



Essex County Athletic Association

Minutes of the Essex AA Executive meeting held in the clubhouse of Chelmsford Athletic club, Melbourne Park, Chelmsford on Monday 7th June 2022 at 19:30 hours.

Participants:

Andy Catton (Chair), Gerry O'Doherty (President), Allison Gillan (President Elect) Malcolm Bailey (Secretary), Claire Levey, Diane Wooller, Ray Pearce, Allison Gillan, John Weir, Ron Dawson, Kaye Merrywest, Paul Merrywest, Chris Akehurst, Jean Tierney, Michael Wilson, Paul Mingay, Alistair Gillan, Susan Edwards

1. Apologies for Absence

Gary Chandler (Treasurer), Paul Bailey, Scott Darney, Hayley Pegg, Linda Bates, Peter Bates, June Cork

2. Minutes of the last meeting of 4th April 2022

The minutes of the meeting on Monday 4th April 2022 were **approved** as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed: Paul Merrywest

Seconded: Allison Gillan

3. Matters Arising from last meeting.

Agenda Item	Matter	Update
3	Volunteer sought for County Race Walking Secretary	All clubs. This is still outstanding
5	Volunteers sought to take over the role as County Officials Secretary from January 2023 from clubs Possibly splitting the role – Track & Field and Endurance	A number of people have been approached but as yet, we do not have any volunteer(s) for these roles. We also have a vacancy for the 2023 Championship Secretary. Andy Catton to write to all clubs
8	Should County consider investing in a new website	In progress. Chris Akehurst has kindly volunteered his sons to help build the new website with support from Scott Darney and Dave Keeley.

9	Essex League XC fixtures meeting taking place on Wednesday 25 th May 2022 – start time 7.30pm	Provisional dates of fixtures agreed – see Cross County agenda item number 9.
17	Ideas and suggestions welcomed to celebrate Essex AA 150 th anniversary celebrations	The 150 th Anniversary is in 2033 not 2023.

Paul Merrywest asked whether it is proving difficult to find venues to host Cross Country events and whether cost was proving prohibitive. Clubs in London are being faced with a significant uplift in potential charges especially at land owned by the Royal Parks and Local Authorities.

Chris Akehurst said that the Essex League budgets around £500 for each event but some venues are out of our price range. We are fortunate that we are still able to hire venues at a relatively low cost. For instance, Writtle University College do not charge at the present time. Gerry O'Doherty mentioned that it will cost £1200 to hire Weald Park for the XC relays this year. Suggestion was made that England Athletics should be asked to lobby the Government to place pressure on Parks etc. to reduce their charges. A number of park runs take place at these venues and a charge is not imposed for their use for these events.

The 2022 Outdoor Track and Field championships were discussed at this point; however a full discussion took place under item 8 on the agenda.

One of the problems arising out of the weekend was the lack of volunteers to support the event. In the past, schools had been enlisted to help and a suggestion was made that we should invite clubs to host but this happened in the past and a lack of volunteers was still an issue.

4. Treasurer's Report

Gary Chandler was unable to attend the meeting, but sent in a written report which was read out at the meeting.

“Since 4th April we have had several champs:

T&F Multi-events at Lea Valley - with just 45 athletes across all age groups the event had income of £870. The cost of holding the event was £1700 (excluding official lunches which it looks like we will not be charged for). This resulted in an overall loss to the county of £828 before the cost of medals.

Road Relays at Colchester - a new venue and date, and the inclusion of juniors for the first time meant we were taking a risk on how popular the event would be. As such we set the entry fee at £7 per runner. As it happens the event was extremely well supported and we had a total of 183 team resulting in income of £4,124. The cost of holding the event was £2,264 (including the £500 contribution to Harriers for hosting the event), resulting in a profit to the county of £1,950. After medals this drops to £1,700.

Main T&F champs at Chelmsford - still not sure of the final outcome as we haven't yet received the invoice from the venue or for the use of EDM equipment. Will report on financial outcome in next meeting.

The county funded senior male and female teams at the Inter County Fell Champs in May. Cost of the funding totalled £456.”

A question was asked about the use of Lea Valley for the Multi – Events championships. It was disappointing that numbers were significantly down from the last time the championships took place in 2019 (89 athletes as opposed to 45 this year). Cost of hiring the venue is a concern. Unfortunately, Chelmsford track was not available as this was being used for football. It was pointed out that we had assisted Thurrock Harriers with the cost of a new High Jump bed so that they could accommodate these championships. They declined to host in 2022 and discussions are underway with them in connection with the 2023 championships. Another idea which is being explored is whether the event could be combined with other Counties thus reducing costs that are incurred by everyone.

