

**Subject: Registration of NWHU rings**

With effect from 22nd February 2019 all rings issued by the North West Homing Union (NWHU) that are raced or shown under RPRA rules have to be registered with the RPRA by 1st April (or 1st July for 2019 rings). This follows the decision taken by the RPRA council that all rings issued by unions that are not members of the British Confederation should be registered. The cost of registration is 30p per ring. The registration document below should be completed and returned to Royal Pigeon Racing Association, Reddings House, The Reddings, Cheltenham GL51 6RN before 1st April (or 1st July for 2019 rings). Confirmation will be issued by the RPRA to the owner as evidence of registration. The registration form can be downloaded from the RPRA website and will also be published in this week's BHW. The background to this decision is as follows: the sport in general is coming under ever-increasing pressure from animal rights groups and those interested in Animal Welfare. The RPRA receives weekly emails from groups and individuals who would like to see an end to pigeon racing. In 2018 a well known animal rights group approached the cross channel ferry companies requesting they stop transporting racing pigeons to France. Therefore, I am sure you agree that we should do everything possible to ensure that pigeons raced under RPRA rules continue to benefit from the best possible animal welfare conditions – this includes the repatriation of strays. The vast majority of unions in the UK deal with the stray issue in an acceptable manner. The RPRA has a designated team during office hours and an online 'stray wizard' for use at other times. Unfortunately, due to a high number of complaints received at the RPRA HQ in 2018 there are concerns in relation to the ability of the NWHU to repatriate strays in a way that I am sure 99% of fanciers would consider appropriate. To ensure that pigeons raced under RPRA rules continue to benefit from the high standards of animal welfare the RPRA council has reluctantly taken the decision to impose the requirement to register all NWHU rings raced under RPRA rules prior to the 2019 season.

Ian Evans Chief Executive RPRA