

# Avon Athletic Association

**Minutes** of a Management Committee Meeting of the Avon Athletic Association, held on Monday January 25th 2016, in Room 2B065, Block B, UWE Frenchay Campus, Bristol, starting at 7.30pm.

**Those Present:** John Deaton (Secretary), Martin Fisher (North Somerset AC), Pam Gooding (President), Ray Gooding (Officials Secretary), John Robbins (Chairperson), Jim Strudwick (Avon Schools AA), Mike Willcox (GWR).

**Apologies:** Rachael Fisher (Vice-Chairperson, North Somerset AC), Ian Macintosh (Trustee), James Murphy (Welfare / Westbury Harriers), Hilary Nash (Treasurer / Bristol & West AC).

**Minutes of previous Committee Meeting:** (November 23rd 2015): accepted.

**Matters Arising** not dealt with elsewhere in the Minutes:

1. Contact with recently-formed running clubs in the area: the meeting felt that this should be shelved until we could define what we could offer these less formal running groups; it was felt that they could be invited to the Avon AA Relays.
2. Constitution item on distribution of funds in the event of dissolution: continuing minute.

## **Treasurer's Report:**

1. Hilary Nash had submitted the draft copy of the Annual Accounts. The accounts show a deficit of almost £1700 on the year, partly explained by the purchase of the Avon AA tent, the support to the Avon Sportshall team, and higher expenditure on medals purchases than last year. Also, we are due £200 as our share of the December 2015 Tri-Counties Championships surplus.
2. The Independent Examiner has approved the 2014 Accounts: Hilary Nash is seeking the return of the books for 2011 and 2012 from the previous Examiner.
3. As we had received no affiliation fee from Portishead RC since 2008, they have been dropped from our information circulation lists and from the club listings on the Avon AA website.

## **Officials Secretary's Report:**

1. EA is concerned about the way Officials Tutors have been presenting courses, so is developing a new form of Tutor Training (to be applied to Field Tutors first). All current Tutors would need to attend a course within the next 18 months.
2. There was a new initiative to progress Starters through the Officials structure: Ray Gooding felt that this scheme was focused too much on the elite level and not enough on starters of grass-roots events.
3. County Officials Secretaries are now expected to follow up the progress of trainee officials through the qualifying system, despite not always being given the necessary information. Over the past six years, 74 Avon officials have been through recognised Officials training courses: of these, 20 have qualified and are currently active, 14 qualified but not believed to be active, 40 have not proceeded to qualification.
4. It appears that the date (March 20th) which Ray Gooding had set aside for potential Officials courses will not be called upon; there are courses scheduled for Sunday March 13th in Salisbury, and others planned for Cheltenham on an April date still to be confirmed.

A general discussion followed covering both Officials and Coach education: among the opinions raised were:

... The sport should recognise that many officials have no wish to officiate at the top levels

... Progression to Level 3 (2014-6 definition) of Officiating can be problematic, with local candidates finding it difficult to secure adequate levels of competition experience and/or the necessary number of reports.

... some candidates for the Coach / Coach in Running Fitness qualifications can be discouraged by the bureaucracy involved, particularly with the Diary process

... some coaches are more temperamentally suited to coaching particular age / skill levels of athletes, and the coach education system needs to recognise this.

... the requirements for a minimum number of attendees before a course can go ahead needs to be reconsidered, particularly for those skills for which only a small number of candidates are ever likely to be available (or required). With smaller number of attendees, it may be possible to hold courses in private homes, thus saving on costs

... there may be more scope for delivery of some aspects of coach / officials education on-line or via CDs, with any test of understanding of the course material possibly being invigilated locally.

#### **Road Running / Endurance Matters:**

1. South-West Inter-County competition: entries by the general running public for the first meeting of the series (Melksham 10 Miles) had been open for some time: already some 370 places (out of an available 500) had been taken up, with no entries (as at 25/01/2106) from Dorset, Devon or Cornwall clubs yet. John Deaton was the only Avon activist known to be able to attend the race, although John Robbins would be able to help with team nomination. The requirement that County-nominated athletes need to wear County vests could provide logistical problems [post-meeting update: this requirement has been waived for the Melksham event].
2. Bristol 10km / Half Marathon races: these will now come under the "Great Run" banner. The meeting had no news yet of any discount offers for local clubs.

#### **Track & Field / Sportshall Matters**

1. 2016 T&F Championships (Sunday 15th May): The YOSC track was booked, as were the services of St. John Ambulance. Mr. Ravi Badgi hopes to bring a party of Indian athletes again. There seemed no reason to deviate markedly from the timetable and entry arrangements in operation in 2015.
2. Avon AA Open Meetings: the meeting on May 24th 2016 will include the Under 13 and Under 15 800m Championships for both Boys and Girls.
3. South-West Inter-Counties T&F Championships: these are scheduled for Sunday August 7th at Exeter, to be managed by a sub-group of the South-West Council led by David Cooke (Somerset AA Secretary), with on-line entries to be processed via the England Athletics system. This date clashes with the UK Women's League and the Midland League and is on the same weekend as the British Athletics League: John Deaton had pointed this out to the SW Council meeting but they opted to remain with the chosen date. This may well affect the Senior turnout at the meeting (already disappointing in recent seasons), so Senior entry standards may well be eased.

(continued)

## Cross-Country / Trail Matters

1. Tri-County Cross-Country Championships (Bath University, Sunday December 13th): this went off well, although with a reduced turnout (13% fewer finishers overall compared to 2014; Avon finishers down from 122 to 114). Avon will shortly be receiving £200 as their share of the surplus from the event. Keith Brackstone would probably have welcomed more help with dismantling the course after the event.

Wiltshire Cross-Country Secretary Stuart Henderson has stepped down: John Deaton would send a message of thanks to him for his past organisation of the Tri-Counties event. The meeting considered that the Somerset AA should be given the first option on meeting organisation for 2016-7, and that Avon needs to think about a possible meeting organising person (John Deaton is not available to do this) or body for 2017-8. Kingswood School may be a possible alternative venue, as might Pomphrey Hill (although heavy weekend use for football may rule this latter one out).

2. South-West Inter-Counties Championships (Sunday December 20th, at Bicton College): this went off well, although the number of finishers was 20% down on the January 2015 event.

The meeting was disappointed at the choice of date for the 2015-6 event: it meant that some local athletes had been scheduled to attend Gwent League / Tri-Counties Championships / South-West Championships races in successive weekends. The choice of date for 2016-7 could be complicated by the fact that the first Sunday in January 2017 is New Year's Day: if the SW Council choose a date in late December (or is allocated such a date by England Athletics), we may need to think of moving the Tri-Counties Championships to mid/late November.

3. UK CAU Inter-County Championships (Birmingham, March 12th): Chris Elson had agreed to manage the Senior Men's team and Keith Brackstone the Senior and Under-20 Women's teams; Ian Humphreys (Somerset) would be managing the Under-17 Men and Women. Neil Miller and John Deaton were available to help with the meeting but Steve Parsons was not. John Deaton was in regular contact with Ian Humphreys regarding the meeting.

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

1. The new UKA Rule Book comes into force from April 1st: the Avon AA has no information yet about which rules will change.
2. Anneliese Shannon (lead CCSO for the SW region) will shortly be starting maternity leave.

**Information from member Clubs / Associations** The Avon Schools Cross-Country Championships had gone ahead at Kingswood School, which had proved a very satisfactory venue. Teams had been selected for the South-West Schools Championships at Cheltenham on Saturday February 6th.

**Arrangements for AGM:** It was agreed that, as for the 2015 AGM, those clubs represented at the 2016 AGM would have their 2016 Affiliation Fee waived.

**Any Other Business:** The meeting sadly noted the passing of Shirley Morrison, wife of Life Member and former Starter Derek Morrison.

**Date of AGM / Abbreviated Committee Meeting:** Monday April 4th 2016, 7.30pm., at UWE Frenchay Campus (subject to room booking). This means that motions for debate at the AGM must reach the Secretary by Monday March 7th.

**Meeting Closed** at about 9.25pm.