

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (via Zoom call)*

The Chairman of Northern Athletics, Tony Wood, took the Chair and welcomed all present to the meeting. Mr Wood noted that the previous 18 months had been a difficult period for the sport but a gradual return to competition at all levels was now underway. Track & Field competition had been held over the summer although numbers had been slightly down on recent years. The road relays at Redcar had been successfully held. Mr Wood confirmed that the Northern Athletics office had re-opened and added that we were now looking forward to moving onto the indoor season. He concluded by thanking Northern clubs and athletes for their support during the pandemic.

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

Graham Davies

Alan Domleo

Roger Everton

Dr Ron Hill

Derek Nicholson

Jim Smith

Hudson Stoker

Dr Phil Thomas

Norman Waterson

**1) Attendance**

*Present:*

*Officers & Executive Board of Northern Athletics*

RN Needham, T Wood, ND Orr, R Brimage, S Gaines, K Smith, A Williams, Mrs E Williams.

*Club & County Representatives:*

Barnsley & DAC (K Binney), Blackburn H&AC (GS Davies), , Bury AC (K Smith), City of Sheffield & Dearne AC (Mrs S White), City of York AC (P Baxter), Crewe & Nantwich AC, Darlington H & AC (M Tallon), Doncaster AC (T Bailey), Gtr Manchester AA (Mrs J Simpson MBE), Ilkley H&AC (Ms H Coulosey), Leeds City AC (S Linsell.), Leeds Schools AA (Mrs P Schofield), Leigh H& AC (Mrs M Galvin), Liverpool H& AC (Mrs E Williams, A Williams), Liverpool Pembroke & Sefton AC (Mrs K Brown, R Wood), Longwood Harriers (D Owen), Morpeth H & AC (A Jenkins), Rotherham H & AC (S Gaines), Rothwell & DH (M Randall), Sale Harriers Manchester (J Frost), Salford Metropolitan AC (Ms J Crowther), Spensborough AC (F Reddington), Sunderland H & AC (KF Carr ),Trafford AC (A Johnson, M Harris), TROG (J Driscoll),Valley Striders (R Jackson), Wallasey AC (Mrs A Brimage, R Brimage), West Cheshire AC (Mrs M Brooks), Wigan & DHAC (Mrs M Grayston),

*Past Presidents/Trustees:*

Mrs A Brimage, KF Carr.

*Apologies for Absence:*

Blackpool Wyre & Fylde AC, Carlisle Aspatria AC, Stockport H&AC, Wakefield DH & AC, Mrs FM Clarke MBE, JL Driscoll, M Fletcher.

*(NB. Due to the meeting being held via Zoom if we have missed noting your attendance then we apologise. If you wish to have your attendance recorded on an amended copy of the Minutes please email the office to confirm.)*

### **3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were approved as a true record.

Acceptance was proposed by A Williams, seconded by Mrs A Brimage and unanimously approved.

The following items were raised:

- i) Bill McGuirk asked that the following be added to the Minutes (3/ii/para 5)  
*' North Tyneside Borough Council had supported the application for funding from North Shields Poly AC'*
- ii) Paul Baxter asked whether there had been any further developments following Allan Wort's question on extended representation in terms of voting rights. The Chairman replied that he had subsequently discussed the matter with Allan Wort and with the NA Executive Board. It would always prove difficult to resolve in an affiliated club based organisation by allowing votes from exterior organisations. He added that the NA Board would always endeavour to take into account Northern county and league views when deciding relevant issues.

### **4) Annual Report**

The Chairman introduced the Annual Report to the meeting outlining the contents and thanking the Executive Board members and staff for their work on the Report. He also took the opportunity to thank Ron Needham for his double term as President of Northern Athletics across a difficult time. He noted that Mr Needham had attended all Board meetings and every Championship which had been able to go ahead. The Chairman also thanked grassroot volunteers who had made constant efforts to keep going over the duration of the pandemic despite the problems which had been evident because of the pandemic and the issues within our national governing bodies with resignations and redundancies of staff.

Alan Johnson mentioned the upcoming election for the UK Members Council for which Grace Hall had been nominated. He added that all were aware of the work she had put into the sport and urged those eligible to vote to do so on her behalf. The Chairman noted that Arwel Williams was also nominated for the council and both should be supported as they were standing up for the sport in difficult circumstances.

The Chairman then invited the Board members for each discipline to present their reports

- i) Cross Country  
Steve Gaines introduced the shortened Cross Country Report by saying that there had been no Cross Country Championship held in 2021 although the Relay

Championships had gone ahead . He reported that entry numbers in the senior events had held up well although the age group event numbers were significantly down on the previous years. The event itself had been a successful day even though some Covid restrictions had still been necessary.

