

Briefing Note of the 64th Horse Sport Ireland Board Meeting held on

Tuesday 21st July 2015 @ 10am in HSI Offices

The Chairman introduced the newly appointed Director of International Marketing Elaine Hatton to the meeting. Elaine had joined Horse Sport Ireland on June 7th.

Minutes of the 63rd Board Meeting and Matters Arising

The CEO advised that the Breeding Sub-Board toured the Irish Equine Centre (IEC) premises on Tuesday 7th July 2015.

Currently Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) does not provide funding to the IEC although they carry out testing for Horse Sport Ireland under the National Anti-doping programme. The Chairman advised that if extra funding became available to HSI that HSI would like to be in a position to contribute some funding towards the running of the centre as it does very important work. A member requested that if HSI were to contribute towards the Equine centre a further financial update would be required. It was agreed that the matter would be kept under review by the Finance Committee.

Hugh McCusker advised that, regarding the Innovation Fund, the Northern Ireland Horse Board (NIHB) would contribute to covering the Northern Ireland projects that are not subject to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine funding. This was welcomed by the Board but members expressed disappointment at the continued lack of funding from DARD in Northern Ireland.

The Minutes of the 63rd HSI Board meeting were approved by the Board.

CEO Report

Appointment of High performance Coaches

The CEO proposed that from 2016, new appointments as specialist coaches on Eventing programmes should also be required to have a suitable coaching qualifications. This was agreed.

Trevor Breen wins the Hickstead Derby

Trevor Breen won the Hickstead derby on Loughnatousa WB. This was the second year in a row that Trevor won the competition having won it on Adventure de Kannan in the previous year. Loughnatousa WB was also a previous winner of the competition having won it when ridden by Paul Beecher in 2012. Six Irish bred horses finished in the top 7 places in the competition.

Senior Eventing High Performance Programme

Senior eventing High Performance Manager Nick Turner has appointed Ian Woodhead as the new Dressage Coach for the programme while Gerry Flynn has been appointed as Show Jumping Coach. A new 12 rider squad has been named. These riders will be the beneficiaries of the bursary programme which was made possible by the recent anonymous donation towards riders preparing for the Rio Olympic Games.

Investec to sponsor the Irish Show Jumping team

Investec have come on board as sponsors of the Irish Show Jumping team for the Aga Khan trophy in Dublin and the European Championships in Aachen, Germany. The team will be known as the Investec Irish Show Jumping team for these two competitions.

Longines Global Champions Tour

On July 4th, Bertram Allen won the Paris leg of the Global Champions tour with Romanov. Darragh Kenny finished in third place in the same competition riding Sans Soucis Z. Bertram became the youngest ever winner of a leg of the series. The following week Greg Broderick and the Irish Sport Horse MHS Going Global made their Global Champions Tour debut in Estoril. They jumped three clear rounds to finish in third place.

Presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine

On June 7th a Horse Sport Ireland delegation consisting of Chairman Pat Wall, Finance Chairman James Kennedy, Director of Finance and Operations Mark Bolger and CEO Damian McDonald, made a presentation about the sport horse sector to the above committee chaired by Andrew Doyle TD. The presentation was well received.

Coillte Meeting

Horse Sport Ireland recently met with new Coillte CEO Fergal Leamy to discuss access to Coillte lands in the context of the new industry Strategic Plan 'Reaching New Heights'.

Endurance

The FEI International Endurance event fixed for August 9th in Portlaoise has been cancelled. The OC had indicated that they would be seeking a replacement date. It was agreed that such request should not be granted. It was noted cancelling events at short notice which had been included in the FEI calendar did not reflect well on Ireland.

TG4 to show European Show Jumping Championships Live

TG4 will broadcast the team final of the European Show Jumping Championships live from Aachen in August. They may also broadcast the individual final depending on how Irish riders are doing in the event.

Director of International Marketing – Introduction

The new Director of International Marketing, Elaine Hatton, who started work with HSI on 7th June 2015, made an introductory presentation to the Board.

The Director of International Marketing recommended that an advisory board be established to include representation from relevant organisations on a similar basis to the advisory group which had met prior to the position being created.

Elaine Hatton also advised the Board that her focus would be on promoting public auctions and the Irish Horse Gateway (IHG) as the results from these could be measured. Elaine also advised that HSI/IHG would be an official partner to the European Eventing Championships in Blair Castle.

Finance Report

The Director of Finance presented the management accounts for six months ending 30th June 2015.

The Audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 2014, as prepared by Grant Thornton were discussed. The Finance Committee had reviewed the audited accounts in detail and Noel Delaney Audit Partner, with Grant Thornton, had presented the audited accounts to the Finance Committee at its meeting. The Audited Accounts had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. It was reported that Grant Thornton had issued a clean unqualified audit report for the year ended 31st December 2014.

2014 Annual Report

The CEO presented the draft 2014 Annual Report to the Board for perusal. It is hoped to launch this report at the Dublin Horse Show in the RDS.

The Chairman advised that the accounts in the report are clear and transparent.

The Chairman complemented the presentation of the report and asked that the Board go through the narrative in the document and revert with any feedback in the coming days.

Breeding Sub-Board Report

Sport Horse Foal Championship

The Director of Breeding and Programmes advised that the Sport Horse Foal Championships will take place between 18th July and 1st August 2015 and will be held in the following equestrian centres:

- Mullingar Equestrian Centre, Co. Westmeath – 18th July
- Wexford Equestrian Centre, Tomhaggard – 12th July
- Newcastle West Show, Co. Limerick – 19th July
- Creagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway – 26th July
- Tubberbride, Co. Sligo – 19th July
- The Meadows, Co. Armagh – 1st August

The regional championship in The Meadows on 1st August will be funded by the NIHB. The final will take place at Millstreet International Horse Show (11th – 16th August 2015).

