



**22nd IEOC Annual General Meeting
Online
Sunday 12th November 2023**

Minutes

In attendance: Andy Griffiths (GBR Chairman), Michelle Debenham (AUS Vice Chairman), Sue Stewart (GBR Secretary General), David Lee (IRL Treasurer), Wayne Copping (AUS Board Member), Sue O'Brien (NZL Board Member), Andrew Temkin (USA), Andrew Bennie (NZL), Angela Tucker (GBR), Ann Bostock (GBR), Anne-Marie Taylor (GBR), Annabel Scrimgeour (GBR), Anne-Mette Binder (DEN), George Bazar (HUN), Marilyn Payne (USA), Nicoli Fife (NZL), Chris Van de Perre (BEL), Clayton Fredericks (USA), Karen Winn (USA), Cynthia Deporter (USA), Dianne Penny (UAE), Joachim Dimmek (GER), Dora Beacom (IRL), Peter Koeppel (GER), Eileen Pritchard-Bryan (USA), Felicísimo Aguado (ESP), Frances McAvity (CAN), Sandor Fulop (HUN), Chris Wallis (AUS), Gerardine Lyttle (IRL), "Chicco" Masci (ITA), Hamish Butler-Galie (NZL), Helen West (GBR), Helen Bowler (GBR), Helen Brettell (USA), Helmut Mett (GER), Prabal Pratap Singh (IND), James Roney (IRL), Jan Cottam (GBR), Jane Tuckwell (GBR), Jane Starkey (GBR), Jane Tolley (GBR), Janina Kutscha (GBR), Jean Mitchell (IRL), Jeff Newman (USA), Jane Holderness-Roddam (GBR), Jo Young (CAN), Joanne Jarden (GBR), Joe Carr (USA), Jonathan Clissold (GBR), Jutta Koivula (FIN), Katherine Lucheschi (ITA), Gillian Kyle (IRL), Les Smith (GR), Marcin Konarski (POL), Matthew Bates (NZL), Sue Ockendon (CAN), Marie Hennessy (IRL), Mary Duenow (USA), Mercedes Campdera (MEX), Mike Etherington-Smith (GBR), Faith Ponsonby (IRL), Peter Ponsonby (IRL), Patricia Clifton (GBR), Penny Dodd (AUS), Peter Shaw (AUS), Peter Fell (IRL), Slawomir Pietrzak (POL), Sally Price (GBR), Helen Christie (NZL), Roger Kane (AUS), Richard Baldwin (GBR), Sandy Phillips (GBR), Stuart Bishell (NZL), Stuart Buntine (AUS), Tim Downes (GBR), Ernst Topp (GER), Vanda Stewart (IRL), Wayne Quarles (USA), Wiebke Hennig (GER), Wolf G Mueller (AUT), Xavier Le Sauce (FRA)

Apologies: Nikki Herbert (GBR), Julie Chapman (GBR), Adrian Buzzard (GBR), Sue Gunn (AUS), Julia Otto (GER), Marion Greene (IRL), Wendy Lansdown (NZL), Lindy Young (AUS), Christian Landolt (SUI)

1. Call to order and welcome

The Chairman opened the 22nd AGM, welcoming everybody to the meeting, which was being held online for the first time, facilitating participation of more IEOC members from around the world.

He thanked Rachel and Dan Moore for all their work setting up the meeting and the technology required to support it; Sue Stewart, IEOC Secretary General, for all her work behind the scenes, as well as the rest of the IEOC Board and members for all their input.

The Secretary General outlined how the meeting would be conducted and advised all apologies would be noted in the minutes.

Quorum

The Secretary General confirmed with 10 members in attendance a quorum was present.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 2022 annual general meeting

The Chairman confirmed the draft minutes of the 2022 AGM were previously circulated by email on 11th October 2022.

On behalf of the Board, the Chairman moved that:

MOTION

The minutes of the 2022 annual general meeting be approved.

