

## NARS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

03/06/2025, 12 NOON

THE RACING CENTRE

NEWMARKET

### AGENDA

- 1) Welcome and housekeeping
- 2) Apologies
- 3) Approval of the minutes from the previous EC meeting on the 17/02/2025
- 4) Winter finishing times and fixture list 2026
- 5) Races off on time, Cathy O Meara, head of race day operations, presentation and Q&A.
- 6) D&A update and operating procedures and positive minds.
- 7) EC nonattendance and consequences.
- 8) NARS across the committees, internal and external.
- 9) NARS finances
- 10) NARS AGM, and date of next meeting
- 11) AOB

### **Attendees:**

George McGrath

Kevin Parsons

Georgie Edgecombe

Jemma Marshall

Julia Bennet

Shaun Johnson

Svetlana Zinchenko

Angela Bramham

Claudia Fisher

Mudassir Razzaq

Richard Farmer

Patrick MacEwan

Terry Albone

Victoria Harris

### **Apologies:**

Tom Kerby

GM welcomes all attending the meeting, housekeeping is completed and then GM asks for approval of the previous Executive Committee meeting minutes held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

### **Minutes approved**

GM reminds all attendees to complete their expense forms and have them in before the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### **Follow up**

GM announces the apologies from Tom Kerby, noting the lateness of this as TK gave an hour and 31 minutes notice. GM expressed disappointment at any EC sending short notice of being unable to attend as the 4 meetings per year are well known in advance. The EC are aware that standing to represent your fellow members requires the EC members to attend 8 meetings over their two-year period on the EC. There was a debate on attendance, and it was acknowledged that the EC members should attend each meeting. It was also understood that at times this might not be possible. GM reiterated if one stood on a platform of representing your fellow employees, you should commit to attending the 4 meetings per year, this was made clear in the information on nomination for the EC. The EC meetings are scheduled almost a year in advance. KP has a paper on current EC attendance which is shared with the EC.

Wendy Storie has resigned from the Executive, effective of today. GM has spoken with her at length regarding this, on two occasions, the latter being a few days before this EC meeting to better inform the EC.

### **ACTION**

Pete McCulloch stepped down from the Executive on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2025.

GE talks to the Executive regarding the lack of communication between them and the office. Many members of the EC give notice of their attendance or apologies to either George or Kevin over WhatsApp and do not reply to the emails sent from the office. This makes arranging anything difficult for Georgie

GM reiterates the responsibilities and commitments that the EC have in terms of four meetings a year and the AGM to which they really should try their hardest at attending.

KP shows a table on PowerPoint, this table shows the attendance of the EC members through the last EC meetings.

KP covers the RCI Program and where we are currently at. KP goes over the new scoring sheets that have previously been shown at the last EC Meeting showing the scoring criteria, giving all the RCI's more credibility when doing course inspections. KP also explains his talk with Stratford Racecourse and how they were being scored and the fact that most other racecourses are improving, so when a course hasn't improved, other courses overtake them.

43 courses have been inspected at this time but 16 still to be done. Many of these have already been penciled in to be inspected.

### **ACTION**

After that they all just need to be inspected for the second time, were in a much better place this year than we were last year.

GM moves on to HIPB funding. Funding has been approved for the year 2025 for £759,000. There are three non-executive directors that are paid £15,000 for their time and three non-executive directors that are not paid at all. I do believe that it would be beneficial for the EC to meet some of the HIPB directors, I am thinking of inviting Dr. Elenor Boden to our next EC meeting, or Jon Pett to our AGM in September.

#### **ACTION**

GM goes on to talk about the NARS Presidential Elections. We have Civica engaged to be the independent third-party firm that will facilitate the Presidential Elections. This year we have two people running for the position of president, Tom Kerby and Jemma Marshall. None of the nominations will come to the office, they will be going straight to Civica, as will the ballot paper results. Civica will then announce the results. I advise that both candidates hold a hosting, possibly one in Newmarket and one in Lambourn.

#### **ACTION**

GM goes over the NARS finances. We have four accounts, our current account, private reserve, one-year fixed term account and now we have an account that is used to pay Simon Bailey, the racing chaplain. This is just to hold the money that is to pay SB's salary which has been donated by many different contributors and organisations.

The accounts are always available to anyone via companies house where our accounts are logged. We also have a financial trustee, Dave Eva that advises and looks over the accounts.

Anything that we earn in interest on the one-year fixed term account we hold goes towards sponsorship and NARS events, this keeps the capital secure and means any sponsorship doesn't come for the 0.25% of PM.

We have a general limit of £500 for sponsorship. We don't advertise this as we don't wish to be inundated with sponsorship requests, but we do support racing charities or racing staff that are trying to raise money for good causes.

I would like to ask if the accounts are approved. Unanimous yes.

GM moves on to DBS checks. There is a trial of 30 yards that are taking part. The BHA have identified which yards they would focus on, they also asked that NARS didn't publish the yards or even the fact they were now asking for yards to start DBS checks.

The DBS checks are aimed at senior staff and traveling staff however they can be useful for all staff. The trial was to start in May, and we will wait to see the success of this.

#### **ACTION**

Previously DBS checks have not been enforced due to the expense of them and that they can be time-consuming in an industry where employment status fluctuates so drastically.

The EC discussed the benefits to DBS checks, but also the problems that may be faced when a less than desirable DBS check comes back for a valued member of staff. A flagging system with the BHA was discussed.

