



## *Essex County Athletic Association*

### **Minutes of the Essex AA Track & Field meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams Video on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 19:30 hours**

#### **Participants:**

Any Catton (Chair), Claire Levey, Paul Merrywest, Diane Wooller, Claudia Rabess, Kaye Merrywest, Sally Dobson June Cork Gerry Heapy Gerry O'Doherty Hayley Pegg, Alan James.

(Unfortunately, the meeting was plagued by some technical issues which resulted in some participants not being able to comment, screen freezing and sound breaking up. Those affected have subsequently sent an email and their input has been set out in an appendix to these minutes)

#### **Introduction**

An agenda for the meeting had been sent to all Club Secretaries and posted on the County Facebook site. Not all the participants had received a copy of the Agenda and Andy Catton after welcoming people to the meeting gave a brief resume of the matters that were to be discussed during the meeting. Main focus was to be a 'brainstorming' meeting to ensure that structure is right for this and next year.

#### **1. How well do clubs receive information from Essex AA and how is this disseminated to athletes and coaches?**

No negative feedback received. Question was raised as to how we can persuade more people to become officials? Do we as a County provide enough courses and is there sufficient support to clubs to assist in their recruitment drives? Comment was made that it is difficult for officials to move up from Level 1 to 2. Buddying up Level 1 officials with Level 2 to help with this process was suggested. (a further discussion on this subject took place later in the meeting – see agenda item 10)

#### **2. Are you happy with the format of the outdoor championships (dates for main champs fixed by UKA) with separate relay, 5k and 10k days?**

No changes in current format proposed. Current structure works well.

#### **3. Are you happy with the format of the indoor championships?**

The general feedback from the meeting was yes.

#### **4. Do athletes still want multi event championships/relays?**

Yes athletes are desperate for competition. Multi events championships normally take place at the end of April. Unlikely that Covid restriction will be lifted to allow this event to take place. Could they be consolidated into the two day County Championship programme in May was discussed. However, this would restrict competitors taking part in the main championships. The general consensus of the

meeting was that it was neither a good idea nor practical and a date in early September, was recommended

Relays – Friday evenings are difficult for parents. Possibly consider scheduling both championships during the summer but this might be difficult as a number of people may be away on holiday. Date for these championships to be agreed later in the year (possibly a weekend in July or August) when we have a better of idea of when competition is able to restart.

## **5. Outdoor Championships**

It was agreed that we should plan for these for the scheduled dates of 8/9 May but again this will be subject to any Government restrictions that are in place at the time. Some events may have to be dropped from the programme but it was considered it was better to try and put on some competition rather than cancelling the championships completely. Need to be creative in our planning. The main concern raised was the preparation of competitors and it was stressed that athletes should only enter if they were ready to compete.

At the current time, we are not aware of any contingency plans of rescheduling the dates for County Championships by UKA (although it was mentioned that UKA are considering this option). This question has been asked but to date, a response has not been received. We are unable to reschedule ourselves as we would not be able to obtain the necessary licence to hold the championships. Paul Merrywest to contact Donna Fraser at UKA regarding a contingency plan for a later date, should restrictions still be in place during May.

There is an England Athletic London Region meeting later this month and this may be discussed at that meeting.

We also wish to host the 5k and 10k track championships – Dates will be agreed as and when restrictions allow these to take place.

## **6. Do Essex AA events successfully fit in with league competition**

Calendar is very busy and it is difficult to find dates to accommodate all competition. Unsure what dates have been agreed for events this year. (See proposed fixture list – appendix 1).

## **7. Any observations about events for a) disabled athletes & b) veteran athletes**

It was suggested that there is some demand for additional events being incorporated into the County Championships for both disabled and veteran athletes. Timetabling additional events into the programme may be difficult. It was agreed that we need to establish likely demand by contacting clubs for an idea of numbers of competitors that will enter. This is something that needs to be considered for the 2022 rather than 2021 championships.

## **8. Requirement for Essex T & F Secretary**

Hayley Pegg has volunteered to take over this important role. This was well received by those present and the appointment will be proposed to the Executive committee meeting which is being held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 for ratification.

