



UCORB Board meeting London, Nov 20

The inaugural Board meeting of the United Council of Racecourse Bookmakers (“UCORB”) took place on Monday this week. This news update follows a commitment from the new Board to make it a priority to provide regular briefings to all members.

In line with that policy, a new website bringing regular news and information is being designed. The board hopes it will be up and running shortly. *In the meantime, briefings will appear on this site where appropriate.*

The Board confirmed its membership as: chairman John Hooper, deputy chairman Keith Johnson, eight directors representing the range of regions/areas and Rings (names as per previous report), plus a membership secretary (Simon Walmsley) and company secretary (Chris Hudson) who will also be in charge of financial areas. Both have been appointed board members. Articles of Association have been adopted and the limited company registered in the name of UCORB. As director in charge of finance, Chris Hudson reported that the company begins with an extremely strong financial base as funds are rolled in from previous entities which will no longer be operational.

The Board received a presentation on a data opportunity with potential for significant advantage to bookmakers. Detail around the implications of this proposal were discussed by directors, and a trial will possibly commence in the near future.

The chairman reported that membership continues to grow rapidly as the old associations close and members move over. The Board agreed to a financial policy of free subscriptions and free EL/PL insurance for 2024 to all signed-up members. *Elegibility for membership would depend on being registered and licensed to operate on-course by RBC.* It would also be open to P-to-P bookmakers if they so wished, although it was agreed that P-to-P administration should be left to local existing bodies.

Liaison with other bodies: The chairman reported that the creation of UCORB had been welcomed within the racing industry. He has already received invitations for the board to be represented at a forthcoming meeting of the Racecourse Association (RCA) Gambling Advisory Group.

The chairman will be writing to each racecourse to introduce the new Council and to indicate how we wish to work with racecourses to grow attendances and promote racecourse bookmaking. Among ideas for discussion with racecourses, the board considered such schemes as sponsorship arrangements to give free entry and offers of a range of incentives such as free bets.

The Board also resolved to propose that each of UCORB's area representatives should be included on local racecourse liaison committees or help provide representation.

RBC: Three directors of UCORB, Michael Howard, Chris Hudson and Graham Thorpe have been appointed non-executive directors of RBC. They will provide insight and oversight of the executive of RBC and will provide reports to the UCORB board.

Horserace Levy Board: Keith Johnson and Simon Walmsley were appointed to deal with Levy Board issues.

Gambling Commission: The Board discussed the Gambling Commission's latest initiatives on test purchasing and clampdown on illegal credit card betting. It was recommended that all bookmakers check card-provider arrangements to ensure they prevent credit card acceptance. Simon Walmsley was appointed to represent UCORB at Gambling Commission meetings.

Media/Press: Michael Punshon and Graham Thorpe were appointed as Press and Media representatives. Enquiries can be directed to individual directors if required.

New Areas and other issues: The Board agreed that it is particularly vital for the future that bookmakers are represented with one voice in discussions over potentially contentious topics such as new areas. They expressed a commitment to reaching agreement within the new Council in order to provide unity and clarity to others – racecourses in particular. The problems around new areas are to be discussed at the next Board meeting.

UCORB is moving forward at pace. But the Board continues to offer a welcome to every registered racecourse bookmaker in the UK to be part of a united future.

Any bookmaker who has not already done so should confirm their details to contactucorb@gmail.com as soon as possible to ensure being included within the funding available. *It is important to confirm your details even if your association is one of those rolling-over its membership.*

Simon Walmsley on the above email can provide further information if required or contact either John Hooper (chairman) or Keith Johnson (deputy chairman).