

**MINUTES OF MFHA TEAM CHASE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5th MAY 2010
AT CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE AT 2.30PM**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were a number of apologies for absence.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the AGM on 6th May 2009 were approved.

3. COMMITTEE REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman reported that there had been 2 meetings of the Committee since the last Annual Conference. A summary of the Minutes of the meeting on 3rd December 2009 had been published on the Web Site and there had been a further meeting immediately before the Annual Conference.

It had been a reasonably successful year for the sport although there have been a number of areas of concern. The weather has again been an important factor this year, and the problems caused by this in the spring in particular meant that events are more keen to run in the autumn.

4. NATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

Chesterton Humberts have not yet confirmed whether or not they will continue the National sponsorship which finished on 1st May 2010. It is hoped that they will do so at least for a further 12 months. Negotiations are continuing with the sponsors, led by a small sub-committee.

5. LEVELS OF COMPETITIVE INTEREST IN THE SPORT

There remains a lack of teams coming forward for the Opens, although it was recognised that the standard of horse and rider now competing is very high indeed. There have been good entries for intermediate classes which is a level that everyone can aspire to. The novice classes are mostly against a bogey time, but entries have been disappointing this season.

Philip Cowen reported on the 2010 National Championship. 16 teams qualified – 5 fewer than last year - 13 entered and 12 ran. The Championship was won by Relentless FTB by 2.3 seconds. Over 30 fences there were 8 falls and 3 rider injuries all at different fences. The vast majority of falls and refusals were over the last 8 fences which highlights the importance of fitness of horses and riders at the end of the day. Debbie Topping presented the new “Junior” trophy to Dougie Gittins as the best rider under 25 years old.

The Fernie also hosted the 10th annual UK Hunt Team Chase which offered substantial prize money to hunts including a £1,000 first prize to the winning hunt, this year won by the Pytchley, who also took 3rd place. There were 17 hunt teams entered out of a total of 38 intermediate teams.

6. PROMOTION OF THE SPORT

Presentation and atmosphere at events is extremely important, in particular to attract sponsors and spectators.

Howard Pauling explained how important the role of the commentator is. Suggested it is a good idea to announce provisional times and split times to keep interest going especially in the Open class. If there is a delay this needs to be announced and competitors and spectators kept updated if running late. It should be remembered that Opens should be run in the middle of the day as this is the most exciting class for spectators.

The web site remains an important and effective tool for promoting the sport and providing information for competitors. Mick Hawkins was thanked for his ongoing assistance in running and administering the site.

Horse & Hound continue to give excellent support and publicity through its very good coverage of the sport. Jane Carley was thanked for her excellent reporting.

7. ORDER OF MERIT

George Goring has kindly agreed to provide sponsorship for the Order of Merit in the name of the Goring Hotel as the sponsor. Every event running an Order of Merit class must allow the Goring Hotel to have a free ½ page advert in their programme, which will include publishing the current leader board.

It was agreed that there would be separate Orders of Merit for Intermediate and Open competitions running from 1st Nov 2009 to 31st Oct 2010 and with points and prize money to 5th place as follows:

1st - £400 10 points
2nd - £320 8 points
3rd - £240 6 points
4th - £160 4 points
5th - £80 2 points

Mick Hawkins has agreed to keep spreadsheets of the position and publish these on the web site.

8. THE RULES

It was agreed that a new Rule be included in the same form as Rule 8 in the Fernie Hunt rules saying that if a team takes more than 8 minutes to complete the course they will be eliminated and asked to leave the course.

9. MEDICAL, VETINARY AND SAFETY

There are no major changes in this regard.

10. RECOGNITION FEES, COURSE INSPECTION FEES AND SPONSORSHIP LEVY

The current rates are Recognition Fee £100 for Open events, £60 for others; Course Inspection Fee £60, with re-inspection an extra £40; levy £5 per team. These are to remain at the same levels.

11. MFHA TEAM CHASE ACCOUNTS

The accounts were tabled and approved and are attached to these Minutes.

12. PROPOSED DATES FOR SEASON 20010 -2011

Autumn 2010 dates have been agreed as follows:-

19th September – Belvoir (non qualifier)
26th September – Atherstone
3rd October - Meynell and South Staffs
10th October – Bicester
17th October – Pytchley
24th October – Grafton
31st October – Cotswold
7th November - Essex and Suffolk

Spring 2011 dates are still under discussion

13. REPORT ON COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS FOR 2010 - 2011

Joe Cowen confirmed he is stepping down as Chairman at the end of the meeting and was thanked by all for his considerable contribution to the sport over the past 13 years. James Buckle has been appointed in his place as Chairman for a 3 year term. Allen Brown, Rosie Vestey, Debbie Topping, Fred French and Sara Metcalfe have all been reappointed to the Committee.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of AOB tabled.

15. DATE OF 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Next Annual Conference to be May 2011 at Cheltenham Racecourse on the afternoon of the Hunter Chase evening – date not yet confirmed.