



## FORUM 11<sup>th</sup> May

**Meeting started 10.00am**

**Present:** Sue Billigheimer, Rena Johnsen, Wendy Farnell, Ashley Cole, Robbie James, Fiona Stephen, Sue Landis, Jorja James, Chris Enstrom, Petria Haigh, Susan Latta, Jane Ferguson, Rachel Stocks, Sarah Hamer, Sophie James, Lexi James, Ruth Dawber, Struan Duncan, Juanita Duncan, Vicky Copland, Ian Gray, Ron Guest, Louise Holmes, Peter Birkett, Kevin James, Rowena Black, Magda Dunowska, Helen Bray, Philip Graham, Marga Marshall, Heidi Bulfin, & Kelley Duncan

**Apologies:** Andrea Rigby, Ursula Keenan, & Helen Graham

### **Welcome**

Thanks for coming everyone. Great to have you all here. The purpose of the forum is to bring positive topics up to enable the sport to move forward. We have gone online so that we have one voice rather than a north south divide and we hope you will all work with us on this. Constructive criticism is fine but please no negativity. Thanks all for your understanding and desire to help make our fantastic sport even more amazing. It's an incredible sport with so much genuine camaraderie out on track and while strapping. Let's take it to the next level and keep it that way everywhere, on-line with officials, OC's and the board-we are all volunteers here with the intention of giving back to the sport.

There will be question time allocated after each topic so please add to chat your name to join the queue. Otherwise, we appreciate you staying in mute until its your turn.

From the Board.

Strategy -Summary of successes & outcomes

DRNZ -allowing rides to be claimed -Waikato, Kohuratahi gaining members. Rides have increased participation.

Total increase around 40% NI 60% SI 30% some can be put down to weather but overall, 25% in Annual starts gives an idea. The only discipline within ESNZ to experience growth.

Championship strategy both Island Champs ended up returning contribution and all three Champs OC's thanked for the effort put in by board/individuals.

Relationship with ESNZ- Sponsorship from IRT, Land Rover. Now agreed to pay for 8 buckles. Casual Membership remained @\$5 (\$16.50 ish other disciplines) this year.

New HP pathway – nearly ready to launch. AGM presentation.

Admin help

Endurafest – Not board driven at all but certainly been a major uplift in our sport.

## Topics

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### **Cost of FEI rides-(Tabled by Ashley Cole)**

#### **Opinions voiced were...**

Should we increase fees to a user pays structure similar to Australia (\$400 1\*)

We need to be able to run more non championship FEI rides to enable riders and horses to progress.

Combined classes could have separate fees for FEI and CEN entrants.

Timing not ideal with cost-of-living crisis, and only just re-entering the FEI pathway. Others thought FEI already subsidizing CEN by providing officials and training. Other events have managed to run with current fees without incurring a loss.

Would be better to get encourage the pathway rather than put up roadblocks. Representation often only occurs as a possibility once first steps up pathway have already been achieved.

Clubs are less keen to run non championship FEI rides due to lack of entries, funds, and vets.

Funding is easier to get for championship events.

Demand may help but pricing is down to the individual OC (organising Committee) to set. Entry numbers will show the tipping point for costs increases.

### **Cost of Club Rides- (Tabled by Vicky Copland)**

Vicky Copland (Waitaki) presented some work done on ride organising costs vs entry fees

A typical ride cost budget was tabled.

#### **Opinions voiced were...**

Ride entry fees can't be standardised but cheaper club entry fees by some will affect other clubs' entries.

Other cost reductions such as staying off roads to reduce TMP costs, or only a 1-day event to save on vet costs. TMP's that have the requirement for 2 hourly checks at weekends incur higher hourly rates and equipment hire. Some clubs are facing TMP rules that are much stricter than they used to be.

Vets harder to get due to shortage of vets nationally and vets already working longer hours. Some areas are less expensive than others.

