



Our Process & Timeline, 12th July – 19th October 2020

1. Two prominent owners, Ged Shields and Jon Hughes, researched the landscape of British Racing as a pandemic lockdown project, April – June 2020.
2. An analytical, data-based report was published and launched by the *Racing Post*, 12th July: *A Blueprint for Racehorse Ownership in the UK: Making retention and acquisition of owners the number 1 goal of a racing recovery plan.*
3. A multi-media campaign of advocacy and communication was designed by Louise Holland and her team at HorsepowerXP, who supported it throughout the 100 days.
4. 150+ detailed and confidential discussions were held by telephone and on Zoom with racing's leadership, stakeholders, top trainers, major owners, syndicators, MPs and media influencers. We tested and validated all our recommendations through this iterative process.
5. x12 *Perspectives in Racing* films and x 24 blogs were hosted on the campaign web site, with extensive linkage through social media to a considerable range of racing supporters.
6. Detailed briefings and interim reports were circulated to the full racing constituency.

Free Access to the Campaign Films and Blogs
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KOIR view: racing needs a radical recovery plan designed to safeguard the sport and prevent crisis and contraction becoming an economic catastrophe.

Substantially greater urgency is needed to produce a meaningful Recovery Plan.



We have a world-leading industry on our doorstep which we should all be very proud of.

The training operations here contribute a massive amount to our local economy. That can be measured both in terms of the wages paid to the hundreds of staff employed by the various stables, but also the many businesses and the self-employed who supply services to the trainers.

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor

Visit to Middleham, October 2020.



At a time when many racehorse owners may be questioning their involvement and investment in our sport, we must demonstrate that we can navigate a path through the Covid-19 crisis and offer hope of an improved industry in the years to come.

Clearly, there is a considerable amount of work to do to make our sport more attractive.

Charlie Parker, President, Racehorse Owners Association & Chairman, Horsemen's Group.

The Owner Breeder,
October 2020.

The criticality of ongoing investment into racing by owners has still not properly been recognised. No initiatives have been launched to mitigate the contraction.



Given the historical prize-money shortage, it is remarkable trainers have managed to sell the ownership concept for so long. They deserve gongs in abundance but that clucking in the distance is the sound of chickens coming home to roost.

The pandemic's effect has been to concentrate owners' minds to the extent they now see things in the cold light of day. It is inevitable their numbers will shrink.

In that event the rest of the industry will contract an illness every bit as debilitating as Covid-19.

Julian Muscat, Racing Post, 5th October 2020.

Meagre prize-money and a soulless ownership experience will drive owners out of racing. There is little evidence that racing's leadership is able to deal with this. There is a crisis of credibility and major governance changes are required to address it.



You worry all the time about the owners not getting the return or pleasure they'd expect, and I worry going forward how it will hit racing.

At the end of the day, they accept they are racing for poor returns in Britain, but when it gets so low and they're not getting pleasure going racing, the concern is it will focus their mind on what it's costing them.

Mark Johnston, Racing Post, 21st September 2020.

Before any racing stakeholder blames Covid-19, I feel I must point out that this has been brewing long before that and the pandemic is not really a factor.

A shambolic and reactive BHA, an owners' federation that does little for owners, and the total lack of respect for owners from many areas of racing has knocked the stuffing out of us.

Craig Buckingham, Racing Post, 30th September 2020.

The absence of a strategy is a disgrace.

You need proper strategies for the short, medium and long term. Since racing began on 1st June, there has not been any meaningful communication to owners to incentivise them. That should have been the immediate goal within an ownership strategy.

Jon Hughes, Racing Post, 1st October 2020.

Racing only really has two choices in responding to the Covid-19 crisis and post-pandemic planning. It can muddle through or develop a proper plan with three main phases of action incorporated in it: survival, contraction and then growth. Throughout the 100 days of our campaign, a consistent view has emerged that racing can either continue to “paper over the cracks” by ignoring the deep-seated problems that now need to be addressed or “cross the chasm” by imagining a very different and far more successful and sustainable sport. All strategies need to be driven by that goal.

