



Welsh Athletics Joint Track and Field and Officials Committees

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 10th February 2021 via Teams Conference Call.

PRESENT

Rhiannon Lington-Payne (RLP), Sue Hooper (SH), Crispin Backsall (CB), Joyce Tomala (JT), Jeff Mapps, Bethan Akanbi-Mortimer (BAM), Lynette Harries (LH), Alan Currie (AC), Lynne Brier (LB), Darran Williams (DW), Sue Maughan (SM), Phil James (PJ), Zoe Holloway (ZH), Geoff Wickens, Jake Morgan (JM), Steve Jones (SJ), Kath Elias (KE), Adrian Palmer (AP)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies received. JT welcomed JM back to the committee meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No declarations of conflict of interest received.

3. WELSH ATHLETICS UPDATES

a. Safeguarding and Welfare - Steve Jones (Welsh Athletics Safeguarding Lead Officer)

SJ was invited to the meeting to discuss the recent UKA safeguarding review that included all four home countries. This review was set up following concerns about current provision in athletics and recent allegations in football and gymnastics. The review was carried out by a company called Sporting Resolutions and led by Chris Quinlan QC. Following the review, a report was published to UKA and the home countries in July 2020 and included extensive and wide-ranging recommendations. UKA have set up review panel, consisting of the safeguarding leads for all four home nations and UKA. They now meet on a fortnightly basis to address the contents of the report. SJ presented the following information:

- The review highlighted the need to secure a common set of policies across all four nations, particularly Adults at Risk policies. The review panel have now agreed on a common policy.
- To produce new Codes of Conduct. SJ stated that they have been drafted and are currently waiting to be proof-read.
- A case management group has been set up and meet fortnightly. The group consists of representatives from the four home countries and their standard operating procedure has been agreed.
- Whereas responsibility for investigative work concerned with safeguarding matters have previously been delegated to the four home nations, the UKA lead safeguarding officer will now manage and lead investigations, with the case management group to oversee the work of the lead officer.
- WA have set up their own review panel to develop its own action plan and oversee the implementation of the review recommendations. This panel consists of the Welsh

Athletics Lead Safeguarding Officer, Welsh Athletics Chief Executive Officer, the Welsh Athletics Board member responsible for safeguarding, one Welsh Athletics Network Officer, one Welsh Athletics Communications Officer and two club representatives. A consultant has also been appointed to carry out tasks as decided by panel.

- A new and easily accessible tab dedicated welfare has been added to the Welsh Athletics website. This is to be an ongoing process that will constantly be updated. Useful links to support agencies, such as CPSU (Child Protection in Sport Unit), Ann Craft Trust and a child friendly link for young athletes are to be made available on the welfare page of the Welsh Athletics website. The welfare page will also include links to policies, Codes of Conduct and training opportunities.
- James Williams has authorised a review of the bye-laws (section 12) to reference the UKA wide disciplinary process.
- Clubs will need to recognise and action changes around the affiliation process, such as signing additional declarations that their policies on safeguarding are in place and accessible on their websites and signing declarations that all members, officials and volunteers read and accept the policies and relevant Codes of Conduct as part of the membership renewal process.
- Club Welfare Officers will be required to submit a report on welfare and safeguarding matters as a standing item at club committee meetings.
- Clubs will be required to carry out a safeguarding audit process. Welsh Athletics have agreed to run supported pilot audits with clubs in Wales
- Safeguarding training every three years will become mandatory for all athletes, club members, coaches, officials, board members, Welsh Athletics staff and committee members (currently only welfare officers and coaches are required to do this).
- All UKA policy documents and Codes of Conduct will be formally approved by Welsh Athletics Board of Directors.
- All Codes of Conduct for coaches and volunteers will be signed off by individuals to show that they have read and accepted them.
- Clubs will be required to keep registers of when individuals are due to undertake safeguarding refresher training (possibly the role of the club volunteer co-ordinators).

Action JT requested that SJ email his presentation to LB to send out to all joint committee members alongside the minutes.

JM requested that one club volunteer for each area could carry out the audit with support, so that others can follow, rather than all clubs trying to carry out their own initial audit. JM expressed his opinion that it needed to be a collaborative process.

SJ replied to JM that he would initially like to see it more as a supported self-review process for clubs to look at their own practice, compared against the review recommendations. SJ agreed that it then needed to be a collaborative and supportive process.

