



British Horse Council – Headline Meeting Notes

19 June 2020

Draft notes (corrections welcome)

(remote meeting by Zoom)

David Mountford welcomed everyone to the meeting and Tim Brigstocke then joined and took over the Chair.

Previous meeting notes and information <https://www.britishhorsecouncil.org/meetings/>

A total number of 84 people joined the meeting, with thanks to those who had pre-notified that they would not be able to join. This would have taken us up to our maximum number of 100 delegates.

Format of meeting:

1. Covid-19 related matters

2. Other matters

Notification of any AoB – two items were raised: Illegal employment of grooms coming to light during Covid-19, Registration of Animal Musculoskeletal Practitioners (RAMP).

1. Covid-19 related matters

British Horse Council – David Mountford (Chair)

Since Covid-19 lockdown, weekly calls have been held with Defra to cover many issues including horse welfare, furlough and some of the animal care sector issues, resumption of riding and sport, veterinary activities during Covid-19 especially breeding and pre purchase examinations, as well as many aspects affecting equestrian trade.

Various consultations and calls for evidence; Animal Welfare Committee's record of the welfare effects of Covid-19 in May, further call for this in mid July. BHC will has submitted responses. DCMS – immediate impact of Covid-19 on sport. Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) committee looking at impact on businesses and workers, this will be open until end August.

Scotland - Sheila Voas (CVO)

Scotland's ID Regulations came into force in March 2019 and to highlight that:

- SG are committed to the original timescale that retrospective microchipping will be introduced on 28 March 2021 which is two years after the coming into force date of the Regulations in Scotland
- Publication of the 'Horse Passports - Guidance for Owners, Keepers, Veterinarians and Local Authorities in Scotland' will be within the next few weeks (currently with the printers)

Link to this publication [here](#)

ScotEquine:

- We are advised that people who own horses which are registered with a Scottish PIO are not eligible to use the Digital Stable function. These details must be updated through the relevant Scottish PIO which will then subsequently be sent as an update to the UKCED via ScotEquine.
- The ScotEquine card is being issued on behalf of Scottish PIO's and allows for the movement of equines which are accompanied by a "scan card". They can travel anywhere within Scotland without the need to be accompanied with their passport.

Gosia Siwonia: Veterinary adviser to the Welsh Government

Deadline for microchipping 12 Feb 2021

Travelling reasonable distance to collect an animal for essential business is permitted provided the 2m rule is adhered to

Owners and keepers are obliged to update CED

From 1 June 1-1 riding instruction permitted within local area 5m radius

Some sanctuaries and equine related businesses will be affected

Financial schemes to provide assistance – two sector resilience funds prioritising animal welfare. See Welsh Government website

Importing equines – no Border Control Posts at the moment in Wales

Will clarify ref resumption of sport in Wales

Q: Import through Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke and Border Control Posts. Will there be increased port infrastructure in NI, Scotland or Wales to support lairage of horses once transition period is over?

A: Discussions and planning are ongoing regarding the infrastructure at Border Control Posts, including the welfare requirements of animals such as lairage.



Helen Roberts (Defra) – England

Racing resumed and sales under guidance of Livestock Auctioneers Association

Work underway on guidance for equine care, recreational riding and sanctuaries

ACTION: List of lessons learned identified by people in order to prepare for second wave notify comms@britishhorsecouncil.org BHC will bring consensus view, others welcome to submit separately

Aim would be to provide helpful guidance beforehand especially around furlough

Details of large gatherings coming up to be factored in

Simon Waterfield (Defra) – England

Excellent engagement with equine sector

Thanks from Christine Middlemiss (CVO) for adapting to the Covid situation leading by example

Controls continually evolving as guidance eases GOV.UK for latest info (links on BHC website)

Please see separate report

Equestrian Trade – Claire Williams (British Equestrian Trade Association)

Please see separate report

Equestrian Sport – Iain Graham (British Equestrian)

Challenges are managing different regional liftings of lockdown

Challenges over application of furlough – meaning some people working very hard

Resumption of some activity in July, on a smaller scale – allowing staff to return part time

Postponement of Olympic Games and associated funding and calendar rescheduling implications, working on 2021

Definition of indoor arenas – second wave could have big impact if it comes in winter when indoor is main type of venue – equestrian activities are distinct from other indoor sport, and in reality an indoor school is a “covered arena”. Likewise impact of this on other associated professions such as veterinary.