GM moved on to Winter finishing times. There was a proposal put to the Commercial Committee to finish racing at 8pm rather than 8:30pm. David Armstrong was ready to say that they couldn't do that at this time and to revisit in 2027. However, there were further discussions to which the proposal went to the BHA board and there will now be a trial of finishing at 8pm.

The trial will run for the first nine weeks of the year, Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March. There will be two weekday floodlit fixtures that will finish at 8pm rather than 8:30pm.

Cathy O'Meara joined the meeting.

Cathy O'Meara – Racing off on time initiative – PowerPoint.

CO showed the EC the BHA dashboards on Off Times and explained what is available to the public for viewing.

CO discussed with the EC the initiatives that the BHA are trying to facilitate in terms of getting races off on time. They currently have a target of three minutes to get races off on time. When the initiative first started, they had about a 60% success rate of getting races off on time. Over time a KPI was set of 85% for races off on time, currently it is at 78%.

CO went on to discuss the time between races and wanted the EC's input on the current times they have, whether there is sufficient time or more needs to be done to assist the staff in getting races off on time.

There was a large discussion into what could affect the times in which staff get their horses down to the track, this could be from difficult horses to jockey changes last minute.

The EC discussed the logistics of racecourses as this can also influence the timings staff have to stick to.

CO was very interested in the EC opinions and thoughts on this. CO also explained the push from the broadcasters and bookmakers for specific off times to get as many races broadcast as they can without having any races clash with each other.

It was also noted about how the EC thinks it would be beneficial to be told when they have 5 mins to go and then 2 mins to go, alongside having large clocks around the stable yard so they are more aware of the time.

CO then discussed the direction of travel in the parade rings briefly and what would the consensus be to look into changing the direction to anti clockwise. A diagram was shown for what the parade ring specifications would need to be if the change was made. The EC was not impressed with parading anti clock wise as happens at Windsor and Goodwood.

CO left the meeting.

GM moves on to an update for the Drug & Alcohol policy, there was a paper attached to the email that was sent to all of the EC prior to this meeting.

GM would like to see a standardised approach across that board. The ideal would be one firm that carries out all of the testing for trainers, this would then enable NARS to be able to monitor the process and have the relevant information if a member was to come to us with a complaint to be able to advise correctly.

There is also the concern of a non-negative test being punished rather than the employee being given support.

The papers that were sent to you prior to this meeting are angled towards support and help for anyone that is struggling with a drug or alcohol problem. As no one has questioned this prior to the meeting I am going to take this as read.

There should also be more awareness that all medications that are that are being taken by employees need to be disclosed to the yards office.

The HIPB is supporting in funding this drug and alcohol testing for the first year, this would be with the company that the papers you received before this meeting, so there's a huge financial incentive for any employer to sign up to this particular module as opposed to any other one. Any other module is significantly more expensive than this one.

## **ACTION**

GM moves on to the date of the AGM and the date for the next EC meeting. The AGM will be held at the Saddle Rooms in Middleham. The event will start at 7pm, there will be snacks and refreshments. As always this will be an event that gives the members the floor to ask any questions they wish to. All the EC are invited, if you would like to attend and would like accommodation then please email Georgie your requirements. **The date for the AGM is 24<sup>th</sup> of September**

The date of the **next EC meeting is the 5<sup>th</sup> of August**; this will also be held in the Racing Centre in Newmarket. The meeting will start at 12 noon. Please let Georgie know your attendance.

## **AOB:**

KP – The new website is up and running if everyone would take the time to look at it. It's got new features, such as directions to the racecourses and the stable entrances. This will make it a lot easier for people who have never been to a particular course to find where to go. It also shows the racecourse rating and the COC details.

JM/SJ – 25<sup>th</sup> august there will be a festival in Lambourn that SJ and I are involved in. It will be a family day that starts at 3pm, there will be music and food. SJ's band will be playing. We are aiming to promote Riders Minds, Racing Welfare and another charity that is yet to be decided upon. This is going to be a ticketed event, we are going to charge £5 per wristband and we have gone with 200 people so far, which is the capacity for the event. There will also be security for this event. We are going to be putting out posters to publicise the event and following on from GM's discussion about sponsorship we would like to ask for £500 to cover the cost of wristbands and posters.

GM asked the EC for approval of this and all approve.

## **ACTION**

JM also discussed reporting incidents on the BHS app, as since she has reported a critical incident there have been 'Go Slow' signs installed around Lambourn.

SZ – A college asked me about insurance from the ages of 65 – 67 as RIABS doesn't cover them. Do they have to take out their own personal insurance?

GM – Yes, they would need to find their own insurance provider as the underwriters at RIABS will not cover staff of that age, it is not RIABS that have made that call. The British Grooms Association may also cover beyond 65, so it would be worth the member contacting them.

JB – I sit on a few committees for George, one of which is the Regulation and Integrity committee at the BHA, the Judicial Panel User Group and the Jockey Clubs Racing Group. As you all know we have been trying to make it mandatory that the last seven racecourses supply a free meal to staff, well next month we will have an update on this and providing this is approved the remaining racecourses will be advised in August that this is coming into force. This has taken three years to get to this point but I am glad to say that we seem to be getting somewhere.

AB – No AOB.

TA – No AOB.

PM – No AOB.

VH – No AOB.

CF – No AOB.

MR – No AOB.

RF - No AOB.