He went on to point out that local authority employees were still all working from home which had made it difficult to contact the correct people to ensure event planning went ahead as normal. However Wakefield MDC had indicated that they were supportive of hosting the Cross Country Championships at Pontefract Park in 2022 and although he was still waiting for full confirmation, licensing for park use was in place.

The Chairman thanked Steve Gaines and Arwel Williams for their work on Cross Country this year.

Bill McGuirk reported that the North East XC League had hosted three fixtures and whilst senior numbers had held up reasonably well, the junior entries were down by 20%. He added that he hoped that this would change as things got back to normal and that they were not lost to the sport permanently. Steve Gaines suggested that the disruption to school sport may have contributed to the situation as the pathway into clubs had also been disrupted and said that registered athlete numbers across the North showed a similar 20% reduction and all clubs and events were suffering the same reduction of numbers. The Chairman added that clubs with mainly senior athletes were holding up reasonably well, but it was within the junior age groups that numbers were showing the reduction at present Hopefully this would not be a long term trend.

ii) Road Running

Ken Smith and Bob Brimage spoke on the Road Running report. Bob Brimage began by echoing the comments on Cross Country numbers then thanked New Marske Harriers for their successful hosting of the Autumn Road Relays, at which the age group numbers had also been lower than in recent years although seniors had been quite healthy. He noted that despite some reluctance from clubs at the southern end of the area to travel to the North East it had been a great day, well marshalled and serviced and good weather.

He went on to remind the meeting that the 2021 year's 12/6 stage event had been cancelled but confirmed that the 2022 event would go ahead at Birkenhead Park. As the park was celebrating it's 175 year anniversary there was hope that the local authority would get fully involved with the event.

A short discussion on the location of venues was held and it was noted that supporting all areas of the North was one of the aims of Northern Athletics. The 5K Road Championship was once again held at Sunderland and Ken Smith said that it had been a well-supported event with good numbers. He also mentioned the importance of selecting venues which had good local officials support although Bill McGuirk commented that there were no North East athletes in some representative events such as the Abbey Dash and the Inter Area relays. Steve Gaines assured him that there was no bias against North East athletes and that over the past few years the selection criteria had been amended to ensure fair selection across the area.

### iii) Track & Field

Malcolm Fletcher and Elaine Williams were responsible for the T&F report. Elaine Williams said that although the Indoor Championships had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had managed to hold the two outdoor Championship events.

The Senior Championship had to be moved from Wavertree to Leigh Sports Village due to the facility being used for Covid purposes. She extended thanks to Leigh Harriers especially Joe and Margaret Galvin and Steve Jamson, who had made huge efforts to ensure that the event went ahead. She concluded by adding that a separate Pole Vault Championship had been held in September as it had been unable to go ahead at Leigh with the main Championship

She went on to thank Kingston upon Hull AC and the local authority for hosting the age group championships at Costello Stadium, Hull and noted that the staff at the stadium had gone out of their way and done everything that was asked of them.

Both meetings had been reasonably successful in difficult circumstances and both Malcolm Fletcher and herself were pleased to see that athletes and officials were returning to the sport following the long period of disruption.

Good feedback from athletes and clubs had been received from both events with competitors expressing appreciation for the meetings going ahead.

The Chairman thanked them both for their work and stressed that it is a very challenging time across all disciplines with facility availability reducing and costs increasing and that it was necessary to encourage participation numbers following the reduction due to the pandemic. He also wished Malcolm Fletcher well and added that although he had not attended the AGM he was now recovered and returning to normal service!

The Chairman then proposed acceptance of the Annual Report which was unanimously approved.

Paul Baxter raised a query regarding the 2022/23 fixture calendar and asked whether there was any chance that the Junior Inter Area match might be restored to the calendar. Steve Gaines said that there needed to be a conscious effort to restore a pathway for athletes and T&F should perhaps use the inter area road model to restore T&F representation. It was noted that alongside the North the MCAA were positive regarding team representation in endurance events but there were difficulties in the South. He said that although there appears to be willing people in the South, the SEAA were reluctant to commit to any team events and there was no co-ordination in the office. He reported that there were plans to repeat holding the Inter Area Relay event at the Brownlee Centre again in 2022 and include U20 and U17 teams . It was noted that Inter Area T&F matches were more difficult to organise and would need all three areas working together if it was to be successful. The Chairman asked whether grants from the ERRA had been received for the inter area road teams. Bob Brimage

replied that the North and the Midlands had received the grants but SEAA had not as they had not sent any teams to the event. He said that the ERRA had received support from Southern clubs and had told the clubs that if they could raise teams then ERRA would support them with grant money. The Chairman thanked all for their work.

