

NORTHERN ATHLETICS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th November 2018

The Chairman of Northern Athletics, Tony Wood, took the Chair and welcomed all present to the meeting.

A one minute silence was observed in memory of colleagues who had passed away during the year.

Sheila Bolland
Dr Alan Neuff
Roy West

Jim Green
Mike Nicholson
George Kirby

Dave McDonald
Brian Spriggs

1) Attendance

Present:

Officers & Executive Board of Northern Athletics

K.F.Carr, T Wood, ND Orr, R Brimage, M Fletcher, IM Rogers, K Smith, A Williams, Mrs E Williams (*co-opted*)

Club & County Representatives:

2 Dash AC (J Howley), Altrincham & DAC (M Welford), Barnsley & DAC (M Fletcher), Bingley H&AC (B Haygarth, C Daniel), Blackburn H&AC (GS Davies), Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde AC (Mrs M Crompton, S. Taylor), Bury AC (K Smith), Chorlton Runners (J Smith, Ms J Miles); City of Sheffield & Dearne AC (Mrs S White), City of York AC (P Baxter, R Everton), Cleethorpes AC (E Bellamy), Derby AC (B Parker), Doncaster AC (T Bailey), East Cheshire & Tameside AC (EJ Murphy), Gateshead H&AC (C Betts), Holmfirth H & AC (SD Green, T Cock), Keighley & Craven AC (C Tomes), Kendal AAC (Mrs M Belk), Leeds City AC (S Linsell), Leeds Schools AA (Mrs P Schofield), Leigh H& AC (J Galvin), Liverpool H& AC (Mrs E Williams), Liverpool Pembroke & Sefton AC (R Wood, Mrs K Brown, D Brown), Longwood Harriers (D Owen), Middlesbrough AC (RA Ward), Oldham & Royton H&AC (Ms P Booth), Pontefract AC (C Jones), Preston H&AC (R Welfare), Queensbury RC (A Dovernor), Rotherham H & AC (S Gaines), Rothwell & DH (M Randall), Roundhay Runners (Ms M O'Donnell, I Rayner, A Lewis), Sale Harriers Manchester (J Frost), Skyrac AC (GA Agar), Southport Waterloo AC (L Coupland, M Dandy), Spensborough AC (F Reddington), Steel City Striders (A Buck), Sunderland H&AC (KF Carr), Trafford AC (A Johnson, Mrs M Johnson, M Harris), UTS Run Club (M Stone), Valley Striders (R Jackson), Wallasey AC (Mrs A Brimage), Warrington AC (A Wort), Wigan & DHAC (Mrs M Grayston), Wirral AC (N Waterson), Yorkshire RWC (T McDermott), Mrs R Cooper, S Cooper.

Past Presidents/Trustees:

Mr B Heywood, Mrs J Simpson MBE, R Lawton, W Nicholls, D Nicholson, JL Driscoll, GL Outwin, RR Swinbank.

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs FM Clarke MBE, F Cordingley, Macclesfield H&AC, Rossendale H&AC, DH Runners, Pudsey & Bramley AC, Denby Dale Travellers, Richmond & Zetland AC, Salford Metropolitan AC.

3) *Minutes of the Previous Meeting*

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2017 were approved as a true record subject to the addition of Mark Randall to the attendance list on behalf of Rothwell & DH.

Acceptance was proposed by G Davies, seconded by A Williams and unanimously approved.

4) *Annual Report*

The Chairman, Tony Wood, introduced the Annual Report for 2017/18 and invited the Executive Board members for each discipline to present their reports.

- i) Arwel Williams began by speaking on the Cross Country Report and noted the following items:

Entry numbers at the Cross Country Relays were slightly down on the previous year although this year a higher percentage of those entered had attended the event, he thanked Steve Gaines for the organisation of the event. AW reflected on possible reasons why entries were down and Ian Rayner (Roundhay R) asked if it could be due to it being the first event following the introduction of the affiliation scheme. SG said that he thought not as it was just a very busy time of year and team managers were overloaded with events. It was also mentioned that the event had clashed with the British Fell Championships.

