

Responses to Stakeholders -
LAUREN MCGEE

Q1. It is a given that you have a passionate interest in the sport of eventing. What are the main objectives that have encouraged you to stand for election?

I feel that I have skills and knowledge which would be helpful to support BE. I have a strong working background in commercial and operations management however I am especially interested in innovation, engagement with young people and Diversity and Inclusion.

Q2. The BE Board comprises individuals with a range of skills derived from their professional lives. How do your own skills and expertise fit with the current Board members' expertise in relation to running the sport and the business of eventing?

My role is Head of Operations for an offshore wind farm for which I am accountable for the safety of my team, budget and production. Although completely different from the sport of eventing there are some similarities with regards to both; such as them being activities which can be largely affected by weather and can be considered fairly high risk. To be successful we have to be skilled at risk management, mitigation and contingency planning; this year above any other has highlighted this.

Q3. Given the pressures the sport faces, with falling membership, competition from other equestrian activities and the prospect of a generally poor economic climate, marketing is likely to be important to BE in 2021. Where do you think BE's marketing efforts should be focused in order to address these challenges? Please provide specific examples of initiatives that are likely to enable existing members to gain full benefit from their membership and suggest means to encourage new members and horse registrations.

I am a coach and mentor for internal personnel, but also run engagement activities with local schools and speak at nationwide careers events. Innovation is key to the success of my industry so inspiring young people to look towards careers within offshore wind allows for fresh ideas, talent and insight to be brought forward. I believe that this is also important for sport and eventing, I feel that aligning with equine apprenticeships is a good way to link with younger generations just starting into the industry to start building and engaging with that network of talent.

Through my organisation's work with apprenticeships, we measure the interventions which have been a success and tracked as the reasons why people have applied for apprenticeships. Role modelling was seen as the key reason why many people had applied, the feeling is that if people can see 'people like them doing roles they would like to do' then it encourages them to put themselves forward. So positive role modelling and routes into the sport have to be visible. Positive role models should also extend to those Eventing personalities that run their own businesses and riding schools, so that people see that this can be a career choice - potentially also important for parents who may influence a step back from the sport when those important GCSE years are upon us.

There is still an unfair perception that equestrianism is an 'elite' sport, myth-busting of this through campaigns and relatable role models would be a good initiative. Another way to target this is through a programme of Diversity & Inclusion:

Diversity - I don't think enough is promoted about the fact that we are the only sport which has females competing against males at the same level, with no restrictions around age. We are a truly diverse sport so how can we focus on inclusion to ensure that elitism isn't a limiting

factor? How do we get more people into riding schools? How do we support XC training centres so that people make that daunting leap from riding schools to XC. Is there unfairness within the balloting system? Do members on the start of their journey get balloted out in favour of more experienced eventers who get to have a few horses run? How do we get more events and therefore more entries? How do we communicate and collate feedback from members to act upon, how do we get members to suggest and initiate improvements to support BE? We run a system at my site where people not only report problems, but ask them to raise 'improvement proposals' so it leads people away from complaints and empowers them to identify positive change to any concern they may have.

With regards to innovation of the sport, is there potential to tap into technology to enhance the options available to members? There are subscription type services which offer photos of XC courses, dressage test advice, e.g. Is there opportunity to develop a premium service in which we work with the Event hosts, get courses photographed, headcam footage of a sponsored rider completing or walking the course and offering advice. This option may be increasingly valuable for BE80T, if we are still operating within social distancing restrictions next year. Can dressage test advice be provided by a sponsored rider? This then feeds into the role modelling piece and enhances visibility.