

First Incorporated in 1923 as The Northern Bookmakers & Backers Protection Association  
**The British Racecourse Bookmakers' Association**

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### NEWSLETTER JUNE 2020

Greetings to all members. We hope that you are all staying safe and well in these difficult and unprecedented times. Here is a short newsletter to let you know the situation as we see it going forward, as well as a precis of what we have been trying to do to help alleviate the situation for all on course bookmakers.

#### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Earlier in the year the board announced on our website that subscriptions would be put on hold until attended racing (racing with crowds in attendance) resumed.

As we are now 6 months into the year with no tangible evidence of attended racing's resumption, the Board has decided to reduce the £100 annual subscription to £50. This £50 will cover the costs that the association has already incurred on your behalf, these being the obligatory Gambling Charity donation and insurance costs.

We are very grateful to those many members who have already paid the subscription in full, so those who have paid in full will have their subs reduced by £50 next year.

It has been encouraging that so many members have contacted Directors offering to help in any way they can and we send our thanks and grateful appreciation and would always encourage members to seek election to the Board.

#### **GAMBLING COMMISSION**

Most of you will have heard by now that nearly one year after seven OCBs were fined by the GC for allegedly breaching license conditions at Royal Ascot the GC have quashed the fines.

The Association's lawyers have robustly challenged the findings of the Commission since the imposition of these fines and have continually questioned the GC's responses to all pleas for mitigation, clemency and co-operation rather than confrontation. Thankfully these fines have now been withdrawn. This is however, by no means the last we will hear of this. What happened to the Ascot 7 could and in our opinion WILL happen to many other bookmakers over the course of the next year or so. Consequently, our advice to all OCBs is to be constantly vigilant. Make sure all staff are aware of the 'Challenge 21' standard, that all signage is up to date and that all laptops are set up with 'challenge' and 'pass/fail' buttons. (a matter of a few minutes for RDT techs to install.) For those that are interested we have produced a folder that is robust enough to be carried everywhere an OCB might need it. It fits into a standard laptop carrying case and contains everything that we consider essential in fulfilling the requirements of the GC.

The cost of this defence which has been for the benefit of *all* OCBs has not been insignificant, which is another reason why it was necessary to charge a small fee for subs this year.

Given the currently increasing requirements of the licensing conditions ALL OCBs are recommended to lobby their MPs to complain about the Commission's treatment of the non-remote sector.

We have written to the GC on more than one occasion to request some sort of reduction or waiver in fees (due to the current situation) only to be told that the fees are set by statute, not by the GC. The GC have told us that they have a legal opinion (which they would not share) that indicates that this is the case. As a consequence we have asked for this and other issues we have with the Commission to be discussed in Parliament and we would ask all members to raise these issues with their own MPs.

## **SPRC**

As soon as the intention to change the way the SP is calculated was announced the Board made a statement to the press questioning it and asking why it was felt that this trusted and recognised gold standard should be interfered with. We have continued since to warn against any sort of change that would compromise the integrity of the SP in favour of the Off Course Industry. As an association the BRBA will be making a official submission to the CMA. Any members who wish to make their own personal submission in addition are welcome to do so.

## **HAND SANITISER**

In preparation for the return of attended racing we have sourced a quantity of hand sanitiser for members and this is available to members (now) at a cost of £2.60 per 100ml container + delivery.

## **BACK ON TRACK**

Although we don't know when it will be possible for OCBs to work on course again, we thought it prudent to have a plan which hopefully will enable us to be ready and able to resume, albeit possibly in a limited and phased way, when the happy moment arrives. With this in mind we've put together a few ideas and sent them to the major racecourse groups as well as to responsible and influential individuals.

- Betting rings/areas to be spaced thus: Pitch,Gap, Pitch,Gap, Pitch Gap etc, and no more than two lines of books in any one area and with preferably only one line in use.

- Designated numbers to be reduced to a level at which the Public, Bookmakers and Racecourse staff would be safe. (and also to take into account the fewer pitches that would be on offer with the increase in spacing between picks as well as then expected decrease in crowd numbers while people get used to the idea that venturing out isn't going to be bad for their health.)

- Bookmakers to come in number order off list

- No Opt Ins from outside the maximum number

- All joints to have hand sanitisers available.

- All joints to have 'Queuing Spaces' set out in front of them with masking tape/ or marker spray. As is currently the case in Supermarkets. (current thinking is 2 metres apart)

- All badges to be bought online.

- No more than two people, (including the bookmaker) to staff any one joint. And both must be on the joint. (No floor staff permitted)

- All bookmakers and staff MUST certify that they are free from all symptoms of Covid 19. (Such certification could be a condition of buying the on-line badge.)

We very much hope that these measures we have taken and suggestions we have offered go some small distance to alleviating the hardship that all members are experiencing during these terrible times. Please feel free to contact any of us if you want to discuss anything in the newsletter, or if you just want a chat. We look forward to seeing you all on course at the earliest safe opportunity.