

Avon Athletic Association

Minutes of a Management Committee Meeting of the Avon Athletic Association, held on Monday December 5th 2022, by Zoom, starting at 7.00pm.

Those Present: Debbie Brooks, John Deaton (General Secretary), Roland Gibbard, Pam Gooding (President), Ray Gooding (Life Vice-President), Hilary Nash (Treasurer / Bristol & West AC), Stuart Nunn (Yate & District AC), John Robbins (Chairperson), Mark Thomas (Team Bath AC). [Correction: Add Arthur Renshaw (Thornbury RC)].

Apologies: John Cox (GWR), Kelly Dicks (GWR), Andrea Garcia-Lock (SGS College), Ian Macintosh (Life Member)

Minutes of previous Committee Meeting (26th September 2022): Correction: one club still had not paid their Avon AA Affiliation Fee. Otherwise: accepted.

Matters Arising:

1. The Independent Examination of the 2021 Accounts is almost complete.
2. County Tent: this needs to be moved from its current storage location as a matter of urgency. Clubs are asked to contact John Robbins zatopek56@hotmail.co.uk with offers to store the tent, even as a short-term arrangement.

Treasurer's Report: (Distributed in advance; copies available on request): Points not covered in the Report:

- ... the cheque for the Cleeve Road Relays deficit has gone through
- ... Running Imp has discontinued the medal design we had used. However we have sufficient supplies for the Oldbury 10M Race
- ... we would need to review the stock of Avon AA / Team Avon vests
- ... we would need some invoices before the claim to the YDL for 2022 fixtures can be cleared.

The meeting discussed a request from Yate and District AC for financial support towards the cost of an Electronic Starts system. Comments included:

- ... the cost would be around £8,000; the meeting was unclear about how much was being sought from the Avon AA, and what other potential funding sources were being approached.
- ... the Association had not in the past given grants towards capital costs, although they had passed on to YOSC items obtained from EA's support grants to improve County Championships (e.g. wind gauges)
- ... the Association's bank balance had dwindled in recent years, and it currently had few income sources.
- ... Police forces were taking a harder approach to Starters' guns, and new recruits to the discipline were expressing reluctance to take on the Licensing regulations (only likely to increase) associated with owning the classic starting pistols.
- ... if the Avon AA contributed to the costs of the equipment, they would hope for some easement of the charges for use of the equipment.

John Robbins and Hilary Nash would meet to formulate a proposal which Yate & District AC / YOSC would be asked to submit to the Committee.

Officials Secretary's Report: Officials qualified / upgraded since last report:

- To Level 1: Edward Cooper (FJ), Rich Maddocks (FJ)
- To level 3: Debbie Brooks (FJ)

Not continuing as an Official: Molly Cater

Road Running / Endurance Matters:

1. The meeting discussed an article in AW asserting that numbers in adult endurance events in England had dropped recently. Local opinion was that the commercial races were being affected by the national financial situation. Reports suggest that race attendances in Scotland are nearly back to pre-Pandemic levels.
2. Application details for South-West team places on the April 2023 London Mini Marathon are now available.

Track & Field / Sportshall Matters:

1. The Avon Schools Sportshall Championships / Trials will be held on Saturday January 28th at the Bristol Grammar School Sports Hall.
2. Avon AA Track and Field Championships: the standard dates for these events are May 13th and/or 14th 2023. The Somerset AA are interested in some level of cooperation between the two Championships. Holding joint Steeplechase events at Yeovil worked well last year.

The 2023 Great Bristol 10km / Half Marathon will be held on Sunday May 14th, which could affect numbers of officials available.

