

Musselburgh Local Joint Pitch Council

Minutes of the 22nd meeting held at Musselburgh Racecourse on Wednesday 9 November 2005

In attendance:-

Chair and secretary Haig Jenkinson, Betting Ring Manager
 Bill Farnsworth, Douglas Kennedy Musselburgh Executive
 James Cameron, Rails Bookmakers Assoc.
 Peter Collins, East of Scotland Bookmakers Assoc.

1 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

BF told Council that he had not yet made an application to the Levy Board for betting area approval for the paddock area of the racecourse and, currently, did not see this as a high priority in event of other issues surrounding the development of the racecourse.

The minutes were approved and signed.

2 Future LJPC Minutes

HJ told Council that it had been decided by NJPC Council Members, who included representatives of the RCA, RBA and NAB, that, with immediate effect, future minutes from all LJPC meetings would be posted on the NJPC website and thus available to all to view in their entirety.

HJ indicated that as approval of minutes was not actually official until convening the following meeting of the LJPC he would furnish the minutes to LJPC members at the earliest opportunity in order that he could seek "approval" of the minutes from members prior to posting on the website.

3 AW Update

BF told Council that he expected the results of the planning application for the AW track by the end of 2005. If the application proved successful it was intended that work on the circuit would start in the spring of 2006 – with a 12 month construction timetable. BF indicated that, subject to BHB approval, he would seek to transfer the normal turf Flat fixtures temporarily onto the AW circuit in the 2007 season only – giving the turf track an opportunity to recover from the work carried out previously. The National Hunt racing 2007/2008 season would resume on the turf track. While, again subject to fixture approval, the first true AW fixtures would begin September 2007. It is anticipated that AW fixtures under floodlighting would continue throughout the winter until March.

BF would very much like the opportunity to race on the AW on consecutive days. The preferred option being Thursdays and Fridays.

In response to a question regarding bookmaker lists, HJ commented that no decision had yet been made by the NJPC regarding the AW pitches and their allocation. This decision could be taken by the NJPC as, and when, Musselburgh Executive had obtained full planning permission and an understanding of how many fixtures were anticipated had been obtained. The mechanism of allocating AW pitches was decided by the NJPC on a racecourse-by-racecourse basis depending on the particular circumstances surrounding each venue.

One course of action the NJPC could take would be to auction the pitches and monies raised from the sale, less NJPC commission, would be ring fenced for Musselburgh betting ring improvements approved by the LJPC.

BF objected to the fact that the NJPC would take 6% of any sale proceeds should the NJPC decide on a sale of AW pitches. BF asked what the NJPC did with money from the sale of pitches. HJ told BF the income generated for the NJPC to operate came essentially from daily pitch administration fees and auction fees.

BF further objected to the fact that any proceeds raised from a potential sale were only for ring improvements. BF felt that as it was Musselburgh Executive that were creating the new AW product through a £10 million investment then they, Musselburgh Executive, should benefit directly from any monies raised by the sale of pitches should this occur to be spent as they deemed appropriate.

4 Designated Numbers 2006

HJ had previously furnished members with attendance records and opt-in / opt-out details together with crowd figures for fixtures in 2005.

PC provided members with dates supplied by Edinburgh Council with regard to local holidays. PC indicated he was mainly of the opinion that while the ongoing OFT investigation regarding setting of Designated Numbers continued then the majority of the Tattersalls numbers should stay the same unless BF had good reasons for changing them based on his expectations of particular fixtures.

BF commented that on the “big” days feedback from punters had been that they would like a couple of bookmakers on the grass area near the marquees set up on the grandstand side of the racecourse. Following lengthy discussion, Council agreed that on the days where they set the designated number at its maximum of 43 the pitch layout on these days would be 40 in the main ring (2 lines of 20), 2 on the grass outside the marquees and 1 in centre of course. Obviously, if maximum attendance was not achieved there was no obligation for bookmakers to take up any of the “temporary” positions and bookmakers would, as always, be free to select from all of the positions available on a seniority basis.

The Council unanimously agreed the Tattersalls numbers. Essentially there were few changes. New fixtures on Thursday 4 May and Friday 5 May were set at 35 and 30 respectively and the new fixture on Thursday 17 August is set at 43. BF is promoting this as a “Ladies Night” and expects this to prove a well attended meeting. The fixture on Sunday 8 October 2006 is a “regional racing” meeting, unlike the corresponding fixture in 2005, and the number is reduced to 30. On the jumps Council agreed that the numbers on Sunday 5 Feb should increase to 40 (from 35), this meeting is sponsored for the first time by John Smiths and BF expects a crowd in the region of 4-5,000.

JC told Council that he wanted to raise the current designated number of 5 on the rails to 7 on all days.

PC objected arguing that since the racecourse executive had moved to one enclosure at the beginning of 2005 the Rails had become busier, not through new additional turnover overall, but due to the changes implemented by the management and this had proved detrimental to the bookmakers operating in Tattersalls.

BF commented that he too felt that the Rails bookmakers had been the main beneficiary of the one enclosure policy and that to increase numbers on the back of this would be unfair.

JC disagreed indicating that he sought an increase in the number on the Rails to increase competition offered to Tattersalls bookmakers.

Asked by BF if an increase in numbers on the Rails would harm Tattersalls, JC commented that this was not his concern and if the LJPC did not support his proposal he would appeal the decision.

BF concluded that he could not support an increase in bookmaker numbers on the Rails while crowd attendances at the racecourse remained flat and overall demand for bookmakers pitches at Musselburgh continued to prove weak.

BF also commented that now that the racecourse had moved to one enclosure he did not see the sense in having two separate lists and believed an integration of the Rails and Tattersalls lists was the sensible way forward. Furthermore, BF indicated that he would not wish to see separate Rails and Tattersalls lists at the future AW circuit when it was set up.

Rails numbers remains at 5 all days.

5 AOB

BF told Council that from 1 January 2006 admission prices would be increased from £13 to £15 at all meetings, with the exception of Saturday's, where admission will remain unchanged at £20. PC objected strongly to the increase in charges telling BF that continually increasing admission charges would drive customers, including bookmakers, away.

PC asked whether some sort of discount season ticket for bookmakers and their staff could be considered along the lines of that provided at Kelso.

DK told Council that a scheme was set up in the past and the take up by bookmakers was extremely poor. However, DK told Council that anyone purchasing an annual members badge was making a substantial saving of almost 50% on normal admission prices should they attend all the racemeetings Furthermore, the racecourse would continue to heavily promote Family Tickets on certain days via their association with various local and national newspapers.

MUSSELBURGH DESIGNATED NUMBERS FOR 2006

Rails:

5 All meetings

Tattersalls (Flat)

30 – 5 May, 26 Jun, 2 Aug, 31 Aug, 8 Oct, 3 Nov

35 – 31 Mar, 4 May, 10 Jul, 24 Aug

40 – 16 Apr, 22 May, 3 Jul, 3 Aug, 24 Sep

43 – 3 Jun, 10 Jun, 17 Aug

Tattersalls (NH)

30 – 6 Jan, 20 Jan, 15 Feb, 20 Dec

35 – 24 Nov, 10 Dec

40 – 5 Feb, 30 Dec