Unregulated sport is the challenge – no governance so LAs trying to police what is happening



Leisure & Recreation – James Hick (British Horse Society)

Definition of indoor riding school – LAs best qualified to define at a local level because they are all different and not the same as most indoor sport facilities.

Please see separate slides

Racing and Thoroughbred Industry – Claire Sheppard (Thoroughbred Breeders' Association)

Please see separate slides

David Sykes (British Horseracing Authority)

Please see separate note

Welfare – Roly Owers (World Horse Welfare)

Please see separate slides

2. Other (non Covid) updates

England

See separate report from Simon Waterfield (Defra).

Animal Welfare in Transport – manifesto commitment was to tackle a number of animal welfare issues including long journeys for slaughter etc.

Existing EU rules don't reflect current scientific advice, Defra commissioned report from Farm Animal Welfare Committee (now called AWC) considered a range of evidence and submitted to all Devolved authorities. Report identifies factors affecting welfare and a number of recommendations.

Scottish and Welsh Governments did comment on the AWC reports and are carrying out consultations.

Free Trade Agreement – entering negotiations with NZ and USA as well as the EU. Current focus on NI Protocol and being considered very important ref horse movements.



EU Animal Health Law - Adam Diep

No change in implementation date – April 2021. UK has no legal obligation to align with the EU Animal Health Law, and this has not been brought up in the trade negotiations with the EU.

Needs to be looked at in terms of trade negotiations, and there could be impacts, and a look at entry requirements.

For Implementing Acts please see [here](#) although, having left the EU, documents are not being sent and we still await many Implementing Acts and Delegated Acts to emerge from the Commission.

UK can decide whether it abides with EUAHR after the end of the Transition Period, there are parts that the UK may choose to retain.

Scotland

ScotEquine available for public access fairly soon. Not connecting directly to Digital Stable. “Scan cards” will be available soon, limited supply, available for a fee to cover costs of issue.

Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Bill

Wales

Not alerted to any specific welfare issues as yet, other than loss of income impact. Wales was lucky from outset to have funding mechanisms already in place such as the Economic Resilience Fund and others to enable equine organisations to apply.

NI - SPS, EUAHL and NI Protocol – NI remains part of SPS and must implement EUAHL in full, significantly different from rest of UK so will be drafting primary legislation. ID and registration of premises will therefore be included. Movements from GB to NI will be on a third country basis, no FTA situation will prevail. Border Control Posts will be designated and built at Belfast and Larne. Preparations going well, to achieve in 3 months what Dublin did in 3 years. Studbooks are a cause for concern and Minister will meet with Weatherbys and Horse Sport Ireland as there is a legal issue, a member states cannot register animals in a third country.

Please also see separate slides.

British Horse Council

Good deal of work on Equine ID and CED. PIO meeting with Defra was facilitated. Ministerial announcement at NEF was welcome but considerable lag with officials’ advice ref implementation of Lord Gardiner’s announcement. BHC has been frustrated by speed of movement especially considering October microchip deadline.



Equine Viral Arteritis – work delayed due to Covid

Considerable concerns exist over horse movements following the end of the Transition Period.

Animal Health Trust. Finances struggling as a result of the veterinary industry structure, clinical referral services had become loss making. These will now be closed and AHT will need to restructure following a new business plan and significant funding ongoing as well as a cash plug to fill (funds need to be found, provisional pledges have been made by HRH the Princess Royal and HM The Queen as well as other resourceful individuals) an existing gap. The rest of the sector is being invited to consider pledging an amount to fill the immediate cash hole to enable AHT to get back to a viable starting point if required. Trustees taking a decision on whether AHT can continue to exist and this will mean a successful long term business plan including funding from the racing and TB sector but the remainder of the sector to make a contribution. Many equestrian organisations are looking at what they may be able to do ongoing and there is considerable appetite for disease surveillance and research to continue and be self funding. Without a reformed AHT we would have a big industry hole. A meeting at the end of June will come to a final decision as to whether there is a future for AHT. We have no surveillance system without AHT and it's important to understand what the Regulator wants in terms of disease controls. For info or to consider a pledge contact david@beva.org.uk

Equine Health & Welfare Pathway (for England)

Please see separate slides. Planning work will get underway in plenty of time for 2021/22 and participants in this meeting will be invited to contribute.