HSI Show Jumping and Eventing Mare Championships

The Show Jumping Mare Championship will be held on 31st October/1st November 2015 at Wexford Equestrian Centre in conjunction with the Autumn Grand Prix Show. The Eventing Mare Championship will be held at Lisgarvan House, Co. Carlow on 13th September 2015.

Traditional Horses Breeding Committee

The second meeting of the Traditional Irish Horse Breeding Committee was held at the HSI offices on 30th June 2015. A total of 2,177 Traditional Irish Horse (TIH) mares have been identified as being the current actively breeding TIH mare herd. The Director of Breeding and Programmes advised that the Traditional Irish Horse Breeding Committee plan to invite the owners of these mares to regional meetings later this year.

Breeder Prefix

In recent months HSI has received a number of complaints from breeders who have registered their horse in the Irish Horse Register (IHR) with a prefix but the horse's name has subsequently been changed upon registration with the FEI.

The FEI General Regulations outline the rules for naming horses in Article 138 and allow owners to change the name of a horse for a fee.

At present HSI, as the National Federation, is obliged to follow the FEI regulations on naming and cannot refuse to change a name when registering a horse with the FEI on the grounds that the horse is registered with a prefix in the IHR. The Breeding Sub Board have requested that this issue be raised with the FEI and the WBFSH with a view to putting procedures in place to protect breeder prefixes.

Registration Statistics

The Director of Breeding and Programmes advised that the number of IHR Registered foals dropped to 4,548 in 2014 from 5,160 in 2013.

Sport Sub-Board Report

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) advised the Board that during the course of the Deloitte Internal Audit, the matter of criteria for the award of International hosting grants was raised. A paper outlining a method of allocating the international hosting grants based on a points system which takes into account FEI star ratings, the number of horses ridden by foreign riders and the international ranking of the riders at the show was discussed.

Discussion ensued amongst Board members regarding the document. Some members expressed concern that smaller international events were losing out under the proposed system and that while these had low numbers of international riders, they were a training ground for young Irish riders.

The Board were advised that Eventing Ireland provides their own funding to international events which gave a heavier recognition to lower level events as they were an important stepping stone for National riders. Others felt that events were not genuinely international events unless they had a significant number of international riders.

The Board, having considered the proposal, agreed to implement the method for allocation for 2015, with an adjustment to make CIC3* classes equivalent to CCI2* for the purposes of allocating points for star ratings.

It was agreed that if there was any unallocated amounts left over at year end that there might be some latitude to address the concerns expressed about smaller events.

Reaching New Heights – Strategy Update

The Chairman advised that a Joint Agricultural Committee meeting was held on 7th July 2015, the Chairman reported on the items discussed at the meeting which he felt gave positive feedback on HSI.

The CEO brought to the attention of the Board correspondence received from Tony Ennis, Chairman of the Association of Irish Riding Clubs (AIRC) regarding the ‘Reaching New Heights Strategy Report’.

There was no further update on the establishment of the implementation committee as set out in the report but the Chairman said he expected news shortly and he hoped that the Minister would Chair the group.

Jumping in the City Report

The CEO presented a report to the Board regarding the recent ‘Jumping in the City’ series, which took place in Limerick Greyhound Stadium on Friday 5th June, Cork Greyhound Stadium, Curraheen, on Friday 12th June and finished in Shelbourne Park, Dublin on Friday 26th June 2015.

The CEO thanked the sponsors, the SJI and HSI staff who helped make each event a huge success. In particular he asked the board to note the work done by Sophie D’Alton from HSI.

On behalf of SJI, Tony Hurley said that the series had been extremely well received and he thanked the HSI staff for their commitment to the series given the short lead in time.

It was suggested that if the series were to be run again in 2016, it would benefit from having greyhound races following the show jumping and prize giving.

The CEO brought to the attention of the Board correspondence received from Willie Ruane, CEO of Connacht Rugby in which he explains why the Galway Greyhound Stadium were unable to partake in the 'Jumping in the City' series.

European Championship Athlete Selection Policy

The CEO brought the FEI Athlete Selection Policy for Show Jumping(SJ) and Eventing to the attention of the Board for agreement.

Given that the SJ team selection would only be made after the Dublin Horse Show and that the definite entry date was the next day, it was decided to delete the provision for a selection appeal as this could not be carried out in this timeframe.

Accordingly, it was agreed by the Board to delete Section 8 in the SJ document for the European Jumping Championships being held in Aachen, Germany, from 19th – 23rd August and to reinsert same for future championships subject to the timelines being practical.

The Board agreed on the FEI Athlete selection policy for eventing at Blair Castle, Scotland, 10th – 13th September 2015.

AOB

The Chairman advised that the Connemara Pony Breeders Association held a meeting on Friday 17th July 2015 – members from all around the country attended, which resulted in significant changes to modernise the structure of the CPBS.

The Chairman advised the Board that Anne Bannon and Kieran O’Gorman will not be going forward for re-election to the IHB and therefore would retire from the HSI Board. He thanked both Anne Bannon and Kieran O’Gorman for their work whilst members of the HSI Board.

Both Anne Bannon and Kieran O’Gorman wished the Board well in the future. It was agreed by the Board that Anne Bannon would remain on the HSI Finance Committee.

The next HSI Board meeting had been fixed for September 15th but the Chairman advised that due to unforeseen circumstances he was not now available on this date. After discussion, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Monday 14th September 2015.

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.