

BLC NOTES - NEWMARKET RACECOURSE 26 March 2024

IN ATTENDANCE:

Racecourse - Sophie Able, Margo Walsh, Darren Townsend, Sarah Woodborne.

Bookmakers - Arthur Mulgrew, Mike Armes, Ed Thompson, Simon Barham, John Christie, Michael Punshon.

Via Teams – Steve Clare

2023 SEASON – Sophie Able

Event marketing last year was focussed on increasing public admissions to increase footfall over revenue.

The second three-day Guineas Festival since 2003 introduced the Communities Day on the Friday. Overall, 28,500 attended the festival.

For the July Festival a lower advance and on the day price was introduced. Admissions increased by 3,000 over 2023 despite especially inclement weather on Friday.

The newly formed Cambridge University Horseracing Society brought in 375 students at their first promoted event.

Bookmakers supported the strategy and efforts made to grow admissions to Newmarket.

2024 SEASON – Darren Townsend / Sophie Able

The promotional strategy remains targeted at increasing public admissions.

Fixtures – Craven Meeting 16-18 April; Qipco Guineas Festival 3 - 5 May; Spring Meeting 17-19 May Spring Revival Weekend; Pete Tong's Ibiza Classic Fri 21 June; Summer Celebration Sat 22 June; Afternoon racing 27 June; JLS Music Night 28 June; Summer Saturday 29 June; July Festival - Ladies Day Thu 11 July, Style Friday with DJ after racing 12 July, July Cup Sat 13 July; Busted Music Night 19 July; Boots & Bridles Raceday 20 July (late afternoon first race time t.b.c.); James Arthur Music Night 2 August; Summer Saturday 3 August; Becky Hill Music Night 9 August; Dinosaur Day 10 August; Deacon Blue Music Night 16 August; Summer Saturday 17 August; Afternoon Racing 23 August; Summer Saturday 24 August; Cesarewitch Trial Day 21 September; Cambridgeshire Meeting with Oktoberfest 26-28 September; Sun Chariot Day 5 October; Dubai Future Champions Festival 11-12 October; Two Year Old Day 23 October; Final Meeting 1-2 November.

All six music nights are online with encouraging sales already.

In 2024 Newmarket has two fewer fixtures, with a no racing weekend on 26/27 July.

Following a trial at the end of last season, it has been decided to extend the policy allowing drinks & food to be consumed in the Premier Enclosure this Spring on the Rowley Mile.

It will remain under ongoing review, but potentially extended over the season and apply at both courses.

Bookmakers were delighted to hear this news and expressed their view that customer service would be significantly enhanced as a result.

The new Jockey Club App was introduced. DT explained that amongst other things it allowed ticket purchase and provided a number of benefits including online racecards and racecourse layout plans to help racegoers find facilities etc.

SA explained that the city of Cambridge, the fastest growing in the UK, would be a significant area for promotional activity. There are 45,000 new homes planned and work will continue over the next years to encourage the population to come racing at Newmarket.

The Hong Kong Suite (Rowley Mile) and Summer House and resin flooring (July Course) will benefit from pre-season investment.

OPERATIONS ITEMS – Margo Walsh

This season gate opening times at all meetings including Festivals will be 2hrs before the first race.

Bookmakers may have vehicular access to the course to drop off equipment, but vehicles must be off site 2 ¼ hrs before the first race.

It was emphasised that all bookmakers and every member of their staff must be in possession of either a barcoded Annual Members Badge or public admission ticket to access the course. A DBB does not provide access and is not barcoded. To gain access to the Course one member of the party must have an RBC ID card.

Bookmaker car parking was discussed. The bookmakers reported that often designated spaces were used by others and were unavailable.

It was agreed that DT would discuss the situation with CSP the car park contractor in order to brief car park attendants regarding unauthorised use of bookmaker spaces.

Bookmaker's parking labels will again be available and distributed via Sarah Woodborne, 1 per pitch at the first meeting each bookmaker attends.

A discussion ensued about the bookmaker's responsibility to ensure that potential under 18s are challenged and that under 18's are not allowed to place bets.

There was disagreement about the efficacy of the Think 25 policy which is aimed at supporting bookmakers in discharging that responsibility.

Bookmakers asked that the anchor points were power washed / cleaned out pre-season. MW agreed.

NEXT MEETING – Spring 2025