

**Briefing Note of the 69th Horse Sport Ireland Board Meeting held
at 10am on Tuesday 17th May 2016 in HSI Offices in Naas**

Minutes of the 68th Board Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the 67th Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) Board meeting held on 10th March 2016 were approved by the Board.

The Lanaken Committee had its first meeting on May 3rd, a committee member proposed a change to the Terms of Reference (TOR) as suggested below. It was agreed that this proposal would be put before the Board at its next meeting. The Changes suggested are as follows:

TOR item 6.5 *“All communications with the media shall be through the Horse Sport Ireland press office. Committee members shall not comment to the press on any matters in relation to internal deliberations of the Lanaken selection committee, unless so delegated by the CEO of Horse Sport Ireland. Neither shall they provide off the record briefings or comments to journalists.”*

TOR item 5.3- “The Director of Breeding and Programmes *and/or* the CEO”, subject to Board approval.

These changes were agreed by the Board.

The Terms of Reference of the Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) Removal Panel, pursuant to the Summer Olympic Games in Rio Athlete Selection Policies (Item no. 69.6) were agreed. The panel will consist of the Chair of the Sport Sub Board or their nominee, The Chair of the relevant High Performance Committee or their nominee and the Chair of the relevant affiliate and their nominee.

CEO Report

Jumping in the City (JITC)- updated dates

Following a meeting of the Organising Committee (OC), a memo was sent to Board members on April 13th outlining that the OC favoured running only one leg of the series on August 5th in Shelbourne Park. This would also act as an opportunity to promote equestrian sports participation in the Olympic Games as it is the night of the opening ceremony. The Irish eventing team compete in the dressage phase on the following day.

The CEO also advised that an email has been received from the Munster Region of Show Jumping Ireland (SJI) expressing disappointment that ‘Jumping in the City’ will not take place in Cork or Limerick this year. The CEO advised that the JITC organising committee is due to meet with the Munster SJI representatives this afternoon to explore the possibility of the Munster SJI running events in Limerick and Cork . It was agreed that an update would be sent to the Board if a resolution was found.

2019 European Eventing Championships

The first phase of the bidding process for the 2019 European Eventing Championships closed on May 15th. Both Ballindenisk and Millstreet had formally expressed an interest to Horse Sport Ireland in bidding for the Championships. However, Ballindenisk decided not to proceed with their application as they did not wish to bid if another Irish venue was also

applying. Horse Sport Ireland has lodged an application on behalf of Millstreet, a copy of which is attached, along with the FEI bidding process document which sets out the next steps.

Grennan College

On the invitation of AIRE I attended a meeting in Grennan College in Kilkenny. The college runs an Equine PLC Course which is under review. Following the meeting it is anticipated that the course will run for the upcoming academic year and that an advisory group consisting of equine industry leaders from the area would be set up to help guide the programme.

Dormant Accounts

Sport Ireland has invited National Governing Bodies to apply for funding under their dormant accounts programme. The target areas for funding are:

- The personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged
- The educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged
- Persons with a disability (within the meaning of the Equal status Act)

Only one application per NGB is permitted. The details of the fund were circulated to the HSI affiliates. Dressage Ireland, Pentathlon Ireland, Para Equestrian Ireland and RDAI have all expressed an interest in applying. It was felt that the proposed application from RDAI would have the best chance of success. Para Equestrian Ireland has agreed to stand their application down in favour of the RDAI Proposal and HSI now proposes to put the RDAI project forward as HSI's sole application. The maximum amount of funding available is €50,000.

High Performance Budgets

The allocation of High Performance Funding amongst the various programmes within HSI is proving to be very challenging in 2016. There are some additional costs due to the Rio Olympic Games. In recent years the allocation of Sport Ireland funds between the disciplines has been based on the contributions from affiliates. Dressage Ireland has indicated that they wish to increase their HP contribution for 2016. The SJI have not yet confirmed their amount. There is a significant shortfall in the amount needed for Eventing as a result of preparation plans and to fly a reserve combination to Rio. Discussions are ongoing with Eventing Ireland in relation to their contribution. The CEO requested that the Board would allocate responsibility for finalising this to the Finance Committee as it now needs to be resolved urgently. This was agreed.

Lanaken Committee meeting

The Committee had its first meeting on May 3rd. Amendments to the Terms of Reference as agreed at the last meeting were proposed. The main issue of debate is the ISH Studbook series and the possibility of allowing Warmblood Studbook of Ireland (WSI) horses to compete in series on a HC basis or for prizemoney funded from elsewhere.