Racing - Ross Hamilton

European thoroughbred and sport horse sectors have come together to form a Task Force to advise and review on the implications of the Animal Health Law for the sector – given that there remain significant concerns about elements within it, including those provisions that apply to Third Countries including the UK post the Transition Period. A dossier has been prepared which has been submitted to the European Commission. This includes representation from the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities, FEI, Horseracing Ireland, France Galop and Weatherbys.

EU Animal Health Law & TB movements – Racing and TB breeding continues to take an Europe wide position to resolving issues. A Task Force (racing and sport) has been developed to look at aspects of the future movements and the EUAHL. Simon Cooper represents UK in terms of TB registrations/Weatherbys. A prospectus dossier with recommendations is being produced and circulated to key Government and trade departments.

Irish Government is still being formed and focusing on horseracing industry and horse movements.

Horse Welfare Strategy has 20 recommendation, some of which have been accelerated by Covid-19 and they will be picked by the Horse Welfare Board. This is a template for taking forward high welfare standards in racing.

Migration Advisory Committee engaged on future shortage occupation list for professions which are needed such as work riders in the racing industry, as a future part of the immigration system.

Sport

Please see separate slide from BEF

Research

HBLB has seen its income drop to zero since racing stopped. All heads of expenditure cut by up to 25%. It was decided that it was not appropriate to affect projects underway or projects starting in 2020. There will not be a new funding round in 2021, except for possibly some smaller funded projects. Currently have 7 scholarships, 16 projects and 6 post docs and user friendly dissemination plans are being developed.

The Horse Trust is currently funding 25+ scientific and academic projects and it is likely that all of these will be delayed by 6-12 months by Covid 19. It is likely that The Horse Trust will fund fewer projects than normal in 2020.

Disease surveillance is a crucial part of our world and as such funding bodies, indeed all bodies, need to be focusing on such key areas, whether at AHT or elsewhere. HBLB will continue its funding of AHT disease surveillance this year, provided it continues, including the International Collating Committee disease data. Discussions as to what could replace AHT for disease surveillance in short order as it is crucial for movements in racing and sport.

AoB and questions submitted in Q&A:

- Defra agreed to share lessons learned from their consultation with devolved authorities.
- DM respond direct to Brian Hutton about his RAMP queries.
- Query about genetic samples stored at AHT – ideally direct straight to AHT as it's quite specific.
- Challenging situation come to light regarding grooms' employment during Covid-19 (see below)

Questions:

Q: Lucy Katan, British Grooms' Association: Please can it be added to the future agenda about human welfare of the workforce in our sector. The pandemic has highlighted the substandard and illegal working practices that are still commonly occurring in our sector.

A: Yes, happy to include in future meetings

We have had so many calls from grooms who have the incorrect employment status, not on PAYE and have been forced out of their workplace with no furlough or SSP possible. This continues to be an embarrassment to our industry, it should be raised and tackled to create a new normal.



Q: Are there plans to enforce microchipping after October deadline as doubtless not all will comply?

A: PIOs can advise owners - what should PIOs do about non-compliance? If PIO's can remind their members of the deadline that would be beneficial to all and we would be grateful of this action. If there are concerns regarding non-compliance with legislation you can report to your local authority. We hope that going forward the Central Equine Database and Digital Stable will provide a more efficient way to take action against those who are non-compliant.

Q: Is there going to be any concerted industry-wide push to get information accurate on the database in line with the new legislation in October? Public still largely unaware they need to #CheckThatChip.

A: Defra will be doing a coordinated comms plan to industry regrading microchipping once their restrictions on messaging have been lifted.

Date of next meeting: Friday 11 December (Zoom) 10.30-12.30