

BHRC AGM 2014
at Days Inn, Wetherby - Sunday 30th November 2014

Present: Gordon Garnett (Chairman), Barry Delaney (Vice Chairman), Stella Havard (Steward), Fred Hay (Steward), Jackie Maguire (Steward), Bret Strickland (Steward), Dawn Forrest (Steward), Robert Thompson (Regional Steward), Alan Muirhead (Regional Steward), Roland Pugh (Regional Steward) Jim Kemp (SHRC/CW), Craig Stevenson (MFDA), David Edwards (TTC), Anthony Fettah (YHR), Lee Price (WWHRA), Michael O'Mahony (CCB), Les Coward (EVHRA), Jason Podmore (MHRC), Bob Lee (HHA), Richard Wigham (NESA)
Roy Sheedy (candidate), Lisa Knott (candidate), Michelle Strickland, Wesley Jones, Michael Lord, Sheelagh Lord, Amanda Stanley, Peter Davison, William Laidler, William Laidler Jnr, Kirsty Lee (Company Secretary), Helen Tyler (Minutes), Dave Walsh (Accountant)

Apologies: Huw Evans

The Vice Chairman opened the meeting and asked members to peruse the minutes from 2013. The Vice Chairman requested that all persons present switch off their mobile phones.

Minutes proposed by Mr Kemp, seconded by Mr Hay.

Minutes carried

Mr Walsh presented the accounts. Mr Walsh explained that the licence fee income was due to people paying licences early, not necessarily an increase or decrease in numbers. The fines had been split to show tracks fines separately from those levied by the BHRC. In 2013 there had only been invoices for five issues of the Calendar, so 2014 figures showed for seven issues plus an entry form booklet, which accounted for the increase in print and posting costs. The surplus of the Sire Stakes money is put into a fund which sits on the balance sheet and is to be paid out in future years. The integrity shows more or less even, with a slight profit. The wages are down due to reduced hours, the light and heat decrease reflects less operating hours. Postage has increased as it does every year, also the banking fees as the free banking period has ended. Through the FSB the BHRC could now get free banking with Co Op which would be explored in the New Year. Stewards expenses had been split into Regional and BHRC Stewards, and Conference expenses had been split from Chairman's expenses to detail the costs of conferences, most of which come from registration fees and travelling costs. The accountancy fees had increased as there had been more work carried out due to staff shortages in the office. Mr Walsh requested any questions on the accounts.

Mr Podmore questioned whether the Prakas money was shown.

The Chairman, Gordon Garnett, entered the meeting

Mr Wigham questioned whether clubs and associations get a copy of the accounts

The Secretary replied that they had been distributed weeks ago via email and would be printed in the Calendar after they had been signed off at the AGM.

Mr Walsh ran through the balance sheet, the debtors and creditors, who had been mostly paid now. The Prakas main income was entries and interest, there had been a very short investment and the prize money paid out. Mr Walsh questioned whether BHRC supported the Prakas by 50% as other races.

The Secretary replied no not for the Prakas just for the Sire Stakes.

Mr Walsh explained that 20% of the interest gained has to be paid in Corporation Tax, the balance sheet shows what is owed to the BHRC to cover what they have paid out on behalf of the Prakas. The balance I what is invested with HSBC earning the best of what it can in a short term bond.

Mr Podmore questioned why it was in a short term investment.

The Chairman explained that there was always a possibility the benefactor could ask for the money back so it should be easily accessible. Other options such as buying property had been explored, he had looked at two houses, one fell through and the other couldn't be purchased due to the seller not wanting to sell to investors. The Chairman advised that he felt the money should be in bricks and mortar.

Mr Podmore questioned how long the BHRC had had the funds.

Mr McNally replied since 1983.

Mr Podmore questioned when it was known that it could be invested in a house.

The Chairman replied that the fund can be invested for the benefit of Harness Racing, interest rates are low at present but have been higher and realised better returns.

Mr Kemp stated that the money was gifted for the furtherance of trotting not Harness Racing, there is nothing in writing that says BHRC can touch it for anything else.

The Chairman apologised and stated he was corrected.

The Vice Chairman explained that there were never restrictions on what the fund should be invested in, the proceeds were for the enhancement of trotting, specifically British bred.