AC asked if the mandatory three-year safeguarding training will be organised by individual clubs.

SJ replied that it would be more likely to be organised virtually by UKA.

JT asked if regional welfare officers will still have a role to play in the safeguarding process.

SJ agreed that they would still play a crucial role as critical friends to club welfare officers around lower-level concerns e.g. conflict within clubs, bullying etc.

JT asked if regional welfare officers have seen this recent information.

SJ confirmed that they hadn't, but there were plans in place to hold similar briefings with them because the message to regional welfare officers is slightly different. SJ went on to say that Wales currently have three regional welfare officers in place, with North Wales about to appoint a regional welfare officer imminently. Once appointed, a meeting can be arranged with regional welfare officers.

b. Fixtures 2021 and Provisional Dates (Rhiannon Linington-Payne)

RLP shared Welsh Athletics current plan and provisional dates with the joint committee as follows:

Junior Championships – 12th and 13th June at Newport

Welsh Schools Championships to be confirmed for Saturday 3rd July. Venue to be arranged

Senior Championships – 10th and 11th July in Cardiff

Welsh International - Wednesday 21st July in Cardiff

RLP said that these arrangements were likely to be changed and that plans were also in place to re-organise all major events for August.

RLP expressed her hopes that more localised in-house events could be set up instead of Welsh Junior League, with results being collated to replicate league results, so that the younger age groups will have some competition. DW has drafted a provisional timetable to be shared with clubs.

RLP said that she would be working closely with other home nations, especially England, to collaborate dates and plan weekend competitions without clashes in cross-border competitions, YDL matches, in house junior events and other competitions.

RLP said that they would still be expected to restrict numbers of competitors permitted to participate in competitions this summer and that it was currently impossible to plan more than three weeks in advance.

JT added that she is responsible for planning YDL Midland area, covering wide areas of both South Wales and England. This is proving difficult because it means following the guidelines of two different governments. JT said that she is looking for host clubs and that most South Wales clubs would be together for this year, with only half the events in some matches. JT said that this would be co-ordinated with Welsh Athletics events specific competitions to try and cater for everyone.

RLP confirmed that by the end of February, there would hopefully some additional plans in place for competitions. These will be circulated in due course, once more is known.

JM thanked RLP for the work that was being carried out and asked if Welsh Championship events could be incorporated into event specific events to keep the younger age groups motivated.

RLP said that they were considering all options.

JT reminded the committee that it would be unfair to expect athletes to travel between South and North Wales for championship events and there was always the possibility that travel restrictions could also still be in place.

c. Officials Conference (Zoe Holloway and Sue Hooper)

ZH confirmed that 45 individuals had registered for the conference to date and they consisted of a mix of track field and endurance representatives, as well as general club volunteers.

ZH said that they will probably break the bookings down into individual Zoom sessions so that individuals can book themselves onto the sessions that interest them.

SH confirmed that she is publicising the conference on social media to make it as successful as possible.

ZH confirmed that she is meeting virtually with workshop leads to make sure that plans run as smoothly as possible.

ZH confirmed that the conference will run between 12pm – 4:30pm and that attendees can use the individual links to manage their own screen time.

JT expressed concerns about Zoom links not being as efficient as Microsoft Teams and asked if the conference could possibly take place on Microsoft Teams. ZH said that she would look into this.

JT thanked ZH and SH for the work that they are putting in to organising the conference.

d. Inter-Regional Track and Field Championships Task Group Update

JT confirmed that the inter-regional handbook has been put together and shared with the individual regions. The plan was to give feedback on the handbook in this meeting, but no feedback has come back from the regions yet as regions are not due to meet until next week. However, JT confirmed that she has received a phone call from Hedydd Davies, praising the content of the handbook.

JT confirmed that once the handbook had been signed off on 24th Feb in the task group meeting with regional representatives, she will email it out to this committee for information purposes only. JT is hopeful that it will be signed off in the March General Council meeting. JT stressed that a great deal of work has gone into it and that the guidelines within the booklet would not be subject to change for the next two years.

JT went on to say that if it is not possible to hold a full inter-regional championship in August, there will possibly be a pilot Under 17s match on August 1st in Swansea. This is currently up in the air but remains to be one of the considerations.

