

Cross-Party Group on Scottish Horseracing & Bloodstock Industries

Wednesday 11th December – 6pm

Minutes

Present

MSPs

Miles Briggs MSP

Neil Bibby MSP

Sharon Dowey MSP

Stephen Kerr MSP

Invited guests

Jim Ferrie, Worshipful Company of Farriers

Sarah Michaels MSc, Senior Registrar to the Worshipful Company of Farriers

Non-MSP Group Members

Delly Innes, Scottish Racing

John Burns, World Horse Welfare

Apologies

Rachael Hamilton MSP

Shortage of Scottish Farriers

Sarah Michaels explained that since 2017 Scottish apprentice farriers have had to pay their own fees to attend college. Farriers and horse owners have raised concerns to both the Farriers Registration Council and the Worshipful Company of Farriers around shortages of practising farriers. There is concern that this may lead to a long-term horse welfare issue. Oatridge College closed in 2009, apprentices would then have to travel to England to continue or start their training at Myerscough, Hereford or Warwickshire, which students must fund themselves, unlike in England which is state-funded.

Prior to 2017 the UK and Scottish governments agreed that Scottish farriery students could train in England without have to be self-funded.

The Worshipful Company of Farriers would like to see the following put in action

- To close the funding gap for Scottish students
- Review the required standard for entry on to the register for Scottish farriers;
- To consider whether the funding is the main reason for low demand of apprentice farriers in Scotland.
- To compare English and Scottish training frameworks;

Jim Ferrie added that only an Approved Training Farrier (ATFs) can take on apprentices. Many farriers do not want to train their next competition which will negatively impact their own business. The cost of being an Approved Training Farrier is now £10k.

Miles Briggs asked if SRUC have been able to develop courses. Jim replied that due to a lack of ATFs, the course at SRUC would not be viable and tutors, as well as students, are also thin on the ground. John Burns added that SRUC are looking into the viability of running courses at SRUC, as the forge is present, but the interest is not currently high enough.

It was agreed that the CPG would write to the Minister for Education and Further Education, Graeme Dey, to ask why the agreement with the UK Government over funding is not being taken forward and if he is aware of the college requirements for farrier courses. Neil Bibby asked that the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Mairi Gougeon, also receive a copy of the letter.

John Burns also added that National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) has carried out a survey with the British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association (BFBA) re- farriers in Scotland. Findings should be ready by end of this year and will highlight more information regarding the existing farriers and the barriers that many farriers in Scotland are facing.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed