

	Northern Athletics Annual General Meeting
Date	November 11th 2023
Venue	Junction 25 Conference Centre, Brighouse

Present	<p>T Wood – Northern Athletics, N Orr – Darlington Harriers & AC, S Gaines – Rotherham Harriers & AC M Tallon – Northern Athletics, Elaine Williams – Northern Athletics, Arwel Williams – Liverpool Harriers S Grime – Hyndburn AC, M Fletcher – Barnsley AC, G Davies – Blackburn Harriers & AC T Bailey – Doncaster AC, S Parsons – East Cheshire & Tameside AC, B Heywood – Former President J Simpson MBE – Former President, D Allen – President Elect, B Allen, J Jackson – Wakefield Harriers & AC M Jackson - Wakefield Harriers & AC, M Grayston – Wigan & District Harriers & AC, B Edwards – Bury AC</p>
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Chairman, Tony Wood, opened the meeting at 11:00 after a short silence in respect for remembrance weekend.

Item	Obituaries
1	<p>It was sadly noted that the following friends and colleagues had left us in the previous twelve months:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Joe Galvin, Kevin Johns, Ken Kaiser, Pete Watson, Alan Barlow, Jon Mason, Jan Lishman Mike Dooling, Bill Rudkin, Tommy Morgan, John Rudd, John Nuttall</p>

Item	Apologies for Absence
2	<p>M Randall – NA Board, M Hill – NA Board, K Carr, J Crowther – Salford Met, A Johnson – Trafford, D Paver – City of York, D Wall – West Cheshire AC Judith Temperton</p>

Item	Minutes
3	<p>Minutes of the previous AGM held on November 12th 2022 were approved as a true record with no items raised.</p>

Item	To receive and consider Annual Reports
4	<p>The Chairman, Tony Wood, introduced the annual reports, mentioning that reports were available in print and had been made available during the week on the website and via e-mail.</p> <p>In addition to the published report, the Chairman talked about the many developments in the sport over the past 12 months, and highlighted in particular the reducing number of technical officials. In the North there are schemes in place to attempt to recruit more officials, but this does not always appear to be the</p>

case at National level. It was also noted that athletics is not a prominent enough sport in schools for the recruitment of young athletes.

It was pointed out how Northern Athletics has fought for many causes in recent years, such as preventing the equalising of cross-country distances, an example of how the top down-management of the sport attempted by National Governing bodies is not working. This is further evidenced by the late consultation process regarding the proposed changes to athletics age-groups being pushed through by England Athletics. Northern Athletics consulted with Northern Clubs who were overwhelmingly against the new age-group proposals providing a united voice for the area. The Northern Athletics Board is strong and experienced, and is thankful to all of the clubs who financially support the organisation, which is key to the survival and success of the organisation.

The Board members for the individual competition areas were invited to present their reports.

The following comments are in addition to the published report documents:

I. Cross Country – Board Members Steve Gaines & Arwel Williams

Thanks were given to Blackburn Harriers & AC for their efforts in helping to organise the 2023 Cross-Country Championships. Numbers were approximately the same as the previous year in Pontefract with just over 2,000 athletes across all categories. Blackburn was the first time that the event has used chip timing with chips on bib numbers, which worked well. The 2024 Cross Country championships will be held in the North-East. There is constant difficulty in finding courses and the Board is always open to suggestions for future courses.

The 2023 cross country relays were cancelled as Sheffield City Council cancelled all events in the area due to the poor weather in October. Northern Athletics incurred a small amount of supplier costs. Team entries were back up to pre-pandemic numbers. Sadly, after a detailed search, there was no suitable weekend available to reschedule the event.

II. Road Running – Board Members Bob Brimage and Ken Smith

The 2023 12 & 6 stage relays were held at Redcar and had an increase in women's entry numbers over the previous year. The event went well despite experiencing a lot of sea fret! The 6&4 stage relays took place in Birkenhead on a popular course for athletes. Entry numbers were down however on previous years held at Sportcity in Manchester. The future use of Sportcity for relays is in doubt due to current stadium developments.

