

BE Stakeholder Group Meeting Summary Notes

19th August 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
Di BRUNSDEN (DB) – IT Task Force (*invited for introductions; left the call at 4.20pm*)
Terry Miller (TM) – IT Task Force (*invited for introductions; left the call at 4.20pm*)
Chris Tattersall (CT) - Board Director, Finance, Commercial & Technology Committee Chair, EHOA Liaison (*left the call at 5.00pm*)
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:

- IT Task Force: Introductions and brief
- Abandonment Insurance
- 2019 Accounts
- BE Finances
- Sport and Fixtures
- EquiRatings
- IT
- Any other Business

Discussion:

IT Task Force

- JM introduced DB and TM and explained that the Board had agreed to form an IT Task Force, to be chaired by DB, to review the IT issues reported by stakeholders.
- News of Task Force to be announced imminently.
- Terms of Reference to be published (likely to be before the end of the week).
- DB and TM gave an introduction explaining that they had volunteered to help and that the purpose of the Task Force was to look at the current infrastructures, identify issues, prioritise areas for improvement and produce a strategy for the best use of the limited BE IT resources in the short, medium and long term (3, 6, 12 months). DB explained that she was experienced in IT and hoped to make recommendations to deliver the best possible solution considering sustainability, risk mitigation and cost. DB would use her skills to examine the current situation and consider where money would be best spent.
- Task Force to include JM, Wendy McGowan, Louise Jack, Miranda Collett, Adam Cadman, Debbie Pritchard and Olivia Szajna plus stakeholder representation. TM to act as secretariat and oversee governance.
- The intention was to use the former IT Steering Committee as a base and to coordinate closely with the EARS Working Group so as not to duplicate effort.
- DB planned for two phases of initial work to take place which would form the basis for the recommendations:
 1. Canvassing members for their specific issues
 2. Collation and strategic analysis
- DB felt that the Task Force should be in a position to make their first report after (approximately) three months and committed to regular updates.

- Association Representatives commented that the Task Force was welcome and positive and would look forward to further updates.
- DB noted that the Task Force intends to approach BEOA and ERA for views on IT system functionality, and to take the recent EHOA members own survey responses into account.
- HW requested that communications on the work of the Task Force should be regular and appropriate for the intended audience. HW also suggested that the news/updates could be included in the newsletter and that the positive areas should be emphasised.
- BH asked DB what guarantees were in place that the recommendations of the Task Force would be actioned by BE. TM explained that Louise Jack and JM were included on the Task Force so that the strategy could be developed collaboratively. TM & DB gave no guarantees that the Task Force would be able to solve all of the problems and accepted that some risks may already be well mitigated, but the Task Force would identify and investigate concerns.
- JC asked about budget and strategy for spending. DB answered that she hoped to understand the budgetary restraints and plans in further detail.
- The message was clear that the Task Force was to look at the present situation and the direction of travel for the future.

4.00pm DB & TM left the call.

Abandonment Insurance

- JM reported that the settlement was in the final stage. Agreement finalised and signed by BE; just waiting to receive countersigned agreement from underwriters. Conclusion was close, but not possible to publicise until agreed in writing.
- JM confirmed (confidentially) the agreed settlement was that:
 - it would be possible to refund entry fees in full for the seven affected events,
 - there would be no cover on the policy for any future abandonments in relation to covid-19,
 - extra cover had been added for future abandonments in relation to equine DEFRA communicable diseases.
 - the policy would remain in effect [for non-covid 19 related abandonments] until the end of 2021.
- Some members had made section 75/chargeback claims instead of waiting for the outcome of the insurance claim. These members would not be entitled to any refund.
- JC stated that further discussions would be required to consider the suitability and terms of the "Pandemic Refund Policy" for 2021.
- JM confirmed that a wider review of the abandonment insurance cover would take place during 2021 and would include a broker tender process and investigation of alternative options. The possibilities and merits of "Self-insurance" and a personal annual policy would be considered.

2019 Accounts

- JM confirmed that the threat of a legal claim could be disregarded now that the abandonment insurance claim had been concluded, meaning that the publication of the 2019 accounts was imminent, subject to Board/Auditor sign off.