- 1 Stop making the BHA the whipping boy of the sport.** Current governance is not fit for purpose. The BHA lacks authority to drive fundamental change beyond its regulatory remit. It is held accountable for initiatives that it has no authority to implement. The tripartite structure has failed.
- 2 Form a Task Force to create a Recovery Plan.** There is little confidence in racing’s current leadership to drive a radical change plan. It lacks the competence, capability and commitment. Replace it with a carefully selected task force of highly motivated experts and change agents.
- 3 Survival and then (managed) contraction will dominate 2020 and 2021.** Racegoers and owners must be brought back on to racecourses in substantial numbers. Without that, the sport faces bankruptcy. Government needs to be lobbied skilfully, and appears to be sympathetic.
- 4 Roll the future back to the present.** It will be only too easy for immediate crisis management to preclude longer-term strategy. The task force must develop a bold vision of the future and ensure that it guides the implementation of major initiatives, particularly to do with funding.
- 5 Set highly ambitious financial targets for future income streams and use them to drive the recovery plan.** There is £250m+ of additional income to be captured: second phase of Levy development, racing optimisation, gambling innovation, media rights pooling, cost reduction.
- 6 Re-size the sport for a post-pandemic landscape.** 20%+ of owners, trainers and breeders may quit the sport. Horse numbers will drop substantially. Redesign the pattern, programme and fixtures. Introduce two tiers of racecourses, with markedly different facilities, standards and quality of racing.

Racing’s Recovery Plan Has to Contain Three Overlapping Phases of Radical Action



The protracted and completely unsatisfactory process for the design of an Industry Ownership Strategy is a case study of the inadequacy of racing’s governance, leadership and project management capabilities. It was announced at the end of 2017 with full communication on it promised by the Racehorse Owners Association in the autumn of 2018, but that did not occur. Over £1.5m of funding was provided by the Horserace Betting Levy Board and the Racing Foundation, so its non-appearance is nothing short of a scandal. At the time of writing, we still await its publication.

- 7** Put retention and acquisition of owners at the heart of the recovery plan. Our *Blueprint* argued this case. Nothing has changed. The Ownership Strategy must drive this forward. Its endless delay in publication, and therefore implementation, is hugely damaging. Exit of owners is accelerating.
- 9** The quantum and allocation of prize-money must be addressed. Poor prize-money is the #1 issue. Nothing matters more. Three changes: (1) reallocate money to class 4-6 races, (2) phased reduction in fixtures at this level, (3) utilise new income streams to invest in better class racing.
- 8** Meaningful initiatives for owner retention are an immediate priority. The criticality of ongoing investment into racing by owners has not yet been properly acknowledged. Address this urgently. Find ways to motivate, engage and incentivise owners to remain in racing.
- 10** Ownership strategy must be owned by the whole industry and not just the Racehorse Owners Association. Racecourses, trainers, syndicators and breeders all have a vital role to play. Form a cross-industry project team as part of the task force and accelerate action.

A Multi-Initiative Ownership Strategy is Essential – It Contains at Least Ten Key Elements

		The <i>Keep Owners in Racing</i> team will assess the strategy in detail when it finally appears										
		Inadequate			Moderate				Excellent			
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Strategic Vision	Vision, goals, objectives, targets, deliverables and returns on investment										
2	Road Map & Action Plan	Specific initiatives, plan of action, timescales, resources, change management										
3	Contested Issues	Clarity on ways of dealing with strongly contested ownership issues										
4	Prize-Money & Funding	New sources of funding, prize-money targets and their allocation										
5	Owner Segmentation	Analysis of trends, needs and requirements across different owner segments										
6	Strategies for Retention	Immediate actions Q4 2020 / 21 and then mid-term initiatives to retain owners										
7	Strategies for Acquisition	Detailed plans differentiated by owner segments in UK and internationally										
8	Trainers & Syndicators	Expanding ownership through initiatives led by trainers and syndicators										
9	Racecourse Experience	Innovation in the allocation and provision of owner raceday privileges										
10	Marketing & Communication	Integrated strategy for marketing, promotion and digital communication										