

Avon Athletic Association

Minutes of a Management Committee meeting of the Avon Athletic Association, held on Monday September 19th 2011, at the Civil Service Sports and Social Club, Filton Road, Bristol, starting at 7.30pm.

Those Present: Stuart Nunn (Chair, Yate & District AC), Keith Brackstone (CC Coordinator), Dave Coales (Team Bath AC), John Deaton (Secretary), Mike Down (Bristol & West AC), Rachael Fisher (North Somerset AC), Andy Hood (WSM Juniors AC), Dan Jones (Team Bath AC), Bill Kingston (Life Member), Cy Knibb (Bristol & West AC), Neil Miller (Westbury Harriers), Lesley Nunn (Avon Schools AA), Ben Redwood (Yate & District AC), Gordon Robbins (Road Running Co-ordinator / Bitton RR), John Robbins (President), Mike Strange (Life Member), Mike Willcox (GWR). Plus visitors: Chris Mallender (EA Team Leader, Midlands & South-West), Nigel Rowe (Chair, SW Council)

Apologies : Pam Gooding (Life Member), Ray Gooding (Officials Secretary), Jim Murphy (Westbury H. /Welfare), Tim Snowdon (Avon Network), Derek Wolfe (Bristol & West AC) .

Discussion on the future of athletics in the Avon and the South-West: this involved the Association's guests Chris Mallender and Nigel Rowe.

SN: What does England Athletics see as the future of the Networks?

CM/NR: Each Network was due to be funded for three years, (in our case from September 2009), subject to satisfactory delivery against plans. After that, EA hopes that the Networks will become self-funding. EA does not know its own funding situation after 31st March 2013: there is no guarantee that funding to Networks can be sustained at any particular level , or even sustained at all. EA may be required to direct any funding it receives elsewhere.

EA is preparing for the next funding cycle for 2013 – 2017: The first draft of its proposals need to be submitted by February / March 2012, with the decision known in about October 2012.

The Networks may need to make decisions about the hours required of their paid staff or to increase the use of volunteers, and may need to look for increased cooperation with clubs, schools, Further Education colleges, etc. or to seek new funding sources from elsewhere. [Note: the last three paragraphs have been amended following feedback from Chris Mallender]

KB: But clubs are already finding that schools and colleges are trying to ease the effect of their own financial cutbacks by calling on the clubs for more support.

SN: What part does EA believe that Counties (especially Avon) play in the future of the sport?

NR: They recognise their importance, but would not be funding them. They also recognise the importance of networks, clubs, local authorities etc.

CK: The clubs are the basis of activity in most counties, with a great level of commitment. The Networks are currently doing some of the work in the sport which counties used to do.

CM: Why did the Avon AA not become a Network?

SN: Because we were told we were not allowed to! The "one size fits all" philosophy of Network formation was a mistake.

Various: We are more than just a competition provider! We believe that the Avon AA is a strong County organisationally, and that the South-West area had been one of very good practice, but an area which has been ignored. The value of Counties should not be judged on the record of a few disappointing examples.

??: What funds does the South-West Council receive?

NR: The SW Council has no funds of its own; however there are some funds set aside for financing South-West area competition and for the advancement of South-West officials, to compensate for the geographical remoteness of the area.

MD: Are there any Minutes of South-West Council meetings available?

NR: No Minutes are kept: each portfolio holder keeps the relevant users in his/her area of responsibility informed of developments.

GR: Some of the area's clubs do not appear to know that a Network exists.

Various: Some clubs are simply interested in doing their runs then going home. There is no point in having clubs in the Network if they won't pull their weight.

CM: Does the County have a Business Plan?

KB: Not as such, although we put in considerable effort last year to ensure that we have a mechanism whereby each area of the County's activity became self-supporting financially.

JR: How does Avon help the South-West Council / EA in putting forward the bid for future finance? There needs to be a dialogue between Avon AA / Avon Network / South-West Council / EA on business development planning.

CM/NR thanked the Association for the invitation to this meeting. They were now more appreciative of Avon's position in the sport, particularly after Tim Snowden's presentation in May about the role of the Network. In the bid for funding, they needed to show the legacy effect of the money already spent, and to identify the case for further funding under the categories Growing The Sport / Sustaining / Excellence. They would be keeping in touch with the Association.

The Chairman thanked Chris and Nigel for their attendance at the meeting, and wished them a safe journey home. Chris and Nigel left the meeting at about 8.45pm.

The meeting then returned to routine business:

Minutes of Previous Meeting (July 11th 2011): accepted.

Matters Arising:

1. Avon AA Banner: John Deaton passed this to Gordon Robbins.
2. Avon AA Open Meetings: the series had gone off well, with a surplus of over £700 generated. The meeting attracted some athletes from considerable distances, although there could have been better support from local clubs. The meeting was well-covered for officials: the organiser had received complimentary remarks about the meeting atmosphere. Cy Knibb was keen that the series is repeated next year, but would not be organising it himself.

3. Cross-Country clash of dates on Sunday 13th November: there were discussions in progress between the race organisers (from Bristol City Council) and the Gwent League about possibly combining the events.
4. The entries for the Bristol Street Miles and Street Sprints had been a bit disappointing: clubs would be urged to give these events more support next year.

Secretary's Report: Items covered under other headings.

