

Notes from Carlisle Bookmaker Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 7th June 2018

Attendees:

Molly Dingwall – General Manager, Carlisle Racecourse
Dickon White – Group Betting Director – The Jockey Club
Paul Garrity – Bookmaker
Mike Eckley – Bookmaker
Sam Bown – Bookmaker
John Clark – AGT Betting Ring Manager

Welcome

DW welcomed all attendees to the first Carlisle BLC meeting. He also introduced Molly Dingwall who was the new General Manager at the racecourse.

2018 to date, Trading Review – Carlisle only

SB opened up the trading review by stating that he attended every fixture at Carlisle. He reported that 2016/17 was better than 2017/18 for him in the Jumps season. He said that Easter fixture was still good, but the midweek fixtures suffered from poor turnover. The Flat season was better than in previous years, and Jess Glynne Music Evening was very successful. He is expecting Paloma Faith to be a successful evening also in 2018. The flat fixtures on Friday also worked well. His final comment was that the Ladies Night on the Monday evening had not been as successful as previous years.

PG added that he liked the concept of the Ladies Night on Monday. ME added that competitive races with 10/12 runners was ideal for betting purposes.

PG said that on many of the difficult EW races, many bookmakers bet Win only which he felt was poor for the ring. Could everyone be made to bet EW? DW felt that this would be difficult. All discussed the standard EW terms and DW outlined that these were now standardised across all courses. JC added that he would prefer if all bookmakers would bet EW and to the same terms on all races.

PG stated that Jess Glynne evening was his best ever at Carlisle. Jumps season was slightly disappointing but realised that the weather was poor throughout the season.

MD said that she had re-introduced trackside car parking but this needed to be pre-booked. It would be £8 for bookmakers, £10 for racegoers. This was welcomed by all attending. She also added that the season ticket would be back for the Jumps season. MD also confirmed that it was acceptable for bookmakers to drive onto site and drop equipment off but this must be completed at least one hour prior to the gates opening.

PG also asked about local newspaper offers, as he had seen Cartmel doing this successfully. Could it be done for quieter racedays? MD agreed and also outlined pricing strategy at many fixtures, which was £15 in advance, and £18 on the day. MD added that Carlisle were re-focussing on the local area, with weekly advertising in newspapers and radio. Also updating website was important.

SB also commented that he thought that the Carlisle Bell meeting was improving and liked the tradition of the meeting. ME added that it was difficult if it competed directly against a racemeeting at Newcastle.

ME commented that Carlisle had not been one of his regular courses to attend for Hills but would be attending more in the future due to a staffing restructure. He was positive about the course and added that it is a good racecourse for business. Hills have Pick one on the Rails for the Flat and Pick three on Jumps and there was a big difference between them. Saturday evening (Jess Glynne) was best ever for Carlisle.

SB asked whether Carlisle marketed the Jumps fixtures as much as Flat? MD responded with a positive, and outlined that she was a massive Jumps fan. JC added that prize money at the Jumps fixtures was very strong.

JC attended most fixtures and felt that it was a good course to work with few issues.

2018 Plans for Carlisle

MD opened by outlining pricing strategy for meetings, including Ladies Day. She reported strong sales to date for Bell and Plate day. Paloma Faith in July was selling exceptionally well and they were hoping for a similar crowd to 2017. She was hoping to create more of a feature on the start and end of the Jump season and also focus on the Flat fixtures. They would have similar fixtures in 2019 to 2018. SB asked about possible appetite for Saturday fixtures, MD responded by saying she would like them at Carlisle but they were difficult to obtain. Also keen to drive volume into the racecourse, she is planning on changing hospitality pricing to make it more accessible to everyone.

Bookmaker Numbers & Rings

There was general agreement that the current rings, and layouts worked well at Carlisle. There was no appetite to make any changes.

JC stated that Colin Dockery (Op's) had mentioned the additional pitches at far end of course, and could these be opened for Paloma Faith. All agreed that this was not required, and they would not be available for any fixtures, unless agreed by the BLC.

Daily Betting Badges

No issues with badges or badge box, all worked well. SB asked whether Carlisle would consider an annual betting badge for bookmakers, DW agreed to look into and revert. DW also stated they were looking to sell all racecourse betting badges online but the current system was not quite user-friendly enough and work continued on trying to improve it.

Marketing Fees/ Promoting the On-Course Market

All discussed the current use of marketing fee expenditure by the racecourse. DW reported that AGT were working on improving the communication of Rule 4 messaging as it was causing issues for bookmakers. Wording had now been agreed and they were going to produce a leaflet for bookmakers to use. This would then be provided to Racetech and PA announcers to use to ensure consistency.

Bookmaker Access/Car Parking

This worked well and trackside parking had been discussed earlier in meeting.

Think 21/under 18 Gambling

All agreed that this was an issue that needed serious focusing on, it was both the racecourse and bookmakers' responsibility. ME added that it was a key area that William Hill's compliance team were heavily focusing on and it was a priority issue that was not going away.

Health & Safety in the Betting Rings

Generally, not a major issue at Carlisle although MD stated she wanted to reduce the amount of rubbish visible in the betting ring. Bags were offered to all bookmakers, and should be used to assist the racecourse. JC added that keeping the ring tidy and free of obstacles greatly assisted the BRM's.

AOB

No other business. DW would produce notes and circulate shortly. MD and DW thanked everyone for their time and attendance.