

Monday 22 June

An open letter to racehorse owners

Dear Owner,

I want to thank you for your patience and understanding during this immensely complex, challenging and financially turbulent period. As ever, you have demonstrated unwavering loyalty to our sport; sticking resolutely by your trainers and continuing to support your horses, despite an extended period with no prize money to offset your costs. The industry owes you a huge debt of gratitude.

The entire racing industry has worked hard over the past few months to help our sport return safely at the earliest possible opportunity. The resumption of racing on 1 June was a significant milestone in our recovery and, together with the success of subsequent fixtures, a testament to British Racing's collective endeavour.

Owners have played an invaluable role in the development of protocols to protect our participants on the racecourse, and contributed constructively to decision making – both individually via direct engagement and correspondence, and collectively via the Racehorse Owners Association (ROA).

Therefore, I understand how deeply disappointing and frustrating it is that at this stage you are not able to attend the racecourse to watch your horses run. I share this disappointment: owners are integral to our sport and we want to see you back on the racecourse.

As you will be aware, in line with [UK Government guidance](#) on the return of elite sport behind closed doors, access to the racecourse in the early stages of resumption has been restricted to individuals with essential functional roles. This is to ensure that new and revised protocols, such as health screening and social distancing requirements, are operating efficiently to safeguard the health and wellbeing of participants. Minimising the number of personnel on course in the first few weeks following resumption has enabled us to embed these protocols and assist participants in adjusting quickly to new ways of operating.

The whole industry has responded positively to these changes; and because of this work, the absolute focus is now on continuing to develop and agree a plan that enables owners to attend race meetings in a safe and practical way.

The BHA, ROA and Racecourse Association (RCA) are working on producing a viable plan that enables you to enjoy watching your horse run, whilst ensuring that British Racing continues to do everything possible to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. This will inevitably entail a phased return to racecourses, with interim measures in place to ensure we can achieve this in a risk-managed way that prioritises your safety and that of other raceday attendees.

Sadly, it is simply not possible at this point for us to return immediately to normal circumstances. Therefore, it is likely that in the early stages, owner numbers will be restricted (on a per horse basis), with access limited to designated owner zones that are separate from participants and officials. These provisional arrangements will help ensure that British Racing is able to satisfy government and public health guidance, including strict observance to existing social distancing and infection control requirements.

We will continue to keep you informed about how these plans progress, and expect to have specific proposals, including timelines, to share with you very soon.

In the meantime, I want to thank you again for your forbearance, support and dedication to our sport throughout this difficult period, and reiterate our commitment to finding a workable solution that will ensure you can be welcomed back onto the racecourse in the very near future.

I wish you the very best of luck for the season ahead.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Wayman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Wayman

Chief Operating Officer