Having a base entry fee then adding additional TMP & Vet levies (as other disciplines do with ground fees/ stabling etc) would add transparency of extra costs to riders.

There are concerns that volunteers are subsidising actual rider costs out of their own pockets with fuel costs for track marking etc. Free entries could be offered as an incentive to volunteers in that situation.

Fundraising in the off season could offset having to raise entry fees to keep them affordable. Others thought with many being time poor they would rather pay more or donate than commit time.

Straight increase in ride entry fees rather than giving clubs the option to set their own, could reduce entry numbers particularly lower level.

Some thought levies of the higher levels were subsidising the lower levels through requiring a higher standard of officials & personal to run these events.

Most thought the current fees structure fair and that it shouldn't be a choice between competitive and non-competitive sport. That both ends of the spectrum need support.

Recreational riders are the feed in for a healthy club, and the energy they bring can feed into volunteers, the next level of competition, & top level.

High performance building blocks are being put in place.

In summary

- there was a split of sentiment on whether entry fees should be increased or not.
- Fundraising could help OC and members.
- Volunteers are getting burnt out and are time poor, the more members the more help.
- A thank you goes a long way. Encourage riders to thank all involved, especially officials many of whom are there at their own cost.

### **Club Development/Collaboration- Ideas to take this forward. (Tabled by Wendy Farnell)**

South Island clubs have a meeting June 9<sup>th</sup> to collaborate, work together to move forward.

Ideas include:

- Fundraising to support each other.
- Working together to run rides.
- Uniform entry fees across rides
- Venues shared to reduce TMP costs (Venue club to control financial, other clubs to share other roles such as Officials & vets, sponsorship, evo etc
- Ride Calendar – need more rides and to lighten workload might help encourage that.
- Hopefully some sort of action list

Expertise being shared between clubs was generally seen as positive. Some were concerned that collaboration could result on less people doing more work and becoming more overloaded than they currently are, if doing roles for other clubs as well.

Clubs were seen to still be the right operating structure for the sport as they are needed for the culture to develop and to attract members at grass roots level.

More structured organisation of rides was seen to be beneficial to running events smoothly. It could also make it easier to run FEI non championship rides.

Training of new volunteers needs to be encouraged. Those that don't know how are not going to volunteer for roles such as track marking etc. Having more trained volunteers would lighten the load.

Ideas outside the box are needed so we are not continuing to be in the same situation. Some roles could be done remotely. Some costs can't be changed so need increased revenue, however that is achieved.

Events committees have been tried in the past and have not been that successful in the past, due to lack of familiarity with local issues/ resources. But that doesn't mean it can't be worked around with new ideas.

In some disciplines you can't complete their entry without a small volunteer job being selected for the event. Some clubs require a volunteer day as a condition of membership.

These ideas could be sent to clubs for them to add to. Email requests could be sent to see who would want to be on event committee.

A vet list in areas is being put together.

Similar event committee ideas could work for the four North Island clubs. It might encourage formation of new clubs if there is a lighter load. South Island members can help the North Island in some aspects.

Officials training courses need to be scheduled for off season. Clubs need to communicate when they would like them. North Island currently under discussion. East Coast keen in South Island. Online renewal course in the pipeline but still need experience on hand to give a range of perspectives for new officials training. New officials training should still be face to face. Scenario training for roles could be added in and check lists for roles so trainees more prepared. Can offer open invitations on Facebook or similar when Officials courses dates are organised.

#### **Open Discussion of Topics raised from the floor.**

High Point Award updates during the season was discussed and thought to be achievable now that there was help with administration. Same with officials' upgrades.

Discipline sponsorship through the board was raised - it is not the highest priority at this stage. Sponsorship through ESNZ is happening and we have had two good sponsorships this season from Landrover & IRT. It's easier to get sponsors behind an event than a discipline. Discussions with an equine fencing company re yarding solutions and sponsorship are in early stages.

Standardising track marking and track marking training was thought to be a good idea. It was suggested that such a document be created for discussion.