5. a) Correspondence

Correspondence has been received from Alyson Harvey, Hon Sec of UKCAU.

1. Would we be interested in taking part in an Inter Counties 4 stage road relay?
2. That the decision has been made that the Inter Counties Track and Field Championships in 2022 will not take place. It was felt that the clash with the Commonwealth Games would create problems for Counties. It is hoped that this event will be re-instated in 2023.

As far as point 1 is concerned – we have written back to express our interest, seeking further information. What distances are they planning and when on the calendar will it potentially take place? There was a suggestion that the first year it could be held in the North of England and we asked if it would be in the South the following year. We also enquired what other plans they might have in place for wider road running events.

They replied that their initial contact was just to find out whether counties would be interested. Detailed discussions about the event have not taken place. The main issue that they have with all their events is that they are reliant on joining up with a third party as they cannot afford to put on their own meets.

We were also contacted by England Athletics who are offering a retrospective grant of £500 to assist with the cost of hosting the Country Track & Field Championships, subject to various criteria being met.

An application has been submitted and it is hoped that we will receive the monies late June/early July.

Further correspondence has been received from Havering AC and Woodford Green AC with Essex Ladies and this was discussed under Track and Field – item 8 on the agenda.

b) Club & Committee Changes

New club, Brentwood Beagles has affiliated to Essex. Revised and updated contact list to be sent out to all club secretaries with a copy of these minutes.

6. Networking

The UK final took place on 10th April 2022 at the Essex Sports Arena Colchester. We provided a grant to support the Essex team costs and we have not yet received a written report on how the team fared on the day. Malcolm Bailey to chase.

7. Regional Reports

London – Meeting took place via Zoom on Wednesday 13th April 2022. Paul Merrywest attended on behalf of Essex County. Copy of the minutes – See appendix 1.

East – A volunteer is still sought to represent Essex. We have not received any minutes from the East Regional Council for some time. We are unsure if any meetings have taken place. Andy Catton is to chase. A volunteer to represent Essex (bearing in mind that the majority of our clubs are in this area) would be welcomed. Club Secretaries are asked to speak to their membership.

8. Track & Field

The Outdoor championships took place at Chelmsford over the weekend 14/15 May 2022.

It was agreed that a full review of the weekend and lessons that need to be learnt will take place at a separate Track & Field subcommittee meeting (date to be arranged).

To seek the views of clubs that took part, they were contacted to seek their constructive feedback from the event. Their views and comments will be considered at the forthcoming subcommittee meeting.

On day 1, there were some IT issues that were encountered which were outside of our control. It is also acknowledged that the work load to organise the events both as Championship Secretary and Track & Field Secretary are too much for one person, especially when they work full time. Hayley has indicated that she may well consider stepping down as the Championship Secretary at the AGM. Andy Catton is to write to all clubs to express the possible need for someone to step up and take over the role, if the Championships are to continue.

Discussions took place regarding the problems that were encountered with the Open Track system. It appears that the programme did not appear to be able to cope with the demands/requirements of our championships. In addition, the on line system for recording results was not working at the start of the championships.

The Open Track programme was not set up to seed races as a championship and this caused significant problems where this process had to eventually be undertaken manually. We were advised that Open Track had a 24 hour help line but this was not available on the day. We need to consider seeking a rebate from Open Track.

Other systems that provide an integrated entry, seeding and results service were discussed. **Roster** is an option – this is the partner company with England Athletics and this will be explored as an option for the 2023 championships

The lack of volunteers (despite a plea going out to clubs to help) also caused problems as they are needed to help with the results; which meant that some athletes were unaware whether they had qualified for finals. There were some delays in presenting medals – although that it was felt that at least 80% were presented in a timely manner.

Due to the issues mentioned earlier, the events were running late during the morning although some of this time was made up, later during the day.

Day 2 ran more smoothly.

After the championships, an email was received from Woodford Green with Essex Ladies (WG) setting out their strong dissatisfaction about the ruling set out in our County Constitution, Rule 15 c):-

- a) In all championships, Essex County medals shall be awarded subject to the number of entries as follows:
 - i. One medal only if four entries or less
 - ii. Two medals if five entries
 - iii. Three medals if six or more:

Except that, if second and/or third place positions are better than, or equal to UKA Grade 3 performance, then medals shall be awarded.

WG expressed their concern that this particularly affected young athletes, being denied medals due to small fields as their performances were not deemed to be good enough.

