

BOOKMAKER LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING – Cheltenham Racecourse

Monday 8 October 2018

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bookmakers - Dale Such, Mark Jeal, Barry Johnson, Andy Pinnington, John Hooper, Nick Daisley, Graham Thorpe, Paul White.
David Mackinnon Regional Head of Operations, Andy Collins AGT, Steve Clare JCR Betting Consultant.
Dickon White by phone.

APOLOGIES:

Robin Grossmith

MEETING NOTES

2018 / 2019 SEASON

New season highlights were explained by DM. There will be 16 race days with Gates Open as follows:

26/27 Oct 12.00; 16/17/18 Nov 10.40 (10.30 18/11); 14/15 Dec 10.10; 1 Jan 10.30; 26 Jan 11.00; 12 – 15 March 10.30; 17/18 April 12.00 & 20 May 15.30.

Raceday formats will follow last season except that to mark the WW1 Centenary several military highlights & features will take place on the Sunday of the November meeting. An additional c.2000 racegoers are anticipated that day. Centaur to feature several activities with the pitches remaining in situ.

The Hunter Chase race meeting in April retains its Friday evening spot but will be re-branded as the Cheltenham Racenight.

BETTING BADGE PURCHASE

To coincide with the start of the new season, the Bookmaker's Badge Box has been relocated to the Ticket Sales & Collection Marquee over the service road directly opposite the pedestrian entrance to the Centaur.

On non-Festival racedays, bookmakers not purchasing their DBB in advance online must now visit the Badge Box to gain access to the racecourse. DBBs bought at this location will be charged at the full multiple (unless to an Annual Member) and will therefore permit access to the racecourse for the ticket holder.

As in previous years DBBs may be purchased in advance online. The point was made that the online purchase process is not very user friendly and DW agreed to again liaise with the Business Services Dept. regarding improvements.

All agreed however, that online in advance DBB purchase was the far better option for bookmakers.

For the 2019 Festival the racecourse again intends to require all bookmakers to buy DBBs in advance online, there being no badge box in operation. All agreed that this was entirely reasonable, and that bookmakers should be well used to this by now.

With regard to gear drop off into betting rings by car, it was confirmed by DM that bookmakers could continue to do so but that all vehicles must be off site at least one hour before gates open (see above) to the public.

BOOKMAKER NUMBER & BETTING RINGS

Best Mate.

It was explained that following extensive discussion at previous BLC meetings, it has now been decided to trial an increase in the number of betting positions within the Best Mate Enclosure behind the grandstand. This was proposed by way of a New Betting Area comprising 4 positions located away from the existing 5, towards to the Eastern public entrance.

During the ensuing debate the bookmakers unanimously recommended that 3 rather than 4 new positions be introduced which was agreed by DM/DW.

This NBA will be trialled during the 2019 Festival. A number of objective & subjective measures would be used to assess the trial and it was agreed that a condition of occupying one of the new positions was that the bookmaker must provide their daily betting figures daily within 24 hours.

Lower Tatts – November Meeting

DM agreed that the 'Guinness Village' betting positions would be available for use on the Friday & Sunday in addition to their usual use on the Saturday. This to coincide with increased facilities for customers in that area. DM confirmed that for crowd flow reasons the 10 'parade ring' LT positions would continue to be unavailable on the Saturday.

Tattersalls Betting Ring

With the objective of improving the attractiveness of the betting ring for customers and bookmakers alike and further to the various discussions at preceding BLC meetings a proposal for a revised layout had been developed by Andy Collins & Terry Lang.

AC presented & explained the proposal which was positively received.

Feedback from the meeting will be incorporated by AC prior to wider consultation this winter, with Tattersalls bookmakers. The objective being an improved, revised, Tattersalls Ring for the 2019 Festival.

AMF / PROMOTING THE ONCOURSE MARKET

Bookmakers were reminded that any suggestions they had for promoting racecourse attendances and / or the betting ring should be made at any time to DM/DW.

MJ suggested a sponsored race title sponsorship to promote on-course bookmakers. DM explained that all off air TV races were already sponsored at a commercial rate, but stated that he would explore with the wider team the possibility of his proposal at another meeting.

MJ also suggested that the JCR websites could include a drop down featuring on-course bookmakers. DW agreed to pursue within JCR.

THINK 21 / REFUSING UNDER AGE BETTING

Bookmakers were reminded about their responsibilities in this regard and that the Local Authority were expected to continue their on-course bookmaker testing regime.

It was felt by the bookmakers that effective sanctions should be taken against those bookmakers habitually failing LA testing. This should include suspension. DM/DW action as appropriate.

H&S in BETTING RINGS

AC lead a discussion on the previously suggested idea of marking a yellow box at the rear of each betting position (Ring & Rails) within which the bookmaker & equipment must be accommodated. An area of 1m square was suggested. Bookmakers at the meeting were in agreement about a demarcated area but uncertain as to the extent of it. Each agreed to review with their own joint when next working and send suggestions for the size of a yellow box to SC (steve.clare@redgateconsulting.co.uk).

In addition, GT agreed to ensure the matter was fully discussed to a conclusion at the forthcoming AGT Technical Sub Committee meeting.

AOB

All bookmakers complained about the poor quality of the Wi-Fi/RDT service at this year's Festival.

It was agreed that Natalie, the JCR Wi-Fi liaison manager, would ensure a closer working relationship with RDT to reduce the likelihood of such difficulties during the 2019 Festival. Bookmakers were encouraged to notify DM on the day should a serious Wi-Fi problem that effects large areas.

The untidiness of the Rail was discussed, and DM confirmed that where required all Rails would be repainted prior to the new season.

DM further explained that in order to further improve the visual presentation, the racecourse was to install mild steel fixings to the front of each rails position so that a standard sized bookmaker's drop sign could be affixed in a neat manner via magnetic strips. The consensus was it's a positive move.

A thorough discussion ensued regarding drop sign sizes and agreement was reached on 900mm x 500mm as being the most appropriate. It was agreed as reasonable for rails and See You Then Terrace bookmakers to be required to provided such (either perspex or aluminium with magnetic tape fixings) for first use on 12 March 2019 and then thereafter. DM to notify rails bookmakers accordingly.

Earlier pitching up times were discussed. All bookmakers eventually agreed that moving the pitching up time from 2 1/2 hours before the first race to 3 hours for The Festival was not unreasonable and were prepared to accept the same.

Action point c/f from the previous meeting – ND asked about a potential waiting list for the SYTT betting area. SC/DW to answer at next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Weds 16 January 2019 - please confirm availability to SC - All