## **9. Need for new county team managers**

It was reported that three volunteers have come forward from the recent advert on Facebook. These will be considered at the next Executive committee meeting.

## **10. Need for increased volunteering - organisers, officials & helpers**

Various suggestions were made including offering a nominal payment (in the form of vouchers), giving volunteers a t-shirt/sweat shirt and writing to schools suggesting that their pupils could use the hours working as a volunteer as part of their volunteering for the Duke of Edinburgh awards.

It was mentioned that a number of youngsters work at weekend's which would mean they are unable to volunteer.

Due to the pandemic the number of official courses on offer has been restricted. The courses currently on offer are all held on line but because a number require 'face to face' participation these have not taken place. In the past, Diane Wooller has held a number of courses at Chelmsford (considered to be a central location in Essex)

Diane is advised by EA of all Essex based people that complete a course. One of the issues at the moment there has not been any competition for officials to meet the number of events that they need to achieve their Level 1 accreditation.

Alan James (Woodford Green AC & Essex Ladies) mentioned that they had held an officials course for a number of youngsters but they were unable to progress some of these because they were under 18 (unable to obtain the necessary DBS) and some were not UK nationals. They had to wait until the individuals concerned reached the age of 18.

## **11. Views on participation in or format of Southern Inter Counties event (as per recent SCAA email below)**

- **Should we change the age groups which take part in the inter counties to two competitions for U15 & U17 and U20 & Seniors – rather than U15/U20; U17; and Senior**
- **When should the events take place to avoid exams / university dates – the September date for U20 means a lot of people have left for University or are visiting Universities; the July date for U17 means people are away on holiday with families**
- **Who should run and manage the events – The counties or should we be asking SEAA to take over management – if so how would this work?**
- **Which Counties should be invited to take part – a number of Counties no longer send teams to some events**
- **What needs to happen to get more Counties involved?**
- **Costs – should the costs be split between the counties or should the host county pay for everything**

- **Should there be A&B String or just a single athlete for each event – the number of counties, men and women taking part could cause issues for a full timetable of A&B string**

No real consensus was agreed. Some concerns were raised about using Horspeth as a venue – need to rotate

To encourage further participation perhaps the events should be split – South East and South West. This would reduce travelling.

Currently, eight counties participate with organisation split for the U15/U17 and U20/Seniors. Costs should be split.

To be discussed further at the forthcoming Executive committee meeting in March.

## **12 Any other business**

Paul Merrywest asked whether the cost of entry into the County Championships should be increased from the current level of £7-9. Be Fit Today held events last summer and charged £14/15 per event. The view was that cost was not a major issue – athletes just want the opportunity to compete. Increasing County events to £10 per event was suggested. The possibility of producing instant results was suggested as a token of mitigating any concerns about an increased cost. Results need to be verified before being published and extra volunteers will be needed. With the restrictions that are likely to be in place this year this is something for consideration for the 2022 year.

Meeting closed 20:42

## **Appendix 1**

Message from Diane Wooller re Officials courses:

“I have looked on the EA Website this morning and there are some Virtual Level 1 Officials courses

Field 6th March 2021, 10th March 2021, 18th April 2021, & 29th April 2021

Starters /Starters Assistant 13th March 2021

These courses all cost £20 and are booked through the England Athletics Website.

I was going to email all the Club Secretaries as these courses could get booked up especially if we are soon allowed to have some meetings.”

Message received from June Cork – who attended the meeting but was unable to participate in the discussion:-

## **Multi-events**

Picking up on the suggestion that they be incorporated in the County Champs, I have two [small] points:

1. Multi-eventers would be denied the opportunity to compete for individual medals
2. multi-eventers require certain minimum length of time between events which could/might be a problem for combined time-tabling

## **Fixtures - nb: East Anglian League dates are, currently, very provisional:**

[info from Noel Moss]: 2nd May, 30th May, 27th June, 25th July and possibly either 22nd August or 5th September, with the final on 19th September

27th June will probably be the day after the Eastern AA Championships

### **May**

1st/3rd BUCS

8th/9th Essex Track & Field Championships

16th National League R1

23rd Loughborough International

26th Belfast International

### **June**

6th National League R2

12th Essex Schools Track & Field Championships

27th British Champs/Olympic Trials - not necessarily competing but spectators esp if scheduled in/around London

