



## **SUSSEX COUNTY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION**

**President: Martin Etchells**

### **Minutes of the Executive meeting held on Friday 19th February 2016 at Withdean Leisure Centre, Brighton.**

**Members Present:** Reg Hook, Linda Tullett, Maureen Stephens, Gavin Stephens, Neil Sutherland, Bob Page, Jenny Hughes, Dave Leach, Keith Donno, Peter Masters, Martin Etchells, Melanie Anning, Ron Penfold, John Gill, Tim Kimber.

**16-77 Apologies for absence** – Elspeth Turner, Judy Lasis, Peter Selby, Mandy Collison, Roland Garrad, John Linfield, Graham Ashdown, Peter Standen, John Luxford, Phil Baker, Michelle & Terry Notman, Vicki Clark.

**During the meeting members stood to remember Roger Wardale, a Vice President of the Association and former Coaching Secretary and Sussex Schools' Team Manager, who had recently died.**

**16-78** - The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.

**16-79 Matters Arising** - Nothing to report

#### **16-80 - Correspondence & Administrators report**

All the major county events at K2 and Withdean stadiums had been booked. Some licences still need to be obtained.

Brighton Marathon is now offering late places to all affiliated club athletes: there are no discounts or benefits for Sussex athletes.

The new website launched in January and so far feedback has been very positive. It is an on going process so constructive criticism and feedback is welcomed

Almost 50% of entries for the indoor championships were on-line.

Vicki Clark, Dave Leach, Gail Nerurkar and Virginia Fonteyn have successfully managed the Inter-counties teams. The Executive thanked them.

Trevor Simcox had expressed an interest in the Track & Field Secretary role.

Melanie Anning said she would be standing down from organising the Under 13 and Quadkids championships' after the 2016 event.

## **16-81 Treasurer's report**

Martin Etchells presented the accounts. He reported that there was still income to be recorded. The majority of the income from the Indoors championships had not been included. This would cover the £5000 payment to the network.

Peter Masters spoke briefly about how the merged network and county accounts might look and how the development side might move forwards.

Bob Page proposed that the county looked at the cost of activities to ensure there were no big loss makers.

Martin Etchells explained that the Road Relays normally made a small profit but were always recorded in advance of all the payments coming in.

## **16-82 - Network report**

**Website** - There is confusion because the old site is still up and running and needs to be shut down soon.

It is important that any stakeholders, such as Bob Page, have access to the site to update and oversee their sections.

**Squads** - Peter Masters reported that the new squads model for this year had been very successful so far. A Long Jump masterclass led by John Shepherd had taken place at the end of January and was well attended by athletes and coaches. A sprints masterclass led by John Powell was due to take place in March. There had been a change of date and this has impacted on some athletes and coaches availability but it is still going ahead. Mike Winch and Judy Oakes are also keen to offer something similar to throwers. This is yet to be finalised.

**Officials** - John Gill said there would not be an officials course this Spring after the very successful Autumn course.

## **16-83 - Track & Field report**

The main championships on 14th/15th May will now be at Withdean Stadium, as K2 had a longstanding booking confirmed last July, which could not be moved. The EA led change in the county AA championship dates to the second weekend in May, had caused the problem. To ensure this does not happen again Melanie Anning has booked K2 in advance for the next three years.

On behalf of Keith May, Martin Etchells thanked Melanie Anning for resolving the issue.

The date for the Masters championships had not yet been confirmed. Martin would follow this up with Peter Crawshaw.

Melanie Anning confirmed she is receiving the officials availability responses.

## **16-84- Cross Country report**

Keith Donno reported that entries had increased across the board in Cross- Country. He and Phil Baker wanted to thank all the officials who helped out at the many meetings over the 2015-16 season.

Keith discussed increasing the number of venues so that it was not always the same organisers, clubs, marshals and courses being used. This is especially pertinent with the increasing number of athletes and additional wear and tear and impact on the localities.

Maureen Stephens said that the Lancing course could be under threat as a venue because of overuse,

John Gill discussed the problems about attracting new officials.

## **16-85 Road Running report**

Bob Page reported on the Harvey Curtis programme of races and confirmed a change of venue for one event to Chichester next year.

Bob spoke about the Brighton Half Marathon organisers paying clubs £30 per marshal provided, compared to Brighton Marathon who offer nothing despite increasing numbers of participants (3000 children's places offered this year for the Mini Mile).

Bob reported that he had heard good feedback about the new Worthing Half Marathon the previous weekend. He said such commercial events were making the calendar very congested but that the sport of road running is very vibrant.

## **16-86 Race Walking report**

Ron Penfold was encouraged by the unexpectedly high turnout of 49 walkers at the Alf Palmer Memorial Walks in Horsham in December. The athletes who competed over distances ranging from 1k-5k were from local and southern clubs with ages ranging from U11 up to 79 years.

Ron reported that The Boxing Day races were reasonably well supported with Ian Richards a very clear winner, as he was at the 15k Road Race at Steyning in January.

