

Avon Athletic Association

Minutes of a Management Committee meeting, held on Monday May 24th 2010, at the Civil Service Sports Club, Filton Avenue, Bristol, starting at 7.30pm.

Those Present: Gordon Robbins (Chair, Road Running Co-ordinator, Bitton RR); Keith Brackstone (Cross-Country Co-ordinator); Clive Butler (WSM Juniors), John Deaton (Secretary), Mike Down (Bristol & West AC), Ray Gooding (Officials Secretary); Andy Hood (WSM Juniors), Bill Kingston (Life Member); Cy Knibb (Bristol & West AC); James Murphy (Westbury Harriers), Hilary Nash (Treasurer / Bristol & West AC), John Robbins (President), Tim Snowdon (Avon Network), Mike Strange (Life Member), Gareth Thomas (Thornbury RC), Mike Willcox (GWR).

Apologies : Pam Gooding (Life Member), Lesley Nunn (Avon Schools AA), Stuart Nunn (Yate & District AC); Derek Wolfe (Bristol & West AC)

Minutes of Previous Meeting (January 25th 2010): Item on the Under-11 Sportshall Championships: these went ahead on the planned date (Sunday January 31st) with Avon winning the Boys' and Girls' events. With this correction, the minutes were accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Matters Arising:

1. Network Coaching Bursaries: Tim Snowdon pointed out that he was no longer allowed to give these, as EA considered they were already supporting courses by offering reduced prices to EA coaches.
2. MCAA Cross-Country medals: the situation had been resolved; the athletes concerned should not have been refused their medals, and had now received them.
3. Dinner: Mike Strange had circulated forms by e-mail, and asked that those who had already made verbal requests complete and return a form. John Deaton would add the form to the website. Bruce Tulloh (guest speaker) to be presented with an item of Bristol Blue glassware.

Report on Business of AGM: Since the AGM, David Godfrey had agreed to assist Dean Garrett with the Team Management at the South-West Inter-Counties Championships. However Hilary Nash considered that an extra volunteer was needed for on-the-day work: John Deaton to circulate Track and Field clubs. There were still vacancies for two (at least) Team Managers for the two Inter-County Cross-Country Championships.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary had e-mail addresses for all clubs except Fry Club Joggers, and had had confirmation from all e-mail addresses except AXA. Clevedon AC's Secretary is now Hayley Marriott (e-mail address hayleymarriott@gmx.com). The meeting agreed that the Secretary could claim half the cost of his printer cartridges.

Treasurer's Report: As at May 16th, the Current Account held £1,522.77 and the Deposit Account £21,355.88. There were outstanding payments from the T&F Championships to St. John Ambulance (£74.61) and Yate and District AC (£50.00): these may be delayed because the process of changing cheque signatories was proving cumbersome. Regarding a floral tribute at Peter Griffin's funeral: the family had requested "family flowers only", so the meeting agreed a donation of £50 to Westbury Harriers, preferably to be used towards a permanent memento (possibly a trophy for a planned WH race promotion).

Officials Secretary's Report:

1. Natalie Shaw, EA's Officials contact for the Midlands/South-West has resigned: there has been no news of a replacement yet.
2. Ray Gooding confirmed that even starters with a firearms certificate could not now possess the Olympic .38 BBM replica gun: such guns need to be handed in at a Police Station by June 4th (the planned UKA collection scheme has been abandoned), and a receipt obtained which would be essential if any replacement or compensation scheme should emerge.
3. The responsibility for Endurance officials has now been passed to County Road Running Secretaries.

4. The T&F Championships officials cover was adequate, with some newly-qualified Level Two's in action.

Road Running Matters: The meeting confirmed that the County Championships events would be: Clevedon 10km on Tuesday June 15th; North Somerset Road Relays on Sunday 12th September; Oldbury-on-Severn 10 Miles on Sunday 3rd October. John Deaton asked to be notified of the Avon Championships results within these events for publicity on the website.

John Deaton pointed out an apparent restriction in the new Coach Education system: that coaches gaining the new Coach Endurance award would not be insured to take athletes onto a track. Tim Snowdon was attending a meeting shortly where he might be able to clarify the situation. [post-meeting clarification: coaches with existing qualifications which insure them for track work will be okay so long as they maintain their CRB status etc.]