Ken Smith, Board Member for Road Running, stressed that Northern Athletics are dependent on club support for help and welcomes suggestions for future event venues, in particular for the relays. A new venue also needs to be found for the 10 mile championships in 2024.

Reports and result for the relays, 10k, 10mile and 5k championships can be found in the published report.

The Chairman finished this section by mentioning that Northern Athletics now uses Google Forms for event feedback, which is used by the Board to constantly seek improvements for Northern events.

III. Track and Field – Board Members Elaine Williams and Malcolm Fletcher

Malcolm Fletcher thanked Elaine Williams for completing the comprehensive published report. Malcolm highlighted the positives of having more than 600 entries for the 2023 Age-Group Championships in Middlesbrough, but also highlighted the expense of using Manchester for the Senior & U20 Championships, mainly due to security and hotel costs. The inter-counties, which was held in York, had ten counties in attendance and was one of the best supported meetings in the calendar.

Elaine Williams thanked Malcolm Fletcher for all of his work in ensuring that all of the track and field events run so smoothly, especially the indoor events at EIS.

During the 2023 outdoor championships, take-off review screens were introduced allowing officials to be trained in new technology. The outdoors also went to Middlesbrough for the 2023 junior championships to help share Northern Athletics events around the North.

Malcolm highlighted the fact that more than 100 officials dropped out of their appointments in the 2023 track & field season, which was very disappointing and caused much work for the Northern Athletics Board and office.

With regard to future plans for Track and Field; in 2024, the Northern Senior & U20 championships will be held in Middlesbrough, the Inter-Counties will be held in Blackpool, and the Junior championships will be held in Derby.

Fixture and calendar planning meetings with England Athletics were noted to be very difficult.

The Inter-Counties were further highlighted, with the fact that Northern Athletics fully fund and support the event, as there is very little other opportunity for young athletes to wear a county vest. It was stated that part of the £2 per athlete Northern Athletics Affiliation Fee pays for this fantastic event to support the area's young athletes although costs were increasing.

IV. Tri-Region Officials' Group – Cath Hickey

Arwel Williams of Liverpool Harriers and the Northern Athletics Board, stated 300 new officials have completed endurance courses, the problem with the recruitment of officials seems to be getting people to record and document their experiences and progress to level 1.

The Chairman highlighted the table on page 23 of the published report showing the current number of qualified officials.

David Brown of Sale Harriers and the Tri-Regional Officials' Group, noted that starters do not get league points for their club, which means that clubs do not push people to become starters and starter's assistants. It was also mentioned that the Tri-Regional Group had observed a lack of timekeepers. There are also currently 111 Northern officials from level 1-3 who have not signed the new officials' terms conditions.

Terry Bailey suggested that Zoom courses make it more difficult to build personal relationships with course attendees to help them progress to level one after their course, due to how geographically dispersed the attendees can be.

Gordon Agar of Skyrac noted that the EA systems for officials change frequently and are difficult for some to understand.

Steve Parsons from East Cheshire told the meeting how his club is being successful in recruiting officials by approaching interested parents at the club and supporting them with regards to training. Steve also mentioned the positives of starters using TESS, but noted the expense of the system.

The officials project group was brought up by the Chairman who mentioned the mentoring scheme which is operated by the group. Steve Gaines of Rotherham Harriers & the Northern Athletics Board added that everyone who asked for a mentor has been matched with one.

Janice Kaufman of Gateshead Harriers asked about the £27k in the accounts for use on officials' development. Steve Gaines answered that around £10k has been spent already, and the money is being spent on projects such as the take-off verification cameras and has also been used on development on TESS. The officials project group that allocates the money meets periodically via zoom and votes on all funding bids. Janice suggested that details of how to apply could be placed on the Northern Athletics website, and that if the money is spent and proved to be of use, more money may become available in the future.

Dave Brown, Liverpool Pembroke & Sefton, spoke about his club having a lack of officials above L2, as parents then leave officiating as their children reach a certain age and leave the sport. Steve Parsons said that his club also tries to involve parents in running too, to increase their involvement and likelihood of staying involved in the sport.

