

Odds and Sods

Brian O'Connor



HRI policy doesn't inspire confidence for the future

According to some business types, strategy can sometimes boil down to choosing what not to do. Trying to secure racing's long-term future is exercising lots of official minds around the racing world, although, it seems, with different degrees of urgency.

At a recent International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) meeting in Paris, the splendidly named Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges, chief executive of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and IFHA chair, was in no mood for sugar coating.

"I would submit that we have the biggest challenges facing the sport ever," he declared. "This is in the context of significant social, political and economic uncertainties - uncertainties we face in multiple areas."

Since Hong Kong is one of world racing's beau ideals in terms of financial clout and popular profile, his warnings on the need to widen the sport's fanbase, threats to its funding, and what was described as the sustainability of the thoroughbred were stark.

figure stalled, it was a welcome increase for the sector.

Minister for Agriculture Martin Heydon made a point of saying the extra money put into the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund is linked to implementation of an Indecon review's recommendations on animal welfare and integrity.

That Indecon report to the Oireachtas last year argued that a stronger public-policy rationale exists for funding of welfare and integrity programmes than for prizemoney, "given the public good" of the former. It even recommended some of the funding be "ring fenced".

As is the way of such reports, maybe its existence alone is job done, another document to gather dust. Heydon's reference could even be just a box-ticking exercise. But even at that, it is an indication of the direction of travel when it comes to racing's broader relevance.

Convincing the public that the four-legged participants at its core are treated properly is the ultimate challenge for racing everywhere. It is existential in a way everything else isn't.

Online venom

Failure to invest in mechanisms that provide meaningful reassurance to a wider world ever more dubious about animal sports has the capacity to prove disastrous. Even a cursory look at the online venom generated by the Government's budget increase to racing underlines the constant balancing act it faces to keep its vital social licence.

Recognising that should be part of the foresight and leadership that is urgently needed, according to Engelbrecht-Bresges's comments.

It is particularly required in Ireland where racing has both a unique relationship with government as well as major economic status. But welfare continues to be a relative afterthought in a pecking order that seems strategically focused on ploughing on in the same old way.

After 25 years of the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund, the Government's funding safety net is more vital than ever since Irish racing's other great financial pillar, the gambling industry, is in such a state of flux. Not that such upheaval is immediately obvious from HRI's policy direction.

Much of its current five-year strategic plan is predicated on reaching over €92 million in government funding by 2028, which looks a no-hoper at this point. Another major



A record number of Irish race fixtures are scheduled for 2027, which looks financially risky in the current climate. Photograph: Morgan Treacy/Inpho

Something for the Weekend

The weather gods look set to play ball and provide decent ground for tomorrow's Champions Day action at Ascot. The going doesn't seem to matter to Rayiff (3.20) - winner of the French Guineas and Jacques Le Marois - who will be the freshest QEII runner having had just three starts this

season. His trainer Francis Graffard could hardly be in better form and saddled The Revenant to win the race in 2020. James Doyle has picked incorrectly from a choice of Wathnan runners more than he'd like, but he could have got it right with Division (2.05) in the Champion

Sprint. Doyle has overlooked both Paboros and 2024 winner King Of Blue, and the choice looks significant. Division has had little luck this season, particularly on his last start. But a strong pace and midfield draw can help Doyle smuggle him into contention for a late spurt.

element continues to be increasing fixtures, at the heart of which is the new Tipperary all-weather circuit due to open in October 2027, for which HRI has borrowed €34 million.

Much of the commercial logic for an increased fixture list is tied up in media rights sales and betting turnover. But the gambling industry reality has transformed. Racing's significance to bookmakers is declining, betting shops are dying a not-so-slow death, and government instincts towards gambling generally are increasingly more hostile, particularly in the vital UK market.

Declining foal crops, fewer overall runners and smaller field sizes add up

to a questionable rationale for a record 396 fixtures in 2027. If it made financial sense in 2024, the logic of lumping on an ever more uncertain betting outlook when the numbers don't seem to add up looks increasingly like an old strategy for a new reality.

It certainly doesn't smack of fresh thinking. Neither does HRI's perpetual concentration on prizemoney inspire confidence that it's got the strategic chops to navigate increasingly choppy waters. All of it underlines the potential long-term impact of stale ideas on a sport struggling to recognise that its self-interest is tied up in staying relevant enough for people to care about it.

66

Welfare continues to be a relative afterthought in a pecking order that seems strategically focused on ploughing on in the same old way

It was little surprise that much of the Paris meeting focused on betting. Money speaks all languages and the rise of illegal betting hits racing bodies where it hurts most - in the pocket.

It's also doing so right now. In comparison, Engelbrecht-Bresges's comments on how racing is flirting with losing its popular relevance are intangible. They are vague enough to be put on the long finger by governing bodies busy keeping the bureaucratic carousel turning in the here and now.

