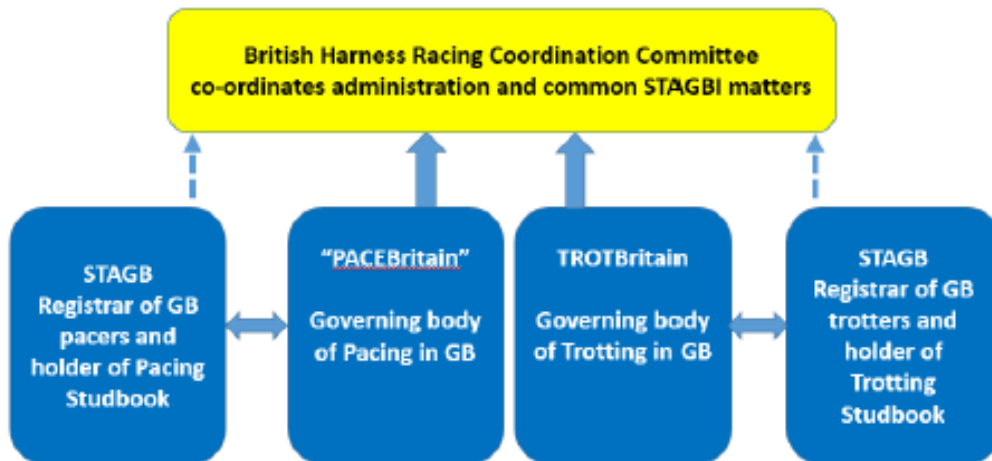


BHRC and TrotBritain

Back in 2015 TrotBritain contacted the BHRC Council regarding trotting racing followed by formalising matters with a request to the BHRC to 'move the governance of trotting to TrotBritain'. Whilst discussing and considering this request the Council of the BHRC felt that the best way forward would be for both parties to meet to discuss the set-up, role and aims of each organisation and to find a way forward.

The idea put forward from TrotBritain and posted to their Facebook page:



This is our vision for a future Britain in which the two sports of harness racing flourish separately and jointly.

We say *two sports* because we are part of Europe. Britain and Ireland aside, the rest of Europe treats pacing as an activity whose existence is to be reluctantly acknowledged, but not in any way encouraged or supported. In fact a governing body which organises pacing races cannot be a member of the European Trotting Union, even if it also organises trotting races.

Of course we are also part of the English-speaking world, where, as in North America and Australasia, pacing dominates what is regarded as the *single sport* of harness racing.

Whatever one's attitude to their feelings about pacing, for TROTBritain, the reality of being part of Europe trumps. We will undoubtedly have full UET support in making the case to both the UK and international authorities that in the European context separate governing bodies for pacing and trotting are appropriate.

We very much hope that the BHRC will join us in implementing this vision, seeing it as a positive basis for both sports to move forward in maximum harmony, finally putting the unhappy past behind us.

Since TROTBritain was formed in November 1993 to give trotting a stronger voice, we have struggled to achieve an understanding with the BHRC that would enable us to take responsibility for trotting, while maintaining the formal independence that is necessary for being admitted to the UET. The time has come to accept that a body necessarily and democratically dominated by pacing interests will find this an unattractive prospect. We must therefore become the governing body of the sport of trotting, leaving a reformed BHRC to run the sport of pacing. (We have no wish to interfere in their internal affairs, but feel the term 'harness racing' would be best replaced by 'pacing'.)

It should be clear from the diagram that the intention is that the two bodies would coordinate administration to the maximum extent possible. Both the financial money and time burdens on individual licence holders must be minimised by co-ordinated administration, proportionately financed. Issues where conflict may arise need to be resolved by agreement between two equal partners.

In order to become the governing body TROTBritain will need to upgrade itself in a number of ways, but it is likely to remain as an association, operating primarily through social media networking with meetings where necessary.

It will be necessary to call on those who endorse this vision to support us financially, as well as politically. Rest assured that there will be no question of discriminating against those who wish to own, train or drive pacers. But from now on it will be a requirement of being a full TROTBritain member that one supports this movement for independence.