Byron Edwards of Bury AC, explained how he has spoken to Parkrun timekeepers to encourage them to come into track & field, basically finding people who enjoy volunteering. Margaret Belk from Kendal AC added that Facebook and the website can be used to promote the fact that officiating can be fun, to encourage more people to get involved.

Jean Simpson MBE spoke of how officiating is voluntary and that some people may not be able to afford to travel to venues.

Margaret Grayston mentioned that a local level in the North officials are very pleasant, but at a national meeting at Reading, a southern official was extremely rude to athletes.

The annual Report was fully approved by the AGM.

Item	To receive and consider Annual Accounts
5	<p>Treasurer Nigel Orr presented the accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2023, which appear on pages seven and eight of the published Annual Report.</p> <p>The accounts were accepted, and the Chairman thanked Treasurer, Nigel Orr for completing the accounts for another year.</p> <p>The accounting year included a £27,938 planned deficit due to investing in a staff succession strategy.</p> <p>The Affiliation Scheme had an income of £54,407 - still lower than pre covid. The Affiliation Scheme provides an independent sustainable source of income.</p> <p>£12k sponsorship was received from Start Fitness, for which Northern Athletics remains extremely grateful.</p>

A full range of championship events took place during 2022/2023, with slightly lower returns due to increased costs.

Janice Kaufman asked about the budget for the current year. Nigel Orr responded that there is a planned break even budget, but Northern Athletics has taken a hit with the cancellation of the Cross Country Relays.

Janice Kaufman asked about the financial reserves policy. Nigel mentioned that £200k of reserves exist – 2 years contingency. Janice suggested a deficit year in the future to invest in officials, for example starter’s equipment.

The accounts were approved by the AGM.

Item	To appoint an independent reviewer of Accounts
6	The Treasurer, Nigel Orr, proposed that Northern Athletics continue to work with BEVAN VAT as their independent auditor. This was accepted by the AGM.

Item	To Elect the Executive Board of Northern Athletics															
7	<p>The first position nominated was that of Northern Athletics President. The Chairman thanked outgoing president Judith Temperton for all of her hard work during the last year.</p> <p>The new president of Northern Athletics was announced as Dave Allen. Steve Gaines, secretary of Rotherham Harriers introduced Dave and presented the presidential chain. Dave thanked everyone who nominated him and mentioned that he very pleasantly surprised with his nomination. Dave thanked Barbara his wife too, for all of her joint work and support over many years in the sport.</p> <p>The AGM voted unanimously in favour of the election of the proposed Northern Athletics Board for the coming year:</p> <table data-bbox="263 1500 1037 1769"> <tr> <td>Chairman:</td> <td colspan="2">Tony Wood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Honorary Treasurer:</td> <td colspan="2">Nigel Orr</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cross Country:</td> <td>Steve Gaines</td> <td>Arwel Williams</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Road Running:</td> <td>Bob Brimage</td> <td>Ken Smith</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Track & Field:</td> <td>Malcolm Fletcher</td> <td>Tim Hood</td> </tr> </table> <p>Margaret Belk thanked the board and staff on behalf of the clubs for their hard work over the past twelve months.</p>	Chairman:	Tony Wood		Honorary Treasurer:	Nigel Orr		Cross Country:	Steve Gaines	Arwel Williams	Road Running:	Bob Brimage	Ken Smith	Track & Field:	Malcolm Fletcher	Tim Hood
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Item	Discussion on the plans for Northern Athletics for 2024
8	<p>The 2024 Outdoor championships have been mentioned already in the Track & Field report section. The venues show a good geographical spread across the region.</p> <p>Janice Kaufman asked about the possibility of a Northern Track Relay Championships. Malcolm Fletcher mentioned that free dates are an issue in a very congested calendar, but if a date could be found, he would help work to find a venue.</p> <p>Janice Kaufman brought up the subject of engagement with regional councils and counties. The Chairman mentioned the regular contact that Northern Athletics already currently has with England Athletics. If Regional Councils have any issues which need support from Northern Athletics, the Board is more than happy to discuss these and help wherever possible. Arwel Williams pointed out the North West Regional Council has little contact to local clubs.</p>
	AGM was closed by The Chairman at 12:50