This ruling has been in place for sometime although it was acknowledged that it had not been strictly enforced in previous years although it had been for the 2022 Indoor Championships. Also, this ruling went out in the pre- entry information (first version omitted this; but it was very quickly corrected) and it went out on Facebook and emailed to clubs.

Technically, for this to be amended a proposal needs to be proposed and seconded and voted on at the AGM in December.

In the past, it has not been an issue as there has invariably been sufficient athletes entered into the various events and there was some sympathy expressed about the comments made by WG. It was also commented upon that there could be occasions where more than 6 athletes take part but none of those taking part actually achieve the UKA Grade 3 performance standard. This will be further discussed at the forthcoming Track & Field subcommittee meeting.

A comment was made about the timings of the Track & Field Championships. It was felt that this was too early in the season and some of the younger athletes may not be able to enter because they studying for their GCSE's and A Levels. Unfortunately, the dates for these championships are laid down by UKA and are part of the progression of championships throughout the year.

Kaye Merrywest asked why an entry fee was not charged this year, which had been agreed and instead a voluntary donation collection box was put in place to raise monies for English Schools. Kaye expressed a view that as a Trustee that she and the other trustees should have been consulted as they are responsible for ensuring that the County maximises its income from events. In previous years a programme had been produced which was part of the entrance fee. Andy Catton explained a discussion had taken place before the event and it was agreed that we would gauge how this was perceived and that we would review it again in 2023. If we are to continue this into 2023, it was agreed that the Trustees would be consulted in the first instance.

On Wednesday 8th June 2022 the track 5k championship will be taking place at Chelmsford AC. 66 athletes have entered. There will be 5 races.

Andy Catton sought the views of those present as to whether we should pay travelling costs for officials and volunteers supporting the various County events. Also, instead of providing a lunch that we should offer a 'lunch allowance'. This would make things easier for those that have special dietary requirements.

Tea and coffee should still be made available to officials on the day.

Mileage allowance of 35p per mile was suggested.

Also, it was discussed whether we should pay for the officials uniform. If we were to do this, the officials should have attended a certain number of events.

It was agreed that these proposals would be considered at the next meeting when the Treasurer will be present.

9. Cross Country

Dates (**provisional**) for the 2022/23 XC season are as follows

Date	Event	Venue or Host club
24.9.22	Essex XC relays	Weald Park
15.10.22	Essex League XC Event 1	One Tree Hill
12.11.22	Essex League XC Event 2	Writtle University College
26.11.22	Essex League XC Event 3	Orion
3.12.2022	County Vets	Writtle University College
17.12.2022	Essex League XC Event 4	Hockley Woods
7.1.2023	County Champs (all ages)	Gloucester Park, Basildon
28.1.2023	Southern Championships	
11.2.2023	Essex League XC Event 5	Hainault
25.2.2023	National	Leeds

Jo Mower has approached County to ask whether we would be prepared to enter teams of four into an Eastern Counties event (Male, Female, U20 and U17). This was supported by those present.

County team managers to decide which of our events would be the selection race for the event.

10. Road Running

Gary Chandler sent in a report as follows:-

“Road Relays at Colchester.

Extremely good event with 128 senior and 55 junior teams entered.

The one area to consider for next year is the use of chip timing. Active Training World would cost c£1560 (so £2.50 per runner). This is very expensive and so alternative providers should be considered.

Also there is a possibility of holding a combined champs with Suffolk. The adjudicator at this year's event was Trevor Bunch who is the Suffolk Team Manager and he was very keen. The county need to consider if this would be a good move (increasing the level of competition) or something we should leave as an Essex only champs

Marathon Champs at Halstead

County Champion - Pete Robinson (Springfield) and Heidi Hogan-Steele (Colchester Harriers)

Next events- 5 mile champs at Pleshey on June 24th and 10km champs at Felsted on 17th July”.

Question was asked whether we should consider combining our Road Relay championships with Suffolk. Concern was raised as to whether the venue could cope with an increase in numbers that this would attract. To be discussed at the next Endurance Subcommittee meeting.

11. Fell running

Alistair Gillan reported that the Inter Counties fell race took place on 5th May. Day went very well. There were 20 Counties represented on the day but there were only two Counties that fielded both a Female and Male team and one of those was Essex. A fantastic achievement. Both teams did extremely well with our teams being made up of principally of Orion Harriers/Springfield Striders runners. Well done to all who took part.

There was also a junior taking part as a solo runner and the aim is to send a full team of juniors for next year's championships.