BE Finances

- Association Representatives stated that they are frequently asked the question "will BE survive?".
- CT commented that the BE Executive have done an amazing job steering the company through the sport suspension and the unprecedented challenges presented by covid-19.
- CT commented that the work to resume sport and save costs meant that current financial projections showed a healthier cash balance at the end of 2020 (compared with projections made during sport suspension).
- CT confirmed that cash reserves had been reduced and there was no doubt that covid-19 had affected the finances.
- CT went on to explain that Wendy McGowan had produced a flexible budget for 2021 including actions to be taken if actual revenue achieved was higher or lower than predicted.
- CT shared that the revenue received for the last two months had been slightly higher than anticipated.
- BH asked whether the budget for 2021 included the membership/horse season ticket discounts that had been published. CT confirmed that the 2021 predicted income assumed that 100% of members eligible

would claim the discount and added that in his view, it was likely that less than 100% would claim the discount offered and that some would prefer to support the future of the sport. BH felt that members who had been dissatisfied with their membership during 2020 would be more inclined to take the discount.

Sport and Fixtures

- BH reported frustrations from members where classes had been cancelled or moved to a different day during the balloting process.
- JM stated that the BE Team and Organisers were being flexible and were doing their best to offer as many opportunities as possible. Schedule planning was very difficult before entries were received, and where entries were made very close to ballot date. The indication given ahead of sport resumption (based on the surveys by BE and by ERA) were that entry levels would be much lower. The BE Team and Organisers were reacting to demands as much as was possible, but with the challenges of covid-19, unfortunately this meant that some members would be disappointed or inconvenienced in some situations.
- BH was concerned that riders would not be provided with satisfactory competition opportunities and requested that as many members as possible should be satisfied.
- BEOA Representative shared concerns that the current covid-19 protocols would mean reduced viability for Organisers, and potentially result in fewer events for 2021. The need to service the membership was appreciated by all.
- EHOA Representative suggested that once members have received their refunds from the seven abandoned events [as the insurance claim had been settled], they may wish to make further entries with that money. EHOA Representative stressed that the 2021 season must not be disappointing.
- ERA Representative reported further frustrations from members where events were not offering prize money. BEOA Representative responded that it was simply not viable for some events where the covid-19 restrictions reduced their income, but agreed to encourage Organisers to pay prize money wherever possible.

5.00pm CT left the call.

- Grassroots Rider Representative reported positive feedback on the covid-19 protocols from riders' point of view e.g. sticking to times.
- BH stated that in his opinion, the environment provided at Haras Le Pin felt safer than Eventing in UK.

EquiRatings

- BEOA Representative asked for further information on the recent news of the continuation of work with EquiRatings, which she felt was positive.
- JM explained that BE and EquiRatings had a contract prior to sport suspension and that due to being unable to provide the competition data with no sport running, EquiRatings had very kindly agreed to do the work on the metrics instead. JM went on to explain that the partnership would generate revenue for BE in the future.

IT

- JM confirmed that improvements to receipts to show a detailed breakdown of refunds was work in progress.
- With reference to the IT Transformation Project Review (published 28th July), BEOA Representative asked for further information on what was covered by the £500k cited as all IT costs related to running the office and the sport. JM elaborated that this figure would cover every aspect of IT including hardware equipment and software licences. LA requested further breakdown of items to be included.
- BEOA Representative reiterated that she felt that the Task Force was really positive and felt that consultation with the right people would be the key to success.

5.40pm BH ERA Representative left the call.

Any Other Business

BEOA Representative posed the question “who is running the sport?” and felt that some decisions recently reported as having been taken by the Board, should have been considered by the Sport Committee, or other groups.

- EHOA Representative reported that the way in which the BE Advisory Group had been incepted, and the perception of their authority, had created concerns.
- JM confirmed that a review of committees would be undertaken after the end of the season and that the BE Advisory Group had been tasked with consulting key stakeholder groups in order to present ideas and recommendations to the Board and were not a decision-making body.
- JM reported that the Rider Working Groups had met during the last week and had discussed expectations on the relationship between the BE Team and the group members and ways in which the groups could work effectively. It was established that the groups should work as teams and feed back [through an appropriate point of contact] their developed proposals. It was noted that HW was a useful link between the Working Groups and the Risk Management & Sport Committee and would encourage the Groups to collaborate and present ideas collectively. Olivia Szajna was their point of contact within the BE Team.
- Reflecting on earlier sport discussion, BEOA Representative understood ERA Representative’s point about dissatisfied members, but felt that with the current challenges, it would be impossible to satisfy everyone. BEOA Representative also felt that some events did not deliver the high standards expected by BE and yet remained popular with competitors. BEOA Representative suggested that this should be investigated and further suggested that the thorough and honest completion of event evaluations was not taking place in the case of all events. BEOA Representative asked for further training and support for officials in order to address this. BEOA Representative felt that delivery of training sessions should be more interactive.

Conclusion and plan for next meeting

Agreed that Stakeholder Representatives would be welcome to propose discussion points for future calls.

The call ended at 6.15pm.