

Avon Athletic Association

Minutes of an abbreviated Management Committee Meeting of the Avon Athletic Association, held on Monday 8th March 2021, by Zoom, starting at 7.25pm.

Those Present: Debbie Brooks (North Somerset AC), John Cox (GWR), Kelly Dicks (GWR), Mike Down (Bristol & West AC / Life Member), John Deaton (General Secretary), Dean Garrett (Bristol & West AC), Pam Gooding (President), Ray Gooding (Officials Secretary), Ken Holmes (Avon Schools AA), Penny Mannings (North Somerset AC), Neil Miller (Westbury Harriers), Hilary Nash (Treasurer / Bristol & West AC), Arthur Renshaw (Thornbury RC), John Robbins (Chairperson), Jim Strudwick (Avon Schools AA), Matthew Viner (Yate & District AC), Benedict Westhenry (Bristol & West AC).

Apologies: Andy Heyes (Clevedon AC), Ian Macintosh (Life Member), James Murphy (Welfare / Westbury Harriers), Mike Strange (Bristol & West AC / Life Member), Diana Viles (Team Bath AC), Sandra Woodman (Yate & District AC), Stuart Woodman (Yate & District AC).

Minutes of previous Committee Meeting: (27th January 2020): Accepted.

Matters Arising: None.

Treasurer's Report: There had been no transactions since the 2020 Financial Report.

Officials Secretary's Report: This was distributed in advance (copies available on request). Changes to Status of Avon AA Officials:

Graded or Upgraded: James Viner to L1 Field Judge; Charlotte Viner to L2 Field Judge; Matt Spicer to L1 Field Judge.

Retired from Officiating: Peter Jackson, Tony Jefferies

Lapsed: Jessica Lewis, Jack Priestley, Ian Boon, Sam Chivers, Samantha Barrett, Carolyn Conibear [Note: some of the officials marked as 'lapsed' may be able to re-instate by completing their DBS]

Road Running / Endurance Matters: Stuart Hancock is planning to promote the Cleeve Road Relays again, on August 29th at Cleeve Cricket Club. He is hoping for the backing of the usual band of officials, and from more of the Avon AA clubs than in recent years.

Track And Field / Sportshall:

1. Avon T&F Championships 2021: Assuming that the EA Roadmap for return to competition remains in effect with the relevant dates unchanged:

... it does not seem likely that we could stage a traditional single-day Championships before June 21st, and there may well be fixture congestion after that date.

... a two-part Championships might be possible, with a Track day and a Field Day probably being easier from the viewpoint of Covid protocols and provision of officials. However this would have financial implications.

... for a meeting before May 17th we are expected to "minimise travel" (no definition of this yet).

... there was discussion about how much athlete preparation would be advisable before a County-level competition: some technical-event athletes may not have been able to train at all.

... for any meeting before 17th May, no spectators (other than the single parent/carer) would be allowed, which would lessen the atmosphere.

... with the cancellation of some early-season YDL fixtures, the weekends of 8/9 May and 15/16 May would be available for T&F events, but these need not be Championships.

... in whatever format the Championships is eventually scheduled, the Avon AA would need support in staging the events, possibly by each T&F club agreeing to take on one aspect of the work?

John Deaton has been invited to participate in an EA Webinar on the Return to Competition during the day on Wednesday 10th March, and will be taking part in the EA South-West Council meeting on the same evening. The outcome of either meeting may affect how any Championships can be run.

2. Schools Athletics: The English Schools AA are hoping to stage a modified Championships for 2021, with limited numbers of athletes: Senior Boys/Girls to compete on Friday only (hopefully, July 9th), Inters on the Saturday, Juniors on the Sunday. Athletes would be expected to travel on the day. The South-West Schools Championships would normally be held on June 19th (i.e. just before Covid restrictions are due to end) : there is a meeting of Schools officials in the South-West soon to discuss how to proceed.

3. Sportshall: no events were possible in the first half of 2021.

Cross-Country / Trail Matters:

1. The December 2020 Tri-Counties Cross-Country championships was (probably inevitably) cancelled, but John Deaton was disappointed at the scarcity of advance preparation for the event. John Robbins suggested that, rather than depending on a single individual or even a single County for the event, the three counties should collaborate, with each leading on one aspect of the meeting. Discussions among the three counties to be sought over the summer.

2. Debate on equality of XC distances for Senior Men and Senior Women: the UKA/EA survey had attracted around 10,000 responses, and EA had employed a contractor to handle the analysis. The results will clearly be delayed. Another had been created by the Area Cross-Country Associations and other parties: John Robbins considered both surveys unsatisfactory, with each set of survey questions angled towards what its creators wished to hear. As the surveys (hosted by the same organisation) can only be completed once from a single machine, the hints in the 'Areas' survey about multiple voting sound implausible.

Information from Outside Bodies:

1. UKA Structure Survey: the consultation information had only been published on Friday March 5th, and the Chair felt that there had not been enough time for members to absorb the complex issues involved. He urged member clubs to consider the matters and feed back their thoughts to the Association.

2. Member clubs were reminded of the EA Club Support Grants (Counties can also apply), the second phase of which is now open. Thornbury RC received a grant in the first phase.

3. [Post-Meeting Note: EA Regional Councillor Elections: in none of the nine EA regions were there enough nominees to require elections for Councillor posts. In the South-West Region, existing councillor Graham Berry (North Devon AC) did not seek re-nomination for health reasons: the new SW Councillors are Elliott Prince (Cheltenham Harriers) and Phil Lucker (South Glos AC)].

News from Member Clubs / Associations: North Somerset AC now have lighting available at their Clevedon base which will aid their winter training efforts.

Any Other Business: None (the only item of pre-notified business was overtaken by events).

Date of Next Meeting: With progress on the Avon T&F Championships being dependent on possible decisions by EA or the Government, it was not felt that we could commit yet to a definite date for the next meeting.

Meeting Closed at about 9.00pm., with thanks to Benedict Westhenry for acting as Zoom host.