

# North West Homing Union

## **NWHU – Covid 19 Measures**

### **The New Normal**

The restrictions on travel and gatherings were the two main items that needed to change for pigeon racing to start until these restrictions are lifted then resumption of the season is effectively on hold. Travel restrictions in England and Northern Ireland only have been lifted, when these same restrictions are lifted in Scotland and Wales is down the devolved parliaments, it is vital that these restrictions are respected.

### **Measures for Marking & Basketing**

You may wish to first and foremost, establish what your members want to do? Do they want to race and train or just train? Do they want to wait till next year?

**Marking Procedures** – the following is for guidance, there are a lot of intelligent people out there and it's never been an ambition to tell you how to suck eggs. Therefore the following is offered as food for thought to help stay inside the legislation and government requirements and getting us use to the new normal, but please if anyone spots any errors feed them back we are all in this together and learning as we go forward.

**Who:** First, establish who in your club must not be allowed to attend marking / clocks? Age, underlying health issues etc then establish which members can / will be able to attend. For those that cannot attend the club but still want to send then establish out of the remaining members who would be able to pick their birds and clocks up while maintaining social distancing requirements.

**Where:** All operations should be where possible be held in the open air or with as much ventilation as is possible at the club's headquarters or alternative venue if one is needed.

**PPE:** You will need to ensure that the marking station has adequate PPE for the activities to be completed. If you cannot socially distance at your headquarters look for an area where you can, if you don't have enough members from the same household to conduct some activities, then the correct PPE must be made available and its use mandatory.

**Masks:** disposable or ones made from washable material note once these are given to a member it stays with them.

**Gloves:** disposable to be worn at all times during the marking process

**Face shield / Safety Goggles** where face to face interaction is unavoidable ie race rubber ringing please note this time must be kept to an absolute minimum as in the actual ringing of the bird, reading of birds life ring number to be done at 2 meter distance bird presented only at point of actual ringing.

Please note the HSE guidance allows for limited face to face interactions provided the correct procedures and PPE is used however these interactions must be kept to a minimum and where possible avoided,

**Hygiene: washing cleaning hands before and post basketing should be mandatory**

Waste bins with liner bags for disposal of PPE waste must be made available.

**Soap & water:** should be available and remember the 20 second rule for washing.

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**Paper tissue / towels** – disposable tissue / paper towels.

**Hand sanitiser** where water is not available then provision of hand sanitiser should be made available, if possible both soap and water and sanitiser should be available

**Wet Wipes** for use to wipe clocks and basket touch points,

## **Operational Suggestions:**

We know that with some members you will have to be firm with and keep them away from marking / basketing for their own protection.

Suggest that minimum of two members using PPE (gloves, mask, face shield), basket members birds.

Members may be given time slots to present their birds and clocks to reduce the number of members gathering at any one time.

Baskets to be presented / placed at designated point at HQ or access to members vehicle where basket held for marking team to unload remaining at all times required social distance by / from attending members.

Where a member is presenting another members basket & clock they should wear gloves and before actual handling wipe touch points with wet wipes.

Further two members to provide clock setting / checking and where required operate the race rubbering station.

These same marking station members to be available to load baskets on to transport.

Members not involved in basketing procedure to remain in vehicles where possible if not then maintain social distancing rules without question. Once a member's birds and clocks have been processed then they should leave.

Clocks external surfaces to be cleaned - wet-wiped on arrival and again before return to members along with their basket.

**Touch Points** Basket handles, opening and restraints to be wiped prior to use by the basket team and again before return to members.

Members basket team only to handle the birds between members basket and the race basket.

There will be localised issues that are best dealt with at a local level however the over-riding issue is to stay safe, protect yourself and those around you and maintain social distancing and adequate use of PPE.

**Please Check:** The Health & Safety Exec have a whole host of documents and processes and procedures that are in place to help, please check the following.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amd6CksqTOo&feature=youtu.be>

**The What about Questions?**

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**PPE** there are two aspects to obtaining PPE the price has escalated with demand forcing up prices so be prepared for a shock and the delivery times can be weeks. The other aspect is the sports image and the fact that some 2000+ organisations could be requesting a mix of badly needed PPE, now not on the scale of say NHS wards but could be on a par with doctors / chemists / dental practices? now this may not sit well with some parts of the general public or membership given the struggle the NHS, Care System and other front line workers are having to get on top of supply and demand issues. Please be sensitive over this subject when dealing with members and the general public.

Are Transport / convoy companies ready are their employees available is the transport MOT'd / Serviced is the sports infrastructure ready for a return to service? This may not happen overnight so please be patient and follow instructions and advice from the convoyers.

Lib sites are these open? some of them are linked in with other sports the likes of Horse Racing, Rugby etc also public access areas like council sports facilities, are these part of the same stage of the lifting of restrictions and on the same timeline?

**Costs:** we could experience increased birdage / additional cost PPE – there will be additional costs at a time when funds could for some be even more limited than usual with members on reduced income.

Transport / Convoy Companies: budgets for, and build their prices on a season starting early – mid April and running till mid / late Sept there is a chance that unit prices birdage or basket charges will have to be reassessed and may even increase with a much reduced season, The price of fuel will only go one way once demand increases, with uncertain numbers regarding members and birds going it will not be unrealistic if convoy costs don't increase to reflect these circumstances. added to this possible additional club racing costs some members may struggle, we as a sport need to be mindful of our members circumstances.

**Wellbeing:** The wellbeing of members and their families is paramount if anyone is in doubt or uncertain about the future and the sport please talk to someone. There are people organisations that are there to help and want to help.

Terry Phifer

North West Homing Union President

**Please Remember – Stay Alert - Control The Virus - Save Lives**

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