

Briefing Note of the 66th Horse Sport Ireland Board Meeting held on

Tuesday 17th November 2015 @ 10am in the Killashee House Hotel in Naas, Co. Kildare

The Chairman introduced the new members to the Board, Jane Darragh representing the RDS, Lt. Col. (Retired) Gerry O’Gorman, representing Para Equestrian Ireland (PEI), the Irish Long Distance Riding Association (ILDRA) and the Carriage Driving Section of HSI.

The Chairman also welcomed James Kennedy, Chairman of the HSI Finance Committee, as an observer to the Board and outlined that James will attend future meetings of the Board.

Minutes of the 65th Board Meeting and Matters Arising

Barbara Micks advised the Board that the Irish Pony Club were disappointed that the suggestions of some of their members in relation to amendments to the road safety booklet had not been taken on board by the Road Safety Authority.

The CEO advised that he understood that the RSA had put the booklet through a detailed legal review and that they were reluctant to amend it subsequent to this.

The Minutes of the 65th Board meeting were approved by the Board, proposed by Charles Hanley and seconded by Tony Hurley.

Board Correspondence

The Chairman advised the Board of correspondence received from Tom McGuigan, Chairman of the Irish Draught Horse Society in Northern Ireland, requesting to become an affiliate of Horse Sport Ireland (HSI).

The Chairman explained that Horse Sport Ireland had been established under the Dowling report and that the report had been prescriptive on the make up of the Breeding Sub Board of Horse Sport Ireland. Accordingly, Horse Sport Ireland had not accepted affiliation requests from other breeding bodies. However, he advised that a structural review of Horse Sport Ireland was part of the industry strategy Reaching New Heights and that he envisaged that a mechanism for affiliating further breeding bodies would be considered as part of this.

Correspondence received from David Cunningham, former Board member, thanking the Chairman and Board was noted. David Cunningham had respected ILDRA on the board but the seat now rotated back to Para Equestrian Ireland.

CEO Report

International Marketing Department

The structure of the Horse Sport Ireland Marketing Department has now been finalised. Sophie D’Alton has been appointed as Marketing Manager reporting to the Director of International Marketing Elaine Hatton. Sophie will retain responsibility for Marketing Team Ireland Equestrian. Rossa Gallagher has taken up the position of Marketing Assistant.

Ploughing

Horse Sport Ireland were part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's pavilion at the National Ploughing Championships from September 22nd to 24th. There may be merit in considering whether it be worth exploring having an equestrian village at the Ploughing on a pilot basis for 2016. The board agreed that this would be worth exploring.

MIDAS meeting

Horse Sport Ireland was invited to attend the first meeting of group called the 'Management of Intelligence and Drugs Action in Sports' (MIDAS). The establishment of the group was initiated by Hilary Forde the Director of Racing Governance and Compliance with the Irish Greyhound Board (IGB). The other organisations represented on the group include the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Special Investigation Unit and the Turf Club. The Board agreed that it was worthwhile to participate in this group.

National Sports Policy Review

The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Pascal Donohoe in conjunction with the Minister for Sport Michael Ring will shortly be commencing a consultation process on the development of a National Sports Policy framework. In advance of this, a representative from each National Governing Body was invited to consultation session with the two Ministers at the National Sports Campus at Abbotstown on November 5th. The formal public consultation process will be launched early in the new year.

National Sports Industry Awards- Jumping in the City

The inaugural National Sports awards organised by the Federation of Irish Sport took place on November 5th in the Smock Alley theatre in Dublin. The ceremony was chaired by Broadcaster Matt Cooper who also chaired the adjudication panel. Jumping in the city won the 'Best innovation in Irish Sport' in 2015 category at these prestigious awards. The Board noted this success and congratulated the staff and volunteers who had made the events such a success.

Reaching New Heights Implementation Group

The first meeting of the implementation group for the industry strategy 'Reaching New heights' took place on October 20th. The meeting was chaired by Minister Simon Coveney. Following the meeting the Minister and the Department asked Horse Sport Ireland to act as the secretariat to the implementation Group.