12. Trophies

Susan Edwards reported that all the trophies were returned for the Track & Field Championships and all have been presented to this year's winners.

The relays are taking place on 15th July and she has received both trophies from the winners of the last time these championships took place.

Susan was delighted to advise that sufficient monies have been raised to purchase a trophy to award to the annual winner of the ladies 5k track championships. The artist that has been commissioned to produce the trophy has produced four designs. An initial idea was that of a woman running with a track surround but this was considered not robust enough with the possibility that the limbs would break in due course.

All four designs were shown to those present at the meeting and the one that was the most popular was:-



Susan will meet with the artist next week to start the development of the next stage.
This year, the winner of the ladies race will be presented with a plaque.

Alistair Gillian mentioned the possibility of acquiring, to assist with keeping a track on the location of the trophies, 'gadgets' which work by affixing a GPS-like tracker to them, which makes it easy to find them if you ever lose track of where they are. These cost around £30 each. Considered to be a good idea and Susan will investigate further.

13. Walking

Nothing to report.

14. Officials

Diane Wooller wished to record our thanks to all officials that have supported all Essex County events so far this year. Without them, the events could not have taken place.

For the forthcoming championships, Diane has sufficient officials to support the 5k track championships but will chase for some more volunteers for the 10k track and relay championships.

15. Schools

Nothing to report

16. Any other business

Havering AC have recently organised a day to encourage new volunteers to become field officials. The day went very well with over 20 attending and around 4 moving on to start taking the officials courses. The sport desperately needs new officials to support events and County have been asked whether we would be prepared to fund another day with the focus on track and timekeeping as well as field.

This proposal was unanimously supported by all present. Cost would be £200-300.

Jean Tierney to advise Havering AC

17. Date of next meeting

Monday 4th July – Chelmsford AC Clubhouse – start time 7.30pm

18. Dates for 2022 Essex AA Executive and sub committee meetings

5th September - Executive

3rd October – Endurance subcommittee

7th November - Executive

5th December – Annual General Meeting

Track & Field subcommittee date still to be arranged.

Time meeting finished 21:10

Summary of Actions

Agenda Item	Matter	Action required	By whom
3	Volunteer sought for County Race Walking Secretary	All clubs to approach their membership to seek a volunteer	All clubs
3	Volunteers sought to take over the role of County Officials Secretary From 2023. Role could be split – Track & Field and Endurance	All clubs to approach their membership to seek a volunteer. Andy Catton to write to all clubs – also we are seeking a volunteer to take over as Championship Secretary.	All Clubs Andy Catton
6	Sportshall Final	Seek report to establish how the Essex team fared in the National finals	Malcolm Bailey
7.	England Athletics East Regional Council	Contact to see whether they have produced any minutes from recent meetings	Andy Catton
7	England Athletics East Regional Council	Volunteer sought to become Essex representative at East Regional meetings	All clubs
8.	Track & Field subcommittee meeting	Date to be arranged	Andy Catton/Malcolm Bailey
8	Consider the following: - Payment of Expenses (mileage) to Officials and Volunteers at County Events Payment of a Meal allowance instead of providing a lunch to Officials at events Cover costs of Officials Uniform (Once they have attended a certain number of events)	To be considered at the next Executive meeting on 4 th July 2022	Added to agenda
12	Sourcing GPS trackers to keep track of the whereabouts of County trophies	Investigate cost	Susan Edwards

Draft Agenda for the next Executive Committee meeting to be held at the clubhouse Chelmsford Athletic Club, Melbourne Park, Chelmsford on Monday 4th July 2022 . Start time 7.30pm

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting – 6th June 2022
3. Matters Arising
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Correspondence
Club & Committee Register Changes
6. Networking
7. Regional Reports
8. Track & Field – to include discussion re -
 - Payment of Expenses (mileage) to Officials and Volunteers at County Events
 - Payment of a Meal allowance instead of providing a lunch to Officials at events
 - Cover costs of Officials Uniform (Once they have attended a certain number of events)
9. Cross Country
10. Road running
11. Fell running
12. Trophies
13. Walking
14. Officials
15. School's Liaison
16. Any other business
17. Date of next meeting – 5th September 2022.

Appendix 1.

England Athletics London Regional Council Meeting Minutes Zoom – Wednesday 13th April 2022, 7.30pm – 8:44pm

Present: Adrian Day (Chair, AD), David Clarke (DC), Mark Purser (MP), Mick Bond (MB), Tony Ganio (TG), Chris Mallender (CM), Paul Merrywest (PM), John Gandee (JG), minute-taker Mara Yamauchi (MY).