MOTION IEOCGM2023-1 CARRIED

3. Chairman's report

The Chairman reported on the following items:

- The new Level 4 was announced in August 2022.
 - The FEI stated it had taken advice from its working groups on the education of Level 4 Officials.
 - At no time was the IEOC consulted or asked for any input.
 - Following the announcement, the IEOC was bombarded with questions about Level 4 from its members.
 - As a result, the IEOC sent an 8-page document of questions to the FEI requesting written answers/clarifications.
 - To date, these questions remain unanswered even though the processes surrounding Level 4 have been proceeding.
 - The IEOC continues to push for answers to members questions on Level 4.
- The Chairman extended his thanks to Anne-Marie Taylor for all her work preparing statistics and graphs on the appointment of Officials over the last 6/7 years which were circulated to members.
- The Board had an amazing 40% response to its survey of members in January on the appointment of Officials.
 - The survey results were circulated to all members.
 - This survey also contained a section for members to confidentially express their opinions on how the sport is being governed. Unfortunately, the overall feeling amongst members was that the FEI Eventing Department fell somewhat short in its dealings and communications with volunteers and Officials at every level, with a general lack of respect and understanding being shown for Officials' concerns, a complete absence of transparency, and inadequate responses given to members.
- The IEOC accepted an invitation from the FEI to an in-person meeting in Lausanne in June where the views of its members were put to Ingmar de Vos (FEI President), Sabrina Ibanez (FEI Secretary General), and David O'Connor (Chairman of the FEI Eventing Committee).
 - The IEOC then met with the FEI heads of department to discuss the points in more detail with a view to finding solutions.
 - It was repeatedly pointed out that the majority of the workforce within the sport is made up of volunteers, therefore the future very much depends on its continued goodwill and the FEI must show respect to its Officials
 - The FEI was also reminded that the IEOC is working with rather than against them.

- The three main topics of discussion were social licensing, issues regarding Level 4 and its processes, and abuse of Officials.
- The IEOC is actively engaging with the FEI, seeking answers to our questions on the Level 4 methodology, and transparency around the exams and results.
- As far as is possible, the Board will keep members informed as things progress.

The Chairman thanked members for all their input to help the IEOC Board put forward the points, which are so important for the future of the sport, to the FEI.

4. Secretary General's report

The Secretary General acknowledged the positive impact of moving the AGM to an online format, enabling the participation of many more members from around the world.

The Board is also making use of the Zoom platform to host quarterly Board meetings which is helping them work more efficiently.

5. Finance report

The Treasurer thanked members for their donations which have assisted with the running costs of the IEOC, in particular the costs of travel to Lausanne for the meeting with the FEI.

The Treasurer confirmed the IEOC remains free to join, but there is a suggested voluntary subscription fee of EUR 25 per year to cover the running costs of the Club.

Donations can be made via the link at <https://www.ieoc.info/subscriptions>

The majority of recurring annual admin costs relate to website and mailbox hosting, and subscriptions for election and online meeting/webinar software.

The IEOC account balance as at 30th October 2023 was €912.29.

Members noted the IEOC activities, and therefore costs, have increased significantly over the past 12-18 months, thanked the Board for all their work and asked that a link to make a donation to the IEOC be circulated.

ACTION: Information on how to donate to the IEOC running costs to be sent to members.

6. Level 4 education programme

The Chairman confirmed the Level 4 education programme has been a hot topic over the past nine months, with the IEOC putting forward questions to the FEI on behalf of members regarding the methodology and transparency, not only in the way the exams were done but also the results and pathways for Officials.

This is an ongoing conversation and the IEOC has appointed Morgan Sports Law to advise them in respect of the concerns regarding the Level 4 education programme.

As always, the IEOC is keen to work together with the FEI to find a mutually agreeable solution.

However, the IEOC is mandated to give a voice to its members and will take any action necessary to achieve this.

Information about Morgan Sports Law and how they are helping the IEOC was sent out with the AGM agenda.

Members with questions, or who wished to get more information were invited to join the FREE Zoom drop-in sessions being run by Morgan Sports Law on 13th and 14th November.

7. Abuse of Officials

The Chairman advised the IEOC is sadly being made aware of an increasing number of incidents of abuse of Officials by riders and/or members of their entourage.

It is essential that Officials report any such incidents to the FEI Legal Department using the FEI Incident Report Form. The Chairman encouraged members who find themselves in the position of submitting an incident report to cc the IEOC.

It is important to remember the term “abuse” is generally understood to encompass psychological abuse as well as physical abuse.