This matter was referred to the Breeding Sub Board as they have responsibility for the Studbook series. The Breeding Sub Board were of the view that the series should remain as it is for 2016 and whether or not performance in the stud book series is considered in the selection of combinations for Lanaken is a matter for the Lanaken committee.

Finance Report

Quarter 1 2016 Management Accounts Summary

The Director of Finance went through income and expenditure for the first quarter of 2016 and advised that high performance was the area of most concern for 2016 due to costs associated with the Olympic Games in Rio.

The Board queried, given the nature of its activities, whether HSI should be tax exempt. The Finance Director advised that a submission on this matter had previously been made to the revenue Commissioners on behalf of HSI. It was agreed that this matter will be revisited with Grant Thornton and the Finance Committee.

The Director of Finance also advised that approval has been received in respect of NDP funding for 2016.

HSI Finance Department

Audit

The Director of Finance advised that Grant Thornton have completed their field work and are currently drafting the audited financial statements.

New Board Member Induction Day

The Director of Finance & Company Secretary advised that he conducted an induction day for new Board members on 1st April 2016; Jane Darragh, David Keane and Rita Dunne were in attendance.

Sport Ireland Audit

The completed internal audit, conducted by Deloitte on behalf of Sport Ireland, had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting.

The Finance Chairman James Kennedy advised the board the audit had found ‘*no evidence of abuse or misuse of public funds*’ as claimed by one stakeholder.

The report also reported that: ‘*Financial policies and procedures are well developed at HSI. No matters of a significant nature relating to financial policies and procedures came to our attention during the course of this internal audit review*’.

The auditors also found that ‘*no issues arose in relation to the expenditure items examined as part of the audit review of expenses*’.

The report makes three significant recommendations: i) that HSI’s financial resources require strengthening; ii) that a formal risk identification and assessment process be established and iii) that HSI should make changes to its grant-awarding processes in order to be better able to withstand challenges by any stakeholder.

HSI has had a policy of expending all of its annual funding on initiatives to support the industry in what were extraordinarily challenging times for the Irish economy. However, the Board of HSI has now decided that we should build up a reserve fund of approximately 10 per cent of our income over the next four years. A formal risk register is also now in place and we have made changes to the allocation process for international hosting grants and breeding grants to reflect the recommendations of the report.

The review noted some other important and procedural points for HSI to address, all of which have either already been implemented or are currently in the process of being addressed by the board and the management of the organisation. Progress updates on these issues are contained in the report.

The report makes some points in relation to the structure of the HSI Board and the fact that it is made up of representatives of our affiliated organisations. The structure of HSI was prescribed by the Government at the foundation of the organisation to ensure buy-in from all sectors of the sport horse industry.

It is expected that the composition of the Board will be considered in the context of the Government-sponsored structural review of HSI which was recommended in the industry strategy *'Reaching New Heights'*, published in March 2015. It is expected that this will take place shortly now that the new government is in place.

James Kennedy also acknowledged the role the HSI Finance Department had played in providing information and responding to queries from Deloitte. He acknowledged that the detailed enquires carried out by Deloitte had demanded a lot of resources, particularly from the Finance Department.

The nature of the allegation made was very serious and it had been a difficult time for the organisation.

Elements of the Deloitte report were queried by the Board. On page 49 it was noted that there was an error in the star rating attributed on an International event.

A member queried the logic of including all comments made by Board members and senior staff as part of a questionnaire, as an Appendix to the report, without any conclusion being drawn about these.

James Kennedy drew attention to point 6.2 and noted the changes the Board had made to processes around the distribution of International Hosting Grants and the Breeding fund.

The Chairman reported that while the report was confidential, the CEO had sought permission from Sport Ireland to publish the report on our website, subject to the approval of the HSI Board. The Board agreed that the report should be published in full on our website with the statement from the HSI Chairman.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Committee Chairman for his report. He noted that HSI were fortunate to have such high calibre people serving on our Finance Committee and requested that the Board be kept apprised on how all issues raised in the Deloitte report are being addressed.

FEI Sport Forum – Olympic Agenda 20:20

The CEO gave a brief to the Board regarding the FEI Sports Forum, which was held in Lausanne in April. He attended the forum with Board member, Georgia Stubington, as the Chairman was unable to attend.

The CEO summarised a proposal by the FEI regarding proposed changes to Jumping, Eventing and Dressage and proposed meeting with three discipline boards to go through same.

Brian Mangan, Chair of FEI Audit & Compliance Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), joined the meeting and gave a presentation to the Board in respect of proposed changes to the rules for the three disciplines, Jumping, Eventing and Dressage.

