

Briefing Note of the 65th Horse Sport Ireland Board Meeting held on

Monday 14th September 2015 @ 10am in HSI Offices

The Chairman introduced the new Irish Horse Board nominees to the Board, Barbara Hatton, Alex Deon and David McCann, who replace Kieran O’Gorman, Sean Kavanagh and Anne Bannon.

The Chairman advised the Board that Anne Bannon, who, had stepped down as an IHB Director has agreed to remain on the HSI Finance Committee as proposed at the last Board meeting. He stated that we are fortunate to have her experience on that Committee.

Minutes of the 63rd Board Meeting and Matters Arising

The CEO advised the Board that a meeting is scheduled for Friday 25th September with the Irish Greyhound Board to review the Jumping in the City series and it is envisaged that a full breakdown of costs in respect of the series will be available to the Board for the next meeting on Tuesday 17th November 2015.

Chief Executive Officer Report

Discover Ireland Dublin Horse Show

The highlight of Dublin Horse Show was Ireland’s victory in the Aga Khan cup. The winning Irish team consisted of Bertram Allen/Romanov, Greg Broderick/MHS Going Global (ISH), Cian O’Connor/Good Luck and Darragh Kenny/Sans Souci. During the week of Dublin Horse Show over 800,000 people viewed posts which were posted on the Team Ireland Equestrian Facebook page. The page now has over 55,000 followers.

Road Safety Booklet launch

The road safety booklet ‘Horse Road Safety on Public Roads’ was launched by Minister Pascal Donohue TD on August 5th. The booklet is a joint initiative between the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and Horse Sport Ireland.

The European Pony Championships

The European Pony Championships in Dressage, Eventing and Show Jumping took place in Malmo, Sweden from 4-10th of August. The Pony Show Jumping team took the team silver medal. In eventing Zara Nelson took the individual bronze medal with Millridge Buachaill Bui (ISH) (TIH).

Rio test event

The Rio test event took place for the discipline of eventing from August 6th to 9th. Nick Turner and rider representative Ciaran Glynn attended the event on foot.

Children on Horses, Junior and Young Rider SJ championships Austria 11-16th August

The Irish Junior Rider team won the silver medal while the young riders won the team bronze medal. In the Children on Horses category Jennifer Kuehnle won the individual gold medal riding Chaitanya 2.

European Show Jumping Championships in Aachen

The Irish team finished 7th. This was one place, and less than half a penalty, outside of Olympic qualification. However, the Irish team lodged a protest due to an arena party member causing interference to Cian O' Connor and Good Luck during their round. The protest and subsequent appeal to the Appeals Committee were rejected. This matter is listed for separate discussion on the agenda.

Pentathlon European Championships 22nd August

Arthur Lanigan-O'Keeffe won the European Senior Pentathlon Championships in Bath, England on August 22nd. In the process he also secured Olympic qualification.

Young Rider Championships Strzegom, Poland 30th August

The Irish young rider eventing team won the team bronze medal at the European Championships in Strzegom, Poland.

Knowledge Transfer Groups- Equine

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have approved the appointment of facilitators for Equine Discussion Groups. It is understood that approximately 15 facilitators have been approved. Horse Sport Ireland staff member Michael Doherty has been approved as one of facilitators. Each facilitator can establish a maximum of five groups with between 12 and 18 members. Michael will endeavour to establish five groups with a guideline of establishing one in each of the IHB regions. The Chairman advised that HSI Director Dr. Jack Murphy had also been approved as a facilitator in his own right and that he also intended to establish a number of groups.

Finance Report

The Director of Finance updated the Board on the Irish Sports Council audit which was being carried out by Deloitte. He advised that Leo Fleming from Deloitte had attended the most recent meeting of the Finance committee. It was anticipated that it would be another few weeks before the final report would be issued.

The primary cause of the delay was because Deloitte were engaging with recipients of the ISC international hosting grants to seek their views. Deloitte intended to have further engagement with Millstreet and some of the other recipients of this funding before signing off on their report.

It was noted that Deloitte had queried why the Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee did not attend Board meetings. The Chairman suggested that James Kennedy, Chairman of the HSI Finance Sub-Committee would be invited to attend all future meetings of the Board as an observer. This was agreed unanimously.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Finance for the work that had gone into meeting the auditor's information requests and said the Board looks forward to their final report. He said the Board should take comfort from the calibre of people HSI has on its Finance Committee:

James Kennedy had been the European Vice President of Bausch and Lomb, an American multi-national healthcare company (he was in charge of driving efficiency and reducing costs) and he is a past President of the Chamber of Commerce of Ireland, Anne Bannon is an experienced accountant and Head of the Allied Irish Bank's centre that provides banking solutions to the Health Care and Life Science sector and Jim Beecher is a former Assistant Secretary in the Department of Agriculture Food and Marine (DAFM).

The Director of Finance reported that DAFM will conduct an audit regarding equine support grants on 16th September 2015. The Board were advised that an audit of HSI in relation to the Sports Capital Programme had already taken place and that no issues were raised. The Director of Finance presented the management accounts for the seven months ending 31st July 2015.