Some members expressed disappointment that their organisations had not been included in the meeting. The Chairman explained that it was not possible for the Department to include all the bodies in the sector but he assured members that HSI would ensure that any issues they had as regards the strategy would be considered by the implementation group.

International Association of Hunting with Hounds

The International Association of Hunting with Hounds had their Annual General Meeting in Ireland on October 19th. The meeting took place in the Army Equitation School in McKee, Barracks. Representatives from 10 different countries participated in the meeting.

Rules Committee

The 5 year terms of office of the Irish Stewards General for Eventing and Show Jumping were due to conclude during 2015. However, the Rules Committee have decided that it would be better to synchronise these roles with the Olympic cycle. Accordingly, they are not intending to advertise the positions until after the 2016 Olympics with a view to having the appointments confirmed for 2017. The committee also decided that the position of FEI National Head Veterinarian (NHV) in Ireland should be advertised at the same time. The existing office holders would be entitled to reapply.

Boekelo win

The Irish senior eventing team won the FEI Eventing Nations Cup at the CCI3* competition in Boekelo, the Netherlands from October 8-11th. It was first time and Irish team won a leg of the series. The team consisted of Padraig McCarthy/Simon Porloe, Cathal Daniels/Rioghan Rua, Joseph Murphy/Westwinds Hercules and Jonty Evans/Cooley Rorke's Drift.

Finance Report

The Director of Finance went through the financial forecast to the end of the year 2015. He was forecasting a small surplus for the company for 2015.

The Director of Finance advised the Board that the Deloitte audit is on-going.

He emphasised that Horse Sport Ireland will need to budget for surpluses each year with a view to building a reserve for the organisation.

The Director of Finance advised the Board the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) had advised that their funding will increase from €1.82m to €1.87 for 2016. The Equine Support Project Grant amount has not yet been allocated by DAFM.

The recent budget announced that road tax on lorries has been reduced to a maximum of €900. This measure will be of benefit many equestrian lorry owners. The Director of Finance wished to acknowledge affiliates and their members who provided information to the HSI lorry tax survey, which was included in representations to the Department of the Environment.

The Director of Finance advised that a formal Board member induction session was held in HSI offices for new HSI Board members on 15th October 2015. This would be standard practice for all new Board members in future.

Sport Ireland Voluntary Code of Governance for NGB's

James Kennedy, Larry O'Neill, Damian McDonald and Mark Bolger met with Alan O'Hare and Ciaran Mangan of Sport Ireland to explore the areas that Sport Ireland can help HSI in further advancing compliance with the Code of Governance as designated by the ISC in May 2014. A further meeting has been scheduled for 25th November to progress matters.

As requested by DAFM, the project to complete the tagging of equipment, fixtures and fittings was completed in September 2015.

Breeding Sub-Board Report

The Director of Breeding and Programmes Alison Corbally gave the Breeding Sub-Board report as circulated.

At the Breeding Sub-Board meeting of the 3rd Nov 2015 the Chairman Jim Beecher presented a document to the Sub-Board querying the impact that the current stallion inspection system is having on the breeding programme. He noted the low level of coverings by stallions who went through the inspection process in recent years and considered that the resources invested in the inspection regime may be put to better use. He proposed the following course of action:

1. We review our inspection and classification system.
2. Seek submissions from breeders and consult widely.
3. Adopt any new system by the 30th April 2016.

This proposal was discussed at length and the Board agreed with the subboards plan to review the inspection and classification system over the coming months and to consult with breeders and stake holders, including the NIHB, with regard to the merits of inspections. It was agreed not to hold the full inspections in spring 2016, however it was noted that some owners may need to be accommodated with an inspection in some cases, e.g. stallions that have partially completed the inspection process.

This review was announced to breeders at the IHB AGM, which was held on the evening of the 3rd November. The details of the review and the consultation process will be discussed at the next meeting of the Breeding Sub Board on the 27th November 2015.

