

Annual General Meeting of the Cross-Party Group on Scottish Horseracing & Bloodstock Industries

Tuesday 23rd November – 6pm

Minutes

Present

MSPs

Miles Briggs MSP
Rachael Hamilton MSP
Stephanie Callaghan MSP
Siobhian Brown MSP

Invited guests

Gordon Brown, Racing TV Presenter

Non-MSP Group Members

Delly Innes, Scottish Racing
John Burns, World Horse Welfare
Lucy Gurney, Racing Together
Willie Blackie, William Hill

Apologies

Neil Bibby MSP

Scottish Horses, Trainers and Jockeys successes in 2022

Gordon Brown from Racing TV highlighted just some of the success' horses trained in Scotland have achieved over the past twelve months, as well as those to keep an eye on during the forthcoming months.

2021 has seen a significant number of Scottish trained horses with prestigious wins in both National Hunt and Flat races.

Delly Innes added that it was worth bearing in mind that only 4% of all horses trained in Britain, are Scottish. Of the 14,216 owners in Britain, only 739 (5%) are Scottish. There are 24 racehorse trainers in Scotland (600 across Britain) and 16 jockeys are based north of the border (450 across Britain).

One of the most notable wins for Scottish trained horses over the past twelve months was that achieved by Jim Goldie trained Nicholas T, who took the Northumberland Plate in June. Another remarkable success for Scotland was Euchen Glen's win at Sandown earlier in the year, also trained by Jim Goldie.

Annandale, bred and owned by William Johnstone from Ayrshire, is likely to be running in the Ascot Gold Cup in the Summer of 2022.

2017 Grand National winning Trainer, Lucinda Russell, is hoping to follow on her success with One For Arthur, to enter Mighty Thunder in next year's Aintree Grand National. Mighty Thunder already has a 'National pedigree' having come a close second in the Midlands National, taking first place in the Edinburgh National at Musselburgh and winning the Scottish Grand National at Ayr in April 2021. His next race will be at the Becher Chase at Aintree in December 2021, over the Grand National fences.

There are a number of other Scottish names to look out for over the course of the next few months. Hawick based Ewan Whillans has recently taken over from his father, Alistair, and has had a triumphant start to his new career. Katie Scott trains winners over Jumps and Flat from her yard at Galashiels. Edinburgh-born Erika Parkinson, Apprentice to Mick Appleby, was recently crowned Champion of the Racing Excellence Haydock Park Apprentice Training series 2021.

The building bricks are in place for a successful 2022.

Questions

Miles Briggs asked if there is more which could be done to promote investment in racing in Scotland. Gordon Brown replied that owners' experience on Scottish courses is very highly regarded, but it could be more beneficial to see grouping of fixtures between the Scottish tracks, to encourage owners and trainers to run several horses within a number of days at several Scottish tracks. Delly Innes added that, whilst racing behind closed doors was taking place during Covid, the sport was able to welcome a new audience to racing, which has the potential to encourage a greater number of syndicate ownerships, so it is important that the industry retains as much of this new audience as possible, so that syndicate ownership might be able to grow.

Rachael Hamilton asked what improvements the racing industry was making regarding the welfare and well-being of jockeys. Gordon Brown replied that jockeys, and trainers, are under a significant amount of pressure to retain riding fees, to cover their own travel expenses to the courses and the increase of social media commentary is not helpful to their wellbeing. Weighing and changing room facilities at all Scottish racecourses will be upgraded to meet new minimum standards and future-proof the sport, with the most immediate changes to be implemented by

February. There has been a recent announcement that racecourse saunas, which have been out of operation since Covid-19 safety measures were introduced in June 2020, will now be permanently closed and removed, with discussions ongoing with jockeys and trainers regarding future weight structures. Organisations within the industry, such as Racing Welfare and the Injured Jockeys Fund, are ideally positioned to provide appropriate support to all jockeys and racing staff who are injured, unable to ride, or in general need of support. There are three rehabilitation centres across Britain to help jockeys recover from injury, and return to work as quickly, and safely, as possible.

Stephanie Callaghan asked if jockeys worked part-time or full-time. Gordon Brown replied that some jockeys do race ride as a 'hobby', and those 'Amateurs' are not paid for doing so, as they have other jobs.

Election of Office Bearers

It was decided that the following will continue as office bearers for 2022.

Convener: Miles Briggs MSP

Dep. Convener: Neil Bibby MSP

Secretariat: Scottish Racing

Date of Next Meeting

The next meetings will take place on:

- Wednesday 18th May 2022
- Wednesday 16th November 2022