A document outlining the worrying level of outstanding funds from Sport NI had been circulated before the meeting. The Director of Finance advised the Board that as a result of the outstanding payments the Horse Sport Ireland Finance Committee had decided to suspend the NI Talent ID Programme, and possibly other initiatives funded by Sport N.I., until funds were released. He said the Committee had taken the view that they could not continue to incur further costs until some funding was paid over to HSI by Sport NI.

Breeding Sub-Board Report

The Director of Breeding advised the Board that the Sport Horse Foal Championships took place at Millstreet International Horse Show on Sunday 16th August 2015. The championship had been well received. A survey is being carried out amongst the participants with a view to identifying potential improvements for future years.

The last leg of the HSI studbook series took place in Meadows Equestrian centre following which the combinations had been selected for the World Breeding Federation for Sport Horses Show Jumping championships in Lanaken in Belgium.

The Board of the Irish Draught Horse Society of North America voted to harmonise their studbook with the Irish Draught studbook in Ireland at their meeting on 19th August 2015. The outcome of the autumn mare inspections was included in the meeting pack. The Chairman suggested that in light of the low numbers of Sport Horses participating that we need to review the costs associated with mare inspections. He reiterated that the Board has to consider all our activities to ensure that they are providing value for money and delivering on their intended objectives.

It was agreed that the costs, and benefits, would be looked at and that the Director of Finance should present a report on the costings to the next meeting.

Director of International Marketing Report

The Director of International Marketing updated the Board on marketing activities since the last meeting. It was noted that the sponsorship presence at the European championships in Blair Castle had been an effective promotional tool for the Irish Horse Gateway and upcoming auctions.

A member expressed concern about the lack of Irish Sport Horses amongst the horses that had completed the competition in Blair. He said that this was a cause of concern which he attributed to a lack of thoroughbred blood amongst the modern Irish Sport Horse population. As the UK was the largest market for Irish bred horses a marketing campaign in the Horse and Hound magazine had been launched in the week commencing September 7th.

The Director of Marketing advised the Board that options to promote Irish horses in the US market were currently being explored.

It is intended to convene the Marketing Advisory group, which had met in the lead up to the creation of the new Marketing Department, in the coming weeks. The Board were advised that Zoe Kavanagh, CEO of the National Dairy Council, had agreed to chair the Group at the request of HSI Chairman Pat Wall. Zoe had produced a marketing report as a key input into the industry strategic planning process. In her day job, she is the CEO of the National Dairy Council and competes in EI competitions.

Key performance indicators in relation to the Irish Horse Gateway were presented and the improvements in all key metrics were noted.

Appeal to the Court for Arbitration for Sport – Olympic Qualification

Robert Splaine, Chef d'Equipe of the Irish Show Jumping Team, and James Tarrant joined the Board at his stage and gave a report regarding the incident at the FEI European Championships in Aachen on 22nd August 2015, involving Cian O'Connor and Good Luck. Avalon Everett from HSI was also in attendance at the Board meeting for this report.

There was a detailed discussion about the incident and the impact it had on the Irish team. In general, Board members felt that there was an inherent unfairness in what had happened.

Whether Ireland wins the case or not will very much depend on the legal argument and it was agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee containing legal experts from our constituents to make necessary decisions which it is not practical for the Board of Directors to make, regarding Horse Sport Ireland's appeal to the Court for Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The aim of the appeal is to secure an Irish Show Jumping team place at the 2016 Olympic Games. This is about Team Ireland going to Rio and securing medals for the Ireland.

Any decision to expend funds on the case will be subject to approval by the HSI Finance Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee will report to the Board at its next meeting and subsequent meetings as necessary.

The membership of the Committee is:

Joe Fitzpatrick, Solicitor

Martin Hayden, Senior Counsel

Tony Hurley, HSI Director

James Kennedy, Chair of the HSI Finance Committee

Phillip O'Connor, Retired solicitor and former member of the FEI Tribunal.

These members have all agreed to serve on the Committee on a pro bono basis.

FEI General Assembly Proposals

The CEO presented the FEI General Assembly proposals to the Board.

A discussion took place around the unsanctioned events rule and the potential implications of a recent Belgian competition court judgement against the FEI. The Global Champions Tour (GCT) had complained about the FEI rule precluding athletes from competing in authorised competitions for 6 months after competing in any unauthorised competition. It was noted that this issue had already been dealt with in Ireland and that riders who competed in unauthorised national events in Ireland were not subject to any sanction under SJI rules. However, such riders could fall foul of the current FEI 6 month rule.

It was noted the FEI were appealing the Belgian court's decision and that they were planning to defend the provisions. The FEI and the EEF were concerned that the introduction of a commercial GCT team competition would impact on Nations Cups.

It was noted that the only proposed rule change at the 2015 GA was in relation suspended NF's. The board had no issue with this proposed amendment.

AOB

The CEO circulated an FEI document setting out the bidding timetables for FEI Championships in 2019. It was noted that no date had yet been set for bids to be received for the 2019 European eventing Championships. The CEO advised that he had sought further guidance from the FEI on the matter.

The next HSI Board meeting will take place at 10am on Tuesday 17th November 2015 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.