

TREC IRELAND



Tourism Related Equestrian Competitions Ireland Clg.

The Chairman
Horse Sport Ireland
1st floor, Beech House
Millenium Park, Naas
Co. Kildare, W91 TK7N

16 August 2023

Dear Sir,

Thank you for inviting our comments on the proposed changes to the current election process of the chair of each of the consultative councils- namely the Sports Advisory, the Leisure Advisory, the Breeding and Production Advisory, and the Coaching and Education Advisory Councils. These four councils provide advice and are a wide and deep source of equine and equitation knowledge for the HSI Board and help the board understand the needs and aspirations of the equestrian fraternity which they serve. Each Advisory Council chairperson is currently elected by representatives from the appropriate council affiliate members; this was set up this way to ensure that there is the possibility of an affiliate being able to communicate information and concerns via their Council's chair directly to the HSI Board. This was laid out in the Indecon Report- p38 para 2 and 3.

We feel that the current HSI directors have not made clear why they are proposing to change from a democratic process of election to one of an appointment method. It now seems highly likely that, if this proposal is adopted, the new HSI board will not have 4 members with deep insightful knowledge of the equestrian breeding sport and leisure worlds—indeed it may not have a single affiliate member on the Board.

The current HSI directors are also proposing to change the qualification requirements for prospective new appointees. Again the Indecon report foresaw the types of danger that having a lack of equestrian knowledge would bring to the HSI Board and sought to guard against it by ensuring that the “horsey knowledge and experience” would be provided via the Advisory Council Chairs and that the ministerial appointees would bring in the additional capabilities in finance and governance etc. that all Boards require. The current proposal seeks to completely eliminate this balance and now requires the Advisory Council directors to be highly versed in a range of skills (e.g. legal, financial), organization business modelling skills, and be a previous board member of another NGO (excluding HSI) besides being able to claim deep insightful experience and knowledge of each and every one of the Advisory Council's equestrian interests... quite a tall order! We feel that these requirements are best suited for the development of an executive committee rather than a board and so we are rather confused as to why such a high level of skills and knowledge is sought in non-equestrian areas.

A board of directors is responsible for governance, oversight, and major decision-making, and representing the interests of shareholders or stakeholders. We ask how such responsibilities can be delivered to the equestrian community when HSI has no voting members other than the members of its own board. We feel it would be illuminating if all the affiliates could become voting members of HSI as they would benefit from meeting with the board at general meetings. Currently, the HSI board cannot be held accountable to anyone other than the Minister her/himself and a change here would be most welcome. Alas, it is not on the cards in this proposal!

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All in all, this affiliate feels that the HSI Board should return to the Indecon Report and implement it fully. Undoubtedly the HSI Board's current proposal of appointing "Industry Directors" will allow it to pick and choose whoever it wants but we fear that this same proposal will increase the communication distance between HSI and the affiliates and their affiliate memberships to the detriment of the latter.

Yours sincerely

Frances Whooley *Judi Pheysey* *f. Bryson*

Frances, Whooley, Chairperson Judi Pheysey, Secretary Rosemarie Bryson, Treasurer
TREC Ireland

www.trecireland.com

cc

Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Ireland,
Charlie McConalogue, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine of Ireland