Links to useful resources including the FEI Incident Report Form and their Safeguarding Policy Against Harassment and Abuse are available on the IEOC website under the Resources section (<https://www.ieoc.info/resources>).

The Chairman encouraged members to use the Independent Helpline for Officials (IHO), which is available to give FREE and CONFIDENTIAL advice and support to all Officials, as well as FREE access to legal support should it be required.

Questions about interpretation of the safeguarding rules can be directed to the Independent Helpline for Officials.

The contact details for the Independent Helpline for Officials are also available under the Resources section of the IEOC website (<https://www.ieoc.info/resources>).

8. Proposals re FEI Career Paths

The Chairman stated that at the in-person meeting with the FEI in June, the subject of Level 4 judges having had some form of FEI competition experience, as per the requirement for FEI Dressage Judges was discussed.

The conversation was broad and not intended to be conclusive.

He acknowledged and apologised that the notes of the meeting appeared to imply that the IEOC believed a Level 4 judge should have ridden to 4* level, and that Level 3 judges should have evented internationally to a minimum of 3*. This is not the case. but the question was asked as to whether a Level 4 Official should have some form of competition experience.

The IEOC was subsequently asked to review the Career Paths for each function and to let the FEI know if they need to be changed or updated.

The IEOC sent a number of suggestions to the FEI in August 2023. These suggestions were based on feedback received in our member survey in January. No formal response has been received to these, or any other suggestions or questions submitted to the FEI since November 2022.

The Board subsequently received additional feedback from members in Australia and New Zealand and had further discussions on this topic with members at the regional meeting at Burghley.

A copy of the suggestions sent to the FEI in August on the Judges Career Path was sent out with the AGM agenda, along with comments and questions the Board has put together on the Career Paths for Course Designers, Stewards and TDs.

The Chairman stressed that ALL the suggestions that have been put forward are just that, suggestions. They were based on previous feedback received from members, and there was no intention that they would be applied retrospectively or used to demote anyone.

As always, the Board welcomes input from and discussion with members on the Career Paths for Officials, and will listen to the discussions at the AGM, and then put together revised proposals for changes to all Career Paths – CDs, Judges, Stewards and TDs. Member feedback will then be

sought on these revised proposals before they are sent to the FEI. However, it will not be possible to do this until the Level 4 appeals process is complete.

The Chairman stated the focus is on looking to the future, and it's vital to have the input of members on the career paths as without the Officials the sport cannot take place.

Judges Career Pathway

The following comments/questions were raised by members regarding the FEI Eventing Judges Career Path:

- Some Level 3 Judges were not invited to apply to become Level 4. Going forward, if an Official meets the criteria, can they apply to become Level 4 or is it by invitation only?

Course Designers Career Pathway

Wayne Copping (IEOC Board Member) presented the FEI Eventing Course Designers Career Path and made the following comments/suggestions:

- A proper explanation of the required English proficiency grades should be provided.
- *Level 4*
 - The requirements for Level 4 will be very difficult for most CDs to achieve, and those in the Southern Hemisphere will never be able to fulfil the requirements as there are not enough CCI4* events in the region.
 - It will be very hard for CDs to maintain 8x CCI4-5* within 3 years as a CD or Assistant CD including 2 x L format due to the amount of travel and expense required, particularly as an Assistant CD where no compensation is provided.
- *Level 3*
 - Why can't a L3 CD who designs at 4* be allowed to design a CH 4*? This could be done with a mentor and so get CDs to progress up to L4.
 - The requirement for Level 3 of 2 x CCI4*-S & 1 x CCI4*-L in the last 5 years as an Assistant CD needs to be a little stronger for balance with the Level 4 requirements.
 - The requirement for Level 3 CDs to have CCI3* experience as an Eventing Athlete is not necessary and will result in the loss of a lot of good Officials who do not have this experience. Equally, having ridden at this level does not necessarily mean that you will be a good CD.
 - The requirement for transfer-up to Level 3 to have 2 x CCI3* as a CD with positive evaluations needs to be stronger when compared with the Level 4 process.
- *Level 2*
 - The reduction in the number of years' experience required for a Level 1 CD to become a Level 2 CD if they have experience as an International Athlete is inappropriate. There are many ex-riders who may know how to judge a distance but do not have a clue about the CD process overall.
 - The requirement for a Level 2 CD to have done 2 x CCI in the last 3 years as a Level 1 CD with 1 positive evaluation for officiating as a CD need to be stronger. Why is it that the more experience and years in the sport a CD has the more difficult it becomes to transfer up the levels?
 - An explanation of Equivalency Officials is required.

