

## BOOKMAKER LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING 2019 - Cheltenham Racecourse

Wednesday 16 January 2019

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Bookmakers - Dale Such, Mark Jeal, Barry Johnson, Barry Pinnington, Nick Daisley, Robin Grossmith, Paul White.  
Cheltenham Racecourse - David Mackinnon, Dickon White, Andy Collins, Steve Clare.

### APOLOGIES:

Graham Thorpe, Andy Pinnington, John Hooper.

### MEETING NOTES

#### PROPOSED LAYOUT CHANGE TATTERSALLS RING

It was explained that the racecourse was keen to consider changes to Tattersalls Ring layout in direct response to feedback from bookmakers who had experienced a decline in trade, most notably since the redevelopment had concluded. The sole intention being to explore initiatives that would have a positive impact for bookmakers.

After detailed consideration by Andy Collins & Terry Lang a proposal had been developed and circulated for Tattersalls bookmaker feedback.

Bookmakers were thanked for the excellent number of responses to the consultation. A total of 19 written representations were made direct to the racecourse, as well as a number of phone calls to bookmakers on the BLC.

There was however, no consensus amongst those who responded. Roughly half supported the proposal with the other half opposing it.

Debate ensued about whether a reduction in bookmaker number was appropriate, as well as the proposed repositioning of the betting positions.

It was recognised by the meeting that the racecourse had acted in good faith but that there was no majority in favour. Both AC & Terry Lang were thanked for their efforts.

Accordingly however, DM stated that the current proposal would be 'parked' but that an alternative could be considered in future.

The prohibition on consumption of alcoholic drinks in the enclosure drinks discussed but DM confirmed that it would remain on the grounds of public order.

#### LOWER TATTS – Paddock Positions

The relocation of the 10 Paddock betting positions as a result of the redevelopment has unfortunately had a detrimental impact on betting turnover.

Following discussions with Paddock bookmakers in the autumn, it was agreed to trial a straightened out line of betting positions (rather than the curve which follows the parade ring) at the December meeting.

Feedback from bookmakers was that the trial did result in a margin gain for a minority, but not sufficient to justify a permanent change.

It was recognised that the racecourse had considered a number of alternatives to improve the situation but for a number of reasons none was suitable.

It was agreed that there was no obvious answer at present, but that should any new option to improve the situation for all ten betting positions present itself it would be given consideration.

#### FESTIVAL ARRANGEMENTS

Gates open 10.30 daily (bookmakers may have vehicular access for kit drops before 9.30), with the last race at 17.30.

As was agreed at the last BLC pitch in will be 3 hours before the first race.

ICE will again be available to bookmakers for banking services. DM will establish if next day cash will be available to bookmakers, if required, upon demand.

As per previous years all bookmakers are asked for their cooperation in the advance online purchase of betting badges and admission badges. These are available now (follow the link on the AGT website). Betting badges for Gold Cup day are sold at a multiple of the last available public price based on being sold out in 2018.

A suggestion was made that the racecourse could charge bookmakers a multiple of the reduced advance price, or indeed a lower multiple. It was explained that following a similar suggestion last year he had explored the possibility of such with the finance team but the reduction in revenue would be too great at the current time. It was re-iterated though the current 'sold out price' initiative would continue.

Bookmakers car parking arrangements will be the same as previous years.

The trial of three additional positions behind the stand in Best Mate will take place.

Although the restriction on the consumption of alcoholic drinks will remain, public access to Best Mate betting ring will be easier than in 2018. There will again be a temporary public stand in Best Mate.

## WIFI / RDT

Feedback from bookmakers was that the RDT served bookmakers continue to suffer unacceptable service breakdowns.

Much work had been done by the JCR IT team who are convinced that the problem is not caused by the racecourse WIFI. All other partners (including Elite) use the racecourse WIFI network without detriment.

Indeed, there is nothing more that can be done to the WIFI network by the IT team.

Accordingly, it has been agreed that RDT will be allowed to set up their own bookmaker only network w.e.f. the next race meeting.

## RAILS SIGNAGE

As agreed at the last BLC the rails will be equipped with steel panels to which bookmakers will be expected to affix their 900 x 500 sized 'hang' boards by way of a self-adhesive magnetic strip.

AC will work on a trial run in advance of The Festival.

It is expected that all Rails bookmakers will be in compliance in March.

## EQUIPMENT BOUNDARY

The 1.4m boundary line for equipment behind the Rails was working well and had been extended to Tattersalls and indeed all JCR racecourses.

The boundary line will be marked in Tattersalls on day 1 of The Festival – AC.

## THINK 2! / Under Age Gambling

All bookmakers were reminded of their responsibilities in this regard, and had been provided with a magnetic notice strip by the FRB.

A reminder to display this notice will be included in the pre-Festival operations note to bookmakers – AC.

## AOB

## TRACKING

Bookmakers were asked their views on the use of price tracking facility made available by both RDT & Elite.

Almost all agreed that the way it was often used was very bad for customer service creating uncertainty and misunderstanding in prices laid.

Concerns were raised about its potential impact on the SP; sheer frequency of price changes; prices being driven from off course; the facility being operated by solus staff who were not in control of or aware of the numerous price changes.  
Further consideration will be given to this aspect by JCR & the RCA.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 21 May 2019