Brian Mangan advised that equestrian sport has been downgraded from a level 3 to level 4 sport by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). This will effect funding from the IOC. This is due to equestrian sport not making sufficient impact in the global media. He also updated the board in relation to the IOC's Agenda 20:20 proposals.

He noted that one of the biggest assets the sport has is gender equality in that it is the only Olympic Sport where men and women compete against each other on an equal basis.

He advised the board that the FEI had worked closely with the IOC in relation to Olympic formats which would be more audience friendly and would provide greater opportunities for more countries to compete.

He said that while there were many aspects to the proposals, the issues which had received most attention were the reduction in the number of riders per team and the subsequent removal of the 'discard' score.

Georgia Stubington said that while there was a lot of concern in the eventing community about the reduction in the team size and the removal of the discard score her view, having attended the forum, was that the proposals were unlikely to be changed.

Formal proposals from the FEI in relation to format changes will be circulated to National Federations (NF's) in July. At that point there will be an opportunity for NF's to propose amendments. These will be considered by the FEI and a final version will be circulated before the FEI General Assembly, which takes place in November. Horse Sport Ireland will then have to decide whether to support, or not support, the proposal.

There was a further discussion about some of the proposals but overall the Board were of the view that equestrian sports continued participation in the Olympic Games had to be a top priority for the sport and the sector.

Brian Mangan also advised that the FEI is launching a new campaign called 'Two Hearts'. This is a campaign to promote equestrian sport and demonstrate the unique bond between horse and rider, the only sport with two athletes performing together as a unit.

A discussion arose in relation to the value to the sport of having a team at the Olympic Games in each discipline. The Finance Committee Chairman said he would be interested to see if there was any work done on this area internationally. It was agreed that Brian Mangan and James Kennedy would have further discussion about this to see what information is available in relation to this.

Breeding Sub-Board Report

2016 HSI Stallion Selections and Parade

A total of 34 stallions were presented for selection for the 2016 Horse Sport Ireland stallion selections which took place at Cavan Equestrian Centre on the 19th & 20th April 2016. 19 stallions were presented for selection for the Irish Draught Horse Studbook, 13 were presented for selection for the Irish Sport Horse Studbook and 2 were presented for the Irish Sport Pony Studbook. The results from the selections were listed as an Appendix to the report.

HSI Breeding Grant

At the Breeding Sub Board meeting on the 8th April it was agreed that a Breeding Grant with a fund of €125,000 for the sponsorship and support of classes at equestrian shows and events would be made available for 2016. An application process for the fund was advertised and a total of 39 applications were received. All of the applications were evaluated by the Breeding Grant Evaluation Committee that met on the 10th May 2016. A list of the allocated funds was appended to the report. The Chairman thanked Jim Beecher, Jack Murphy, Alex Deon and Barbara Hatton participating on the adjudication panel

2015 Foal Registration Statistics

A total of 4,435 foals were registered in the Irish Horse Register in 2015. Irish Sport Horse foals accounted for 3,893, Irish Draught foals for 509 and Irish Sport Ponies for 33. Comparing the registration figures to last year there was a slight drop in overall registrations by approximately 100 foals, however this drop affects the ISH foal crop only with the number of Irish Draught registered foals increasing by 100 registrations between 2014 and 2015.

HSI also issued 876 identification documents ('white books') for foals in 2015. The Director of Breeding expressed her ongoing concern that these foals were not included in a studbook as they were registered with no pedigree or with partial pedigree recorded. This white book issue was highlighted in "Reaching New Heights" and has yet to be satisfactorily addressed.

ISH Studbook Eventing Series

At their meeting on the 12th May 2016 the Breeding Sub Board decided to replace the ISH Studbook Eventing Series with a ISH Studbook Young Horse Eventing Championship for 4, 5 and 6 year old horses. Pony classes will also be included. The Championship will be held in mid-September, possibly midweek, and will have a total prize fund of €20,000.

HSI Foal Championships

Regional qualifiers for the 2016 HSI Foal Championship will be held between July and September. Foals will be permitted to enter only one Regional Qualifier but will not be required to attend the qualifier in their own region. The Final will be held at the end of September or early October at a centrally located show. The total prize fund for the Championship will be €26,000 with a budget of €4,000 being reserved to cover other costs. Applications will be sought shortly from venues/shows wishing to host the Championship.