### **July**

2nd or 4th National League R3

3rd/10th World Masters Track & Field Championships, Tampere, Finland

8th/11th European Athletics U23 Championships, Bergen

9th/10th National Schools Championships, Manchester

15th/18th European U20 Championships, Tallin

17th/18th England CAU Championships, Bedford

23rd Opening Ceremony XXXII Olympiad, Tokyo

## **July/August**

31st July/9th August XXXII Olympiad - Athletics

## **August**

7th National League R4

7th/8th England Athletics U17/U15 Championships

*7th/8th Centurions Championship: 100 Miles - Garon Park Track [two day event]*

17th/22nd World U20 Championships, Nairobi, Kenya

18th/29th World University Games, Chengdu, China

21st/22nd Southern U17/U15 Championships

22nd August SEAA U17/U15 Champs

26th/29th European U18 Championships, Rieti

## **August/September**

24th August/5th September Paralympic Games, Tokyo, Japan

## **September**

2nd/5th UK School Games

## **Instant Results/Championships etc**

Am inclined to agree with Hayley. The meetings as we're looking at them at present are most likely to be severely curtailed in terms of the range of events. At the Southern Open at Chelmsford last year the restricted numbers combined with expanded time-tabling, meant that [for the first time in my memory as Announcer] I was actually able to announce the results of the final race *before* the athletes had got their tracksuits back on.

## **Courses**

I have one athlete and one parent undertaking the England Athletics Coaching Assistant on-line course later this month.

## **Officials**

I hear what was said about reimbursing volunteers who offer their hours for their DofE Award - but one of the categories of the DofE is *volunteering*. Perhaps a quality t-shirt, sweat-shirt or hoodie with the badge of the Club they're helping and "Duke of Edinburgh Volunteer" below, would be positive.

However, it would be interesting to know just how many of the Volunteers continue officiating at the end of that section of the award scheme.

Essentially DofE volunteers would provide a short-term fix to a long-term problem. We definitely have a problem developing a pool of officials although when encouraged, the parents will certainly get involved *that day*. However, if their son or daughter is not competing then they are unlikely to be officiating.

CoNAC [I think it was them] provided their officials with a uniform of tracksuit, rain jacket, sweatshirt etc etc; however, when I commented how smart they all looked, it transpired that as they were not permitted to build a Clubhouse on the University's grounds they decided to invest in their officials instead. I hope they all stayed.

### **Southern Inter-Counties**

We've had several athletes from Southend over recent years who've qualified to compete in these Championships. I have actually told all of them [starting with the parents] that it is a great achievement and honour, and how well they've obviously been doing to be invited to represent Essex. I haven't met one who was not excited by the prospect of wearing an Essex vest.

It would, however, be useful for all venues to be used on a rotation in order to share out the travelling time and distances if nothing else.”

### **The following was posted on the Essex Athletic Network Site on 11<sup>th</sup> February:-**

ONLINE Coach Workshop

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021

11.00am – 1.00pm

Sprints & Hurdles

(Coaching Young Athletes Within Club Settings)

Tony Benton will host this workshop, and will cover various coaching techniques and session planning;

- o Planning the training year
- o Pattern of training sessions
- o Typical sprint training sessions
- o Developing hurdles speed

Tony Benton has over 50 years' athletics experience starting as a jumper and hurdler within the successful Essex Beagles (now N&EB) teams in the 1970s.

He has been coaching with Havering AC for almost 30 years, and has been a Level 3 Performance coach since 2000, during which time he has coached a series of Under 15, Under 17 and Under 20 athletes to national medals in sprint hurdles, 300/400m hurdles and now sprints.

From 2002 onwards he organised and led regular hurdles coach & athlete workshops for England Athletics and was the Essex Athletics Network Activator from 2010 to 2016.

These sessions are a fantastic opportunity for coaches from all event groups to learn from one of the very best tutors in the sport who will be providing a huge amount of value.

FREE to Essex Athletics Club members, £10 to Non-EAN Club members.

(one athlete can be booked via Coach booking)

Signup online;

<https://ean-hurdles.eventbrite.com>

For more info contact

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