

Briefing Note of the 55th Horse Sport Ireland Board Meeting held on

Tuesday 21st January 2014 @ 10am in HSI Offices

A minutes silence was observed by the HSI Board in honour of John Jude Doyle, a good colleague and friend, a member of the Breeding Sub-Board and a former HSI Board member, who died on the 15th January 2014.

Minutes of the 53rd Board Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the 54th Board meeting were approved following some suggested amendments.

Neil Henry queried if there was any progress on the horse lorry taxation issue. Mark Bolger advised that he had met with the Department of the Environment, along with Taylor Vard, Paul Duffy, Tiernan Gill and Alison Packman (from Eventing Ireland). The Department requested that HSI produce statistics as to how many horse lorries are on the road. Mark said that HSI would be co-ordinating efforts to establish this.

The Director of Finance informed the board that he would organise a meeting with the testing vets on the HSI anti-doping programme as requested by the board at a previous meeting.

Board Correspondence

There was no correspondence for discussion by the Board.

CEO Report

The CEO provided a report to the Board of Directors. The Director of Finance, Director of Breeding and Programmes and administrative assistant absented themselves from the meeting for this presentation.

Pony Eventing Team Manager

The Pony Eventing Team Manager Position recruitment process is now complete, the successful applicant is Olivia 'Polly' Holohan.

Funding for 2014

Core funding from the Irish Sports Council has been cut by 1.25% to €773,191 while High Performance funding will remain at €500,000. Grant-in Aid funding from the Department of Agriculture is expected to remain at the same level as last year at 1.22m.

Sport Northern Ireland and Child Protection

Horse Sport Ireland is in receipt of Grant funding from Sport NI. In order to continue to receive this funding, HSI needs to comply with specific Sport NI child protection requirements- including registration with access NI. In order to assist us in meeting these requirements HSI has retained Dermot Howlin of Gymnastics Ireland to produce the necessary documentation required by Sport NI and to carry out an overall Audit of our Child Protection policies and procedures in the context of new legislation being activated.

Sports Capital Programme (SCP)

The Minister for Sport has announced a new round of the Sports Capital Programme. The Programme is managed by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and provides grants to assist in the development of sports facilities and the provision of sports equipment throughout the country.

Finance Report

The Director of Finance advised that the Finance Department are currently working on the 2013 year end accounts. Provisional 2013 forecast figures were presented to the HSI Finance Committee on 13th January 2014.

Breeding Report

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have awarded approval to HSI to maintain an Irish Sport Pony Studbook. This Studbook will be developed over the coming months, with various Rules etc. needing to be established.

HSI has agreed, in principle, with Equinome (a UCD based company that has been developing genetic tests to link muscle type to performance in racehorses) to collaborate on a pilot research project into the effect of the myostatin gene on performance in showjumping and/or eventing. The objective would be to see if it might be possible on the basis of muscle type to predict whether an animal is more likely to be suited to a career as an eventor or a showjumper. Clarifications is being sought in relation to data protection issues regarding the DNA samples used in the project.

Terms of Reference

The proposed Terms of Reference for a committee to oversee the selection process for the world young horse championships in Lanakan had been circulated and were approved.

The Chairman said that in line with the Terms of Reference, and following consultation with the Chairman of the Breeding sub board, he had decided to appoint Harold Mc Gahern as Chair of this committee.

Report of Meeting with Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney

The Chairman advised that he met with the Minister for Agriculture, Mr Simon Coveney T.D., along with the CEO, the Director of Finance and Operations and the Director of Breeding and Programmes.

The following items were discussed with the Minister:

A Strategic Planning Proposal for the Sector –RDS/Teagasc/HSI

The Minister agreed with the approach being taken and would help to launch the process. He also agreed to participate in regional meetings to roll out the strategy.

Marketing Plan for Irish Horses

The Minister was of the view that the Marketing plan should be included as a component of the Strategic Plan for the industry.

Education of Breeders – Discussion Group Proposal

The Chairman advised that there may be an opportunity in the Rural Development Programme under “Knowledge Transfer Measures” to secure funding for educational initiatives to “enhance farm viability and competitiveness”. Teagasc and Horse Sport Ireland have made a submission to this process for the funding of discussion groups along the lines of those that exist for the other species and have proved particularly beneficial in the dairy sector.

VAT on Horse Related Activities

The Department of Finance had published a circular in relation to the new VAT treatment of certain horse related activities. HSI stressed the importance to the sport horse sector of a good outcome to the upcoming consultation process.

Horse Registration

The Chairman also advised that the Minister was surprised to learn of the number of white passports being issued. The Minister agreed that this was not good for the sector, particularly if foals were being registered without recorded pedigree.

Horse Welfare

The Minister outlined his approach in relation to this matter. He said that the Department would be taking a more aggressive approach in relation to enforcing the law. A number of horses had been seized under the Control of Horses act in 2013 targeting particular areas and this would continue. He considered educational initiatives were needed in those areas where sub-optimal welfare was common and sought assistance from HSI – he said additional funds would be made available for this.

Strategic Plan Update

The CEO advised that two dates for Teagasc focus groups are 12th February for show jumping and 19th February for eventing. The CEO advised that Sarah Barton from Teagasc will issue the invitations.

VAT on Horse Industry Activities

A VAT expert from Grant Thornton, Sasha Kerins, gave a presentation on the proposed changes in the VAT treatment of in the horse industry. Horse Sport Ireland will be making a submission to the Department of Finance in relation to this matter.

Eventing Selection Criteria (Sample for Approval)

The CEO advised that HSI was reviewing its various selection policy documents for WEG and other Championships. A draft of the senior eventing selection policy was included in the packs. One significant change is the inclusion of an appeal option. It is proposed that selection appeals would be dealt with by Just Sport Ireland(JSI). The operational details for JSI were included in the packs. The CEO invited comments on the draft from board members.

The Chairman suggested that the members should reflect on this and provide any comments to the CEO.

Proposed Change of Ownership Statutory Instrument

A draft Statutory Instrument in relation to making it a legal requirement to report a change of ownership had been circulated. The Board were in support of the concept of a requirement to record ownership changes but they raised some concerns about how it would operate. HSI will discuss this further with the Department.

Premises Registration Proposed Revised Statutory Instrument

A draft statutory instrument in relation to Premises Registration was circulated.

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.