TW commented on the ECCA National Cross Country Championships scheduled for February at Harewood House, following the NA Championships held there the previous year. TW described it as a great venue and said that the ECCA representatives who had been to look at the course thought it an ideal setting. Bob Jackson (Valley Striders) mentioned that as it is a 2 lap course that may encourage entries from slower athletes as there is less risk of being lapped. There was a suggestion that perhaps individual entries should be allowed via the website however Brian Heywood stressed that it is primarily a team event.

Ian Rayner asked whether there were any plans to equalize male and female distances. SG replied that the ECCA had held a survey at the 2018 National Championships at Parliament Hill following pressure to review the matter. The sample was 220 athletes and a large majority chose not to equalize distances.

Malcolm Fletcher mentioned that the Yorkshire County Committee had considered the request for equalization of distances at their AGM but as the motion had not had a seconder the proposal was rejected.

Steve Gaines went on to report that the 2019 ECCA Championships were due to be held at Harewood House as it was the turn of the North to host the event based on the usual three year cycle.

The Chairman thanked SG and AW for their work over the year in organizing the NA Cross Country events.

- ii) Bob Brimage and Ken Smith spoke on the Road Running report and began by saying how successful the road programme had been in both the individual and relay events. Sunderland had been our 5k event, Brampton to Carlisle the 10 mile championship and the Ribble Valley 10k had ended the year. NA thanked the local clubs for allowing us to hold our championships successfully within their events.

The 12 & 6 Stage relays had not been scheduled to return to Birkenhead Park in 2019 but due to the inability of the original host venue to stage the event it would go back to Birkenhead which had proved to be a successful and enjoyable day this year. Sport City had once again hosted the Autumn Relays with a big increase in entry numbers. It continues to prove a popular venue for athletes and spectators.

Ken Smith concluded by announcing the 2020 12 & 6 Stage would probably be held at Catterick Garrison. He went on to say there was a continuing problem in finding suitable venues and asked for clubs to submit any suitable courses for consideration in the future.

The Chairman once again thanked Bob Brimage and Ken Smith for their work during the year.

- iii) Malcolm Fletcher reported that the Track & Field Competition year had followed the same format as usual beginning with the very successful Indoor Open meetings at Sheffield EIS in November and December. The 2018 Indoor Championships had come close to breaking even financially which was a huge improvement on the situation at the start of the decade. This had come about due to changes being made over that time including the introduction of a U13 age group, the use of only one venue and sensible management of costs. He did mention that management standards at EIS had declined over the last few years but the venue was still a popular choice and a big draw for the athletes.

The outdoor championships had been held at Sport City (Senior/U20), at Wavertree (age groups) and the Inter County match at Leigh Sports Village. MF thanked the staff at those venues for their assistance on behalf of NA.

MF said that although the Senior/U20 event had once again clashed with the County Schools date which had badly affected numbers in the U20 age group,

the UKA fixtures group had finally taken note and the 2019 event would be held on a different date and avoid the clash with the Schools event.

He continued by noting that the Junior age group event at Wavertree Stadium, Liverpool had shown an increase in numbers and the good weather had contributed to an excellent event with a high turnout, he added that due to the success and the suitability of the venue it would be used for the Championships again in 2019.

The Inter County match had been the usual very competitive event with the young athletes getting behind their counties and Yorkshire had once again run out as winners although both Lancashire and the North East were getting closer every year!

There had been just one representative match opportunity which was the Welsh International match for the U20 age group. The Northern team had been chosen from the winners of the U20 Championships and the expenses for the event had been met by EA.

The Combined Events Championships had once again been held within the EA Combined Events with Northern athletes being presented with Northern Championship medals at the event alongside EA and Midland Champions.

MF thanked everyone who had assisted in the promotion and presentation of the T&F events.

Malcolm Rogers, the joint T&F representative on the NA Board announced that he was standing down from the Board and that Elaine Williams, previously a co-opted Board member, would be standing in his place, although he would continue to be available whenever required as a co-opted member of the Board.

Arwel Williams raised concerns over the matter of Trackmark created by UKA and suggested that the cost could prove too much for many smaller clubs and that no help is available from the NGB's.

