

## **British Eventing Board Elections – November 2020**

**Les Smith**

### **BEOA/ERA/EHOA Questions**

**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?**

My priorities if I am re-elected are as follows.

- *Clear accountability of the Board and BE executive team to all stakeholders' groups and the BE membership*

It is vitally important for all stakeholder groups within the sport to work together to achieve the best results for the BE members. As I attend many events throughout the year, I can see on a day to day basis some of the issues that occur within the Sport that could be addressed and done in a more harmonious way if improved communication and workings within the stakeholders' groups are achieved.

- *Finances – to ensure BE is a viable business.*

I would like to look at ways of reducing the centralised costs of running the BE business that we have control over. 2020 has been an unprecedented year and will be an ongoing challenge into 2021 and beyond. We need to make the right decisions now and have a clear plan for the next 5 years. There are also some valued lessons from 2020 that we can take forward into the future which will help achieve these goals.

- *IT – an end to the uncertainty and continued spend.*

At the start of 2020 season I was one of the three elected BE Directors who pressured the BE Board to recognise the failing of the EARS system. From there alongside a working group of end users BE reluctantly agreed to the use of Miranda Collett Eventing Scores system which has given a Scoring solution to members and looks to be the way forward.

I was a strong driver behind the setting up of the IT Task Force. From the meeting minutes provided on the website they appear to be bringing clarity to the IT project and I am hopeful we will be able to move forward and implement some of their recommendations in due course.

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**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 main priority is to maintain British Eventing as the leading Eventing nation globally where the best events exist across all levels from grassroots to top level and the best riders want to compete.

- *Experience and milage*  
Having been involved with Eventing at all levels for over 40 years and being part of how the Sport has evolved I understand the need to bring on board new ideas to move the Sport forward into the future.
- *Objective decision making*  
Having no specific financial vested interested within the Sport I feel I can bring a more balanced view to the decision-making process without prejudice.
- *Broad knowledge base*  
Seeing things from different viewpoints as a previous rider and current coach from BE80 up to FEI CCI 5\* level. As a FEI Official I work regularly as a team player with other officials, riders and organisers at events on a day to day basis all around the World.

**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.**

The strongest marketing tool that British Eventing has in its armour is the quality and standard of Event and associated structure that we deliver. This should always be fundamental in our thinking and proactive planning.

- *Membership development*  
Recognising the growing unaffiliated market, I believe we need to re-look at how we structure our levels of membership. For example, we could look into a specific BE80 membership with lower subscription yearly cost. This would help to grow the base from the bottom up and bring more entries to events. This could be rolled out across the levels.
- *Communication with the Membership*  
Listen to what the membership would like. For example, as Chair of the Sports Committee and working closely with the rider working groups, in 2021 we will roll out Area Championships. It is vital we provide relevant competition and pathways for all our riding members across the levels. It is also our responsibility to do this in a financially responsibly way for all BE Organisers.
- *Commercial Strategy*  
Recognising the current difficult climate of business, we need to adapt and think more dynamically. Good examples of this are what we can offer with our digital assets across our membership which as we know is an attractive proposition and affluent target audience to many companies who may come on board as partners.

If anyone would like to further discuss or ask any other questions please don't hesitate to drop me an email at [lessmith105@aol.com](mailto:lessmith105@aol.com).