British Dressage

Director Reports

2026

Officials



Peter Storr
Judges Director

British Dressage

Officials

Formerly Judges, incorporating Stewarding activity

Over the past year, the Officials programme has continued to strengthen the education, development and support available to both judges and stewards. A key area of focus has been creating a more accessible and connected learning environment, ensuring officials at every stage of their journey have the tools and opportunities needed to develop their knowledge and skills.

Through a combination of headquarters and regional delivery, more than 250 judge training sessions have been delivered during the year. The Judge Education pathway has also undergone review through the External Quality Assurance process, resulting in further enhancements to the learner experience and continued confidence in the quality of our educational programmes.

Accessibility remains a priority, with revisions to assessment prerequisites helping to create clearer entry routes and development opportunities for aspiring officials. Alongside face-to-face training, the ongoing expansion of digital learning has enabled judges to access educational content through the BD Learning Hub and Black Horse One, providing greater flexibility and supporting continuous professional development.



Officials

Stewarding activity

Stewarding development has also remained a priority throughout the year. A new marshalling programme has been successfully piloted across ten venues, supporting efficient event delivery and providing a foundation for wider implementation. Qualification and upgrade opportunities continue to be well supported, with new steward assessments scheduled as part of a broader commitment to workforce development.

An important welfare milestone has been the implementation of the FEI Noseband Measuring Device at national level. Also in 2026, the revamped Level 3 Stewarding programme began at the Winter Championships with stewards attending to shadow the role of a Chief Steward in a Championship environment and attending a series of education and development activities in addition to other practicals.



Principles of Dressage 2026

The Principles of Dressage seminar continues to be a flagship educational event, bringing together judges, coaches and stewards around a shared commitment to horse welfare, consistency and best practice. Building on this success, Principles of Dressage will return to Hartpury College on 20 and 21 March 2027.

2027 and beyond

Looking ahead the Officials Committee will continue to focus on recruitment, retention and education, ensuring that judges and stewards remain well equipped to support participants and maintain the highest standards across British Dressage competition.



Training



Harry Payne
Training Director

British Dressage

Training

Coach education has seen a period of significant transition and development, with considerable progress made towards creating a modern, flexible and welfare-led framework for the future.

During the final phase of the previous qualification structure, 32 coaches successfully achieved coaching certificates. At the same time, the organisation launched its new consolidated coaching qualifications, bringing together learning pathways into a more streamlined and accessible programme. Early engagement has been encouraging, with 26 coaches already enrolled and a further five candidates registered through the Scottish qualification route.

BD Presents

Alongside these initiatives, BD Presents will continue to provide accessible education and inspiration for members. Future events featuring Gareth Hughes, Michael Eilberg, Isobel Wessels and Brad Hill will place a particular focus on equine behaviour and rider development, sharing practical insight and expertise from some of the sport's most respected figures.

A strong emphasis on equine welfare, learning theory and ethical training methods underpins the new programmes, ensuring coaches are equipped not only with technical expertise but also with the knowledge and understanding required to support both horse and rider development in line with modern best practice.

Collaboration across the industry has continued to be a key theme. An Education Workforce Development Day brought together more than 170 educators from across the equestrian sector, creating valuable opportunities to share expertise, strengthen professional networks and align approaches to learning and development.

What's next

Looking forward, work will continue to enhance coach support and create greater consistency across development opportunities. A new universal CPD framework will launch in the coming months, offering a clearer and more coordinated approach to ongoing professional development. Collaborative initiatives with organisations including Pony Club, Riding for the Disabled Association and other youth and inclusion charities will further broaden learning opportunities and strengthen links across the wider equestrian community.



A successful pilot of the rider development Progression Tests has also laid the foundations for a wider rollout later in 2026, helping riders and coaches better understand progression routes and development goals.

Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate a continued commitment to developing a highly skilled, welfare-focused coaching workforce that can support participants at every level of the sport.

Youth



Hannah Moody
Youth Director

British Dressage

Youth

Youth activity has continued to expand throughout the year, with education, welfare and inclusion remaining central to the programme's development. Significant progress has been made in strengthening learning opportunities for young members whilst creating accessible and supportive pathways that encourage participation and long-term engagement in the sport.

A major achievement has been the continued growth of the Horse Care Programme, with over 310 full Horse Care Certificates awarded to date. This milestone reflects the importance of embedding equine welfare education at the heart of the youth pathway and ensuring young riders develop strong foundations as responsible horse owners. Building on this success, Intermediate and Advanced Horse Care programmes have been launched, with practical qualification opportunities planned from 2027.

Partnership working has played an important role in expanding inclusion and accessibility. A successful collaborative day with Cool Ridings provided opportunities to engage new participants and broaden access to dressage, while the development of an inclusive coaching programme, supported by Sport England funding, will further strengthen opportunities for underrepresented groups across the sport.

Talent development continues to be a key priority. The Foundation Academy welcomed 44 athletes for the 2026-27 programme, incorporating C and C+ Squad riders alongside returning athletes following updates to selection criteria. This reflects a more flexible and inclusive approach to supporting young riders at a critical stage of their development.

