



**MINUTES OF THE BRITISH DRESSAGE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020
HELD ON 20 October 2020 at The Windmill Hotel, Coventry**

Directors Present: Linda Whetstone
Caroline Godfrey

In attendance: Jason Brautigam
Ben Waterhouse
Winnie Murphy

1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Chairman Linda Whetstone opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending online via live stream the twenty-second Annual General Meeting of British Dressage.</p> <p>With the agreement of the meeting the Chief Executive, Jason Brautigam, took as read the Notice convening the meeting.</p>
2.	<p>The Chief Executive noted that four members were present.</p> <p>A total of 27 Proxy forms were received to will allow the Chairman to vote on behalf of those not present. One proxy form nominated the Chief Executive to vote on their behalf.</p>
3.	<p>The Chief Executive announced he would now take members through the Ordinary Resolutions as set out in the Notice of the AGM.</p> <p>First Ordinary Resolution</p> <p>For the First Ordinary Resolution the CEO stated that Claire Moir was standing unopposed for the BD Youth Director election.</p> <p>On the unanimous approval of the 28 proxy forms received and those present, with no votes registered against, Claire was deemed to be elected as BD Youth Director for a second term of four years.</p> <p>Second Ordinary Resolution</p> <p>Finance Director Caroline Godfrey reported on the financial statements for 2019. BD auditors Mazars supplied a statement which was read out by the Finance Director:</p> <p><i>Mazars were appointed as the external auditors for the year ended 31 December 2019. The audit process took place remotely due to the impact of COVID-19. There were no significant or major issues identified within our audit findings and no material misstatements were identified.</i></p>

	<p><i>There were a few instances where the 2018 prior period balances and disclosures were incorrect or not in accordance with the current accounting standards but these were corrected within the 2019 financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations and accounting standards. No significant internal control deficiencies were raised within our audit findings report.</i></p> <p>The Chief Executive proposed that the Financial Statements, together with the Directors' Report and the Auditor's Report for the period ending 31 December 2019 be approved.</p> <p>This Ordinary Resolution was carried unanimously with 28 proxy votes and all present in favour of the resolution.</p> <p>Third Ordinary Resolution</p> <p>CEO proposed that Mazars be elected as auditors of British Dressage and that the Board be authorised to fix their remuneration. This Ordinary Resolution was carried unanimously, with 28 proxy votes and all present confirmed in favour of the resolution, and no votes against. The Board was duly authorised to fix their remuneration.</p>	
4.	<p>Special Business</p> <p>The following resolution was proposed as a Special Resolution:</p> <p><i>That the draft articles of association submitted to the meeting and for the purpose of identification signed by the Chairman thereof be and the same are hereby approved and adopted as the articles of association in substitution for and to the exclusion of all the existing articles of association of British Dressage.</i></p> <p>The CEO outlined the reasons for these changes, which would enable the Board to appoint up to five extra Directors in non-technical roles to provide specific expertise in certain areas, such as legal, HR, IT etc., as required. This would include the Finance Director and Business Development Director roles. In addition, all member-elected roles would be subject to electronic membership voting in future, including those who were standing unopposed, with the result binding and announced at the AGM.</p> <p>This Special Resolution was carried by a majority decision, with 27 proxy and all present in favour of the resolution, and one proxy vote recorded against.</p>	
5.	<p>Presentations</p> <p>The Chair provided an overview of the year to date, summarising some of the challenges BD has faced during the coronavirus crisis. The CEO then provided some more detail on the financial and operational impact, current projects, membership figures, participation numbers and marketing initiatives, while the COO covered IT projects and a volunteer update. CEO also summarised the key strategic objectives for British Dressage over the next four year Olympic cycle from Tokyo to Paris.</p>	

6.

Member Questions – submitted in writing before the meeting

Question from Annabel Darrall-Rew

Although some members are happy with the new website layout, I find the new website cumbersome and laborious to navigate. I think it is most difficult for BD judges. To find out the information I need for upgrading I need to navigate through five separate sections. Please can you investigate this and maybe have a page specifically for existing judges on the first page of the site or a link from the page I reach having logged on?

Answer

This continues to be a work in progress, as we are in the process of implementing an overhaul of the judge education system. This will involve a number of changes to the way that we deliver judge training and assessment, moving to a different system for those wanting to upgrade and including further online judge training activity on a national basis.

We are currently in the transitional phase, so we still need to ensure that the information on our website covers all activity as we move from the old system to the new. With the launch of the new system we will be overhauling the structure and navigation of the judge pages on the website and will carry out some audience testing with selected judges to ensure this is easy to navigate.

However, we have already launched a centralised judge training calendar, which went live on the resumption of activity back in June, plus dedicated pages for new judges, as well as current judges looking to upgrade and the judge education workforce. Further enhancements will be forthcoming as the new system is rolled out over the course of the next six months.

Question from Rosalind Tate

How many people have lost competition points since lockdown ended, irrespective of the reasons? This is due to a recent post on social media in which a poll revealed over 50 people had lost points and there were over 170 comments on the subject.