Mr Kemp stated that he would like to see the original documents.

The Vice Chairman replied that it was never documented, there was negotiation between Dr McKenzie and Mr Tom Menzies, neither of whom were present to ask. The fund is intact and is being used to enhance trotting.

Mr Podmore questioned whether there was authority to take the money out and raise money.

The Chairman replied that he had not seen anything written down and if anything existed the office had not seen it.

The Secretary confirmed that no such information existed in the BHRC office.

The Chairman stated that the BHRC have held the money in trust, they have invested the money. If the BHRC had bought property it would be bringing better money in, he felt it prudent as trustees for the BHRC to buy a house, it would not be frittered away if invested.

Mr Laidler questioned if the money has been invested since 1983 where had the investment gone.

The Chairman replied that it had been paid out every year in prize money.

Mr Laidler stated that he never known many Prakas races.

Mr Kemp stated that he would like to know what can be done with the fund, could it be used to buy a house.

Mr McNally stated that the new administration would have something to bring in later, the item was important to them.

The Chairman asked for any more questions.

Members had no questions

Accounts proposed by the Vice Chairman, second by Mr Hay.

Accounts adopted.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman addressed the room with his annual report, which covered form guides, information from IHRC, handicapping. The Chairman informed members that the BHRC could not discuss the Employment Tribunal due to confidentiality clauses, the case had been settled but the BHRC could not answer questions. The Chairman stated that the sport was good value and could still go forward, 2014 had been an encouraging year. The Chairman requested questions.

Mr Fettah stated that members were told at the EGM that they would be given an idea of costs.

The Chairman replied that all the costs were not yet in, when they are members will get full details.

Election of Stewards

Mr Stevenson stated that it was in the constitution that the Chairman should be the first election.

The Chairman replied that this procedure had always been followed and he suggested the meeting proceed.

Mr Wigham stated that it was in the constitution and under the Companies act that the Chairman should be first, the company had been breaking rules for 25 years.

The Secretary requested respectfully that Mr Wigham show respect for the top table and keep his tone respectful for the meeting.

The Chairman questioned what involvement Mr Wigham had in Harness Racing.

Mr Wigham replied that his involvement went back years, not as an owner, trainer or driver but he had been asked to help Harness Racing which he was doing and he wanted to see a new Hard Track.

Mr McNally proposed that the meeting proceed with the usual format.

The Chairman requested members vote on the format.

Members unanimously voted to proceed with the established format

The Chairman requested each person offering themselves for election speak to the meeting.

Miss Forrest stated that most people in the sport know her, she had been involved for a lot of years, had integrity and believed what would be would be.

Mr Hay stated that over the years he had attended fixtures, come through the SHRC and moved to be a BHRC Steward. He felt he had helped BHRC in enquiries and hoped he had brought something to the table and would like to continue.

Mrs Maguire stated that she had been involved for some 35 years, had been elected on the same time as Miss Forrest, she had been involved in integrity, wanted to see all people race on a level and fair playing field. Mrs Maguire stated that she felt she was a fair person, she had sat on enquiries and felt that she was approachable.

The Vice Chairman questioned whether Mr Hay was the only member of the Council from Scotland.

Mr Hay confirmed yes.

The Vice Chairman stated that apart from the Regional Steward, Mr Muirhead, there wouldn't be a member of Council for Scotland.

Mr Wigham suggested that the same question should be put to Miss Forrest due to North East representation.

Mr Stevenson stated that if Mr Hay or Miss Forrest were not re-elected there would be no one on the Council north of Manchester.

Mrs Maguire stated that she did not feel this was always relevant as anyone can converse now.

Mr Stevenson questioned whether the Council saw any racing from Scotland.

Mrs Maguire conceded that was a fair point.

Miss Knott stated that she was involved in the sport as she had a love for it, her father was an owner and driver. She felt she was a fair person, approachable and she would like to assist the sport as she felt it needed help.

Mr Podmore stated that his main aim was change, he had been involved for years, did not miss any meetings of the Committee, but felt that the fun had gone out of the job and would like to see it put back, although he did not intend to be involved in stewarding on race days he did intend to be as fully involved as possible.

Mr Kemp questioned how Mr Podmore would feel if he had to sit on enquiries as a BHRC Steward with other drivers he competes with.

