

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Farriers Registration Council held by Video-Conference call
Wednesday 22 April 2020, commencing at 1000hrs



Present

Mr D A Hall BSc (Hons) DipWCF (Hons)
(Chair)

Ms J Allen

Mr B Benson

Mr Y Breisner

Mr A B Charlwood

Mr I Davidson

Mr D C D'Arcy BSc (Hons) AWCF

Mr R P May AWCF

Mr S Moore FWCF

Mr M Peaty BVSc CertEP CertES MRCVS

Mr M Potter

Dr M Smith

Mr T Smith AWCF (Deputy Chair)

Mr M Weston

Appointed By

Elected Member – Southern Area

The Worshipful Company of Farriers

British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association

British Horseracing Authority

The Worshipful Company of Farriers

Scottish Enterprise

Elected Member – Northern Area

The Worshipful Company of Farriers

British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Lantra

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Elected Member – Southern Area

British Equestrian Federation

Apologies

Operations Superintendent K Colman, Mr P T Gordon DipWCF

Staff

Brigadier D J Greenwood (Registrar)

Mrs N Finck (Deputy Registrar)

Mrs V Jones (Assistant Registrar)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Operations Superintendent K Colman RSPCA and Mr P T Gordon DipWCF.

2. Declarations of Interest

Council Members declared possible conflicts of interest as follows:

Mr M Peaty – appointed by the RCVS

Mr S Moore – appointed by the BFBA and member of the WCF Examination Board

Mr R May – appointed by the WCF and member of the BFBA

Dr M Smith – appointed by the RCVS

Mr T Smith – member of the BFBA and WCF Freeman

Ms J Allen – appointed by the WCF

Mr A Charlwood – appointed by the WCF

Mr D C D'Arcy – employed by Myerscough College and member of BFBA Executive Committee

Mr M Potter – appointed by Lantra

Mr B Benson – appointed by the BFBA and WCF Liveryman

3. Notification of any items to be raised under “Any Other Business”

There was one item of any other business listed ‘Covid-19 update’.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 November 2019 were noted for reference purposes only. The minutes had previously been approved by Council members by e-mail circulation out of committee.

5. Matters arising which are not Agenda Items

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous Council meeting that were not already listed as agenda items, but the Council noted the following:

Item 7.4 (November 2019) – The WCF had been advised by the Institute of Apprenticeships that it may not limit the number of attempts at the End Point Assessment (EPA). The Council understood that for consistency, and as was current practice, the Company will not limit the number of attempts at the DipWCF examination for candidates on the residual apprenticeship framework intakes, approximately 7 intakes over the next 3 years.

Item 7.8 (November 2019) – Council Members seeking advice on any possible conflict of interest were advised to consult the Registrar in the first instance. Substantial guidance was set out in the Office Holders Code of Conduct and Rules for Council Meetings, but it was deemed impractical to produce an exhaustive list of all possible scenarios that may arise.

[At 10.06 Mr M Weston joined the meeting]

6. To Receive and Consider the following Reports, Council Committee Minutes and Associated Papers:

6.1 Minutes of the Registration Committee (RC) Meeting of 4 March 2020

Mr Breisner, Chair of the RC, reported on the minutes of the RC Meeting held on 4 March 2020. The RC recommended to the Council that the annual Retention Fee payable by registrants should be paid by 31 December annually and that late payment beyond 31 December should be subject to the Restoration Fee.

In discussion the Council noted that a clear and consistent approach to payment of retention fees was demonstrably fair to every registrant. After consideration, **the Council CONFIRMED that the Retention Fee was to be paid by registrants by 31 December annually. Late payment beyond 31 December would be subject to an immediate Restoration Fee.**

Mr Breisner confirmed that the FRC short film on the importance of using a Registered Farrier was now available to view on the FRC website.

Council members noted a Bilateral Meeting between the FRC and the WCF had been held on 4 March 2020 in order to consider what form a re-registration assessment might take in respect of registrants returning to the Register after an extended period of absence. The meeting had been both productive and positive. The WCF had undertaken to prepare a draft re-registration assessment proposal for joint consideration at a later date, based on the agreed four core objectives of: Assess and Plan; Trim and Balance; Select and Fit a Shoe, and Nail and Clench. Those present at the meeting took the view that 5 years was too long a period of absence without an assessment, and the consensus of the meeting was that a period of absence of 3 years was more appropriate noting that substantial skill-fade could occur in that time.