As everyone will know, it is a condition of entry for BD competitions that all riders have a valid membership and horse registration when competing. We appreciate that this has been a tough year for everyone, but it is important that we still adhere to our rules and regulations and apply them consistently to all members. This eligibility criteria is stated in the BD Members' Handbook in the Membership, Horse Registration and Entries sections.

Our membership and registration renewal reminders have continued to be issued regardless of the current situation, so everyone should have continued to receive the emails and text communications from BD as normal.

We have endeavoured to keep members up to date throughout the crisis, informing them regularly about the return to training and competition activity, so everyone could be ready for when the sport was able to resume. This included reminders in our e-newsletters, email notifications, website updates and social media posts to ensure that memberships and horse registrations were up to date when competition restarted.

Riders failing to have a current paid membership at the time of a competition means that they are unfortunately ineligible to compete, their results are excluded and any points earned do not count towards qualification.

These exclusions affected 228 individual members in July, 298 in August and 162 in September. Over 32,800 riders went down the centre line in the three months following the resumption of activity. This represents just 2% of the total number of starters during this period, although the September figure is only 1.5%.

This is broadly in line with figures from previous years – 622 results were excluded in the same three months in 2019, a difference of only 66, despite there being more starters in August & September this year.

Of these 688 riders, over 600 have subsequently renewed their membership and horse registrations. Where there are extenuating circumstances we always look to exercise our discretion and offer flexibility, if at all possible. In response to the Facebook thread in question we now also issue text reminders on the day memberships are due for renewal.

This has important insurance implications as members would not be covered by BD in the event of an accident. It is also vital that we protect the integrity of the sport by applying the same rules to all members, to ensure that it is fair and equitable to everyone.

This is the main reason why we moved to an auto-renewal subscription basis for all membership and horse registrations, to ensure that these do not lapse and members do not miss out on results or qualification points. Once everyone is moved over to the auto renewal system this is a problem that immediately goes away, as memberships will never lapse by accident or without you knowing.

Question from Ellie Dadkah – submitted after the deadline on the day of the AGM

Why are only two of the eight horses selected to represent British breeders actually bred here? The rest are bred in Germany and the Netherlands! It's the World Breeding Championships not the World Rider Championships!

Whilst all breeding is global nowadays with the use of A.I., it is still the fine tuning and refining breeding choices made by British breeders, at a great cost and risk to themselves, to produce a British bred sports horse, to then be ignored by their own national sports federation.

Answer

The FEI Dressage World Breeding Championships for Young Horses are certainly a dream goal for many British breeders, owners and riders. Our young horses only get one shot at the age category each year and when the FEI announced that the Verden event had been rescheduled for December, we set out a revised selection criteria for all to work towards, including the submission of a video which would be used to invite horses forward for an observational trial.

A total of 12 horses came forward with video application, three of which were British bred – and all 12 were invited to the second round of selection. The observation trial took place at Keysoe in early October, judged by two independent judges, using the test to be ridden at Verden. From the results of the trial, the Selectors made their final decision. Sadly, one of the British bred horses did not fulfil the WBSFH criteria, so could not be selected, but the other two were chosen – one five year old and one seven year old as a reserve, although this horse has now unfortunately had to withdraw.

International Teams Director Judy Harvey commented; "Of course our desire is to send horses bred at home, but we simply can't select British horses if they don't come forward for selection. We did everything possible to adjust the process to make it as fair as possible and open to everyone. It was communicated to all and, provided the criteria was met, anyone could apply.

"Unless British breeders present their horses how are we supposed to select them? There are of course a number of reasons why some don't. The FEI championships are tough. It's a big ask for the horses – most aren't at a stage in their education to perform at the level required and you're going to compete against the best in the world, so they have to be well prepared.

"Attending the championships in Verden is also a self-funded exercise. In this time of COVID-19 there are health considerations, plus the huge financial implications that have to be considered by individuals wanting to take part. It is up to the individual breeders, owners, producers and rider to make themselves aware of the requirements and to put their horses forward for selection, if that is appropriate for them at this stage in their careers.

"This year, for whatever reason, we didn't have many British bred horses come forward, but we would certainly encourage anyone out there with a talented youngster, British bred or otherwise, to consider the young horse classes for next year – and ultimately selection for the FEI championships. We absolutely share your desire to use this to showcase the best of British breeding, not just our riding talent."

2020 FEI World Breeding Championships selection timeline

30 July – all international riders emailed direct alerting them to say a revised selection policy was coming

	<p>12 August – news item posted on the BD website releasing details and revised selection policy uploaded to the website</p> <p>24 August – all international riders emailed with info and final reminder to apply</p> <p>1 September – mentioned in BD monthly newsletter 'Engage' which goes to all members</p> <p>2 October – viewing trial at Keysoe as part of the Shearwater British Young Horse Championships</p> <p>20 October – selected horses released in a news story on the BD website</p>	
7.	<p>Conclusion CEO closed the meeting by thanking everyone involved in the sport for their continued support and particularly for the kind messages received over the last six months.</p>	