A short discussion on fixture clashes then ensued, Sandra White said that although county championships and BAL fixtures were scheduled for the same date, UKA had told county associations that they were free to decide on their choice of date for championships. Margaret Crompton said that many counties had already booked tracks and therefore the date couldn't be changed. It meant that officials in particular will have to decide whether to accept BAL invitations or stay loyal to county associations. TW expressed his view that he hoped officials would remain loyal to their counties. Barry Parker questioned what other date would be possible as there were already numerous fixture clashes and not enough officials to fully cover all events. Alan Johnson had been present at the meeting and said that it was suggested there that counties were unimportant and that he has been told that UKA would not consider any changes to the calendar.

Gordon Agar commented that it was difficult to understand where the sport is heading due to the shortage of officials and the expensive new regulations on track certification. He pointed out that recently 25 people had attended Officiating courses but only one had turned up to assist at the West Yorkshire League.

Malcolm Rogers said that the North were leading the way in Parallel Success events within Championships and are significantly ahead of the other areas in hosting wheelchair and ambulant events and worked closely with Shelley Holroyd (UKA Parallel Success). MR added that he was very proud about the way that the North had led the way in various areas of development.

TW noted that the other area associations would need to adapt in the way the North has had to. He said that the South now had a new Chairman and the Midlands were also considering their position on funding with England Athletics. There may be a need to follow the North's lead on affiliation to protect their long term future so we can all move forward nationwide with similar objectives. He asked that it should be remembered that athletics is one sport that includes track and field, road running and cross country and NA will always promote all areas of our sport.

TW concluded by thanking Malcolm Fletcher, Malcolm Rogers and Elaine Williams for their contribution to Track & Field and reiterated his thanks to the other discipline representatives.

5) Annual Accounts – Financial Report

The Hon Treasurer, Nigel Orr, was introduced by the Chairman who thanked him for his much valued work during the year. NDO then presented the Annual Accounts to the meeting and highlighted a promising outlook for NA. For the year ending 31.3.18 there had been a £14K surplus on the accounts, this was the second year in which NA had recorded a surplus and was only the second time this had been achieved in eleven years. Key factors in this were the £41K grant from EA and the valuable sponsorship from Start Fitness.

NDO noted that over the last three years £20K had been saved on the running costs which had made a contribution of 23% to the overall finances, these reductions had occurred at a time when competition income had also improved.

Championship organisers had made a good job of controlling costs and increasing entry numbers and all three disciplines had generated a surplus in varying degrees.

The Treasurer added that NA was now in a good financial position and stated that eleven years ago when NA came into being the life of the organisation had only been expected to be four to five years. Looking forward, the possible loss of the EA competition grant would have resulted in NA making a loss on operations therefore the need for a sustainable future income had meant the introduction of the new affiliation scheme. NA had received strong support from Northern clubs

with a current total of over 150 clubs affiliating which had realized a sum of £59,135K and had made a real difference to the future of NA. The scheme provided a solid base from which planning to support athletes and officials could be made.

Bob Jackson (Valley Striders) said that in the previous year's accounts a separate sheet for each event had been shown and asked whether this would be possible again this year. NDO replied that next year he would utilise a format that would give greater clarification. BJ asked whether it could show income from entry fees and NDO said that it would make sense to separate them.

Chris Tomes (Keighley & Craven) asked whether there would be an EA grant in 2018/19 and asked whether there were any plans for using the surplus. NDO replied that there would be a grant of £32K but that there had not yet been any confirmation of a grant in 2019/20. TW clarified again that EA would not give any guarantees for the future. Plans were ongoing with the Executive Board members exploring the best ways to support clubs, athletes and officials.

TW said that NA were now in a position to start the discussion as to how to use the surplus income and that he would be meeting EA in the next month to discuss future funding. He added that he would also be meeting with the South and Midlands to discuss their position. He mentioned that there would probably be a fairly pessimistic outcome in the future and that counties and leagues would probably also suffer if central funding generally were to disappear. Money from our NGBs simply does not appear to be available in any substantial degree for competition providers and if any money is forthcoming then it will be a reduced sum and recipients will be encouraged to source other means of funding.

