

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 28 April 2020**

## **BEF and MBs in consultation for financial stability and sporting resumption**

**The British Equestrian Federation (BEF) is working closely with its Olympic and Paralympic governing bodies British Dressage, British Eventing and British Showjumping, in conjunction with the British Horse Council, on planning for safeguarding the viability of the sport and a resumption of activity when the government is in a position to relax coronavirus restrictions.**

Each of the organisations face tough economic challenges as their main income streams, membership revenue, competition levies and sponsorship, are decimated as a result of the pandemic. All three disciplines have made use of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by furloughing staff while a number of further cost savings and reductions have been made around operating costs and project deferment. The boards and management teams in each of the companies are fully committed to ensuring economic stability for their stakeholders to return to when conditions allow.

With lockdown restrictions in place until 7 May at the earliest, calls are being made for a return to competitive riding and all three organisations are working on plans for getting underway in line with any requirements set by the government. However, all are fully committed to supporting the government's continued message of Stay at home, stay safe and support the NHS' and will not action any return until it is safe to do so.

There will be a period of transition as those competitive members will need to get back riding and build their personal fitness levels, as well as training their horse to be 'competition ready'. Organisers and venues will need to make adaptations in line with any restrictions imposed by government and the competitions themselves may have alternative formats, restricted numbers and different environments to operate within social distancing parameters. Each sport is formulating and developing what will be needed to meet these requirements, as well as closely monitoring what other sports are proposing, alongside any changes in government policy.

BEF Interim Chairman Malcolm Wharton commented; "There is a great deal of work going on in the background by the volunteer Boards and remaining staff in the sports of dressage, eventing and show jumping and those involved are to be commended on their efforts. Collectively, we want to ensure our sports are financially secure and that, when we get to a position where competition can resume, they're ready to go with their organisers, officials, sponsors and venues. However, we must all appreciate that that is still some time away and our immediate focus remains to support the government and the NHS by holding firm and supporting the lockdown restrictions."

The BEF are also in constant communication with the British Horse Society, British Riding Clubs, The Pony Club, Riding for the Disabled and other sporting member bodies on their approach to financial management and any plans for resumption.

Malcom added; "These are tough times and every single one of us has felt the impact of this pandemic in some way. We must maintain focus and work together and support one another to get through to the other side so that equestrianism can continue to flourish. We need to get riders riding, coaches coaching, businesses trading, venues running and the industry moving but only when the time is right.

We all still have a social responsibility to do all we can to stop the spread and minimise the impact of the coronavirus on our health and emergency services. The work and planning in place means that, when the day comes, the equestrian world will be open for business.”

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