



## **British Equestrian Federation Press Release**

For immediate release: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007

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### **2012 legacy recommendations announced**

The British Equestrian Federation (BEF), the national governing body of Olympic horse sports, has revealed key recommendations which will form the basis of the 2012 Equestrian Legacy Plan.

The BEF was one of the first national governing bodies to look at how the Olympic and Paralympic Games could be used to develop long term benefit for the UK and London in particular. The Legacy for London Advisory Group, headed by Barbara Cassani, was set up in order to investigate ways of significantly increasing the level of equestrian activity in London as a result of hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The group took as its starting point Lord Coe's promise "to stage an inspirational Games that captures the imagination of young people around the world and leaves a lasting legacy". As a result the equestrian legacy recommendations concentrate on the possibilities for bringing a wide range of equestrian activities within the reach of Londoners, particularly children.

The key recommendations are:

#### **Set up new riding facilities in London**

Facilities for riding in London have been in decline for many years due to high property prices and the rising costs associated with running a riding school. Currently 12% of the population live in London, while only 6% of approved riding schools are in London and a third of London Boroughs have no approved riding schools. Nonetheless there are outstanding models of urban riding schools in London and in other UK cities proving that they can operate effectively. Preliminary discussions in London have shown that with the right drive and the focus that 2012 brings, it should be possible to start up new riding facilities. Projects could be generated in partnership with local authorities and driven by promoting the wider social and health benefits of riding, using examples of where others have been successful.

#### **Bring together all equestrian related activity via a "London Horse Network"**

A "London Horse Network" could provide a central hub to facilitate sharing of information and support for the London riding community, possibly through the formation of a sub-group. Shared problems could be tackled via the network and the community could be encouraged to work in partnership to promote riding and related activities in the capital. It would have the potential to provide a single, stronger voice for lobbying on issues such as access routes and the mounting pressures faced by urban riding schools. Communication tools such as a website could be introduced for the whole community to use.

### **Establish a schools programme for children in London**

A sustainable and funded programme to widen the opportunities for London children to ride regardless of their background or location should be a key part of the legacy work. The London Horse Network would be the ideal forum to provide linkages across the community and between schools and riding centres. Support could be offered to schools to enable them to offer riding as an option through and beyond the national curriculum. Riding related education packs could be created for use at primary schools across London and related opportunities might also be possible for school children to attend major equestrian events across the country.

### **Establish the “London Festival of the Horse”**

An annual event held in central London, the group envisaged that the festival would feature high level international competition with wonderful spectator opportunities for all as well as a range of other equestrian activities throughout the capital geared particularly to families. The festival would represent a broad spectrum of equestrian sports and encourage increased participation across equestrianism.

### **Roll out the London initiatives to the rest of the UK.**

The group focussed its attention on London. However the recommendation is that the ideas and initiatives developed for London be rolled out to other parts of the UK

### **What Next?**

The BEF will appoint an equestrian legacy group which will be responsible for drawing up and implementing a 5 year plan based on these recommendations. The group's members will represent a wide range of equestrian interests. It is expected that the group will launch the implementation plan within the next two months.

In order to turn these recommendations into reality the legacy group will be asking for support from all sectors of the horse world. Any comments and suggestions should be directed to [info@bef.co.uk](mailto:info@bef.co.uk).

**ENDS**

### **Notes for Editors**

#### **The Legacy for London Advisory Group**

In August 2006 the BEF created the Legacy for London Advisory Group, its aim was to investigate possible legacies for the equestrian sports from staging the Games in London in 2012. The results of the group's work are a set of recommendations which were accepted by the BEF board at the end of February.

## **Background findings informing the recommendations**

Equestrianism is currently in a state of decline in London due to lack of facilities.

In a recent British Horse Society survey of riding activities in London, out of the 32 Boroughs:

- At least 9 boroughs have no riding schools
- 5 boroughs where riding opportunities were recently plentiful and in high demand have seen a dramatic decline due to closures and reduced hacking
- 8 boroughs are well-served for riding facilities and demand exceeds supply
- 10 boroughs with limited facilities - perhaps one riding school for the entire borough

Reasons for the decline in facilities includes:

- The high value of property making it attractive to sell – land value is the overriding reason for closure.
- Difficulties in paying for health & safety regulations
- Rising insurance costs
- Finding employees

Levels of interest in riding are high in London, but there are fewer and fewer places to ride or watch riding at the highest level.

Riding interest in London is of a general nature, rather than discipline specific.

Working, adult novice riders and aspiring youngsters (able-bodied and disabled) are particularly frustrated by the lack of accessible facilities where they can advance their standard of riding.

Many more people would ride in London and on a more regular basis if they had convenient access to facilities.

Those wanting to ride and those engaged in the day-to-day battle to run riding schools in London need better ways to support and communicate with each other.

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