

BOOKMAKER LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING 2022 - Newbury Racecourse

Tuesday 25 October 2022

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bookmakers – Nigel Spencer, Alan Stadler, Tony Morris, Paul Gold, David Hughes.
Newbury Racecourse – Amelia Gray, Mark Leigh, Harriet Collins, Steve Clare, Vicki Moore.
Apologies – Gerry Chesneaux.

MEETING NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Bookmaker representatives from Rails, Tattersalls & Lower Tattersalls were in attendance.

Each bookmaker provided brief feedback of their trading experiences at Newbury since the last BLC. Anecdotally, the Rails betting turnover was at normal levels, it was less so in Tattersalls on a number of racedays and in particular disappointing in Lower Tattersalls.

Some theories as to the reasons for this were debated – closure of the Dubai Duty Free grandstand on a number of meetings, and the lower public attendance than usual on the music nights, LT bookmakers being unable to operate on the last race on music nights. ML agreed to review the requirement for the latter prior to 2023.

It was explained by HC, that public attendance was holding up well at just below that achieved in 2019 (the highest for the previous five years), but it appears that customers are migrating away from the Grandstand enclosure towards Premier.

The vast majority of public admission tickets being bought online in advance at discounted prices (compared to on the day)

HC briefed the meeting on the marketing plans for the forthcoming season along with the various promotional activities. It was agreed that the new Oktoberfest raceday on Saturday 22 October was especially successful. Forthcoming highlights include The Christmas Carnival which runs from 27 November to 2 January, with exclusive access to racegoers on the 25 & 26 November.

There will again be two music nights in 2023. Higher profile acts are being targeted and confirmation will follow in due course. Promotional activity will also be focussed on returning public attendance in the Grandstand enclosure to higher levels.

It was emphasised though, that next year on some quieter weekday race meetings (c.8 occasions) with lower public attendance, the Dubai Duty Free Stand will be closed and the racecourse will operate as one enclosure. Dates to be notified to RBC – AG.

OPERATIONS

It was confirmed that public sales at the racecourse will continue to be by credit or debit card. However, the racecourse acknowledges that betting with cash remains important. Merchandising and various racecourse signage emphasises the availability of cash betting, and this is supported by the continuation of the two permanent ATM machines which will again be supplemented by temporary ATMs on busy racedays.

Bookmakers recognised the competitive racing at Newbury, and also thanked the racecourse for showing major away races on the big screens & CCTV.

Bookmakers congratulated the racecourse on the ease of use of the online advance badge & ticket purchase process. The majority of bookmakers now buy in advance with a few still buying on the day. Whilst on the day purchases will continue to be available, it might be online only since the racecourse may close the Badge Box in due course – ML

A suggestion was made that an annual DBB be offered to bookmakers – ML to consider & revert.

It was confirmed that bookmakers can have vehicular access to the racecourse no later than 30 mins before 'gates open'. Gates open times on the racecourse website.

Joint anchor points to be power washed to remove mud / debris - AG

The ongoing use of Challenge 25 wristbands was again welcomed by the meeting.

Most of the bookmakers recognised the ongoing logistical support they received from the racecourse. One case of a gate marshal preventing vehicular access was raised but it was dealt with subsequently on the day by AG.

The matter of a temporary bar being suddenly closed in running at one of the busy meetings was raised, and AG explained that it was unavoidable due to last minute staff absence.

New Betting Areas were discussed. At present the racecourse is unable to identify any suitable locations, but the matter will be kept under review – AG.

The instruction to remove umbrellas due to extreme high winds towards the end of the race meeting on 21 October was discussed and AG confirmed that it was a temporary H&S requirement.

The ongoing public ticket sales for forthcoming meetings is available upon request from AG.

Bookmakers asked for reserved parking close to their entrance in order to reduce the security risk & potential H&S issues caused by wheeling/carrying equipment back to vehicles post racing. AG/ML to review & consider.

