

NMRC AGM AGENDA & MINUTES MONDAY 22nd JANUARY 2024

Phil Evans (PE) opened the meeting and also thanked Andy White (AW) for setting up the online meeting and all other committee members for their input over the last 12 months. Also taking part from the committee were KU, GA, HG, MB, DB & MW. Apologies received from CR & JB. Angela White also joined the meeting.

We then went on to run through the main agenda as follows:

Membership Report

Helen Goodwill (HG) advised that the 'paper based' numbers were 42 (at 47 in 2023, 53 in 2022 down from 73 in 2019). The number of printed magazines were reduced in 2023 with 'friends' of the club moved to online versions whilst past/present committee members now pay £6pa to receive a printed copy instead of the usual £12pa.

The bulk of the membership is now 'free online' with the current list showing 453 subscribers at present (from 407 in 2023, 368 in 2022, 330 in 2021 & 175 in 2019). All get advised when the new magazine is produced (via Mailchimp) although opening rate of the e mails is usually only 60-70%. Around 11 names were removed from the mailing list during the past year where either their e mails 'bounced' or they 'unsubscribed'.

Our Facebook followers currently stand at 506 (was 456 in 2023, 404 in 2022, 367 in 2021 & 275 in 2020) although some of these are fully registered members (about a third) albeit unclear why some join Facebook but then do not register as free members. Some non-active Facebook members will be deleted gradually over the next 12m. There has been a rise in joiners with 'dodgy profiles' joining the group so we must be alert to any persons, especially if based overseas (so no real reason to join our group) trying to post 'dodgy' messages.

If committee members using Facebook can visit the club page as often as they can and leave comments etc (not just likes) I am sure this will help stimulate further growth of this membership platform.

The club also has plenty of Twitter (X) followers albeit most seem interested mainly in the UAE Racing scene and this forum generates relatively little activity regards the UK operations of the club.

In summary, whilst further growth in free members and other 'followers' is pleasing, the actual involvement in club activities is generally not increasing. See later comments.

Magazine Report

Ken reports that he was not far away on costs sent 26th March 2023. £42.00 owed from last year. 31 stamps left from last year .

Mags sent this year 2 monthly 48, 50, 46,46,46,48, total 284 minus 31 stamps left over 253 @68 ==£172.04

Printing was 6 times £40 = £240 plus £12.00 envelopes all together £466.04 money given to me by the club

£282.00 plus £182.00 total £464.00 balance £2.04 owed

Possible Costs next year Stamps 275 times 75 p £207.00 printing £240.00 envelopes £12 00 that s if everything stays at the same price £459.00 is a possible cost

As club able to transfer £500 from subs account in November the costs are just about covered by subscriptions at present.

I shall arrange to send Ken funds every 6 months and Ken will also buy in extra stamps if any price rises are made before the next AGM.

As long as Ken is happy to continue with the paper magazine distribution etc there are no plans to curtail this option at present despite the falling numbers.

Treasurers Report

At the time of writing I have not heard from Richard when we can expect the latest accounts for NMRC

However since the last AGM the club bank balance has risen slightly we appear to be financially stable again.

We also have moved a substantial chunk of reserves onto a 95-day deposit account which is currently paying more interest. Set up September 2023.

Membership Fees

These comments apply to the 'paper' list only.

Despite the rising inflation in 2023 the club should be able to hold paid membership fees at £12 for another year.

Stable Visits

We managed three visits in 2023 – Mel Rowley, Susan Corbett & Tristran Davidson

It's fair to say that numbers attending have been lower than we would like – in recent years we have suffered a number of member deaths that have impacted upon this club activity.

To make visits more attractive we do try and link to a local race meeting on the same day although when mid-week we do have a conflict with many 'working' members.

Links with Wales Racing Club and some selected racecourses do sometimes help improve numbers.

Initial plans are to arrange three visits across our region in 2024.