If you support our aim please 'like' this post. If you wish to become a full member of TROTBritain send an email to trotbritain@gmail.com with YES as the subject heading. Include your name details in the message if these are not clear or correct in the email address.

BHRC Email to TrotBritain 16th March 2015:

Dear All,

The BHRC would like to invite delegates from Trot Britain to a meeting to discuss the future of Harness Racing within the UK and the format of the Roosevelt and Prakas Trots. We would suggest that the meeting be held at BHRC Office, Goole with weekdays being preferable. If you could advise please at your earliest convenience of your availability and who will be in attendance, the BHRC will make arrangements for the same number of delegates to attend on their behalf.

Kind regards
Kirsty Lee
BHRC Secretary

TrotBritain Email Reply to BHRC 31st March 2015:

Dear Kirsty

Thank you for the invitation which we are pleased to accept,

In order to make such a meeting productive it will be necessary to have a very clear and agreed agenda and this should be established in writing by email in the coming weeks.

From TROTBritain's point of view it will not be useful to have an 'open-ended discussion of the way forward'. We have sent a document which incorporates our future intentions, developed after two decades of experience, thought and consultation. What such a meeting can establish is the extent to which the BHRC intends to facilitate their implementation.

Assuming agreement to the formation of a governing body for pacing, we can proceed to discussions of how the joint British Harness Racing Co-ordination Committee can establish arrangements that will benefit both sports and all licence holders by minimising administrative expenses and workloads.

We are well aware that the BHRC is currently the governing body of harness racing and recognised as such by relevant national and international bodies.

It will be essential that the Chair and Vice-chair of both organisation attend, in the company of one other representative.

Subject to agreeing the agenda, we suggest the meeting is at a convenient place on the York-Manchester axis on May 10.

Regarding the Roosevelt and Prakas events our wish, already expressed to the current and previous Chairman, is that the entries close two weeks before the event and that the Roosevelts revert to the traditional mile distance.

Sincerely
Jack

TrotBritain Email to BHRC 7th April:

Dear Kirsty

From a comment I have received about my previous letter to the BHRC i would like to clarify a couple of points.

1 There is nothing in our proposal that would require the BHRC to change its governance structure in any way, other than simply becoming the governing body for pacing. This would essentially require a resolution that all references to 'trotting' be deleted and the word 'pacing' substituted for 'harness racing'.

2 It would be the task of the British Harness Racing Co-ordinating Committee, comprising representatives of the two independent governing bodies, to coordinate the arrangements for administrative and other matters, such as integrity and stewarding. In many cases we envisage TROTBritain agreeing to continue the existing arrangements, or ones minimally modified, to ensure continuity, efficiency and cost minimisation. There may be some issues on which it would be more difficult to agree quickly, such as dates, and that is where we would be negotiating as separate but equal governing bodies. TROTBritain would be committed to seeking a reasonable solution where there was any conflict of interest, since its aim is to promote trotting, not harm pacing.

I am assuming that my previous communications have been seen by Roy as Chairman. I would be grateful if you could let me know if all three will be circulated to the Council and Committee in time for their next meeting. (I attach the previous two for your convenience.)

Best wishes
Jack

BHRC Email Reply to TrotBritain 20th April 2015:

Dear TROTBritain,

Thank you for your views and comments, which have been considered and discussed by the BHRC Council.

The Council of the BHRC do not feel that there are grounds to go forward in regard to these proposals on restructuring the BHRC and as such feel that a meeting as you suggest would not benefit either organisation at this time.

As you are aware, the BHRC have offered to assist TrotBritain in establishing their organisation as an affiliated member of the BHRC, an offer which still stands.

Kind regards
Kirsty Lee
BHRC Secretary

Discussions on the topic started again around the time of the UET Conference in January 2015.

