

## CHESTER BLC - Monday 25th March 2024 @ Chester Racecourse

Present - Paddy Chesters / Andrea Wilkinson / Neil Farmer representing the racecourse

Neil Pateman (RBC) / Ian Bown / Dave Halford / Paul Dolan / Bob Kirk / Richard Liles / Paul Hertzberg

Following introductions PC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**ACCESS/CAR PARKING** - Given the historic nature of the site, car parking is a very complex issue for the racecourse. PC advised the meeting that the racecourse hope to purchase the car park situated across the road from the main entrance from the Local Authority to increase raceday parking capacity. BK asked if Bookmakers could be issued with a swing badge for rear view mirror to speed up access at the entrances. PC agreed to consider this and advised that if the purchase of the car park did not go ahead then Bookmakers could still use the NCP car park and access the racecourse via the green gates.

PH raised the safety issue of Bookmakers transporting heavy equipment through the tunnel after racing, with the potential risk to Bookmakers and customers. PC confirmed that no other options for egress were available and the racecourse would ensure that marshalls were in place to accompany bookmakers through the tunnel safely. It was felt that this had worked well last year in reducing the potential risk of accidents/incidents.

PC advised that bag searches will continue at the racecourse but that NP will locate himself at the entrance to vouch for Bookmakers to prevent delays in accessing the course. This will have to commence 3 hours before first race as pitching up will continue to be 2 hours on Saturdays and for the May meeting. PD asked if Course bookmakers could continue to drop off their equipment and this was agreed by PC/NF

PC advised the meeting that the centre of the course/car parks are currently very wet so will have to be monitored through April with a view to access for the May meeting. Hopefully it will stop raining!

**ON LINE PAYMENTS** - It was agreed that this has bedded in well now but concerns were raised that sales close at 10pm the night before racing, though badges could still be bought on the day directly from the racecourse office. AW advised that on the day, on line purchasing, should be in place by the May meeting. The multiplier will continue to be calculated at the middle price as previously. BK asked if Chester could introduce an early bird price as is done by ARC tracks for bookings made 6 days before the day of the meeting. PC agreed to consider this suggestion for future years.

PC advised that admission prices have been held at 2023 levels. The workers badge will continue to be free for the May meeting.

**DEE STAND/COURSE ACCESS**- PH raised the issue of access for customers into the course with numerous instances of customers queuing to get in and missing the first race. A request was made for additional resources to ensure customers can be

moved through gates 8 and 9 (Dee/Goat Walk) more quickly. At the Saturday meeting in September last year the Dee Stand gate was closed which negatively impacted on trade in that ring. NF advised that this would not happen again and that both gates would be open for Customers to access the course. PC advised that early tickets sales for the Roodee enclosure were positive.

SEASON TICKETS FOR BOOKMAKERS- PC advised that this could be considered with an appropriate discount, though a similar scheme at Bangor had been tried with very little take up.

COURSE ENCLOSURE- PC advised that the enclosure will be open with full facilities on all the Saturdays and the Family Sunday, unless the area is too wet as has been the case on occasions in previous years.

PREMIERISATION- PC advised that the meeting on Saturday July 13th will not be a Premier meeting and therefore will start outside the 2-4pm window. However, the racecourse hopes to mitigate the negative effect of this by staging an Arab Race at around 3.20pm, with the racecourse opening earlier in the afternoon and screening races from the Premier meetings. All other Saturdays are classed as Premier Days with Ladies Day on 31st August expected to be very popular. Craig Charles has been booked to provide entertainment after racing.

WI-FI ON COURSE- IB raised the problems experienced by ELITE bookmakers which on occasions had caused them to pull down early due to lack of signal. PC advised that a new connection has been installed which he is assured is 10 times quicker than the old system. A separate VIP channel is being considered for Bookmakers to use but it is important that access to this is restricted to ensure effective connectivity.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS- NF agreed that it was ok for Bookmakers to leave their joints under the tunnel at two day (or more) meetings.

NP will send out information on picking arrangements for the new areas- via the RBC website.

BK requested that there be full replenishments (14) on the rails as occurs at other tracks. The current number is 11 but PC agreed to consider increasing this to 12 for 2024.

PC advised that the Chester Bet terminals will continue to be sighted as last year.