#### iv) TROG Report

The Chairman thanked John Driscoll for the Officials report.

He began by stressing that without officials there would be no competition. However he noted that there was a positive picture emerging as numbers were increasing as officials had had more time to embark on training courses and progressing through the levels.

Terry Bailey had restarted the discussion regarding recruitment of potential mentors for new officials and a list was being prepared to aid progression from level 1. However in order to ensure better access and progression a full outdoor season will be required which will hopefully happen in 2022. It was agreed that a list of contacts would be available so that clubs could be circulated and be asked to identify members of their clubs who may benefit from the mentoring scheme..

Alan Johnson asked that clubs be reminded that the Leagues (Northern & YDL) had funds to reimburse clubs for payment of course fees.

Further discussion took place around reports, course delivery and EA involvement. John Driscoll said that there are several examples of people going directly to EA to request virtual courses and EA need to build on that. Terry Bailey added that many people are failing to get reports as they are unaware of how to initiate the process. He said that he made arrangements with senior officials to do this at events across the levels and the appropriate County Officials Secretary should be the first point of contact for those requiring reports.

Arwel Williams reported that since March 2021 60 people had attended the EA Level Introductory Endurance course and 50% of those had converted to either L1 or L2.

The Chairman then proposed acceptance of the Annual Report which was seconded and unanimously approved.

#### **5) *Financial Report***

The Hon Treasurer, Nigel Orr introduced the Accounts for the period April 2020 to March 2021 and observed that this being the peak of the Covid pandemic it had meant that our financial situation had suffered especially as no competition whatsoever had been possible. Minimal expenditures had been introduced in order to limit any financial damage and available grants had been utilized, including a £10K grant from Kirklees BC, the local authority for the office address.

In addition, the office had been closed and the staff furloughed with 80% of the cost being paid via government grants.

No club affiliation fee was requested and the 50% which would have been brought forward from the previous year was deferred until 2022.

Therefore after a difficult year the accounts showed a deficit of £19,175 for the year with a balance of £277,401. The Officials Development fund still holds a figure of £26,140.

In spite of the difficulties of no costs or income for competition and the balance being reduced the Treasurer believed that Northern Athletics was still in a positive position and that the reserves would soon be restored.

The Chairman mentioned the 2021/22 budget and said that although there was likely to be a reduction in numbers the budgeted affiliation fee figure had been set at £55K and to date £44K had been received. He concluded by saying that he hoped clubs would continue to be support the affiliation scheme to ensure the continuation of Northern events.

The Chairman thanked the Hon Treasurer for his work throughout the year and added that he had been a 'safe pair of hands in difficult times'.

Bill McGuirk asked what the pre-covid year's income from affiliation had been and was informed that it had been £66K. Bill McGuirk suggested a gentle reminder be sent to clubs to affiliate and pay. Steve Gaines added that 3 new clubs had affiliated this year.

The Annual Accounts were subsequently approved and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

## **6) Appointment of Auditors**

Nigel Orr (Hon Treasurer) had recommended the re-appointment of Hilary Bevan who had carried out an independent audit of the accounts for the previous two years and as this had been a successful appointment it was approved.

## **7) Elections to the Executive Board**

### **a) Election of Officers**

#### *i) President*

Mrs Margaret Brooks was nominated and approved as President. The new President for 2021/22 would be presented with the Chain of Office by the retiring President at a suitable time and venue.

The Chairman thanked Ron Needham for his extended term in office and the new President, Margaret Brooks, thanked the Executive Board for the nomination which she was delighted to accept.

#### *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 en bloc as discipline representatives to the Executive Board:

*Cross Country*

Steve Gaines

Arwel Williams

*Road Running*

Bob Brimage

Ken Smith

*Track & Field*

Malcolm Fletcher

Elaine Williams

**10) Future Planning & Related Items**

Further discussion on arrangements for 2022 took place with items including Northern Athletics affiliation scheme. The Chairman noted that it had been an interesting few years but he hoped that the sport and Northern Athletics in particular could move forward and progress its aims. He emphasised the importance of receiving input from clubs regarding all aspects of Northern Athletics and stressed that any issues would be referred to the Executive Board for discussion and consideration.

**11) Any Other Business**

Alan Johnson reminded the meeting that the YDL AGM was due to take place the following week and urged delegates to attend as the meeting was not currently quorate and all the committee were looking for re-election.

The Chairman thanked the delegates for attending and expressing their views and declared the meeting closed at 12.45pm.

Signed : .....

Date : .....