BHRC Email to TrotBritain 18th February 2016:

Dear Members of TrotBritain,

Further to the recent informal meeting in Paris, the BHRC Council would like to meet with a proportionate representation of TrotBritain. It is suggested that the date and venue for the meeting be mutually agreed and the BHRC will cover 50% of any room hire costs.

The aim of the meeting will be to further advance talks regarding application for UET membership for BHRC and TrotBritain members. A proviso for the meeting will require that TrotBritain submit copies of papers they feel are relevant in their pursuit of UET membership (for example, but not limited to; UET rules and criteria, current contracts or agreements etc). These will need to be submitted to the BHRC at least ten days prior to the date of any arranged meeting.

If TrotBritain could propose some dates/venues in the first instance, the Council can liaise and a meeting be scheduled.

Kind regards
Kirsty Lee
BHRC Secretary

TrotBritan Email Reply to BHRC 22nd February 2016:

Roy Sheedy
Chairman
BHRC

Dear Roy

Thank you for your letter, which I had hoped would address the issue of how our two organisations can agree to move forward in regard to the governance of trotting.

Instead you have chosen to re-raise the issue of UET membership for the BHRC and our relations with Le Trot. (It is important to establish that these are completely separate matters though often confused.)

It will prevent further delay in setting up a meeting to discuss the governance of trotting if we are able to regard these issues as settled.

The UET

The BHRC could only follow the IHRA into the UET if, like that body, it promised to (a) phase out pacing, and (b) set up a genuinely autonomous body to govern trotting.

To put this matter to rest, I quote from Jacques Chartier's report to the UET on the IHRA application on 30/1/16 (dated September 2015):

"the technical criteria do not strictly meet the criteris of the UET"

"the division of Pacing and Trotting is for now somewhat unrealistic... "Clearly there is no significant difference between Pacing and Trotting as regards persons, the administrstive separation being somewhat theoretical... "

"In return for accession to the UET the heads of IHRA must ensure a real autonomy of trotting and make a commitment to not promote any horse activity not recognised by the UET."

His recommendation to admit the IHRA was clearly based on the presentation of James O'Sullivan to the UET a year earlier (on 24/1/15) which states:

"Until 2014 Ireland had a ratio of 90/10 pacers/trotting races. In 2014 this ratio was 70/30 and it is projected for 2018 the ratio will be 80/20 trotter/pacer. A conscious decision was made in 2013 to implement a ten year plan of moving away from pacers to trotteur-francais."

You were present on both occasions and received the documents from which i quote. If any Council members have doubts about the validity of these quotes I suggest they request you circulate the full document to them. This will end the misperception that the BHRC can ever be admitted as the British member of the UET - assuming it is not willing to go along with the above conditions, especially in not promoting pacing. Until this is accepted as a fact, there is no basis on which we can move forward.

TROTBritain has no problems meeting the above UET conditions, because (a) it has no power to phase out pacing and is committed only to the promotion of trotting and (b) because it has been a genuinely autonomous body devoted exclusively to trotting since its founding in 1993, and intends to remain so.

Le Trot

As an autonomous society TROTBritain will not be supplying any details of our private agreements and contracts with any sponsors. In case it is behind your request, we can voluntarily assure you that Le Trot will not deal with a body that organises pacing races when one devoted to trotting exists, as it does in this country.

Having clarified those two matters we very much hope we can meet soon to move things forward in a harmonious and co-ordinated manner for the benefit of both pacing and trotting in this country. I am copying this letter to all Council members (along with yours to us) as we have reason to believe that many are less than fully informed in regard to this matter. Such circulation is not desirable and i do it only on this occasion because you wrote to members of our Committee. While I have every respect for the BHRC Secretary, I expect all future correspondence on this matter to be between ourselves as Chairmen of our respective organisations, with internal circulation at our discretion.