Mr Podmore replied that he felt he had common sense and was fair and could bring a could view from the drivers point.

Mrs Maguire stated that Miss Knott had not mentioned her background in law.

Miss Knott stated that she had practised in law but now worked in mental health. She had done criminal defence for over 20 years and been self-employed.

The Chairman questioned whether Miss Knott was LLB.

Miss Knott replied no she did not practice as a solicitor.

The Vice Chairman requested an explanation.

The Chairman replied that he wanted to enquire if Miss Knott was a Batchelor of Law.

Votes cast and counted

The Chairman advised members that the elections were for three positions. The votes results in reverse order:

Miss Dawn Forrest -	7 votes
Mr Jason Podmore -	9 votes
Miss Lisa Knott -	11 votes
Mr Fred Hay -	18 votes
Mrs Jackie Maguire -	19 votes

The Chairman stated that therefore the three elected officials would be Miss Knott, Mr Hay and Mrs Maguire. The Chairman welcomed Miss Knott as a new official to the BHRC.

Mr Podmore congratulated Miss Knott on her election.

Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chairman informed members that Mr Delaney and himself would not be offering themselves for re-election as Vice Chairman or Chairman and as such he felt Mr McNally should speak to the room.

Mr Stevenson questioned whether as Mr Delaney was resigning from the position of Vice Chairman he intended to stay as a Steward.

Mr Hay stated that he would like to offer thanks to Mr Garnett for the number of years he had served as Chair and thank him for all he had done for the BHRC. The feeling from fellow Directors was that he should be kept a post within the BHRC on integrity and would propose that issue go forward to a vote if Mr Garnett was willing.

Mr Garnett replied that he would like to consider the issue and discuss it further with the Council. He had retired in August and gone into a new employment position which would not allow him to devote as much time to the BHRC, although he intended to be as helpful to the BHRC as possible and to the new Chairman and Vice Chairman and the rest of the team as he could.

Mr McNally thanked all those in attendance as he felt this had been a very civilised AGM. Mr McNally thanked Mr Delaney for the work and dedication he had given to the BHRC. He had studied those in positions and felt if he could bring what Mr Delaney brought to the BHRC, mostly dignity, he would like to carry on and bring that. It was nice to know that both would be available for help. Mr McNally stated that a strong part of his manifesto had been that he felt the integrity fund was spent wrongly and should be done differently, but he had learnt the lesson that this was not the case, it had been hammered home to him that the integrity fee should not be touched, if anything it should be enhanced. This was the small man's safety net in the sport, it gave them a level playing field. For the integrity fees Mr Garnett and Mr Delaney should take credit. Mr McNally stated that he knew nothing about the position as Vice Chairman but he would try. Mr McNally wished Mr Garnett and Mr Delaney well with their horse in the future, Mr McNally informed members that himself and Roy had ideas to put forward once they were at the top table.

Mr Delaney thanked Mr McNally and stated that he was still a BHRC Steward so would be around for a while, and felt that the new team would be very successful.

Mr Sheedy thanked Mr Garnett and Mr Delaney for all their hard work over the last nine years and also the licence holders that had attended meetings over the last few weeks to show support which was very much appreciated. Good ideas and bad ideas had been put forward, all of which would be looked into. Mr Sheedy stated that there was a chance today to go forward, have a new start, a new time to pull together, work towards promotion and integrity and the good of the sport. Members should make the best of what the sport had, the BHRC had issues which needed to be discussed but with help he felt that he could get the sport to go forward.

Mr Garnett thanked the Secretary and Mrs Tyler for all their help and all those in the sport. He felt there was still work to be done in which he would be pleased to assist, under what role he wasn't sure but he would have discussions.

Regional Stewards

Mr Garnett stated that the Regional Stewards were appointed by the Council and then admitted for voting rights within the Committee. Mr Garnett felt the positions did not need re-appointing.

The Secretary suggested that the process should be followed.

Mr Thompson confirmed that he would be happy to be the Regional Steward for England for the next 12 months.

Mr Pugh confirmed that he was willing to continue in his role.

NESA

Mr Wigham requested that the item be left as NESA were not in the position to provide information yet.

Letter from Bill Hutchison

Mr Garnett read out a letter from Mr Bill Hutchison.