TW continued by saying that NA would now consult with clubs on the way forward by launching a survey and taking note of all suggestions that may be made. He added that the affiliation scheme will be under constant review and that no one at NA has any vested interest in the scheme other than their love of the sport. NA will continue to consult our clubs with regard to all decisions on the future. TW stressed that NA did not wish to be an isolated organisation and would welcome input from all clubs and their members and he thanked them for putting their trust in NA to continue to provide competition in the North.

Bob Jackson asked whether the survey would be timed to include any suggested changes at the next AGM. TW said that any changes would not be major ones and said that changes could not be made with the support of only 2 or 3 clubs. He stressed NA needed to be loyal to the majority of clubs who support the scheme and any decisions will be made democratically using initially the survey as a guide. He added that he and the Board would try their best to please as many as possible.

BJ went on to say that he had submitted a document prior to the meeting with suggestions for changes/amendments/additions to the scheme and asked whether clubs that had not affiliated would continue to be consulted on the scheme. TW replied that although he understood the point only affiliated clubs can be part of any decision making process. TW said that he wanted to

encourage clubs to affiliate but if they did not do so then they would have no direct say in the future. He said NA would reach out to clubs who so far have not affiliated so they can express their views.

The position of athletes who are members of unaffiliated clubs was raised. Chris Betts (Gateshead) said that he thought it was a harsh decision for athletes who are members of BAL clubs and had previously had birth or residence qualifications allowing entry to Northern Championships to now be excluded from NA events. He said that some provision should be put in place for such athletes as it was denying them competition and he asked that the question be included in the NA survey. BJ added that they could be asked to pay a premium allowing them to enter. He said that the Leeds Network had had feedback from 13 clubs expressing concern and the fear of losing their elite athletes to affiliated clubs. He added that most of them had agreed to affiliate for this year but would review the situation in future. TW emphasized the affiliation plan had been carefully constructed to ensure the necessary funds were raised and the need to support Northern clubs who invested in the scheme.

Margaret Belk (Kendal AAC) commented on the general reliance on the Northern office by clubs in the area. She suggested that the NA staff were its biggest asset and that people should be encouraged to use the office for advice and information etc. She added that NA should reach out to clubs and attend county meetings to sell NA to the average athlete.

TW said that this was a good point and it was something that was beginning to be addressed. He said that a new website would be launched in the next few weeks which would introduce several new ideas and content would become part of the discussion over the next year.

Alison Munro (Roundhay Runners) asked whether the other two areas had made similar plans to the North. TW summarised the current situation in Birmingham.. He confirmed that Nils de Vos had now left UKA and that there was speculation regarding the future of the current UKA Chair Richard Bowker.

TW said recently the situation centrally had become serious. In any event funding for competition providers was very likely to be reduced and continuous negotiations with EA had been underway for several months.

TW said he urged the other two areas to follow the North given the forecast of reduced funding from Birmingham. The South of England AA had double the reserves of NA. A new Chair was now in place and may be pushing for an affiliation scheme to fund the future. The Midlands are under pressure to introduce changes but their office is being demolished under the Alexander Stadium redevelopment scheme and they are moving into the EA offices which may cause some disruption in the short term..

He concluded by saying that the current situation is highly political and somewhat volatile and NA have decided to move away from the constant criticism and argument to focus on what is best for the North which TW believed we had done. Alison Munro asked about future funding and whether it would be

available to the other two areas. TW said that any further grants would be smaller and the Midlands in particular were worried about whether they could survive any future cuts. Bob Jackson said that the same questions had been asked at the recent EA roadshow and it appeared that that some thought the North had given EA a way out of giving grants as the affiliation scheme had given NA a guaranteed future funding source. TW emphasized the North were thinking ahead as always and by virtue of our scheme we have ensured a safe future.

Arwel Williams stated that Chris Jones and Dean Hardman (EA) had said that EA could not make a definite commitment on future competition grants being maintained.

Kev Lincoln (Doncaster AC) stated that he believed it was important to put together a five year development plan to encourage people to invest in the process. He added that this could be costed on an annual basis dependent on surplus and updates given at AGM's.

