

Presidents Report.

I am pleased to present the Presidents Report for the 2019/20 season. It has been a season like no other.

On the racing front it started with our September meeting being transferred to Ashburton Raceway because of continued wet weather in the period prior to that raceday. This meeting is our Clubs of Canterbury raceday and we thank them for their continuing support.

Our Methven Cup day meeting in mid October was a successful day with our feature race, our cup, being won by Chase Auckland, owned by a syndicate put together and managed by Alabar, who were also our sponsors for the race.

We had our inaugural Friday afternoon meeting on the 1st November. This eight race low key event aimed at off course turnover was strongly supported by trainers and betting turnover well exceeded most expectations. This race day was a trial and it has now been carded again within our programme for the 2020/21 season.

The Christmas meeting with our two Green Miles again had a large on course attendance. Many groups booked sites on course and this continues to be a good day for our club to promote Harness Racing to a wider audience.

Our last programmed meeting was for late March but after nominations were taken the meeting was cancelled as the country was placed into Covid 19 lockdown.

Hororata Trotting Club continue to race their annual meeting at our Mt Harding track. This meeting took place in mid February.

For the new season Methven Trotting Club have been allocated seven race days. The five dates for last season have been retained and a further two, Sunday 31st January and an eight race card on Monday 26th April which is now a public holiday. This is very late in the autumn to be racing at Methven and we will monitor whether this is viable as the season progresses.

In addition to our seven meetings, Hororata are again scheduled to race in February and Geraldine Trotting Club have been told to relocate to Methven, and their meeting is scheduled for the last Saturday in November.

All in all this means a nine race days have been allocated to race at the Methven track this coming season.

Our track continues to have other regular use with Mt Hutt Trotting Club holding three trial meetings and fortnightly workouts over the spring to autumn period. A number of trainers also regularly use our grounds for training. It is a credit to all the committee who work with the track that this level of activity is able to be carried out. There have been challenges with our new top bend this season and it is a work in progress.

Methven Trotting Club continues to have a group of loyal and long standing sponsors. I thank them for their continued support. A thank you also to our members and life members for your support.

The land sale transaction for the Methven Hot Pools was completed in late 2019 and construction on the site is underway. This will be a great asset for Methven when it is up and running next winter.

A revised residential subdivision plan for twenty two sections has consent approvals. This work is currently out for tender and funding options for development costs are being worked on.

With these developments being undertaken, it was timely to revise the clubs constitution. The was undertaken and an updated constitution is now in place.

Our land that is farmed, again returned much needed additional funds to the club. The farmed area has been reduced by the hot pools site and will be further reduced if or when the subdivision proceeds, as final decisions have not been made on this.

I wish to thank our committee. There is a considerable amount of work, and range of work required to run a successful club such as ours. From the members of the promotions, grounds and buildings, farm, track, catering, sponsorship, programming and finance and development committees, I thank you for your continued work for Methven Trotting Club. A former President, Bruce Harper is standing down from the committee this years. I thank Bruce for all his work over many years.

The racing industry is facing some serious financial issues. The impact of Covid 19 has hurt the industry, but major problems existed before this. As a result of the impacts of these and the remedial actions being undertaken, we are faced with a considerable reduction in funding available to clubs. This will impact on what we can do as a club in the short term.

Country grass track racing remains as competitive as ever. We as a club continually produce strong betting returns for the industry by providing this racing product. Many challenges exist at present but I am confident in the long term future of our club.

Mark Lemon

President