

Sedgefield Local Joint Pitch Council

Minutes of the meeting held at Newcastle Racecourse on Wednesday 2 November 2005

In attendance:-

Chair and secretary Haig Jenkinson, Betting Ring Manager
 Jim Allen, General Manager Sedgefield Racecourse
 Jon Ridley, Northern BPA

1 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

On the issue of an annual car parking fee for those wishing to use the trackside car parking JA indicated that events had moved on somewhat from our previous meeting in that the future of this trackside location for car parking was currently under discussion at board level at Northern Racing. JA indicated that due to pressure of space in the current hospitality and bar areas throughout the stadium consideration was being given to expanding these facilities in the trackside car park area by means of either a fixed or a temporary structure. JA understood Northern Racing would make a firm decision in the next few weeks.

Having regard to bookmakers having their own dedicated car park site close to the ring, JA commented that pressures from various groups who worked / provided services at the racecourse meant he could not envisage this. However, he reiterated previous comments that all bookmakers were welcome to drive into the betting ring to drop off equipment before proceeding to public car parking spaces as long as this was done before the gates were opened to members of the public. This was normally 2 hours before the first race. JA asked that for Health and Safety reasons bookmakers observe this rule strictly.

Finally on car parking, JA commented that Northern Racing were currently in negotiation to purchase additional ground space which, if successful, would increase the number of parking spaces available.

JR asked JA if any progress on the timings of the races at the March racemeeting, when the Cheltenham Festival fixtures take place, had been made. JA indicated Sedgefield's Clerk of the Course was currently in discussions with the BHB regarding the timing of the races in order to facilitate the best possible opportunity for betting turnover on Sedgefield's races.

JA told Council that repairs to the roving camera would be difficult and costly and, at this time, he did not envisage this piece of equipment coming back into service.

JA told JR that sponsorship of the toilet areas which had in the past advertised Betfair and the Tote was available at the cost of £5 per frame per fixture.

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 Grandstand Access – Betting Ring Area

JA told Council that new Licensing Regulations meant that the Fire Authority now had a say in the licensing of all stadia, including racecourses, open to the public.

To this end, the Fire Authority had confirmed that in order for Sedgefield to comply with the new regulations they would have to increase access points in the Pavilion Grandstand.

This will require the installation of either 2 wide entrances, or 3 narrower entrances, from the grandstand directly into the betting ring. JA indicated this work would have to be completed in January 2006 and Northern Racing's planner / surveyor was currently drawing up plans.

The impact on the betting ring will mean the removal and resiting of some, if not all, of the current nine anchorage positions in the betting ring currently set along the wall of the grandstand.

Council members agreed to meet at Sedgefield Racecourse on 22 November (2 hours prior to the first race) in order that a more detailed assessment of possible solutions to the resiting of the bookmakers pitches can be considered.

4 Designated Numbers 2006

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

JR commented that although he had been anxious in previous years to try to hold the bookmaker sponsored race fixture at the maximum number of 28 in an effort to give everyone who contributed to sponsorship an opportunity to bet on the bookmaker sponsored day he felt that it was becoming increasingly difficult to justify this number based on turnover in the ring and crowd attendances and he reluctantly felt Council members should revert to the normal midweek fixture level of 26 in Tattersalls on Tuesday 29 August 2006. Council agreed unanimously to JR's proposal.

It was agreed unanimously that the new fixture on Friday 21 April will be 26 Tatts, 8 Silver Ring, the new fixture on Wednesday 7 June will be 26 Tatts, 6 Silver and the new fixture on Tuesday 12 December will be 26 Tatts, 4 Silver.

Further, Council accepted that in 2005 they had underestimated the popularity of the Bank Holiday Fixture in early May, particularly in the Silver Ring, where JA told Council 1517 customers had attended. Council unanimously agreed to increase the number at this fixture from 4 to 8 in the Silver Ring. Tattersalls will be 26.

Council voted unanimously to keep designated numbers for the remaining 2006 fixtures in line with their counterpart in 2005.

Designated Numbers for 2006 is attached.

5 AOB

JA thanked JR and the Tatts bookmakers for the race sponsorship they provided at Sedgefield and hoped it would continue in the future.

JR indicated this sponsorship had run successfully for many years and he had no reason to doubt that this would continue to be ongoing.

JR told JA that, in similar vein to last year, he felt that Sedgefield's pricing structure continued to be excessive. JR compared the costs for admittance to Sedgefield and Newcastle in his argument. He further felt that JA needed to consider some concessionary pricing for the Silver Ring area.

JA told Council that they were still hopeful of going ahead with the building of an AW track at Sedgefield. Negotiations with the local Council regarding floodlighting options for an AW track were ongoing at present.

JA indicated that bookmaker umbrellas continued to prove troublesome to the viewing of races. HJ told JA that if it was raining bookmakers would not be asked to lower umbrellas but vigilance would continue to prevail when umbrellas ought to be lowered.

Sedgefield Designated Numbers 2006

Tattersalls

28	14 Mar, 26 Dec
26	All other days

Silver Ring

20	26 Dec
8	17 Apr, 21 Apr, 1 May, 24 May
6	14 Mar, 7 June, 11 Aug, 29 Aug
4	All other days