Treasurer's Report: Hilary Nash was not present at the meeting: John Deaton would contact him for a financial update. Hilary's quest for improved interest rates on our savings accounts had meant that we needed to transfer our Current Account to Lloyds TSB: the relevant forms had been submitted.

Officials Secretary's Report:

1. Alan Dent (TJ, Yate) and Mike Smerdon (FJ, Yate) have now received licences as Level 2a (Club). Ben Redwood (FJ, Yate) and Rachael Fisher (FJ, North Somerset) have been upgraded to Level 2b (County). Derek Morrison is sidelined (possibly permanently?) from athletics due to a serious knee problem: the meeting wished him well for the future.
2. John Deaton reminded members that it was time to submit their Records of Experience ("Form 10"). Track and Field officials should submit these to Ray Gooding [raygooding@supanet.com] (Levels 1 & 2) or Barry Parker [bparker@athletics47.fsnet.co.uk] (Level 3 upwards); Endurance officials should submit forms for 2010-2011 (and 2009-2010 if outstanding) to Paul Ross [paul.ross25@blueyonder.co.uk] (Level 2(c) upwards) or Jayne Reed [officials-sw@englandathletics.org] (others).

Road Running Matters: Avon AA Cones: these are now currently with Mike Andrews (Clevedon AC).

Track and Field Matters:

1. T&F Championships 2012: The replacement Championships Organiser, Ben Redwood, was introduced to the meeting. Graham Howell had passed over relevant material: Ben had confirmed that the second weekend in May had been set aside nationally for County Championships. A sub-committee (Rachael Fisher, Ray Gooding, Stuart Nunn, Ben Redwood, John Robbins) would convene to suggest modifications to Championships arrangements (among the ideas already offered: reduce the Senior 5000m to 3000m; hold some events at one of the Avon AA Open Meetings).

Cross-Country / Trail / Fell Running Matters:

1. Tri-County Cross-Country Championships: Keith Brackstone reported that a provisional booking had been made for the course at Bath University, and most of the other preliminary work had been done. The entry fees had been agreed at Under-11's free; Under-13's to Juniors £4; Seniors £6. Resolution of various other points (e.g. whether or not to accept late / on the day entries, and if so whether to charge a supplement; the number of athletes to score in the Senior races) depended on receiving a response from Somerset AA.

Sportshall Matters: Nothing to report.

Avon Network Matters: Tim Snowdon was unable to attend the meeting but had reported the following:

1. Team Avon had won the Avon regional division of the National Junior League, and had gone on to win the promotion match at Derby on August 28th. Promotion to the Midland Premier division meant the inclusion of Women's Steeplechase in the event programme.

2. The first of the Autumn's Network Event days was held at Yate on Saturday 17th September: the next would be at Bath University on Saturday October 8th.
3. Tim asked that the agenda for the next meeting included a discussion of the future of the Network's activities when the current funding arrangements expire (the meeting asked all relevant parties to make a special effort to attend the next Avon Network meeting on Wednesday October 12th).

Gordon Robbins asked if the Network event days organised by Tim Snowdon had been a success and if they had raised the income expected for the county? With both Tim and Hilary absent, no answer could be given.

Avon Schools AA Matters: Two athletes had competed at the English Schools Combined Events Championships (a third had been prevented by injury): both achieved mid-table positions.

Stoke Gifford Stadium Ltd. Matters: Keith Brackstone reported that there were still several training slots available at the track for interested clubs.

MCAA / EA / UKA Matters:

1. The Midland Counties AA AGM would be on Sunday 27th November in Birmingham.
2. England Athletics will be moving their base to the Alexander Stadium.
3. The South-West Council will be holding another Awards Evening, at the Mercure Hotel, Exeter on Wednesday December 7th. Network and County representatives would be welcome.

Club Matters: The meeting congratulated Bristol & West AC Men's Track and Field team on their promotion to the British League.

Any Other Business: John Deaton asked any member club considering applying for charitable status to benefit from Gift Aid Tax refunds on subscriptions should contact him, as he had come across a possible complication.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday November 21st, at the Civil Service Sports and Social Club.

Meeting Closed at about 9.20pm.

APPENDIX A.

Changes of Eligibility affecting Avon clubs (June, July and August)

Alastair	Abrams	Bristol & West AC to North Somerset AC	e.d. 01/09/2011
Misha	Gaffney	Yeovil Olympians to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/08/2011
Owen	Harnett (U15)	Team Devizes to Team Bath AC	e.d. 01/09/2011
Clare	Hodgson	Royal Sutton Coldfield to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/09/2011
Naomi	Hutchinson	Cherwell Runners & Joggers to GWR	e.d. 01/07/2011
Jodie	Kelly	Bristol & West AC to Westbury Harriers	e.d. 01/09/2011
Annika	Jarman	Bristol & West AC to Lancaster & Morecambe	e.d. 01/09/2011
Paul	Newman	Team Bath AC to Somer AC	e.d. 01/07/2011
Kylie	Russell	Team Bath AC to Birchfield Harriers	e.d. 01/07/2011
James	Trezona	Herts Phoenix AC to Bristol & West AC	e.d. 01/08/2011
Mark	Vogan	Glossopdale Harriers to Town & Country H.	e.d. 01/07/2011