In January Sophie Hales of Steyning, who is making a partial return to race walking after a long layoff, won the SRWA Women's 10K Road Champs at Hillingdon in a very good time of 50:59, She was well supported by Anne Jones in 4<sup>th</sup> place and they took the team title. Unfortunately Sophie has moved to Essex and may not race for Sussex again.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March there will be the Lewes open track walks for novices. More experienced athletes will race 1k up to 5k. On 19<sup>th</sup> March the Sussex 10k Track Championships will take place at Horsham. This will include the Slater/Bryce Memorial walks.

## **16-87 Constitution**

There was a general discussion around the governance and management options including who could attend the meetings and whether to co-opt or delegate.

Peter Masters made some comments re. amendments of the objectives. Peter felt the option (with fewer members) should be selected, i.e. an elected executive committee of approximately 14 members.

Bob Page queried how clubs would be represented and whether they could draft a motion. It was agreed that no one should be excluded from being represented at the exec.

## **16-88 Crawley AC Photo Finish**

Tim Kimber attended the meeting on behalf of Crawley AC, to update the committee on the proposed purchase of the PF system for K2. He outlined that Crawley AC had agreed to compromise to reduce the cost of the system, which had now come down to £21,200. They would not buy the clock at present and aimed to source the PC's more cheaply elsewhere.

Tim confirmed that Sports England had rejected Crawley's application for funding, saying they did not satisfy the criteria for a grant.

Crawley AC requested £7,500 from Sussex AA towards the cost of the PF system. The exec agreed to this funding.

## **16-89 Athlete Recruitment**

Gavin Stephens of Worthing District Harriers (WDH) was concerned about Crawley AC's recruitment of athletes from other Sussex Clubs. He spoke about direct approaches to WDH athletes from Crawley and pressure on athletes to compete for Crawley as Higher Claim Athletes (HCA). Gavin and Martin Etchells asked for clarification about the club's policy from Crawley's representative Tim Kimber. Tim responded at the meeting and subsequently, on request, sent a written response also, which is reproduced in full below:

Firstly I wanted to sympathise with Gavin Stephens (WDH Chairman) as it is not nice to lose athletes. I completely understand his view, as I have also been disappointed in the past to lose several athletes to other clubs.

As Crawley BAL team manager I had received several enquiries over the winter for HCA places for the British league, from a number of athletes from various clubs. The enquiries often are routed either via the Crawley website/e-mail or via athletes verbal communication directly. Three enquiries were from WDH athletes from the Autumn 2015. I felt that it was important to clarify that I had not approached the athletes in question. Following the enquiries I reviewed the athletes events and unfortunately had to reject their HCA request as Crawley already had athletes covering these events. It was mentioned that Crawley had asked the WDH athletes to join Crawley first claim. For the record I believe it is important to understand that I had never encouraged the athletes to join Crawley and resign from WDH. I also clarified that I didn't believe in 'poaching' and I had never contacted any athletes to ask them to join Crawley first claim.

I continued to clarify my view on HCA athlete signing. Each year BAL clubs are able to sign eight HCA athletes and five athletes can compete per match. I regard the HCA places as event specific i.e. I allocate the places where Crawley have gaps in the team and where there are not Crawley first claim athletes rather than take on a better HCA athlete and leave a Crawley AC athlete behind.

I always try to offer these places to Sussex athletes in the first instance so that Sussex athletes benefit from the option of higher-level competition. I personally contact athletes/coaches in Sussex for HCA places. I don't consider this as 'poaching' for the reason that HCA is a temporary form of 'second claim' and more importantly the BAL fixtures are on different weekends to SAL fixtures so it allows the HCA athlete to compete for their first claim club in all SAL competitions. For the record I have never asked an HCA athlete to join Crawley first claim. I attempted to demonstrate this by confirming that I had worked with eight HCA athletes per year for the last six years as BAL team manager i.e. 48 HCA athletes in total and none of them have ever transferred to Crawley. I am just grateful that they enjoy the BAL competition.

I have contacted a number of athletes/coaches across Sussex since January from a number of clubs. Three athletes were from WDH for Triple/High Jump and 1500m events to initially check interest before approaching a WDH representative.

I apologised to Gavin Stephens for not contacting himself first. Unfortunately I didn't know Gavin but I had intended on discussing with his mother (Maureen Stephens) in the first instance as I knew her from the XC circuit. In hindsight I now regret contacting the athletes directly and should have approached a WDH representative in the first instance.

### **16-90 Unifying Sussex AA coat of arms**

There are a variety of different shields and styles representing Sussex Athletics. It was agreed that there should be unification, which would bring both Sussex AA and Sussex Schools' together. Peter Masters agreed to write a brief and the exec discussed how the brief could be put out to tender. There were various suggestions that it could be a competition for graphic design students and/ or given to a sportswear company who already work in this area.

There were further discussions around working with a company, such as Logo Sports in Hove to enable athletes selected for county teams to buy kit directly on-line via a Sussex AA branded page.

### **16-91 Any other business**

John Gill is to order new rulebooks.

### **16-92 Dates of 2016 Meetings - All Fridays**

22nd April, 17th June, 16th September, **AGM** 21st October, 18th November