The following comments/questions were raised by members regarding the FEI Eventing Course Designers Career Path:

- Online evaluation for the transfer-up to be a Level 4 CD is inappropriate, an in the field assessment by a mentor should take place.

Stewards Career Pathway

Sue O'Brien (IEOC Board Member) presented the FEI Eventing Stewards Career Path and raised the following questions/comments:

- A proper explanation of the required English proficiency grades should be provided.
- *Level 4*
 - What is the timeframe during which the required officiating experience of 5 x CCI4-5* or CH2-5* as a Chief Steward or Assistant Chief Steward must have taken place before application?
 - Is the Level 4 Stewards blended learning programme with examinations for transfer-up a special, dedicated Level 4 course, or can it be done at a normal Stewards course?
 - Is the CES Maintenance Course (in-person) every 3 years required for maintenance a special, dedicated Level 4 course, or can it be done at a normal Stewards course?
 - Is it necessary for the following maintenance requirement to include **overseas** appointments?
 - 4 Intl. Events in any discipline within the last 3 years as a Level 4 Steward, including 1 CCI.
- *Level 3*
 - Is it necessary for the following requirement for a Level 3 Steward to include **overseas** appointments?
 - 3 Intl. Events in Eventing as a Level 2 Steward within 3 years, including 1 x CCI as a Chief Steward, 1 x CCI4* or 5* as an Assistant Chief Steward with 2 positive evaluations whilst officiating at different Eventing Show.
- *Level 2*
 - Is it necessary for the following maintenance requirement for a Level 2 Steward to include **overseas** appointments?
 - 2 Intl. Events in any discipline within the last 3 years as a Level 2 Steward.
- *Level 1*
 - Is it necessary for the following maintenance requirement for a Level 1 Steward to include **overseas** appointments?
 - 2 Intl. Events in any discipline within the last 3 years as a Level 1 Steward.

The following comments/questions were raised by members regarding the FEI Eventing Stewards Career Path:

- It was noted that some, but not all Level 3 Stewards were transferred up to Level 4 this year with no requirement to go through the same examination and interview process as the other Officials. However, the FEI did not make the following clear:
 - Why this automatic upgrade applied to some Level 3 Stewards and not others.
 - Why this automatic upgrade happened for Stewards but not for Judges, CDs and TDs.

The meeting felt this approach was confusing, left Officials feeling as though they had not been treated equally, has the potential to cause division amongst Officials, and that it is important that the same, transparent process is used for all groups of Officials.

The IEOC has asked the FEI to clarify the process for the automatic upgrade of Stewards.

Technical Delegates Career Pathway

Michelle Debenham (IEOC Vice Chairman) presented the FEI Eventing Technical Delegates Career Path and made the following comments/suggestions:

- A proper explanation of the required English proficiency grades should be provided.
- *Level 4*
 - If an Official meets the criteria, can they apply to become Level 4 or is it by invitation only?
 - Should the following officiating experience before application be as an Assistant TD?