Apologies from: Nadia Williams, Ismail Islam, Devonte Casely-Hayford, Paul Miller.

1) Declarations of interest: AD asked if there were any: there were none.

2) Introductions: none were necessary.

3) Chair's update:

- Volunteer awards: AD said he was working with the chair of the Eastern and South-western Club Support Richard Ayling on taking forward feedback. Richard will share details with the National Council at their meeting on Weds 20 April. While the past awards were valuable, there were big differences in what nominees had done for the sport. In future there would be fewer awards, an in-person awards ceremony, more flexibility, and spot awards eg during the summer season. Further detail would follow.
- Whole Council Conference: this would take place on 15 Oct 2022 in Birmingham with the EA Board. AD encouraged all members to attend.
- National Council equality audit: this looked at whether the EA Councils were representative of their local populations. AD said the London Council was well-represented on ethnic diversity, but less so on disability and it did not have a 50/50 split on sex. We needed to think about this for next year.
- May 2023 Council elections: EA were planning a campaign and wanted a good mix of people to apply. AD asked all members to let him know their plans for standing for next year's elections by end of May.

4) Chris Mallender club support update:

- Darren John report (AD will circulate with minutes): CM summarised the key points of this long report. EA had hoped for member affiliations in 2021-22 to be 80% of 2020 (pre-covid) numbers. Overall, affiliations were at 90% of pre-covid numbers which was good. In London, affiliations were the same ie no drop. Official's numbers in London appeared to be up by 10% compared to 2021 though this could be down to procedural issues. Coaches numbers were unchanged. Overall, it was a positive situation in London. The 2022/23 year had just started so no meaningful numbers were available.
- Club standards: clubs had to do a self-assessment to reaffiliate. Many were concerned about this, believing they had to fully comply with all seven standards or lose affiliation. CM

had been reassuring them that this was a process and help was available. MB said this process had been useful as a self-audit for his club, and as a result of it they had adopted a grievance policy using EA's template. DC said his club had reviewed its Constitution – a pain but useful; the EA templates were helpful. MP said his club were ploughing through this process as normal.

- Operational priorities for next twelve months: CM said EA would be focusing on consolidation from the last year rather than anything new. They had only five club support officers.
 - Facilities: work was underway on time at Tooting Bec track. The planned changes to the operations of Ladywell Arena in Kent had been dropped. DC was in touch with the new Merton Council officer about Wimbledon Park.
 - Surrey County had been invited to send a representative to the London Council meetings but nobody had. MP said he was on their committee but his colleagues had not approached him about any problems.
- 5) Paul Merrywest update: the indoor season had gone well. The numbers of athletes competing was disappointing. Essex had broken even but the Eastern counties had lost money. They were concerned about numbers for 2023. The Southern and Essex entries had been at Christmas when covid uncertainty had perhaps put competitors off. The multi-events competition would go ahead soon. They now had a fell running team. Two recent no-shows by athletes were disappointing. Essex had gone back to different distances on cross country and this issue had been put to bed for now. AD noted the recent masters competitions had attracted record numbers.
- 6) John Gandee update: JG said Middlesex competitions, joint with Herts and Kent, had gone well though numbers were down a little. The Southern inter-counties matches had been revamped at the counties' request. The U20/senior matches were separate from the U15/U17 matches if at least eight counties attended – they were nearly at those numbers. They were using Chelmsford and Horspath as venues as they had both outside and inside throwing areas.
- 7) London Clubs Form update: AD said the next competition planning meeting would be in late May – he had sent round details. The agenda would include the 2023 fixtures calendar, numbers, licensing, and Nicola Skedgel's updates on various areas.

AOB

- 8) PM asked if future meetings would be on zoom or in person. AD said he hoped the next meeting would be in person if everyone agreed. MB noted that despite good stats, he had heard anecdotally that officials numbers were down, especially starters, timekeepers and field judges. CM noted that an EA officials development manager, Mark Ritchie, would be starting in post soon. MB recommended the membership mojo software system for paying subs. MP noted that the licensing system was falling down on higher grade officials. CM asked if the Council planned to do more outreach to clubs as they had done last year, especially with EA Council elections coming up. TG noted good reactions from track & field clubs, less so from other clubs. MB said it had been useful for clubs. AD said it had been a good exercise and he hoped to do it again. DC said his club was overwhelmed with youngsters wishing to join and their track lacked capacity.

The guests left the meeting and the councillors continued with discussion on a confidential issue.