Track and Field Matters: Graham Howell had submitted a report on the Track and Field Championships. Track hire and some other bills still had to come in, but the financial position should be around break-even. Entries were down on 2008 and 2009 (when schools athletes received free entry) with Senior/Under 20's entries particularly poor; some schoolteachers failed to submit entries by the closing date, or to the correct address, or with fees. Some younger athletes did not seem to be too clued-up about the rules of the sport. Overall, he felt that the meeting had gone well.

Suggestions regarding future Championships included:

- ... clubs to promote the event more actively to their members
- ... a change of date (but when to, in an already crowded season?)
- ... entries on the day to be allowed (Bill Kingston: this could provide major problems on Field Event scheduling; John Deaton: higher-level Championships apply closing dates rigidly; athletes need to become disciplined about meeting entry closing dates)
- ... combining the event with the Avon Schools Championships (John Deaton would consult Lesley Nunn)
- ... holding some events as part of local Open meetings

E-mail from Dean Garrett: for the past five years he had run a Primary Age Medal competition at Yate in July: he was suggesting it be upgraded to an Avon Primary Age Group Championships. The meeting was interested in principle: John Deaton to contact Dean Garrett for further information: the Officers would be authorised to make a final decision on awarding Championship status.

[Post-meeting note: Mike Strange has offered to assist Graham Howell with T&F Co-ordinator matters]

Cross-Country Matters: The proposed three-way County Championships was not yet definite, as Wiltshire's committee still had to confirm their participation. The interaction with the Somerset AA in 2009 had proved problematic; as the event would be in Avon in 2010, Keith Brackstone was asked to prepare proposals on how he considered the Championships should be administered, for ratification by the next meeting. Mike Down advocated a return to a previous entries system where a club could opt to pay a fixed fee for unlimited entries: Keith was asked to consider this.

John Terry (Westbury Harriers) had tried to put together a team for the National Inter-Counties Fell Running Championships (May 22nd, Denbighshire), but was unsuccessful: he planned to try again next year. This section of the minutes to be renamed "Cross Country / Trail / Fell Running Matters".

Sportshall Matters: Three Avon teams had reached the National Finals (Birmingham, Sunday April 18th); the Under-13 Boys team won (to the evident surprise and delight of Dave Turner), with the Under-13 Girls 4th and the Under-15 Boys 6th.

Report of Avon AA Development Sub-Committee: Cy Knibb delivered a report from this Committee, the contents of which appear in Appendix A. Discussion on Report:

... Cost Reduction recommendations: Mike Down considered that we needed to consider continued subsidy of representative teams; Bill Kingston emphasised the need to support Officials' education, without which the sport locally could falter.

... Income generation: the meeting supported the ideas of a 4x5 Mile Road Relay and of the four Event Development days. Possible T&F Open meetings would need to fit in with the local athletic calendar: Mike Down suggested there was a need for evening Open meetings, possibly on Tuesdays.

... Event Development Days: Tim Snowden offered to stage four Event Development Days during the next few months; the fees for the lead coaches would be met by the Avon Network, and the cost of facilities would be met by England Athletics, with any financial surplus coming to the Association. The meeting accepted this offer with thanks. The Network / England Athletics support for this type of day will probably not be available in future years.

... Proposed NJAL Composite Team: John Deaton had sent e-mails to the County's T&F-affiliated teams asking for expressions of interest in a composite team of Avon clubs. He received positive replies from Bitton Road Runners, Bristol & West AC, Weston Super Mare Juniors, and Yate & District AC; he had received no replies from North Somerset AC and Team Bath AC despite reminders; Westbury Harriers had expressed interest, but since they are not a T&F-affiliated club, it is unlikely that UKA will accept them as part of a composite T&F team; Westbury Harriers athletes will have access to the composite team via Yate & District AC. Tim Snowden will convene a meeting of the interested clubs to discuss further progress. To compete in 2011, a composite team would need to be registered with, and accepted by, UKA by September 30th.

... Finance: Hilary Nash has a heavy workload but will try to produce financial forecasts in time for the next Development Sub-Committee meeting (scheduled for Monday 19th June)[Error: should read 21st June]. John Robbins offered assistance.

Avon Network Matters: A meeting was held on Wednesday 5th May to discuss the second phase of the Plan.

Avon Schools AA Matters: In the absence of Lesley Nunn, there was no report.

England Athletics South-West Matters: No reports received of any Council meetings.

MCAA Matters, County Sports Partnership (Wesport) Matters: Nothing to report.

Welfare Matters: Jim Murphy had sent e-mails to UKA with queries about the VBS system but had had no replies. Perhaps they are awaiting possible changes by the new Government?

