

## BOOKMAKER LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING 2019 - Newbury Racecourse

Tuesday 22 January 2019

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Bookmakers – Nigel Spencer, Alan Stadler, Gerry Chesneaux, Tony Morris, David Hughes.  
Newbury Racecourse – Lucy Hayes, Andrew Boardley, Steve Clare.

### MEETING NOTES

#### ROLE OF THE BLC

The six bookmakers, two representatives from each betting ring, were thanked for applying and for attending the meeting.

The BLC will typically meet annually and is intended to be an informal communication channel between bookmakers and the racecourse.

#### TRADING UPDATE

Each bookmaker provided brief feedback of their trading experiences at Newbury Racecourse.

There was a range of feedback, but each was complimentary about the racecourse and its general 'bookmaker friendliness'. All enjoyed attending racing at Newbury.

It was reported that the bookmaker's levels of turnover and profit on Flat (either flat or a slight decline) race meetings had performed much better than NH (a more noticeable decline). This mirrored public attendances which were gradually declining when 2018 was compared to the previous year. Midweek fixtures were seen as more of a challenge than the major racedays which held up very well.

A number of factors negatively impacted attendances – The Football World Cup, Royal Wedding, FA Cup and the ongoing redevelopment works. None of these will have an impact this year.

Anecdotally bookmakers felt that there were fewer visitors from Wales to the racecourse than in previous years.

Whilst bookmakers understood the reason for one enclosure racedays, they reported that the Grandstand (Tattersalls & Lower Tattersalls) bookmakers were impacted to a greater degree than their colleagues on the Rails, especially if the Grandstand was not open.

Some bookmakers felt that the concert nights didn't always bring 'punters' in, the older age profile of the act was seen as important to betting turnover. The racecourse was asked to consider a lower badge fee in these circumstances.

Bookmakers asked for more 7 & 8 race cards!

## OPERATIONS

The racecourse has invested significantly in marketing and promotional plans for 2019, aimed at making the big days bigger, whilst also developing activity to improve public attendance on other days too. For example, up to March there is a Grandstand Enclosure public admission ticket available for £15. A strategy has been developed to engage local residents with special admission offers. The four summer evening fixtures will all operate as 'one enclosure', but the Grandstand facilities will be open as usual.

There is a renewed focus on continuing to improve the quality of racing; Keith Otterson has been appointed as The Clerk of the Course with particular race planning responsibilities.

There will be two concert nights in 2019 – Madness in August and Tom Jones on 14 July. Both these were seen as being likely to attract older racegoer who would be more likely to want to enjoy the racing (and betting!) before the concert.

The racecourse is aware of the impact on the Lower Tatts betting ring on concert days and had been able to introduce a number of modifications which allowed a slight increase in the number of bookmakers able to bet on these days and other improvements. However, that betting ring will unfortunately still be reduced in size, and will not be able to bet on the last race due to the public safety measures and space restrictions on concert racedays. The racecourse will continue to consider ways to mitigate this impact.

Lower tatts bookmakers asked the racecourse to consider a reduction in their badge prices on concert days.

Bookmakers were asked their views online bookmaker badge sales – Newbury is considering the introduction in the future (note – not the near future). Consensus was it was a good idea.

It was suggested that the racecourse might consider again the possibility of a Family Raceday.

## REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The main redevelopment has been virtually completed and racegoers will be able to enjoy the full benefit this season.

There were no immediate plans to introduce any New Betting Areas, but such continue to be under review.

AOB

Bookmakers may have vehicular access to the betting rings to drop off their gear up to 30 minutes before Gates Open.

A list of Gates Open times will be posted on the AGT website – LH.

Bookmakers asked if occasional use anchor points could be cleaned of mud / debris prior to the bigger race meetings.

In an effort to improve customer service bookmakers asked if there could be an improvement in the R4 announcements (inc. a pre-announcement to warn that there might be a R4), and a strapline CCTV message for a period of time after the race.

Bookmakers were very supportive of the racecourse U18 wristbands which would again be used this year and asked if they could have a notification of that day's colour.

The policy regarding bookmakers that decide to leave early was confirmed in that they should ensure that sufficient funds are left with the BRM to cover their liability for paid out bets.

It was confirmed that there was no prohibition on bookmakers betting in running during races but that they may only do so from their betting position as set out the Bookmaker's Licence with the Racecourse. It is not permissible for them to do it from elsewhere e.g. grandstand steps etc.

It was confirmed that Britbet mobile couriers would not operate within Existing Betting Areas.

Bookmakers asked if there could be some PA messages to notify the public where the betting rings were located, and some mention of bookmakers & betting areas on the Newbury website.

It was confirmed that as a minimum bookmakers were to comply with the racecourse dress code.

A useful discussion took place about Price Tracking and the software for such offered by Elite & RDT.

