



IEOC regional meeting at Burghley Friday 6th September 2024

In attendance: Andy Griffiths (GBR Chairman), Sue Stewart (GBR Secretary General), Linda Pearce (GBR), Mats Andersson (SWE), Sarah Bullen (GBR), Thomas Duggan (IRL), Alec Lochore (GBR), Andrew Fell (IRL), Helen West (GBR), Richard Nesbitt (IRL), Stuart Buntine (GBR), David O'Connor (USA), Mark Phillips (GBR), Jane Holderness-Roddam (GBR), Christian Zehe (GER), Sue Ockenden (CAN), Gillian Kyle (IRL), Lindy Best (GBR), Andrew Bennie (NZL), Anne-Marie Taylor (GBR), Jane Tuckwell (GBR), Nicky Salmon (GBR), Andrew Tucker (GBR), Judy Hancock (GBR), Janene Maxwell (GBR)

Apologies: Vincent Roche (AUS), Anibal Marianito (POR), Margs Carline (AUS), Lindy Young (AUS), Wiebke Hennig (GER), John Lawrence (GBR), Adrian Buzzard (GBR), Jutta Koivula (FIN), Patrick Carew (IRL), Eileen Pritchard-Bryan (USA), Christian Landolt (SUI), Carolyn James (AUS), Anne-Mette Binder (DEN), Christian Struck (DEN), Xavier Le Sauce (FRA), Charles Trolliet (SUI), Wayne Quarles (USA), Jean Mitchell (IRL), Roger Kane (AUS), Helmut Mett (GER), Helen Christie (NZL), Wayne Copping (AUS), Faith Ponsonby (IRL), Peter Ponsonby (IRL), David Lee (IRL), Katherine Lucheschi (ITA), Michelle Debenham (AUS), Sue O'Brien (NZL), Ann Bostock (GBR), Christian Steiner (AUT), Mercedes Campdera (MEX), Angela Tucker (GBR)

1. Welcome

Andy Griffiths, IEOC Chairman thanked Miranda Rock, President of Burghley Horse Trials and the Burghley Committee for providing facilities for the meeting.

2. Chairman's report on behalf of the IEOC Board

Andy Griffiths (AG), IEOC Chairman opened the meeting with a review of the current situation.

IEOC purpose has always been to provide a link between the officials and the FEI to ensure officials voices are heard and to develop the sport.

We first signed a MOU with the FEI in 2014 and again in 2018 and the FEI had always indicated that a new MOU would be signed thereafter. In October 2023 we were shocked when the FEI took the position that the MOU had expired and there was no agreement in place. This ran contrary to what the FEI had said to us and to how it had continued to treat us as a stakeholder.

Attempts to resolve the situation failed so the IEOC felt it had no choice but to file a claim with the FEI tribunal.

When the FEI replied to the IEOC's claim it backtracked on its position re the validity of the MOU, agreeing that it continued to be valid but at the same time purported to terminate the MOU with immediate effect.

The FEI tribunal reviewed the matter and determined that the MOU was valid until 29/8/24 so has now expired. The tribunal upheld one of the IEOC's claims that the MOU had been breached.

Our lawyers are now preparing to appeal this decision to the CAS which means the case will be heard by a fully independent panel of three arbitrators in due course. We do believe, of course, that it is vital that we have a working relationship with the FEI for the good of us all and for the good of the sport. We have repeatedly offered to mediate with the FEI and will continue to pursue potential avenues for a peaceful resolution.

We are sensing the FEI does not fully appreciate the role of the IEOC to its members and we would like to send an open letter to them setting out how we have supported our members over the years, and how you the members are not totally happy with the FEI's proposed solution of you communicating directly with the FEI, while noting that the IEOC provides both strength in numbers and anonymity.

We hope you will be amenable to signing such a letter but understand that you may have concerns regarding anonymity and possible ramifications of putting your name to this letter. Our lawyers will come up with a suitable solution.

Stuart Buntine (SB) asked why mediation can't take place. David O'Connor (DOC) feels an organisation needs to be represented, but this legal process was started by the IEOC and not the FEI and the board agreed to uphold the end of the MOU.

AG explained following the outcome of the tribunal there were 21 days to put in an appeal but this could be stopped at any point if there was mediation, but legal process needs to be followed.

AG emphasised that we were keen to resolve the situation, the legal processes were complex but the IEOC would continue to push in every direction for an amicable outcome. DOC said due to the legal processes no conversation had been had within the FEI.

Alec Lochore (AL) stated the FEI supports its officials. AG explained the reason for the meeting in June 2023 in Lausanne was that the IEOC were not always receiving answers and that we wanted an open system as directed by the MOU and better feedback.

The IEOC did a survey which was responded to by over 40% of the members, this was sent to the FEI for information/answers but many questions were not addressed along with other questions hence the need for the in person meeting in June 2023.

Anne-Marie Taylor (AMT) attended what seemed to be a good meeting but with little follow up. The MOU was discussed and we were told it would be signed in a couple of weeks but nothing happened.

Andrew Fell (AF), AL, SB, Helen West (HW) all proposed we should mediate as no progress was being made. AG totally agreed and we should all be working together as a team, riders, officials etc. Sue Stewart (SS) confirmed on the basis of the MOU the IEOC should have dates, agendas and minutes of the FEI EC meetings but in February 2024 only 2 sets of minutes were on the website, this has since been rectified. Also FEI information does not always reach officials from their own NF's only from IEOC. DOC not sure why the minutes weren't up but would look into it. There was a majority show of hands to mediate.

DOC said the governance system needs to be very specific and structured similarly to the other disciplines and suggested the IEOC come in line. We will look into this. Andrew Bennie (AB) asked if this is done will it improve communications.

HW asked if it was sensible to suspend action and mediate. AG and SS stated this has already been done and believe there is a solution, just a rocky road ahead. A motion to go for mediation was proposed by HW and seconded by SB and carried unanimously without conditions. DOC abstained. AG said it may be necessary to change some things but our aim is to have a satisfactory resolution for a successful outcome.

3. Secretary General's report

Sue Stewart (SS), IEOC Secretary General advised the AGM will be held online on 17th November 2024.

AL pointed out this was the last day of the FEI general assembly meeting.

This is the year for rotation of officials and we need nominations by 30th Sep 2024.

4. Any Other Business

DOC stated there will be a webinar in October for the EC. In June 2024 DOC asked the FEI to change the process to line up the rule revisions with the Olympic regulations.

18/19 January 2025 discussion on future of sport and its challenges.

AG said if we know the dates we are happy to circulate these. He closed the meeting thanking everyone and assuring them we will do our best to resolve issues and move forward.

5. Meeting close

The meeting concluded at 17:07.