

BE Stakeholder Group Meeting Summary Notes

7th October 2020, 4.00pm
Microsoft Teams

Participants

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

Apologies:

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

Items tabled for discussion:

- 2019 Accounts
- BEAG Report Output
- Fixtures
 - Area Championships
 - Winter Series
- Governance / AGM / Communications
- AOB

Discussion:

2019 Accounts

- The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2019 had been published on 1st October.
- JM reported that one letter had been received from a member asking further questions on the accounts. The Board had responded.
- Association Representatives reported that they had received a lot of communication in response to the publication of the accounts, with the majority falling into the following categories:
 - Request for further information on IT system costs
 - Question why cost saving measures had not been actioned sooner
 - Suggestion that the statement regarding the protection of the future of the organisation was not specific enough
 - Some dissatisfaction with the figures
 - Request for further details of the “signing off” process
 - Clarification on the Staff and Director Costs.
 - JM explained that costs had been high in 2019 due to senior management maternity leave/cover, and a crossover of outgoing and interim CEO.
- Association Representatives asked whether it would be an appropriate time to review the auditors.
 - CT stated that in order to address any criticism of Karen Bartlett’s long-standing appointment, Saffrey Champness had arranged an independent review of the 2019 files. The report to the Board was robust and the Directors were confident that the files had been thoroughly and appropriately scrutinised.
- Association Representatives asked what the current financial situation was, as the published accounts covered a period which ended nine months previously.

- CT reported that the Financial, Commercial & Technology Committee had met the previous day and he was pleased to report [as Chair] that all targets set by the Board for 2020 had been met [and exceeded].
- CT stated that the cash position for the year ending 31st December 2020 was on track to be better than had been predicted at the beginning of the sport suspension.
- CT explained that the improved cash position was largely due to sport resumption becoming possible, but also that during the sport suspension the Board placed three quarters of the BE staff on furlough leave which allowed BE to take advantage of the Government's support with payroll costs and protect the future of the company, however, criticism was received for reduced service levels and communication.
- CT confirmed that the budget for 2021 had been planned and was based around streamlining costs and that increasing revenue would be another key focus to re-build reserves. Contingency plans were included.
- Association Representatives asked whether it should be expected that the 2020 accounts, when published, would look worse than the 2019 accounts.
 - CT answered that the surplus was expected to be higher at 2020 year end. JM clarified that 2020 would record a loss, but it was planned that 2021 would not.
 - JM also explained that decisions in 2019 were made with the expectation of 2020 being a "normal" year.
- Association Representatives asked what was planned for May 2021 when the arrangement with Eventing Scores would be reviewed.
 - JM answered that the Recommendations of the IT Task Force would first be considered by the Board. The benefits and risks of integration with third party systems would be re-assessed.
- Association Representatives asked whether other government support schemes had been investigated, in addition to furlough?
 - JM answered that it was intended to claim the Job Retention Bonus, if eligible. All staff had now returned from Furlough Leave, and due to sport having resumed, it was no longer appropriate to have staff on Furlough Leave. Some funding had been granted by Sport England.
- Association Representatives asked whether the number of staff employed was still 44?
 - JM answered no, it was 31.
- Association Representatives asked how had the ITTP valuation been calculated?
 - CT and JM explained that the money spent on the ITTP would be impaired over five years.
- Association Representatives suggested [as had been requested by one EHOA member] that the Board should release [ahead of the AGM] a Directors' Report to Members to share the financial plans for the future. Association Representatives indicated that members wanted further information and clarity in terms of plans and felt that written communications helped to give confidence.
- Association Representatives asked how the remainder of the ITTP would be funded.
 - JM and CT explained that further work on EARS fell under normal IT operating budget [often referred to as "BAU"] and that the IT "project" spend had now concluded. CT clarified that development work on EARS would continue and further improvements would be made, but that the work was being undertaken by the in-house IT Team and was no longer being treated as a project.
- Given the reported loss in 2019, and the predicted loss for 2020, Association Representatives asked where the money was coming from?
 - JM answered reserves.
- Association Representatives asked CT to consider including stakeholder representation on the Financial, Commercial & Technology Committee.

British Eventing Advisory Group (BEAG) Report

- Association Representatives asked whether the BEAG report would be publicised.
 - JM clarified that the BEAG report was written for the Board in confidence, for the Board to consider and decide which ideas to progress. The Executive Team would develop ideas, consulting with stakeholders as appropriate.
 - It was agreed that a summary of the position would be communicated to the membership.
- Association Representatives asked where they stood with discussing the BEAG Report with their associates.

- JM clarified that the Report had been shared with Association Representatives in confidence, and as such, was not for further sharing or discussion, but it was acceptable to explain that consultation with Stakeholder groups had confirmed broad alignment with BE's intended direction of travel.
- CT confirmed that the BEAG had been advised that BE would not be in a position to take any financial risks in 2021.

Fixtures

➤ Area Championships

- Association Representatives raised some concerns on the proposed eligibility rules and qualification routes, but generally felt excited about the proposals.
- BEOA Representative expressed her opinion that the BE90 and BE100 Championships (Science Supplements Cup) should be for members 19 years and above only, and that ineligibility due to having completed one Intermediate competition within the previous ten years was unfair.

➤ Winter Series

- ERA and BEOA Representatives had given consideration to a BE combined training series. Their research had led them to take the view that it would not be viable. BEOA Representative added that Organisers do not see the benefits to being part of a BE series.
- JM stated that the Jump Training and Area Eventing series would go ahead as normal, but under covid-19 protocols. BEOA Representative stated that these types of competitions were more viable for Organisers if arranged independently of BE.
- Association Representatives asked whether EARS would be capable of administrating the winter series. JM replied yes and that it did so over the 2019-2020 winter season.

Governance / AGM / Communications

- Association Representatives pointed out that there were some spelling errors within the 2019 Financial Report.
- JM reported that the AGM would take place online on 24th November.
- Association Representatives asked whether it would be possible to ask questions of the candidates. **JM to look into this further.**
- Association Representatives felt that the Board should increase their visibility to the wider membership, and that some Board Members in particular were very quiet and the membership may question their contribution.

AOB

- **Covid-19 Protocols:** BEOA Representatives felt that release of updated covid-19 protocols on a Friday to be implemented on event the following day was not enough lead time. BEOA Representatives questioned why the covid-19 protocols differed from BD/BS, as this was confusing. **JM replied that she would look into aligning the protocols with the other Olympic Disciplines.**
- **Blenheim:** BEOA Representatives asked what BE's involvement with the tender process for Blenheim Palace Horse Trials was, as it was understood that the contract between BE and Blenheim Palace had ended. JM answered that BE had the rights to the classes as the current Organiser, along with owning a catalogue of event assets. BEOA Representatives asked whether much interest had been received. JM confirmed that yes, there had been a good level of interest, including some existing BE organisers.
- **GAIN Feeds:** JM explained that a statement would be released as soon as there was sufficient information to do so. In the meantime, competitors were advised to consult their veterinary for advice.
- **UAE National Federation:** JM reported that the UAE national federation had been suspended from the FEI following actions within the discipline of endurance.
- **Travel to USA:** JM reported that an exemption route had been established for elite athletes and officials to travel into the USA if necessary.

Next Meetings

- 28th October – normal Stakeholder Group meeting
- 18th November – Stakeholder Group and “plus ones” – ahead of Board meeting and AGM

6.05pm BH left the call.

AOB Continued

- BEOA Representatives suggested that fixtures consultation distances should be reduced. **JM would discuss this further with the Regional Coordinators in the first instance.**

6.15pm HW left the call.

- **Meetings going forward:** frequency of the fortnightly meetings to be discussed between Association Representatives and reviewed at the next meeting on 28th October.

There being no further business, the call ended at 6.30pm.