the proposed HSI Strategic Plan. He asked the board to reflect on its contents as he was very keen to receive feedback on the draft. He advised the board that if they were not in a position to email submissions he would be happy to meet with them or their affiliates.

The Chairman noted that while Reaching New Heights was a Roadmap for the sector, Horse Sport Ireland needed to have a Strategic Plan for the organisation. It had certain functions it had to exercise and these would have to be the priority for the Board of Directors.

### **Rio Olympic Games : Update and Selection Criteria**

Triona Connors, Equestrian Sport Co-ordinator and Avalon Everett a staff member in the Sports Department joined the meeting for this topic. A draft of the selection criteria had been circulated in advance.

Selection of athletes to represent Ireland at the Olympic Games is ultimately a matter for the Olympic Council of Ireland. However they seek nominations from their respective National Governing Body for Sport.

Discussion ensued on the Show Jumping criteria. The Chairman explained the Show Jumping Team Manager and the High Performance Committee had deliberated over the draft for some time. He emphasised that as there was only one place at the games and with a number of riders performing well on the circuit that Horse Sport Ireland needed to have a particularly robust process in place.

The board acknowledged that the goal of any selection process had to be to give Ireland the best chance of winning a medal(s) at the Olympic Games.

Following discussion, some adjustments were made to the proposed Show Jumping criteria document which was then approved by the Board.

The inclusion of an appeal process to Just Sport Ireland was welcomed by the board. In order to facilitate this, and to give the selected riders more time to prepare for the games, the Team Managers in Show Jumping and Eventing along with the Dressage High Performance committee, are required under the criteria, to make their selection decisions in the week commencing June 6<sup>th</sup>.

Some discussion also took place around the membership of the removal panel which was included with certain situations that might arise in the lead up to the games. A proposal in relation to this will be brought before the next Board meeting.

### **Lanaken Selection Committee 2016**

The CEO advised that the selection of horses for the World Breeding championships was a matter for Horse Sport Ireland in its capacity as the National Federation for Ireland. Now that the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses (WBFSH) had accepted the Warmblood Studbook of Ireland as full members, horses registered in that Studbook were eligible for selection and should be considered on their merits on the same basis as Irish Sport Horse Studbook horses. Accordingly, he was proposing the establishment of a committee to oversee the selection process. The proposed Terms of Reference of the committee were approved as proposed.

### **Volunteer Policy**

The HSI Volunteering policy was approved. It was noted that this document was written specifically for Horse Sport Ireland and while it was recommended that affiliates should also have such a policy it would need to be amended to suit their specific needs.

## **AOB**

Georgia Stubington advised the Board that she is no longer the Chair of Eventing, is now the Vice Chairman and that David O'Mara is new the Chair.

Georgia Stubington also updated the board on the introduction of the Equi Ratings system for approving rider's participation in eventing classes.

The FEI Sport forum was due to take place on April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. While no decisions will be made at the forum the discussions on FEI officials and particularly on the proposed changes to Olympic formats will be important. Georgia Stubington noted the proposed changes in eventing were very fundamental and that there was likely to be a lot of focus on eventing at the forum.

The next HSI Board meeting will take place at 10am on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 in HSI offices.

**ENDS**

**This Briefing Note was prepared by the CEO at the request of the HSI Board; it is not an official minute of the meeting and has not been approved by the Board.**