Club News: Bristol & West AC will move their base to the Packers track on its completion (scheduled for September 2010). This is a 6-lane track with floodlights, and would be open to all. The track at Filton (also scheduled for completion in September 2010) actually lies in South Gloucestershire: it will be managed by "Stoke Gifford Stadium Ltd.", managed by the Chief Executive of Filton College: the Avon AA will have a seat on the Board of the Company.

Bristol & West AC's website address is now www.bristolandwestac.org; Yate and District AC Secretary Tony Jefferies now has regular access to e-mail, so please use the e-mail address tonyandpat07@googlemail.com for official communication with Yate and District AC.

[Post-meeting update: Fry Club Joggers are now contactable by e-mail: jenkins.pines@btinternet.com (Janet Jenkins)]

Any Other Business: None.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday July 26th 2010, usual time / venue. **Meeting Closed** at 10.07pm.

APPENDIX A

“Options For Change” - The Role of Avon AA-Meeting Aspirations or Fighting Fires?

Avon Athletic Association Development Sub-Committee Report May 24, 2010

Following the Avon AA AGM, the sub-committee have met twice to consider the actions required to secure the future financial growth and stability of the Avon AA while always meeting the needs of its member clubs and their athletes.

Active members of the sub-committee included John Deaton (Avon AA Secretary), Cy Knibb (B&WAC), Gordon Robbins (Avon AA Chair/Bitton RR), John Robbins (AAA President), Stuart Nunn (Yate AC), Lesley Nunn (Avon Schools) and Tim Snowdon (Avon Network Coordinator). Interim findings for consideration by the Executive Committee include the following **options**:

1. Cost Reduction Options

- ✓ County cross-country, track and field championships and representative teams should be financially self-supporting and entry fees and travel costs should be set at the appropriate level to achieve this and make a small surplus to fund other relevant development needs.
- ✓ Grants to subsidize club coaches' and officials' attendance on qualification courses should cease. The Avon Network would continue to subsidize official education courses only.
- ✓ Bursaries to individual athletes should also be suspended.

2. Income Generation Options

- ✓ Clubs' county affiliation fees to be increased on an incremental scale depending on the number of disciplines the club participated in. A minority view advocated a £1 per club member levy.
- ✓ Bitton RR to organise an open 4x5 mls. road relay at a date to be agreed, with the proceeds to be donated to Avon AA
- ✓ An open track and field meeting, organised by the county association, to possibly include relays and specific field events to meet the needs of athletes, coaches and clubs where gaps may exist in the competitive programme.
- ✓ A series of four Event Development Days aimed at coach and athlete development with costs met by EA South West and Avon Athletics Network. Athletes and non-Avon coaches would be charged a minimal fee which the county would retain.

3. Increasing Participation Options

- ✓ Increased participation in county championships could increase income but it was felt that club-school partnerships, which could promote growth through increased club membership, would be best left to clubs and their local schools to initiate and maintain.
- ✓ The need to provide improved competition opportunities to help retain athletes aged 17-20 could be met by the formation of a composite team ('Team Avon') in the National Junior League. Those clubs interested would meet under an independent coordinator.

Note.

It was agreed after the meetings that, in the absence of any detailed financial data, further discussion by the Executive Committee of these findings should be delayed until there had been an urgent and detailed examination of the current state of the Associations accounts and the preparation of a business plan.

Cy Knibb: Sub-Committee Facilitator. May 22, 2010

APPENDIX B

Changes of Eligibility affecting Avon clubs

Hannah Alderson	Westbury Harriers to Bristol & West AC (Road/CC)	e.d. 01/05/2010
Heath Bampton	Swindon Harriers to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/02/2010
Claire-Louise Conway:	Bristol & West AC to Wye Valley Runners	e.d. 01/04/2010
Christopher Dodd	Eastbourne Rovers to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/02/2010
Andrew Ellison	Team Bath to Farhham Runners	e.d. 01/03/2010
Suzanne Harding	Bristol & West AC to Team Bath	e.d. 01/02/2010
Steven James	Portishead RC to Clevedon AC	e.d. 01/04/2010
Daniel King	Bristol & West AC to Wye Valley Runners	e.d. 01/05/2010
Brett Sadler	Bristol & West AC to Frome Running Club	e.d. 01/04/2010
Mark Scrutton	Tonbridge AC to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/04/2010
Michael Wilsmore	Tamar Trotters to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/03/2010