Youth Regional Competitions continue to go from strength to strength, with a review of the Under 25 Championships following Sheepgate stepping back from delivering the competition. Exciting plans are underway to relaunch the competition for future generations.

These achievements sit alongside ongoing investment in rider progression, welfare education and inclusion, ensuring that British Dressage Youth remains well positioned to support the next generation of participants. Looking ahead, the focus will remain on expanding opportunities, increasing accessibility and creating positive experiences that allow young people to thrive both within and beyond the competition arena.



Para



Tracy Ormrod
Para Director

British Dressage

Para

Our Para Equestrian community continues to develop and excel with an increase of participants at all levels from local competitions, through Para championships right up to international competitions at 4 UK CPEDI's.

Work continues on establishing venues with appropriate facilities to host para competitions and we continue to strive to give riders competitions in their area on days that suit them, it will remain work in progress for my entire term.

We continue to expand the Para workforce, with 11 new coaches now fully compliant and 6 Para judges due to take their para judge assessment in November. The National Para Academies continue to prove popular, with positions filled quickly and reserve lists in place.

As I look to next year and also 2028 there are exciting plans afoot to hold a Para training event to bring together the whole community to connect, learn and share our knowledge with each other. 2027 will see a lot of discussion and reaching out to the Para community for their ideas and what inspires them.

FEI World Championships 2026, Aachen, Germany

- Team Fifth
- Grade V Individual Gold - Sophie Wells
- Grade IV Individual Bronze - Nicola Naylor
- Grade II Individual Bronze - Jemima Green
- Grade I Individual Silver - Mari Durward-Akhurst
- Grade II Freestyle Silver - Jemima Green





International



Judy Harvey
International Director

British Dressage

International

This year our international endeavours were well supported by a full complement of home CDIs. Huge thanks to Hartpury, Wellington, Hickstead, and London International. It cannot be underestimated how important these 'Home Internationals' are in facilitating opportunities both for selectors and riders without the hassle and expense of crossing the channel. Of course, it is essential for riders to gain vital experience competing abroad and to deal with the complexities of post Brexit travel but to be able to layer that on top of a 'Home CDI' is immensely comforting.

Our first major success in 2026 was the outstanding and well-deserved World Cup triumph of Becky Moody and Jagerbomb in Texas, USA. Becky is an amazing freestyle rider and the crowds in the USA loved her.

Youth Europeans

The European U25 and Young Rider Championships were held in Hungary and whilst we missed out on Team Medals our riders and horses did us proud. The U25s were a creditable 5th and the Young Riders 4th. Mette Dahl and Daytona Platinum were the talk of the show and deservedly won a bronze medal in the freestyle. Lots more to come from these talented riders.



The Junior Team in Poland this year struggled against some fierce opposition and were 9th. They will all have learned a tremendous amount and will put the experience to good use in the years ahead.

The Children on Horses Team, also in Poland, excelled themselves. It is still a learning curve as to what the judges expect at this level, but our team of Amelia, Sebastian, Stella and Isabelle came up with the right answers and beautiful riding to win our first ever COH medal - a bronze. I hope that this encourages more riders to look at this level which focuses on good riding and training.

The Pony Team in Le Mans, France were 5th in the Team Competition and again they will have learned a lot and absorbed the atmosphere of competing against the very strong German, Danish, Swedish and Dutch Teams.

World Championships

We were all excited to be at the World Championships for the seniors in Aachen. What a show, what an atmosphere. We went in as a serious threat to the German Team but they are hard to beat in their own country. Our riders did us proud, Fiona, Carl, Becky and Lottie you are amazing. The Team Silver medal was hard fought for and a huge credit to you all. What can we say about Lottie and Glamourdale ? They had a serene aura about them for the entire show, they were phenomenal. To win the World Championships doing the double double is outstanding. I am privileged to have been there in person for all four titles.

So, this is my last report as International Director. It has been an honour to have been in this role for 9 years. (I got an extra year thanks to Covid). Through this time, we have dealt with Brexit, Covid, and our beloved sport has faced some enormous challenges. However, we have come out of it with our reputation as a leading Dressage Nation intact and enhanced. Our riders are really something to be proud of and our horsemanship second to none. The team in the office – especially Lianne have been amazing and work incredibly hard to keep things on track - thank you. I will sign off by wishing my successor Anne Keen, every success in what is a challenging, intense and rewarding role.



Sport



Derek Pullem
Sport Operations Director

British Dressage

Sport Operations

The introduction of the new test-based qualifying system, replacing points-based qualification, has increased participation at Regional Championships. In total, 160 combinations took advantage of the opportunity to compete at two Regional Championships, while the change has had minimal impact on participation in Area Festivals.

Scoring in the new tests remains broadly comparable with that achieved in the equivalent previous qualifying tests. However, the number of tests available at Elementary level has fallen, and the reduced range of alternatives means that venues tend to offer the more demanding Championship tests. To broaden the programme, a new long-arena Elementary 3 test has been introduced and will be available from the 1 July 2027. A new long-arena Introductory test will also be introduced from 1 July 2027, this will assist venues when scheduling intro classes when only running long arena competitions. It will also feature in the Associated Championships in the Autumn.