Some Council members expressed their concern at the timeframe being reduced from 5 to 3 years, noting that most Part 1 Registered Farriers held a qualification, all applicants will have previously been registered and were probably experienced individuals. Consideration was given as to whether an approach based on CPD might be used as an alternative, but given the poor take up rate amongst those for whom CPD was currently compulsory, and that it was not policy for all Registered Farriers to undertake CPD this was not a realistic option. It was further noted that such an approach would require verification of the CPD which might be viewed as a form of assessment of itself. **After careful consideration, Council members NOTED the progress to date, and asked to see the detailed draft re-registration assessment when it had been developed by the WCF and the RC.** Mr Benson asked that the BFBA be kept updated as the matter progressed.

6.2 Train the Trainer Farrier Award (TTFA) Transition Completion

Council members noted that TTFA transition commenced in 2013 to up-skill both existing and new joining ATFs and was now complete. As at 1 January 2020, 23 ATFs had been removed from the ATF list for non-compliance with TTFA Policy.

Council members noted that there were now 176 ATFs, all of whom held the TTFA, and of whom 45% held a higher farriery qualification or examination – this trend would increase as newly joined ATFs were required to hold a higher qualification or examination, and ATFs qualified to DipWCF retired over time. Training providers will continue to deliver the TTFA training course for prospective new ATF applicants.

7. THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8 WERE CONDUCTED IN CLOSED SESSION OF THE COUNCIL TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY

7.1 Report of the Approvals Committee; including update on the Benchmarking Project

7.2 BREXIT and the Farriers (Registration) Act

7.3 FASG: Lantra and Scotland; Revised NOS and Farriery Qualifications

7.4 Financial Crime Risks Policy

7.5 Office Holder Expenses Policy

7.6 Office Holders Code of Conduct; including confidentiality statement

7.7 Reserves Policy

7.8 Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 25 March 2020

8. Any Other Business:

8.1 Covid-19 Update

The Profession – The Registrar reported that there was a pan-Government response to Covid-19 across all Government departments under Operation RESCRIPT. As it had become more likely that Government would direct restriction on movement in early-mid March the FRC had engaged with Defra to establish how farriery services might be delivered in such circumstances. The critical factor was whether Covid-19 would remain a human health issue, and not evolve into an animal health issue. On that assumption (which continues to hold good up to the date of the Council meeting) it was accepted that there should be a mechanism for delivery of farriery services where they were deemed essential or urgent. Following the Prime Minister's announcement on the evening of 23 March 2020 the FRC sought guidance from Government as to how farriery should be delivered while restrictions on movement were in place. Advice was published on the FRC website on 24 March 2020, and subsequently on the Government website, confirming:

- that farriery should continue for essential/urgent cases; and,
- that Registered Farriers must exercise their professional judgement in deciding what was essential/urgent; and,
- that Government accepted that if left long enough a routine case would evolve into an essential or urgent case. Government further agreed that the issue of verification would be addressed by production of the Farrier's registration card, and that the Police or other law enforcement agencies

should contact the FRC where necessary. In parallel, BFBA had provided detailed technical guidance to farriers to assist with meeting requirements for 2m spacing, cleaning of tools and equipment, use of PPE etc.

Council members congratulated the Registrar and his team on its proactive and practical approach to providing clear guidance for farriers and horse owners, and in securing Government endorsement for that guidance in one working day.

FRC Secretariat and Conduct of Business – Council members noted that the FRC continued to deliver all of its statutory responsibilities, with the exception of DC hearings which have been postponed until hearings may be safely resumed. FRC staff were now working remotely with access to IT and phone connectivity.

Financial Impact – Mr Charlwood, Chair of the FC, advised that the FRC remained in a strong cash position for 2020, and as of the Council meeting there were no anticipated spikes in the forecast of expenditure as a result of Covid-19. Mr Charlwood reminded Council members that the Council did not pay VAT, and as it owned its offices it did not pay rent. Some Council members questioned whether any consideration of the effects of Covid-19 would be taken into account when setting fees for 2021 in the Autumn. It was agreed that this, and a range of other factors, would be considered by the FC when deciding how the Council would meet its obligations in 2021.

8.2 Apprentices – Council members held an ad-hoc discussion (i.e. without the benefit of papers or other preparation) on the practicalities of remote learning for apprentices while colleges were closed. Further discussion encompassed the situation of apprentices who may have been furloughed by their employers/ATFs. Mr D'Arcy confirmed that colleges were continuing to operate virtual Field Officer visits where possible, and that there would be an emphasis on practical training when colleges re-opened. It was accepted that matters would have to be addressed as things progressed, with colleges and ATFs continuing to be responsible for planning and delivery of training and its outcomes, and the regulator conducting holding to account visits in accordance with its statutory duty.

The Chair thanked Council members for taking part in the Council's first video-conference meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.25hrs

Annex A: FRC Policy and Guides APPROVED during this meeting

- Financial Crime Risks Policy
- Office Holder Expenses Policy
- Office Holders Code of Conduct
- Reserves Policy