

PRE-FESTIVAL BLC CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE - NOTES 21 September 2026

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bookmakers – John Hooper, Mark Jeal, Dale Such, Paul Gold, James McNab,
Racecourse – Gemma Steve, Andy Collins, Steve Clare.

Apologies – Barry Pinnington, Simon Wallis, Johnson, Ben Johnson, Neil Pateman.

Forthcoming Season

Fixtures as per previous years.

Advance ticket sales across all meetings are at present very encouraging.

October - The Showcase 24 & 25. Forecast attendance Friday 10,000, Saturday 16,000. One enclosure meeting. Best Mate closed.

The November meeting (Festival List), 13 - 15 inc. Forecast attendance Friday 20,000, Saturday 32,000, Sunday 18,000 (inc. c.7,000 Invade students exclusively in Guinness Village). Family day on Sunday with Entertainment in Centaur and the Best Mate Enclosure. Best Mate open each of the three days. On Saturday, Lower Tattersalls bookmakers will be located only in the Guinness enclosure (none around the Parade Ring).

December - Christmas Meeting 11 & 12. Forecast attendance Friday 10,000, Saturday 13,000. Best Mate open Saturday only.

New Years Day - Forecast attendance 44,500. One enclosure & Best Mate. N.B. Lower Tattersalls bookmakers will be located in the Guinness Village, not around the Parade Ring.

Festival Trials Day – Sat 30 January. Estimated attendance 20,000. One enclosure & Best Mate.

The Festival - Tue 16 - Fri 14 March. Forecast attendance Tuesday 60,000, Wednesday (St. Patrick's Day & Ladies Day) 50,000, Thursday 56,000, Friday 68,500 (sold out). Separate BLC meeting for the Festival in the New Year. Best Mate forecast attendances (inc. in totals above) - Tuesday 6-8,000, Weds 6-8000, Thursday 10,000, Friday 13,500 (sold out).

April Meeting - 14 & 15. Forecast attendance Wednesday 6,500, Thursday 7,000. One enclosure. Best Mate Closed

Hunter Chase Evening - 30 April, forecast attendance 9,500. One enclosure. Best Mate closed.

Ongoing improvement works and new initiatives.

Track - including satisfactory conclusion of substantial drainage works. Track is in good condition considering the weather with ongoing irrigation.

Grandstand public areas - bar refurbishments for Golden Miller & Tommy Atkins mean that all grandstand bars have now been refurbished/upgraded.

Guinness Village - as a result of bookmaker's feedback, a new wide stairway will be built in the middle of the Guinness Grandstand to provide access from the bar behind the seating

area directly into the betting ring. This will be open for the November Meeting, New Year's Day & The Festival.

The Cheltenham Retreat will be open and operational for November Meeting, New Years Day and Festival.

For the Best Mate enclosure, improvements in both the customer facilities and layout behind the grandstand are being finalised. As soon as these are confirmed plans will be made available. It is likely that the number of betting positions behind the grandstand will be consolidated into one area and reduced to 4-5 pitches, dependant on the available space. On all Saturdays a big screen will be positioned on the centre course exclusively for Best Mate customers.

A new Annual Membership tier structured has been introduced. The levels of members included Insurance, Princess Royal Membership and Favourite Membership. Favourite Membership offers admission for 16 days racing priced at a very competitive £379 (available now on the racecourse website).

Roadworks on the Evesham Rd are now complete, including a cycleway which must be crossed to gain access to car parks off Evesham Road n.b. cycles have right of way. Bookmaker Car Parking details have been circulated, and all bookmakers are encouraged to apply for the 2026/27 car park labels in good time.

Operational items

The local authority licencing department attended the racecourse during the off season to discuss & review the mandatory & default conditions. Particular interest was shown in the bookmaker betting operator's licence with respect to: staff training and recording U18 challenges; the bookmakers self-exclusion policy & paperwork; how bookmakers deal with customer complaints.

It is possible that the GC & LA will visit to review bookmaker's compliance during a forthcoming race meeting.

Rails power overloading - bookmakers were again asked not to use extension cables or power sockets as it is likely to cause a power breaker to cut in and disrupt operation.

Equipment drop off can be done up to one hour before gates open but to gain track access bookmakers must provide sight of their RBC i/d, together with a public admission ticket or annual members badge for each person in the vehicle. Vehicles must be off site a minimum of 30 mins before gates open.

Bookmakers must ensure that all kit is clearly labelled with their name & contact details.

There will be cash machines on site for all days – located by Warren's Sweet Shop (Bottom of Hall of Fame stairs) and by the Guinness Village.

Bookmakers were reminded that they and their staff must comply with the racecourse dress code, and that all equipment must be stored in a safe & tidy manner within the area set out behind joints.

The prevalence of forged notes, usually £20 denomination, was discussed and bookmakers asked to remain vigilant and report instances to BRMs.

Handwritten customer notices are not permitted and will be removed by BRMs and racecourse staff. Pre planning on signage requirements is a must to ensure appropriate present standards.

Bookmakers were asked to report intrusive Social Media promotions. These are not sanctioned by the racecourse and BRMs should be notified by bookmakers when the interfere with the betting ring.

Gates opening times – Showcase Friday & Saturday both days - 11.15am

Pitching in times: <https://share.google/VK8nj7564Km6pgkiQ>