Cross Country / Fell / Trail Matters

1. Tri-Counties Cross-Country Championships (Bath University, Sunday November 27th): organisationally, these went ahead well, and the committee was grateful for the work put into the meeting by Ian Humphreys of the Somerset AA.
 - 1.1 The meeting was disappointed by the low turnout of Avon competitors. While some coaches had actively encouraged their athletes to enter, other coaches (or in some cases, entire clubs) had bypassed the event. If the turnout continued to decline, there would come a point where it would no longer be worthwhile for volunteer time or financial reasons to hold such events.
 - 1.2 The Championships had been held earlier in the season than before, to avoid the various Leagues to which local clubs prioritise. The choice of November 27th had been criticised as it was on the same weekend as the UK Cross Challenge meeting (incorporating the GB/NI Trials for Turin). However this event was at least 160 miles from any part of the Avon catchment area, and only eight athletes from Avon / Somerset / Wiltshire finished in the top-60 places in the Trials races.
 - 1.3 Several attendees had problems making car park payments at the University car parks (cash payments are not possible). John Deaton will contact the JustPark organisation.
 - 1.4 The Avon AA is due to be the Lead Organisation for the 2023-24 season Tri-Counties. A suggestion made by Paul King of Team Bath AC is that the meeting is combined with a Gloucester XC League race at the University. The meeting was interested in principle, but there were several factors needing to be considered.
2. South-West Cross-Country Championships (Sunday 8th January 2023, RNAS Merryfield, near Taunton): entries are now open. All athletes who register as Avon competitors will be considered as Avon Team members. Athletes should feel free to wear Avon AA vests (the same as worn by Team Avon members), or their own club vests. It is unlikely that any Avon AA vests will be available on the day. John Deaton will not be available for the meeting, as he will be making presentations at the SW Indoor Championships that day.

The first two South-West athletes in each of the relevant races (U13, U15, U17 for each gender) will (subject to positive response within reasonable time) receive automatic places in the South-West team for the April 2023 London Mini Marathon.

3. UK CAU Inter-Counties Cross-Country Championships: John Deaton has been ratified as the Lead Organiser of the Avon and Somerset teams for these Championships, and he has begun work on the event. We still needed Senior Men's and Senior Women's Team Managers to help with selections for these teams.

Although the 2023 Championships will go ahead, the future of the UK CAU organisation is uncertain.

Information from Outside Bodies (e.g. MCAA, EA, SW Council):

1. The Secretary has had no news of any replacements for Keith Brackstone as Chair of the MCAA Cross-Country Committee or Chair of the MCAA Road Running Committee. There must be uncertainty about the 2023 MCAA Cross-Country Championships [Post-Meeting Note: now confirmed for Saturday 28th January at Leamington] and of the 2023 MCAA 12/6 Stage Road Relays (scheduled for Sutton Coldfield on Saturday April 1st). If the latter is not held, there must be questions about how Men's teams from Avon and Gloucestershire clubs could qualify for the National 12 Stage Relays.
2. The new Secretary of the Gloucestershire AAA is Emma Jeffrey, secretary@athletics4u.co.uk. Albert Gardiner remains as their Officials Secretary.

Information from Member Clubs / Associations:

1. Penny Mannings has stepped down as Chair of North Somerset AC because of pressure of non-athletics commitments.
2. Ben Westhenry has been given temporary Leave of Absence as Secretary of Bristol and West AC to allow him to complete his Ph.D. Ben Maliphant will be covering the post, and will be handling e-mails sent to secretary@bristolandwestac.org.

Any Other Business: The meeting noted with dismay that Mike Down had been knocked down and hospitalised by a hit-and-run cyclist in Bristol. The meeting wished Mike a continued recovery.

Date of Next Committee Meeting: Monday January 23rd 2023, via Zoom. John Robbins will be unable to take part in this meeting, so Item 1 on the Agenda would need to be the election of a Chair of the meeting.

The meeting would also need to plan for the 2023 Annual General Meeting, for which the suggested dates were Monday April 3rd or Wednesday April 5th. Member clubs are asked to inform the Secretary whether either date clashes with a regular Committee evening for them.

The meeting was reminded that John Robbins will be standing down as Avon AA Chairperson at the 2023 AGM. Avon AA business meetings have routinely been held on Mondays, but if a potential candidate for the post would find a different evening easier, a change could be favourably considered.

Meeting Closed at about 8.40pm.