Equine Knowledge Transfer Programme

It is expected that the new Equine Knowledge Transfer Programme will commence in January 2016. Approximately 14 facilitators and 43 equine groups will be involved in the first round of the programme. With each participant having to have at least 2 mares this means that at least 1,500 mares will be included which could be a good representation of the national breeding herd.

HSI has developed an IT system for the Equine Knowledge Transfer Programme which will be used by participants to fill out the details required for the farm improvement plan (e.g. health records, mare records, stallion selections, coverings) and by facilitators to monitor the progression of the members in their group.

WBFSH Rankings

The Irish Sport Horse Studbook finished in 1st place in the 2015 WBFH Eventing Rankings with a total of 1,308 points. The Hanoverian Studbook finished in 2nd place on 1,167 points.

Changes to the EU Legislation

The Commission Regulations relating to the identification of equines are in the process of being amended. A number of the proposed changes to the Regulations will have significant impacts on PIOs, in particular changes to the layout of equine identification documents. Other potential changes relate to information on the keeper of equines, the bodies approved to issue identification documents and the amount of information provided to the Department by PIOs. It is expected that the new regulations will be enforced in Ireland from the 13th January 2016. HSI is currently looking at various options with regard to adapting the passport production system to meet the new requirements.

HSI Breeders Awards

The 2015 HSI Breeders Awards took place in conjunction with the IHB AGM on the 3rd November in the Hotel Kilmore, Co. Cavan. The Breeders Awards highlighted the best of Irish breeding and honored the breeders of top class Irish Sport Horses and Irish Draught Horses. A total of 11 awards were presented, including an '*Outstanding Contribution Award to ISH Breeding*' which was presented to Marily Power & Susan Lanigan O'Keeffe of Suma Stud and a '*Special Award for Breeding Successful Irish Sport Horse Mares*' which went to Marion Hughes.

FEI World Breeding Jumping Championships for Young Horses 2015

The FEI World Breeding Championships for Young Horses took place in Lanaken, Belgium, from the 16th to 20th September 2015. The Irish Sport Horse Studbook was represented by a team of 15 horses, five 5 year olds, five 6 year olds and five 7 year olds.

Seven Irish Sport Horses qualified for the Finals, two of which finished in the medals. Laura Renwick (GBR) partnered Kilkenny-bred MHS Washington (ISH) to take home the Silver medal and Eoin McMahon and Talks Cheap (ISH) finishing behind them to take the Bronze.

HSI Mare Showjumping Championship 2015

23 horses competed at the inaugural Horse Sport Ireland Mares Championship for 5 and 6 Year-Olds which was held at Wexford Equestrian Centre on the 1st November 2015.

Cruicerath Flexianna (ISH), bred by Gerard Campbell, Kildare and owned by USA Young Jumpers LLC, was ridden to victory by Eddie Moloney. Some board members suggested that while the standard of jumping at the inaugural event had been very high that there had been a low awareness of the event until close to it.

HSI Mare Eventing Championship 2015

The inaugural Horse Sport Ireland Eventing Mare Championships was held on the 13th September at Lisgarvan House, Co. Carlow. Twenty two mares lined out for the Championship, with 10 five year olds and 12 six year olds taking part. Lindsay Graham and Graf Maypole (ISH) finished in first place and took home the top prize.

Charles Hanley suggested that the law should be amended to put the change of ownership onus on the seller of horses rather than on the buyer. The Director of Breeding advised that she will discuss the matter to the attention of the Department of Agriculture again but that there were objections to placing the onus on sellers from the throughbred sector and from some auction houses.

Charles Hanley also raised the issue regarding donkeys being registered in order to meet stocking density requirements under the Areas of Natural Conservation (ANC) Scheme.

Director of International Marketing Report

The Director of International Marketing gave the board a presentation on recent activities including the trade missions to China and South Korea.

A full update on advertising initiatives in publications such as the Horse and Hound was given as well as updated statistics on the performance of the Irish Horse Gateway.