New for 2027

New for 2027, BD Open competitions will be introduced to give members opportunities to compete without affecting their eligibility. In addition, the relocation of the Summer Championships creates an opportunity to review the Championship programme and establish a better balance of class sizes and entries. The Middle Tour Championships will also be expanded to include a Big Tour for Grand Prix combinations that do not qualify for the Summer Championships, using a format and qualifying process similar to those already in place for the Middle Tour.

Quest

A survey was conducted to assess interest in extending Quest to Elementary level. Although support for the proposal was minimal, other options are being reviewed to increase the range of Quest competition opportunities.

Rules and Fixtures

Finally a dedicated workgroup is collaborating with Rules and Fixtures to review eligibility rules across all levels and sections, with the aim of further simplifying the framework and improving consistency.



Membership & commercial



Suzanne Homewood
Business Development Director

British Dressage

Membership

It's been a challenging year for the equestrian sector with the impact of economic pressures on the cost of living being felt across the membership.

Membership currently stands at 17,423, down 2.6% since January 2026 and Horse registrations currently 15,482, down by 3% since January 2026.

One of the team's focuses has been to improve the retention of British Dressage members, and the Membership Team have implemented a number of initiatives to improve the member experience. These have included making calls to members to ask about their member experience, targeting lapsed members to understand in detail the reasons for not renewing and improving processes to enable the Team to spend more time speaking to our community.



Membership in 2027

We aim to continue to increase the visibility of BD to non-members, whilst making sure that existing members understand the range of benefits available to them outside of the arena. We also aim to keep highlighting the variety of competition options for members, as well as the activity that takes place in the regions and how members can get involved in that.

Enhanced member benefits

Commercial progress has allowed the BD member benefits package to grow, with new partners on board to contribute expert knowledge and exclusive offers.

- PRP Rescue Services
- Swann & Tower (Home and electrical goods)
- Arden Wood Shavings
- Feedmark
- The HUSK



Marketing & communications



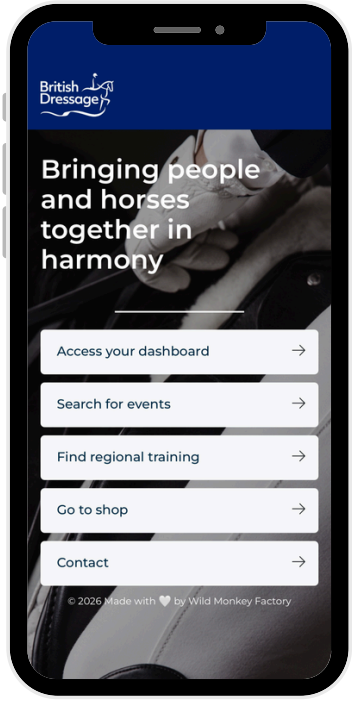
Suzanne Homewood
Business Development Director

British Dressage

Marketing & Communications

The Marketing & Communications department continue to support the ongoing digitalisation strategy. This year we put in place the next stage of this work with the launch of the new BD App. The app has been implemented to offer the following benefits to members:

- Free to download and designed to make managing BD membership simpler, faster and more user friendly.
- Access to individual membership profile and horse registration details in one place.
- View competition activity and training to track progress.
- Search schedules, events, results and regional training.
- Access documents, including the BD Members' Handbook.
- Receive personalised notifications about membership and milestone achievements.

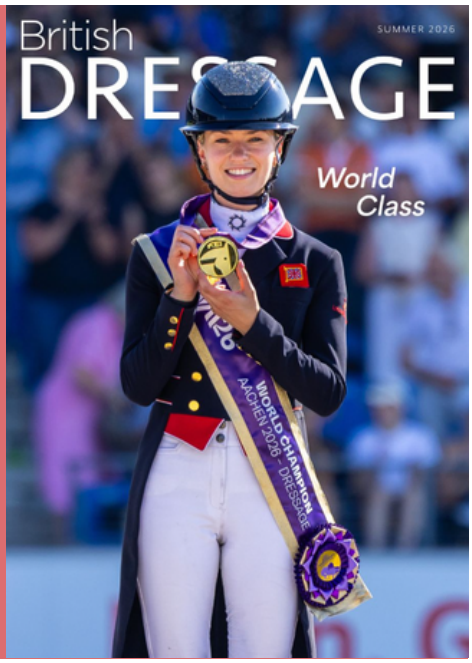


Digital Magazine

Two new editions of the digital magazine were created and published in 2026.

Training special: launched in April and covered nine different content pieces around various aspects of horse and rider training.

Championships special: covered the success of the summer international period with interactive galleries and video content from Aachen.



From Region Team Events to World Championships coverage

Throughout the year, the team have created a significant amount of new content and covered a number of events and competitions, making sure that grassroots riders and activity are represented alongside those competing on the global stage. In 2026 the team have used both in house and external resource to create new membership content, focusing on the community elements of being a member from competitions including the Senior and Para Home Nations, Youth Home Nations, Petplan Area Festival Championships and the Cool Ridings collaboration day.



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