HSI Mare Show Jumping and Eventing Championship

The 2016 HSI Mare Show Jumping and Eventing Championships will have a prize fund of €15,000. The Matron Scheme will be extended for both Championships to allow 7 year old mares with a foal registered in the IHR to compete in the 6 year old section. This year the

Mare Eventing Championship will be split into age classes for 5 and 6 year olds. Applications will be sought shortly from venues wishing to host the Show Jumping or Eventing Mare Championship.

Sport Report

Helmet Standards – Presentation, Managing Director, Roy Burek, Charles Owen

Roy Burek of Charles Owen gave a detailed presentation to the Sport Sub-Board on the current helmet safety standards, the withdrawal of EN1384 and the introduction of the VG1 standards. Roy outlined the timeline that has led to the withdrawal of EN1384. It was noted that helmets that are in circulation bearing the standard EN 1384 can still be used, should an organisation permit their use. It was noted that VG1 is not a standard but a working protocol. The VG1 standard has emanated as a collaboration from various test houses in Europe.

International Hosting Grant 2016

For 2016, it was proposed that Organising Committees and Events formally apply for the grant via an application form. The application form would be available for download and circulated to Organising Committees. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Sport-Sub Board, John Malone would Chair the Evaluation Committee and that the other members would be Affiliates representatives who did not intend to apply for funding. It was agreed that Michael Hughes, Irish Shows Association, David Abbott of AIRC, and David Lalor of the Hunting Association of Ireland would sit on the Evaluation Committee.

Director of International Marketing Report

TIE Media Day 19th April

The FEI ‘Two Hearts’ media video was played (the campaign to spread the spirit of equestrian sport and demonstrate the unique bond between horse and rider).

A media day was organised in the National Sports Campus in Abbotstown where all invited media had the opportunity to learn about and meet the potential equestrian Athletes heading to the Summer Olympic Games in Rio.

The Director of International Marketing commended the professionalism of the athletes. She also advised that the ‘promo’ video for the day has been shared 134 times, reached 88K people. The media AVE amounted to over €270,000. 7 athletes over 4 disciplines were present the Q&A was conducted by Robert Hall and the event was covered on national TV that evening.

Irish Horse Gateway

The Director of International Marketing advised that a new landing page for the Irish Horse Gateway (IHG) is in progress.

The newly arrived Irish Horse Gateway exhibition unit was shown.

Inward Buyer Programme

The Director of International Marketing advised that a reform document is in progress with regard to the Inward Buyer Programme and a decision will be made at the next International Marketing Advisory Committee meeting being held on 24th May.

Consideration was to be given for the schemes sustainability in terms of affordability if rates were made more favourable and proactively promoted. Discussion will be had with auction houses in terms of co-funding.

A survey is being carried out to determine the effect the scheme has on international buyers spending.

Korean and Chinese Market Development

The Director of International Marketing advised that the Korean and Chinese market is currently predominantly educational and knowledge sharing projects.

Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event

The Director of International Marketing advised that the IHG trade stand was at the Rolex Kentucky Three Day Event from 27th April to 1st May 2016.

The IHG Facebook page activity at the time of this event, resulted in a 12.8% increase of Facebook likes from April to May compared with a 2.9% increase from March to April 2016.

Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials

The Director of International Marketing advised that the IHG exhibited alongside TIE sponsors Gain horse feed at the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials from 4th to 8th May 2016. In a new initiative for 2016 IHG sponsored highest placed Irish Bred in the Mitsubishi Cup – this went to Katie Hancock riding Kilcandra Rambo Ray (ISH) (TIH) who won the class.

As well as social media, brand awareness, database building there where notable horse buyer requests on the back of the IHG's presence at this event.

Balmoral International

The new IHG exhibition unit was present at the Balmoral International Horse Trials from 11th to 13th May 2016. This worked in conjunction with the sponsorship of the CSI2* The Irish Horse Gateway International Stakes on Wednesday and the Sponsorship of Working Hunter Ponies on Friday.

Reaching New Heights Update

It was noted that the Knowledge Transfer Programme was being rolled out. Horse Sport Ireland staff member Michael Doherty intended to establish five groups under the programme.

The Chairman advised that a meeting should be arranged with the new Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed in relation to the implementation of the strategic plan, "Reaching New Heights". He hoped that the Minister would continue to Chair the implementation group and that a meeting of the group would be called shortly.

The HSI Scientific/Research group had met again recently and they were making progress on formulating aspects of a more scientific Breeding Programme. Dr. Donagh Berry from Teagasc, who is a member of the group, was currently finalising an evaluation of Horse Sport Ireland's current EBV model.

AOB

A copy of the HSI meetings calendar overview to be issued to Board members.

The date of the next HSI Board meeting is set for 10am on Tuesday the 12th of July.

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.