Competition News

PE advised there were 57 entrants for the 2023-24 NH Satnaps+ challenge this year (down 7 on last year and another 8 on the previous year). As in other areas, the attrition is down largely to members who have sadly died or in some cases now have significant health issues. As regards the trophy I give winners the option of taking it (or not) each year but due to its size its rare to find any takers!

Mark Banks (MB) confirmed that he would score the Alex Bird competition in 2024 again with Mike Wheeler (MW) assisting with the other admin. MB has now supplied updated versions for the 2024 competition which will be in the next magazine and also on the website.

For 2024 the usual Cheltenham, Aintree & Ascot rounds will be held. The final round will be Newmarket in July.

HG to advised that she will also run the Heritage Handicaps comp in 2024.

We are also trying to formulate a 'hall of fame' for past winners of all competitions and if Helen can assist with a list of HH Comp winners that will complete the list.

Also, if the HH Comp trophy is being engraved/presented I will sort out re-imburement for HG.

PE also advised that he will run the Grand National sweepstake again in 2024 after the strong entries in recent years. However, as field now cut to 34 runners the entry fee will be £6 in 2024. AW offered to help run the online draw again.

Cheltenham/Aintree Preview Events 2024

Late last year we were approached by Ian Cox (member of the FB group), who held another preview event in Warrington town centre, to see if we would merge with them this year. They have a few names they use such as Noel Fehily & David Crosse but charge around £20 a ticket

I did ask last November if we could still hold the IJF raffle there and hold a joint Aintree event but they never replied.

Last week Ian called me again but I said as I had not heard from them for over 2 months that I had already set the wheels in motion for our own preview night in 2024 – hopefully the committee will support me on this!

Last year our first post-covid event had 70 attending (against my target of 30-50) and produced a surplus of around £100. The room should hold 100 at least.

On the back of this I would propose to hold the event at the Tetley club and have reserved the room again for Thursday 7th March.

I would suggest we charge £10 for advance bookings and £12 on the night with a £15 joint ticket for both Cheltenham/Aintree. As viability may be fairly tight again can all committee members attending pay 50% of the normal entry fee and same for one additional guest? To help keep tabs on numbers can committee members book places in advance even if paying on the night?

Paul Ferguson is available again and so is Gordon. Paul has also recommended Dan Kelly (an owner with Alan King and form expert who has done several previews with Paul before. Also on the club FB group!). I have also asked whether one of the Cheltenham Exchange Team (you tube previews) would like to join the panel although they have passed this time but will ask about Aintree as an alternative. Keith McHugh (Racing Post) has also agreed to join our panel.

Besides selling tickets to members, will also have banner up at the venue and do some small local advertising. Will also ask Paul & Dan to share details via their twitter followers and if Cheltenham Exchange get involved re Aintree will ask them to help promoting.

Paul will also bring along his Weatherby's guides to sell on the night – were £10 last year.

Aintree Preview Event 2024

I would aim to hold on Wednesday 10th April.

I would suggest we charge £8 for advance bookings and £10 on the night. As viability may be fairly tight can all committee members attending pay 50% of the normal entry fee and same for one additional guest? To help keep tabs on numbers can committee members book places in advance even if paying on the night?

Panel TBC but Andy Gibson may be available as back in UK by then and will also see if Paul Jacobs is available and hopefully Gordon again?

The GN sweepstake will be drawn online on Friday evening.

Other Events in 2024

I will run an online racing quiz night in late February – only 4 entries so far – any more takers?

Any other ideas welcome plus volunteers to arrange events.

Afterthought – Mark's racing trips – wider audience?

Deputising Cover for Key Roles

Andy White (AW) can now access the website builder & Judith Bradley (JB) is now acting as Facebook supervisor. Although CR did not join the meeting is he still available to act as Deputy Treasurer should Richard no longer want to continue in that role.

Any Other Business

KU kindly advised that he will be able to donate 'bottle' prizes for a raffle for the next event we hold.

Election of 2024 Committee

All exiting committee members were re-elected 'en bloc'. No new volunteers have been forthcoming in 2023/24.

Phil Evans 22/1/24