Kind Regards

Jack

BHRC Email Reply 30th March 2016:

Dear TrotBritain,

Further to your email below, and after discussion by the full Council of the BHRC, it is apparent that our two organisations hold differing views of the present situation regarding this matter. However, the BHRC are firmly of the opinion that only dialogue can provide the way forward to establish any solution to the matter. Therefore the BHRC Council would urge that the offer set out in previous correspondence for a proportionate meeting be accepted. As such the BHRC Council intend to advise all BHRC licence holders and members that such a meeting has been suggested. If TrotBritain could propose some dates/venues a meeting can be arranged at the earliest date convenient to both parties.

Regards

Kirsty Lee

BHRC Secretary

For and on Behalf of the BHRC Council

TrotBritain Email Reply 12th April 2016

Roy Sheedy
Chairman
BHRC

Dear Roy

Thank you for your letter. Unfortunately it contained no response to the points raised in my previous one.

We agree that dialogue will be necessary to address the many issues raised in connection with moving the governance of trotting to TROTBritain and the ways in which our two organisations can work efficiently and harmoniously in future.

However that dialogue cannot be focused on what needs to be discussed if irrelevant issues continue to be raised.

The necessary pre-condition for the proposed meeting remains (i) the acceptance by the BHRC Council that the BHRC can never be a member of the UET, given that it continues to organise pacing races and (ii) that Le Trot will enter into arrangements only with TROTBritain for its support of Trotteur Francais racing events (and STAGBI in relation to breeding).

We have no intention of further discussing these points, or of moving to dialogue on the relevant issues, until they are resolved in the above way.

It is an excellent idea to make all our correspondence public and I look forward to seeing it on the BHRC website.

Regards
Jack Dowie
Chair, TROTBritain

BHRC Email Reply 5th May 2016:

Dear TrotBritain

Firstly the BHRC Council would like to reiterate that they are firmly of the opinion that only dialogue can provide the way forward to establish any solution to matters. Whilst it is apparent that our two organisations hold differing views of the present situation, the BHRC do not believe that observations or assessments from either side can be dismissed as irrelevant without modest and appropriate discussion.

The BHRC are currently the Governing Body for Harness Racing (Pacing and Trotting) in England, Scotland and Wales recognised by the World Trotting Association, which was ratified at the last World Trotting Conference. At the same conference the IHRA were confirmed as the recognised Governing Body for Harness Racing (Pacing and Trotting) in Ireland. In the ensuing months the IHRA succeeded in advancing their organisation to be a member of the UET, despite the fact that their organisation governs both trotting and pacing. Taking this into account, the BHRC Council do not accept that the BHRC 'can never be a member of the UET'. The BHRC Council can accept that the organisation may need to diversify, rework and modernise the set-up of the club and company to better suit and serve members and licence holders. After considering this issue, alongside others raised, the BHRC Council are co-ordinating a review of the current constitution.

The BHRC have not approached or entered into any discussion with Le Trot regarding Trotteur Francais races currently staged at BHRC affiliated fixtures. Therefore, Le Trot would have to be contacted for clarification as the BHRC are unable to comment.

Regarding 'moving the governance of trotting to TrotBritain', this would not be possible at present for the following reasons:

[i] the constitution and set-up of the BHRC - an association to govern the racing of Standardbred and Trotting horses

[ii] the set-up of TrotBritain - an organisation that is not, by its own disclosure, a BHRC affiliated owners association, nor a BHRC affiliated promoter yet an organisation that arranges and classifies French Trotters into Le Trot supported races staged at BHRC affiliated fixtures under BHRC administration, rules and regulations

The BHRC have not and will not impede or obstruct any promotion or advancement of Harness Racing (under either gait), but equally it is felt quite right and proper by the BHRC Council that when in receipt of a request such as that from TrotBritain, i.e. 'moving the governance of trotting' to another organisation, the BHRC should explore and examine that organisation and its aims in full.

Therefore to reiterate previous correspondence, the BHRC Council would urge that the offer set out earlier for a proportionate meeting be accepted. If TrotBritain could propose some dates/venues a meeting can be arranged at the earliest date convenient to both parties.

Regards
Kirsty Lee
BHRC Secretary
For and on Behalf of the BHRC Council

The BHRC will keep members and Licence Holders updated on any progress on the above.