

**MINUTES OF MFHA TEAM CHASE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4th MAY 2011
AT CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE AT 2.30PM**

James Buckle welcomed the delegates to the meeting and one minutes silence was held in memory of Jo Rugman who had sadly died as a result of a fall at the VWH teamchase this spring.

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 5th May 2010 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 23rd November 2010 had been published on the Web Site and there had been a further meeting immediately before the Annual Conference.

The Autumn season had gone very well and the spring events had coped well with the poor weather conditions.

4. NATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

Chesterton Humberts have confirmed that they will not be renewing the National Sponsorship deal and are now sponsoring "Polo in the Park", although they may continue to provide some form of more limited sponsorship of team chasing in the future. A number of potential National sponsors have been approached for repeat sponsorship at around £25,000 per annum. We are looking at national brands in financial/legal/car industries which fit with the profile of the sport and focusing on 3 main events over a broad geographic spread. We remain confident that a new national sponsor will be in place for the autumn season and will continue to follow up on all leads.

5. LEVELS OF COMPETITIVE INTEREST IN THE SPORT

The Open teams are now extremely competitive, there are just not enough of them. We have tried to encourage intermediate teams to upgrade to Opens without much success and it seems that new competitors are now going straight to Open level rather than up through the grades. It was suggested that maybe we should broaden out 'recruitment' of Open competitors to retired point to point and event riders.

6. PROMOTION OF THE SPORT

Retraining of Racehorses (RoR) ran competition at this years Championship for the highest place ex racehorse and this was well received. They will be putting forward a further proposal for next season. It was suggested that we should encourage links with racehorse owners who may want to send their retired or 'failed' racehorses team chasing.

Horse & Hound continue to give excellent support and publicity through its very good coverage of the sport focusing on reporting on the Open classes.

7. **ORDER OF MERIT**

The Orders of Merit have been a real success. It is a well structured competition with teams “barking at each others heels” and encouraging them to come out and compete each week of the season. The Goring Hotel has kindly agreed to again provide sponsorship for the Orders of Merit for the forthcoming season and this will continue in the same format.

8. **THE RULES**

The chairman apologized for inconvenience caused by the mid season rule changes which had however been necessary to ensure that these were standardized across events. There are no further changes at present but any queries or suggestions should be referred to the committee meeting in November 2011.

The Grafton had introduced a new “Step Up” class, being a mix of novice and intermediate fences, at their event last autumn which had encouraged a lot of entries. Although longer options for “scarey” fences are to be encouraged these need to be incorporated into the existing structure of Novice, Intermediate and Open Classes and additional classes are not permitted under the Rules. Each class can have speed and bogey time sections and it was suggested that the optional novice fences on the course could be run as a bogey time intermediate.

Event organizers were reminded that the order for Open teams should be drawn randomly and not related to when entries are received.

The procedures for changes in the course part way through a class were discussed. Some events have continuous clocks around the course so they can accurately time sections and adjust accordingly. Alternatively classes have been split when the course has changed, although this increases the outlay in prize money.

9. **MEDICAL, VETINARY AND SAFETY**

There are no major changes in this regard.

There is no check on the standard of headgear used by riders but it was felt that this should be the responsibility of each rider.

Events should ensure that those using quad bikes should have suitable headgear and ride responsibly.

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.

12. PROPOSED DATES FOR SEASON 2010 -2011

Autumn 2011 dates have been agreed as follows:-

11th September – Warwickshire (Non Qualifier)
18th September – Belvoir (Non Qualifier)
25th September – Atherstone
2nd October - Meynell and South Staffs
9th October – Bicester
16th October – Pytchley
23rd October – Grafton
30th October – Cotswold
6th November - Essex and Suffolk

The Warwickshire will be presenting a special trophy in memory of Jo Rugman.

The Spring 2012 dates are still under discussion. The Championship will remain at the Fernie for 2012 and will be held on Sun 1st April 2012, but it is then the intention move the Championship to the Heythrop for 2013 for a minimum of 3 years to be reviewed after the first year.

13. REPORT ON COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS FOR 2011 - 2012

Philip Cowen, Howard Pauling, Ben Pauling and William Grant have all been reappointed for a further 3 years. Two Committee members have indicated they wish to stand down in 2012 and nominations for new members of the committee were invited.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Verey thanked the Open teams for donating their entry fees at the VWH event to the air ambulance.

15. DATE OF 2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Next Annual Conference to be May 2012 at Cheltenham Racecourse on the afternoon of the Hunter Chase evening – date not yet confirmed.