That carousel turned in Irish racing's favour in the recent budget. The government gave an extra €2.3 million to Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) for 2027, bringing its total funding next year to €81.6 million. On the back of two budgets where the

Presbyterian notes

On the morning of the initial Drumcree standoff (September 27th) the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland sent an email to ministers: "In the Presbyterian Church we have people who have differing convictions and feelings about this situation."

"But Jesus brings us together to worship alongside each other and sends us out to serve our communities together."

"We know him in Ephesians 2 as the God who breaks down the dividing wall of hostility between people, bringing peace. Amid all the fear and despair of the world, we look to Jesus and see that there is something better. With him there is hope and peace that the world cannot find anywhere else."

"Please pray for calm and for peace."

for ordinary people whose lives are disrupted; for police trying to keep the peace; and for leaders who need to provide leadership. Pray that God will grant us something of the blessing he promised at Bethlehem 2,000 years ago when the angels sang about peace on earth.

"Above all pray that people will look to Jesus to find peace in the present, hope for the future, healing for wounds, and an example of love and self-sacrifice to follow."

Prof Andrew Holmes (Queen's University Belfast) will speak on Irish Presbyterians and America After 1783: Religion, Slavery, Identity at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (Titanic Quarter Belfast BT3 9HQ) on Friday 23rd October from 1-2 pm. Significant religious and cultural links

across the Atlantic post 1776 were reinforced in the following century, and continue to shape transatlantic connections.

The talk addresses the persistence of Presbyterian emigration and religious connections. It explores the tensions that developed owing to the demand of Irish Presbyterians for the immediate abolition of slavery in the United States. It shows how relations were reset after the Civil War thanks to a shared culture of religious revivalism and the development of a Scotch-Irish identity.

Details at www.proni.gov.uk/events
A Conversational Ministry conference with Ed Welch and Andy Bannister is planned for Assembly Buildings, Belfast BT1 6DW on Tuesday 10th November from 10.30

am to 2.30 pm. Cost: £20 (including lunch) eventbrite.co.uk.

The aim is to help participants, whether ministers, elders, ministry leaders or church members to make use of significant opportunities for ministry and witness which unfold in unplanned for every day conversations to open "a door to speak about faith, hope and God".

Church leaders gathered recently on the shores of Lough Neagh in an event following on from the Let Justice Flow Like Rivers care for creation conference last January.

The Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Richard Kerr, valued greatly the opportunity to share in liturgy with fellow Church leaders, and also to hear from farmers affected by the challenges of poor water quality.

Church of Ireland notes

The autumn issue of the Church of Ireland journal, Search, edited by Canon Ginie Kennertley, is out.

Last month's resignation of an AI supreme, with his announcement that Artificial Intelligence, if not forcefully regulated, could result in the extinction of humanity, makes the leading article by Linda Hogan urgently topical. Stringent control of AI development is needed without delay. Professor Hogan lists the vital ethical demands needed for its immediate regulation.

ACC-19, the triennial gathering of the Anglican Communion was hosted by the Church of Ireland in Belfast in the summer, but mutual respect between Anglicans of different cultural traditions was noticeable, as an article by Archbishop John McDowell illustrates, even though definitive agree-

ment on its key topic did not ensue.

The new Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin the Very Revd Tom O'Brien, known as both a devout Christian and a dynamic manager, commits himself in this issue to leading a Christ-centred cathedral in inspiring worship and the service of the community around it. The cathedral's Precentor, Canon Roy Byrne has penned a tribute to the previous Dean, the Very Revd Dermot Dunne, who has retired. Christ Church is also featured in a meditation on walking the cathedral labyrinth by Canon Albert Ogle who has recently returned from many years of ministry in the USA.

Ordained Local Ministry, Safeguarding developments and the response of different churches in the USA to Donald Trump's initiatives, have all been talking points over recent

months, and these are helpfully covered in this issue by three distinguished clergy: Dr Chris Mac Bruithin of CITI, the Revd David Bowles of Whitechurch parish, Dublin, and Dr Kevin J Moroney of New York, who served as chaplain and lecturer in CITC at the turn of the century.

Finally Iva Beranek, known to many for her work with the Church's Ministry of Healing, explores the spiritual and emotional life of C.S. Lewis.

Subscriptions to Search may be renewed, new ones take out and individual copies ordered at <http://www.searchjournal.org>

Tomorrow morning the Archbishop of Dublin will preside at the Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Synod Service in St. Philip's church, Milltown, and following the service he will chair the

Diocesan Synod in Alexandra College. In the Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny, the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory will preside at the Diocesan Synod while the Bishop of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe will be similarly occupied in the Woodstock Hotel. On Tuesday a service of Holy Communion in St. Patrick's cathedral will precede the Armagh Diocesan Synod in the Alexander Synod Hall where the Primate will preside and on Wednesday the Bishop of Derry & Raphoe will preside at the Diocesan Synod in the Everglades Hotel.

