

And they're off at Musselburgh for Friday night at the races

The unfolding story of Musselburgh Racecourse has been told here in several articles, but there is a happy outcome now.

Today the British Horseracing Authority has announced that the committee which runs the course the Musselburgh Joint Racing Committee has been granted a temporary licence which will run till the end of 2017.



Councillor Willie Innes the Chairman of MJRC confirmed yesterday that the body will conduct a governance review which was demanded by the BHA.

The BHA said in a statement: "The British Horseracing Authority has today confirmed that Musselburgh Racecourse has been issued with a temporary licence until December 31, 2017.

"This follows agreement from the Musselburgh Joint Racing Committee and East Lothian Council that an independent governance review should take place, with a nine-month timeline for completion and implementation of recommendations.

"Having had the opportunity to clarify some issues with the MJRC, the BHA is satisfied that its licence condition has now been met.

"As a consequence, Musselburgh's forthcoming fixtures on 14 and 25 July can go ahead."



Bill Farnsworth CEO of Musselburgh Racecourse
with HM the Queen

Musselburgh Racecourse chief executive Bill Farnsworth said: "We are relieved that the BHA has been able to issue a licence to Musselburgh Racecourse which will allow our next meeting on Friday 14 July to proceed as scheduled.

"We are aware recent events have caused much uncertainty in the racing industry and we would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused. We would urge racing fans, owners and trainers to support Musselburgh at this meeting as we seek to find a long-term solution to this unfortunate situation.

"We hope the proposed independent governance review will create a modern blueprint which puts the interests of the racecourse first and prevents any similar situation from arising in the future."

John Prideaux, one of three Lothians Racing Syndicate members on the seven strong MJRC which runs Musselburgh Racecourse, said: "We are relieved that a last-minute solution has been found to meet the licencing requirements of the BHA and that racing will go ahead at Musselburgh on 14 July.

"This regretful and drawn-out episode has been extremely damaging to the reputation of Musselburgh Racecourse and we must now focus on rebuilding confidence in what is one of the Scotland's best sporting assets.

"The Lothians Racing Syndicate made clear from the outset that we support the BHA requirement to hold a governance review and welcome the BHA 's insistence that the review be wholly independent and not simply commissioned by East Lothian Council as Cllr Innes wanted.

"We are committed to working with other MJRC members to ensure the best possible outcome for hard working racecourse staff and the racegoers, trainers and owners who have supported Musselburgh over the years."

Miles Briggs, Conservative MSP for Lothian and Convenor of the

Parliament's Cross Party Group on Scottish Horseracing & Bloodstock Industries, said:

" I of course welcome the news that an agreement has been reached at this very last minute stage to secure the licence to allow racing at Musselburgh to go ahead next week and until the end of 2017. It is a real relief as the alternative, Musselburgh losing races, would have been disastrous.

" But the fact that we faced the imminent cancellation of important race dates at Musselburgh and endured all the associated uncertainty and negative media coverage for the racecourse over recent months has been regrettable and damaging. Many local people and race goers believe there are real questions to be answered as to how this state of affairs came to arise and why the Council could not have secured this agreement weeks ago, something that would have saved the dedicated racecourse staff from a period of significant stress.

" The focus now must be on the future and the governance review and I hope that can be taken forward as quickly as possible and that any positive proposals arising from that review can be put in place to help secure the long term future of the racecourse which is of such critical importance to the economy of Musselburgh and Lothian."