

BE Stakeholder Group Meeting Summary Notes

2nd Sept 2020, 4.00pm
Microsoft Teams

Participants

Jude Matthews (JM) – BE CEO
Linda Allan (LA) – EHOA Chair
Jan Cottam (JC) – BEOA Chair
Chris Tattersall (CT) - Board Director, Finance, Commercial & Technology Committee Chair, EHOA Liaison
Helen White (HW) – ERA Representative
Alexandra Bright (AB) – BE EA

Apologies:

Fiona O’Hara (FOH) – Chair
Bruce Haskell (BH) – ERA Chair
Gary Parsonage (GP) – Board Director, ERA Liaison
Nigel Taylor (NT) – Board Director, BEOA Liaison

Items tabled for discussion:

- Finance
- Insurance
- IT
- Communication & Representation
- Sport & Fixtures
- AOB

Discussion:

Finance

- JM confirmed that the 2019 accounts were currently being finalised by Auditors and [subject to Finance, Commercial & Technology Committee and Board approval] would be published imminently (by the end of September).
- Association Representatives stated that they had relayed to their members that they understand BE to have robust financial plans in place for 2021, but that they are repeatedly asked for further information and sight of a financial strategy. JM explained that the plans included “trigger points” and “levers” which would enable the Board to react to changes in circumstances. It was not appropriate to release figures, as they would only be relevant at a certain point in time.
- Association Representatives relayed the feeling from some members that a membership organisation should publish detailed financial information to its members. JM explained that BE was also a Limited Company and that the membership revenue served as an income stream for the company. As a Limited Company, there are legal restrictions on publishing any financial projections for 2021 and unaudited accounts. The Association Representatives responded that they found this explanation helpful.
- Comparison with BD and discussion on Charitable Status. **JM to provide further information.**
- Association Representatives would like to see strategies for how membership revenue will be increased. JM explained that a membership review had started before Covid-19 and had stalled due to a shift in priorities. BEAG had proposals for membership structure which would be considered. The focus would be on simplifying the process for competitors wishing to compete on Day Passes. JM added that the priority of enrolling new members had to be balanced with the need to provide opportunities and value for the existing/continuing members.
- Discussion on whether or not central negotiations with national suppliers would be beneficial. JC felt this would be worth further investigation.
- Association Representatives enquired as to whether any further compensation to members in Scotland was being considered. JM stated that two events would be hosted in Scotland by the end of the season and agreed that was not good value for their membership. However, many members had travelled south

to compete at events in England since sport had resumed and so it would be necessary to analyse data to establish how many members had been affected. Winter series were discussed, but JM advised that these had not been well supported in Scotland in the past.

- Concerns aired that potential sponsorship was being overlooked. JM explained conflicting brands and unrealistic servicing costs might be reasons why leads did not always materialise.

Insurance

- Association Representatives felt that the previously agreed review of insurance provisions should commence as soon as possible and should involve BEOA. **JM agreed to commence the review in December.**

IT

- Association Representatives asked for more information on what the £500k “Business As Usual” budget would cover and relayed that they were often asked by their members how much it costs to support EARS. JM explained that it was very difficult to give specific broken-down costs as the IT team and equipment support multiple functions. JC suggested that the cost of Salesforce licences, for example, would give a good indication. JM explained that Salesforce is not limited to EARS and has been used as the Customer Relationship Management system within head office since 2016 also. **JM to report further on capitalisation.**
- JM reported that the IT Task Force had started their work.

Communication and Representation

- Association Representatives suggested surveying the membership to assess appetite for competing in 2021. JM suggested that perhaps after Christmas might be an appropriate time to collect views, although answers would not be useful in terms of fixtures planning at that stage. JC suggested the purpose would be to show that members’ views were important and to keep engagement, rather than for fixtures planning. **JM agreed and would investigate an end of year “mop up”.** Feedback from the previous survey was that respondents would like to provide answers in relation to more than one horse.
- Association Representatives gave feedback that membership communication had improved, which JM attributed to having the Communications Team back from Furlough Leave.
- The weekly update email was well received. Association Representatives suggested including contact details for the three organisations (BEOA, EHOA, ERA) plus HW as Grassroots Representative. It was thought to be an opportunity to widen the awareness of the organisations (particularly ERA and EHOA) and encourage better representation of these groups of stakeholders.
- Discussion on approach, style and language used in the notes of the Stakeholder Group meetings. Agreed that an appropriate collective noun was required to refer to association representatives [instead of using personal initials, or “stakeholders”] as participants wanted it recognised that they were representing views of their respective organisations and not their own personal views. It was accepted that “stakeholder” covers a wide range of people interested in British Eventing, not limited to riders, owners and organisers. Noted that Association Representatives give a huge amount of their time on a voluntary basis working hard “behind the scenes” on behalf of their organisations.
- It was confirmed that notes from the Board meetings would be made available on the BE website. The 2020 notes not yet been published due to resource.

Sport and Fixtures

- BEOA Representative stated that unaffiliated events were beginning to offer Novice (110cm) classes (Dauntsey cited) and so felt that strengthening the BE brand was high priority. JM added that many reports had been made that it was cheaper for Organisers to run unaffiliated events than BE events, and research was ongoing to investigate where the cost savings were in the hope that some savings could be translated into BE event organisation. So far, it had not been possible to obtain financial data from organisers of unaffiliated events and complete a comparison exercise.
- It was felt that care of volunteers was an area where BE could improve and suggested a central loyalty/reward scheme. HorseEvents cited as offering an excellent volunteer recognition programme.
- Requested that the subject of prize money is reviewed for 2021. Many members had reported disappointment at events not offering prize money, especially as entries had been so high, and some were charging the higher entry fee.

- LA enquired about the policy for riders travelling to compete abroad. JM explained that anyone choosing to travel to a country that would require self-isolation on their return to the UK would need to do so unless exempt. The BEF could provide exemption for Elite Senior Athletes and essential support staff on the BEF World Class Government funded programme. BE would provide exemption to those who qualify as an elite athlete only where the status of the country in which they were competing changed whilst they were there and, only in a situation where an individual travelled from one COVID-19 secure competition environment to compete in another COVID-19 secure environment in the UK. In addition, BE would require each person who obtained exemption to have a negative COVID test on arrival back in the UK before being able to compete. However, JM was aware that there was some pressure for athletes to travel to non-exempt countries, which would need to be considered ahead of Le Lion and Pau. Association Representatives requested any future communication to be very clear in explaining the exemption possibilities. CT added that there were many exemptions available for other professions e.g. drivers and pilots.
- The addition of extra days to events in order to accommodate surplus entries was highlighted as being inconvenient for many competitors whose classes were moved to a different day. Noted that competitors make arrangements to compete on the day as indicated in the event schedule e.g. annual leave, childcare. JM explained that this was an unfortunate consequence of trying to offer competition opportunity to as many members as possible and reported that event entries were beginning to return to more normal levels. Agreed that communications on balloting and classes changing days varied from event to event. It was suggested to release central communications explaining the reasons why classes may change days. **JC to discuss communications with Organisers.**
- Association Representatives enquired about the planned format of the forthcoming meetings with BEAG. Confirmed that BEAG expected to present their recommendations.

5.40pm LA left the call.

- In response to concerns about 2021 fixtures, JM explained that the fixtures calendar planning was well underway and hoped to balance organiser viability under covid-19 restrictions with provision of competition opportunities for members.
- JC asked whether the planned review of the Strategic Fixtures Process would take place. JM felt that a review would be limited (due to the effects of covid-19) but **agreed that the pathways and processes should be formally reviewed as planned.**

There being no further business, the call ended at 5.50pm.