- 2 x CCI4*-L or higher outside of home country, in the last 3 years including 1 as a TD.
 - The officiating experience required before application will disadvantage Officials from the Southern Hemisphere. Can the FEI provide any financial assistance or help Officials to get invitations to meet these criteria?
 - Where are the FEI Eventing education modules required for maintenance on frangible devices located? Currently they are not easy to find on the education website. It would be good to add a link.
 - For the transfer-up blended learning programme:
 - What determines a pass or fail?
 - Who will sit on the interview panel in the future?
 - It is essential that interviews are conducted at a fair and reasonable time agreed by all involved. Even allowing for international time differences there is no need for interviews to be scheduled for 1AM or 2AM.
- *Level 3*
 - Please make it clear that the venue and assessors for the following requirement must be approved by the FEI **prior to** the event.:
 - 1 x CCI3-5* outside of home country in the last 2 years as a TD or Assistant TD
 - TDs should be given equal opportunities to officiate, with support provided if required, outside their home country.
 - For transfer-up the positive evaluations should be from the FEI approved assessor list.
 - A link to the FEI approved assessors list should be provided.
 - Is it mandatory for the Official to be foreign?
 - Where are the FEI Eventing education modules required for maintenance on frangible devices located? Currently they are not easy to find on the education website. It would be good to add a link.
 - Consider having positive evaluations as part of the maintenance process.
- *Level 2*
 - Should the positive evaluation required for a Level 1 TD be from an FEI approved assessor?
 - Consider having positive evaluations as part of the maintenance process.
 - All Level 2 TDs should have a mentor provided for support and to assist with ongoing education and evaluation.
- *Level 1*
 - Is it already, or should the Level 1 TDs online course with examination taken by National Eventing Officials be a formal evaluation?
 - “Pass an online interview with Course Directors” should read “Pass an online interview with FEI Course Directors”.
 - Perhaps add key criteria for education; eg understanding, integrity, work ethic, time commitment, teamwork, fairness.
 - Consider having positive evaluations as part of the maintenance process.
 - All Level 1 TDs should have a mentor provided for support and to assist with ongoing education and evaluation.

The following comments/questions were raised by members regarding the FEI Eventing Technical Delegates Career Path:

- Online evaluation of Level 4 TDs is inappropriate.
- As there are so few Championship and 5* events, the FEI should help those looking to transfer up secure Assistant TD appointments.

The following points relating to all Career Pathways were raised by members:

- The Level 4 education programme must be reviewed and amended for the future, as the way the recent Level 4 assessments were conducted was not acceptable and the requirements are impossible for many people around the world to achieve.
- The cost for a new Official coming into the sport and progressing up the Levels is unobtainable for many people. The FEI needs to look at how they can support their volunteer Officials through their Pathways recognising that not all NFs provide financial support to Officials to do this.
- Any evaluations of Officials should be collected in a consistent and properly structured manner.
- In this day and age it is important to take into consideration not only someone's technical ability within the sport, but also their attitude to teamwork and attention to the welfare and mental health of others with a view to ensuring the sport is more accountable and transparent for all riders, organisers, sponsors and the public.

The Chairman reiterated:

- The Board welcomes any additional feedback on any of the FEI Career Pathways which can be sent via email to mail@ieoc.info after the AGM.
- Member feedback will then be sought on the Board's revised proposals on all Career Paths before they are finalised and sent to the FEI.
- It will not be possible to do this until the Level 4 appeals process is complete.

9. Consultation with members

The Chairman confirmed the Board will continue to make use of surveys to gather feedback from members and ensure there is consensus before requests or support to change rules or Officials Career Pathways are sent to the FEI.

10. Next election

The Chairman advised that his, Sue O'Brien and Wayne Copping's terms of office end on 30th November 2024.

There will therefore be an election for three board members in November 2024.

Andy, Sue and Wayne can stand for re-election if they wish.

The Chairman encouraged people to put themselves forward to join the IEOC Board when the call for nominations is circulated next year.

11. Next AGM

The Chairman confirmed the next IEOC AGM will take place online in October/November 2024.

12. Any Other Business

- It was noted that the Level 3 requirements for transfer will become a problem for US Officials as the US Dressage Federation will not allow individuals to apprentice with judges for the Grand Prix level at shows. They will only allow Officials that need to apprentice for those levels to pay other judges and go to the show and judge with the judge. The person has to pay for the judge's time and expenses to do this. There are not very many judges in the US that can afford to do this, hence the requirements will be cost prohibitive because of the USEF prohibitions.

- Members commented that they had experienced inconsistency in the training and abilities of FEI Course Directors and noted the importance of Officials sending any feedback (positive or negative) on their experience at courses to Sandra Lecoultre at the FEI.
 - The Chairman advised that whilst the IEOC understands that Course Directors receive annual training from the FEI to try and provide conformity on the delivery of courses around the world, it feels a better approach would be for the FEI to have a small core of Course Directors who receive a stipend and could all work off the same syllabus and provide consistent/fair education and assessment of Officials. The IEOC made this recommendation to the FEI at their meeting in June.
- It was suggested the IEOC could act as a conduit between Officials looking for appointments to gain experience and Organisers, putting the Officials in contact with Organisers.

13. Close meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:18 GMT.