He also suggested having regional Trackmark inspectors so that clubs could pay expenses rather than paying high fees to independent contractors. Malcolm Rogers noted that this could be risky because if facilities were not properly maintained then legal problems could arise in case of accidents etc and that professional support was necessary.

Gordon Agar (Skyrac AC) mentioned that South Leeds Stadium had been built to host Rugby League and the clubs had fought hard for a track to be provided but different rules applied to such facilities. He also said that he did not believe events should be held at Becketts Park track due to safety concerns.

Paul Wilson (City of York) suggested that Trackmark had not been communicated very well to clubs and although there was a 38 page document produced Kev Lincoln said that this had gone to local authorities and not clubs.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by R..Wood, seconded by B.Heywood and unanimously approved.

6) *Appointment of Auditors*

The Hon Treasurer had recommended that he was researching new Audit companies and would refer the selection to the Executive Board for approval.

7) *Elections to the Executive Board*

a) *Election of Officers*

i) President

Mr Stan Taylor was confirmed as President for 2018/19

ii) Chairman

Mr Tony Wood was elected Chairman.

iii) *Honorary Treasurer*

Mr Nigel Orr was elected Honorary Treasurer.

8) *Election of Discipline Representatives*

The following people were elected as discipline representatives to the Executive Board:

Cross Country

Steve Gaines Arwel Williams

Road Running

Bob Brimage Ken Smith

Track & Field

Malcolm Fletcher Malcolm Rogers

Mr Stan Taylor was presented with the President's Chain of Office by the retiring President Mr Kevin Carr. Mr Carr thanked Northern Athletics for electing him as President for 2017/18 and said that he had thoroughly enjoyed his year in office, he said that he had been encouraged by his attendance at Board meetings to see that NA was in good hands for the future. He also thanked the ECCA for selecting him as their next President and was looking forward to his first duty at the ECCA Relays at Mansfield. Mr Carr concluded by thanking his wife Margaret for her support both during the year and throughout his athletics career.

Mr Taylor was then introduced by Tony Wood who said that he was a former President of Lancashire AA. TW, as chairman of Lancashire AA, was very proud that Mr Taylor had accepted the role of NA President. He went on to remind those present that Mr Taylor had been a great athlete, a sub 4 minute miler and had represented Great Britain over the middle distances.

Mr Taylor thanked NA for his appointment and said that he would ensure that he would do his best for NA throughout the year.

9) *Constitutional Amendments*

i) The 15 Constitutional Amendments as listed on the Agenda were approved unanimously. The Chairman noted that it was mainly a tidying up exercise involving minor changes to the description of meetings.

ii) Barry Parker (Derby AC) noted the Constitution used the term 'Territory'. TW said that it would be added to the 2019 Agenda.

10) *Future Planning & Related Items*

Tony Wood began by inviting clubs to contact him or the office at any time in the future if they needed any advice or information regarding the future of NA and any planning items.

He then invited a discussion from the floor which related to future planning.

i) Alan Johnson (BATFL & T&FL) asked whether resources could be directed

towards putting on courses in specific areas to target clubs for new officials. TW replied that this was a possibility and agreed to meet with relevant representatives to discuss the matter.

Barry Parker informed the meeting that there were courses being held at Ellesmere Port the following week and Gateshead the following day.

ii) Allan Wort (Warrington AC/NW Regional Chair) stated that the North West Regional Council fully supported the aims of NA and would continue to do so. He made the point that the regional councils were a route to make views known to EA and UKA via club and county.. He added that the councils could also be contacted directly to express views and comments.

Andy Ward (Middlesbrough AC) said that as the former Chair of the North East Council he used to visit all club tents at Cross Country Championship events in order to canvass views from the younger age groups.

iii) Bob Jackson made a formal request for a vote on items to be included in the survey questionnaire. TW said that it could not be voted on as a proposal had not been put at the required time prior to the meeting and therefore could not be included in the Agenda for the meeting. Andrew Dovern (Queensbury RC) said that it was his view that if NA wish to survive then all clubs and members should be consulted.

There being no further items for discussion, the meeting was closed at 1.10pm.

Signed : Chairman

Date :