

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### **PJA STATEMENT FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF BEN CURTIS' BHA DISCIPLINARY PANEL ENQUIRY**

Following the conclusion of the BHA Disciplinary Panel enquiry into breaches of the Rules of Racing, following which Ben Curtis was given a two week suspension, suspended for six months and which will only be served should he breach the Covid 19 protocols again, Paul Struthers, Chief Executive of the PJA, said:

“We would like to thank the Disciplinary Panel for a fair hearing and for reaching an entirely sensible and rational conclusion on the appropriate sanction, bearing in mind Ben has already served a costly two week suspension as required under racing’s Covid-19 protocols. We note that we have never had cause to complain about any decision, whether or not we agree with it, since the advent of the current Judicial Panel under the Chairmanship of Brian Barker CBE QC.

“However it is very disappointing that, through those instructed by its in-house Compliance Team, the BHA was seeking a three month suspension, a punishment which would have had a catastrophic and immediate impact on Ben’s career and wellbeing. No doubt the BHA will try to justify this but given the facts of the case and when compared to action taken by other sports it is a stance that is impossible to fathom and was one with which the Panel clearly didn’t agree.

“Unfortunately, the actions of the BHA’s Compliance Team were once again cause for concern and frustration. These actions damage the otherwise excellent relationship that the PJA and its members have with the BHA. Having sought to persuade a Panel to take someone’s livelihood away for a quarter of a year for what amounts to a professional misjudgement, it is crucial for the BHA to hold others it regulates and itself to the same standards it expects of licensed jockeys and trainers.

“Ben is grateful to the support he has received from racing professionals and once again apologises unreservedly for his mistake.”

**END**