Monkstown Parish Church is holding a series of Wednesday lunchtime recitals at 1.10pm until 4 November. Admission is free and donations will be divided between the performers and the church. Further details from hildungan1@hotmail.com

CLASSIFIED EXTRA

PROPERTY ON VIEW

Lisney Sotheby's
ON OPEN VIEW
SATURDAY 17th October

BALLSBRIDGE 01-662 4511

DUBLIN 8 5 Curzon Street, Portobello 2 3 2
A three-bedroom period property ideally located in the heart of Portobello. 130 sqm
VIEW: 10.30 TO 11.00 AM BER C - PRICE: €945,000

DUBLIN 4 150 Clyde Lane, Ballsbridge 2 3 3

A superbly located, detached property with secure parking. 190 sqm
VIEW: 11.30 AM TO 12.00 PM BER D - PRICE: €1,950,000

BLACKROCK 01-280 6820

CO. DUBLIN 39 Priory Avenue, Blackrock 3 3 5 4
Impressive and substantial five-bedroom family residence. 295 sqm
VIEW: 10.00 TO 10.30 AM BER C3 - PRICE: €1,595,000

CO. DUBLIN 1 Cedar Square, Grove Avenue, Blackrock 1 3 1

Three-bedroom home located within a highly regarded gated development. 80 sqm
VIEW: 10.00 TO 10.30 AM BER C - PRICE: €675,000

CO. DUBLIN 16 Clonfadha Wood, Blackrock 3 3 4 4

A stunning detached property in the heart of Blackrock. 172 sqm
VIEW: 11.00 TO 11.30 AM BER B - PRICE: €1,850,000

DALKEY 01-285 1005

DUBLIN 18 76 Shanghanagh Vale, Cabinteely 4 4 4 2
Beautifully extended family home in Shanghanagh Vale. 180 sqm
VIEW: 10.30 TO 11.00 AM BER D - PRICE: €795,000

CO. DUBLIN 17 Arkendale Road, Glengarry 2 2 4 2

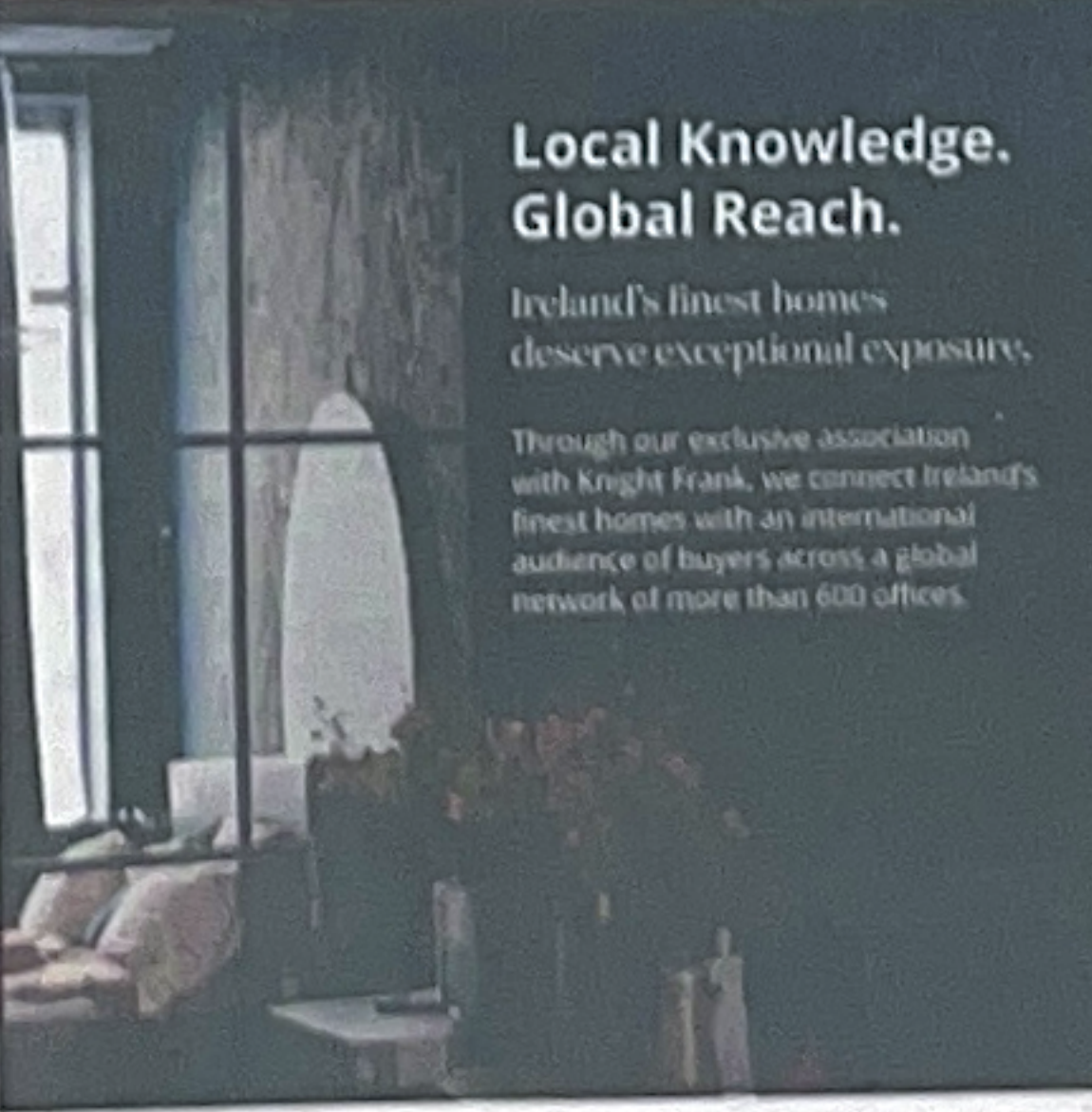
Charming 4-Bed Semi in Sought-After Glengarry. 144 sqm
VIEW: 11.30 AM TO 12.00 PM BER E1 - PRICE: €1,400,000