The Director of International Marketing advised the Board that a marketing team has been established which comprises of Sophie D'Alton as Marketing Manager and Rossa Gallagher as Marketing Assistant. She also advised the Board that an advisory committee is currently being established, the first meeting is due to be held on 14th January 2016. The CEO of the National Dairy Council Zoe Kavanagh has agreed to chair the Sub-Group at the request of Zoe Kavanagh.

Sport Sub-Board Report

The CEO summarised the Sport Sub Board report which had been circulated.

In particular he highlighted the progress made in the area safeguarding (protection of children and young adults).

He also advised that the Irish Sports Council and the National Sports Campus Development Authority have merged and are now called Sport Ireland. The initial Board meeting of Sport Ireland took place on 5th November 2015.

The European Equestrian Federation General Assembly

The European Equestrian Federation (EEF) General Assembly was held in Warsaw, Poland on 14th October 2015 and was attended by the CEO. A full report of the meeting was in the board documents.

The FEI General Assembly

The FEI General Assembly, took place from 10th – 13th November 2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. A full report of the General Assembly had been circulated. The CEO said that one issue which Ireland had raised was the need for the FEI to introduce a register for breeder prefixes.

It was HSI's position that such a register should be developed and that such prefixes should not be changed without the breeders permission. However, if such agreement was reached or the name did not include a breeder's prefix the charge being applied by the FEI for name changes of over €1000 was too much. Horse Sport Ireland had asked the FEI to revisit this.

He also advised the board that the FEI Bureau were taking a strong stand on unsanctioned events. They had issued a recent Press Release saying they were going to use all legal means to ensure that any further challenges to the rule would be resisted.

'Reaching New Heights' – Implementation Group Update

The Reaching New Heights implementation group met for the first time on October 20th.

The CEO advised that, as recommended under the 'Reaching New Heights', a new Genetic Evaluation / Scientific Group has been established to advise the HSI Breeding Sub-Board on scientific/genetic matters. This group will be chaired by Cathal O'Donoghue. The inaugural meeting took place on 16th November 2015.

The CEO suggested that the affiliates should meet to consider some of the recommendations in the Strategic Plan. In particular he highlighted the proposal for single registration fee or a

‘Discounted Bundle’. He also referenced the proposal that competitions should be restricted to horses that are registered in a Studbook. He said it if this was going to apply for horses born after January 1st 2016 then it would be important to announce it before the end of 2015. He suggested that the three Olympic disciplines would meet in the first instance.

The CEO also suggested that that a common IT strategy for the sector was badly needed. He acknowledged that a number of the affiliates had developed their own systems as had HSI. However, he said that over time, further investment would be needed and that all organisations should work towards a common platform.

It was also suggested that AIRE should develop a formal response to the proposal to ‘star rate’ equestrian centres.

NIHB Issues

Hugh McCusker advised that the Northern Ireland Horse Board (NIHB) had requested a meeting with Minister Simon Coveney. They were keen that he might assist in persuading his opposite number in Northern Ireland to provide funding for the sector.

He welcomed agreement with Horse Sport Ireland that the NIHB could process ownership changes in their offices from December 1st, 2015.

HSI Meetings Calendar 2016 – Draft

The Board discussed the draft meetings calendar for 2016 and requested that the ads for the studbook series be placed shortly.

Tony Hurley will forward a copy of the list of National Grand Prix and Premier Series to the Director of Breeding and Programmes.

The Board then agreed the meetings calendar for 2016. The Finance Committee meeting dates are to be added to the calendar and agreed by James Kennedy, Chairman.

AOB

Jack Murphy referred to a horse sold at the recent Goresbridge supreme sale of Show Jumpers. He noted that the horse had been specifically campaigned with the sale in mind and that the horse had made a very good price. He suggested that this might be a good production model and that perhaps it should be highlighted.

The date of the next meeting was fixed for Tuesday, January 26th at 10am in the Horse Sport Ireland 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.