Prizegiving's at club rides could be more of an event than an afterthought to reward new rider's achievements. This relies on everyone making an effort to stay for prizegiving.

Insurance with ESNZ for incorporated societies is an ongoing issue. Multiple communications have been made and it has been hard to make progress thus far. We will know more by AGM. Current situation is that riders and officials are still covered by the insurance. It's the liability cover for the Incorporated Society OC's that is not covered by ESNZ as they are a separate legal entity. This has been raised on numerous occasions as a priority for our sport. Clubs affected are Waitaki, Canterbury, Ruahine, & Wairarapa. All ESNZ disciplines are affected by this.

## **Afternoon Session**

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### **CTR Proposed rule changes**

Remits 1-5 & 7-8 no issues raised.

Remit 6. Championship rules –

Question was raised whether the qualification required for the 30 – 40km Championships were really warranted (Junior & Intermediate CTR). No issue was raised for the qualification required for the open CTR championship. With the idea of encouraging more participation at championship level which could follow on to more participation at club level because they were successful.

Others thought encouraging support at a club level would encourage entries at club rides and show some commitment to ESNZ.

It was suggested to try delaying the implementation for a year so can then compare any effect on entry numbers.

### **Endurance Proposed rule changes.**

Remits 1-3 & 5-7 no issues raised.

Remit 4. Update to FEI rule changes. Change from 24-36 months.

The issue of selectively choosing which FEI rules to match was raised. CEN only requires one ride at each open distance level to move up while FEI requires 2.

Debate ensued with the majority happy with current CEN distance level requirements.

It was suggested to remove FEI from reason as no objections to increasing the period to 36 months.

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### **Rules - Open for Members to suggest.**

TD requirements for CEN 120km be modified in some way to cover the situation of an experienced individual not technically meeting rule requirements. Currently difficult to complete the training requirements to meet that rule when few CEN non championship classes run and most prefer riding when they are. It was suggested that to include "Exceptions to be approval by the TC (on a one-off basis). It was also suggested that there could be option available to grade up if training has been completed under designated experienced TD's.

### **General Discussion**

Calendar to be discussed with clubs directly to progress.

East Coast looking at FEI Fride in December. Date clash with North Island FEI ride. Under discussion. Clarification on IRT grant spent on assisting a Vet to reach FEI status was sought. IRT grant money is tied to animal welfare basis. Aly is prepared to commit to reaching FEI level 2 which requires 2-4 years and 6 rides to go up. There is no financial advantage to him in achieving this. He is putting in his own time and effort to be available to do this.

This led into a discussion on responsibility and management of club financial issues. It was raised that clubs should be responsible for own situation and the board was commended on their growth and success in last 12 months. Another thought voiced was that a regional model might work better than current club model.

It was brought up that Endurafest is taking \$2k per rider out of the local sport. And that the calendar should be organised around championships rather than club rides. This is already what is happening re calendar, with FEI rides taking precedence. Plus "taxation" of levies on clubs. Plus, member disloyalty by attending both ESNZ & DRNZ rides.

The general consensus of replies to the above opinions were that Endurafest was a boost for our sport, the calendar is being handled correctly and that the "taxes" are used to help the sport by way of Championship grants, FEI fees, Buckles etc. Everyone is free to choose where they ride and the individual accused had actually also been to more ESNZ rides for the season than most other members had.

Financial update from that board showing:

- circa \$10,000 profit for the year.
- The levy increase was only 10% and levies had not been increased for many seasons.

- The club contribution funding model for championships had worked as planned with all contributions returned to the clubs due to host clubs making a profit or having the funds available themselves

Sourcing financial support for non-championship FEI rides was raised. The Toft sponsorship money was given for this purpose and is tagged as such in the budget. Board to discuss with finalising of next year's budget as no SI non champ FEI ride has yet been officially notified to the board prior to this forum.

**Meeting closed 2.30pm.**