RANELAGH 01-662 4511

DUBLIN 6 59 Ranelagh Park, Milltown 3 3 4 4
A superbly located, double-fronted 4 bed family home. 209 sqm
VIEW: 10.00 TO 11.00 AM BER D - PRICE: €1,295,000

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PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Cork City Council: Further Information/ Revised Plans: Cork City Council Reg. Ref: 2614/2026. Longview Estates Ltd. applied for planning permission for a Large Scale Residential Development (LSD) at a site of c. 7.62ha located at Lahardane and Ballinacally, Ballyhooley Road, Cork City. The development consisted of the construction of 262 no. residential units (total GFA c. 25,427.7 sqm), comprising: i. 2 no. 4 storey apartment buildings (Blocks A & B) comprising 54 no. apartments (33 no. 1 bedroom & 21 no. 2 bedrooms); ii. 3 no. 2-storey apartment buildings (Blocks C, D & E) comprising 14 no. 2-bedroom duplex apartments; iii. 194 no. houses in a mixture of 2-storey terraced, semi detached and mews end of terrace units (34 no. 4-bedroom, 136 no. 3-bedroom, 24 no. 2-bedroom); and iv. A proposed creche (c. 452.7 sqm). The development also includes vehicular access points to the east and north of the proposed site connecting to the constructed distributor road to the adjoining Longview Estates (permitted under ABP-306325-20 as amended by CCC Reg Ref 23-42409 / ABP-318904-24 and CCC Reg Ref 25-43863); a pedestrian link to the nearby, all associated car parking, cycle parking and bus storage facilities; associated internal roads, pedestrian and cycle paths; public lighting; public open space (c. 14,362 sqm); communal amenity space; landscaping and boundary treatments; connection to public utilities; and surface water management works including attenuation and swales; all ancillary site infrastructure; ESB bus stations and site development and excavation works above and below ground. The proposed development will be constructed in a series of phases, or one continuous phase in accordance with the planning plans and construction management plans. The application may be inspected online at the following website: www.lahardaneld.ie. Significant Further Information / Revised Plans have been furnished to the planning authority in respect of this proposed development, and are available for inspection or purchase at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the authority at City Hall, Cork during its public opening hours. A submission or observation in relation to the further information or revised plans may be made in writing to the planning authority, on payment of the prescribed fee (except in the case of a person or body who has already made a submission or observation) within two weeks after receipt of the newspaper notice and site notice by the planning authority.

LEGAL NOTICES

THE COMPANIES ACT 2014

In the matter of Pinnacle Engineering Consultants Ltd (In Members Voluntary Liquidation). Notice is hereby given pursuant to S.193 of Companies Act 2014 that a general meeting of the above named company held on 2 October 2026 the undersigned was appointed liquidator and authorised to distribute any assets of the company amongst its members pursuant to S.618 of the Companies Act 2014. This is a solvent liquidation and all submitted creditors have been paid in full. 16 October 2026 Jimmy Fennelly Liquidator FLH Professional Accountants Ltd 80 Ranelagh Road Dublin 6 D06 P6Y3

Health+Family

EVERY TUESDAY IN THE IRISH TIMES