4. DISCUSSION:

a. Eligibility – Athlete Transfers within Wales

JT said that she had received a query about lack of current information on the Welsh Athletics about athletes transfers in Wales since 2019. DW confirmed that they are on the “Get Involved”

section of the website. DW confirmed that he also receives regular updates and information on this from Jacqueline Brace.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Photo Finish Training Update

ZH confirmed that UKA are not going to add photo finish to the UKA pathway as a training opportunity. Therefore, ZH and PJ have agreed that they will try to set up in-house training in Wales. However, both ZH and PJ expressed their frustration once again at trying to facilitate this.

PJ expressed his frustration that he needs to sit on a UKA training course to become a photo finish trainer, but no courses are being arranged until April at the earliest. Therefore, everything in Wales is being pushed backwards. PJ also said that he needs to know what the existing Level 1 course content consists of to formulate a course in Wales.

PJ expressed concern that all those with in-depth knowledge of photo finish in Wales have retired or disappeared from the sport.

GW confirmed that a fairly recent Level 1 course held in did not include the setting up of the equipment.

PJ confirmed that this is why there is such a gap in knowledge in Wales.

LB said that she had actually attended a Level 1 course where the afternoon was dedicated to the setting up of the equipment.

PJ confirmed that this was because the facilitators at that time (Jeff Marsden and Derek Crowder) had modified the course content to meet demands.

DW said that it should be a lot easier to learn about setting up equipment within a Level 1 course content because of the reduction of equipment that is now required. DW agreed that setting up the equipment should be taught within a Level 1 course.

Action JT asked PJ and ZH to put some points together so that she can email Steve Perks and James Williams so that they can take this further. JT asked them to include the names of those they have already contacted in UKA about this.

b. Update on Ratification of Walks Records

DW looked into the walks performance at Aberdare and the potential record set by Grace Griffiths, an Under 15 athlete from Pembrokeshire Harriers. The information was shared with AC, who confirmed that she had actually broken the record twice. These performances were set in Aberdare and Swansea. However, only two walks judges were present, whereas five is the required number for a record to be ratified. Based on this, the committee agreed unanimously with AC's concern that records and best performances will never be recognised, due to a shortage of walks judges in Wales.

The decision was made to recognise and ratify the performances as Welsh Best Performances (records only apply to senior athletes). This was proposed by JT and agreed by all committee members. It was also agreed by the committee that Welsh Athletics would recognise all best

performances for walks that involved a lower than required number of walks judges present for an actual record to be ratified.

Action - DW will look into the performance at Swansea and send the information on to AC.

6. **REPORTS**

a. Regional Issues

CB updated the committee on progress following a meeting with Wrexham. The track facilitators have agreed to bring the track back up to competition standard and will invest in a full professional clean and moss removal. There are also plans in place via grant applications and Welsh Athletics support for a high jump bed and pole vault bed.

JT asked about CB if it was correct that Deeside have been told by Ed Hunt that they can hold Level 1 meetings.

CB was not aware of this but confirmed that a meeting is to take place next week.

RLP said that Deeside had a report done on the track prior to Covid and this report highlighted necessary repairs. RLP was also aware that Track Mark has been extended to 2023 and that Deeside have asked if they can pay to patch the track up in the meantime so that they can hold competitions. RLP said that this was being dealt with by Ed Hunt.

CB confirmed that Colwyn Bay have a new representative on the council and a grant has been applied for to bring Colwyn back up to competition standard. CB said that a meeting was scheduled with them tomorrow. Chris Moss and James Williams will be in attendance at this meeting.

JT confirmed that East and South Wales have agreed to cancel their joint regional competition on 8th May. A lot of thought and consideration had been given to this and the decision was based on athletes not being able to prepare adequately for competition, as well as duty of care to officials and spectators. An official statement will be made next week on the East Wales website and JT will also send a statement to DW to be shared on the Welsh Athletics website.

There were no further updates from South Wales and no updates from West Wales.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

BAM asked about Welsh Junior Leagues hosting weekend in-house meetings and where this leaves clubs that don't have facilities.

RLP said that they would aim to group them together with nearby clubs that have facilities.

BAM also informed the committee of a fundraising event being organised by Claire Seabourne, Lyn Cushing's daughter, in memory of Lyn and asked if members could publicise this within as many clubs as possible.

<https://localgiving.org/fundraising/LynCusingMemorialFundraiser2021/>

KE asked if SJ was going to give an update on schools. SJ had already sent his apologies and left the meeting.

Action – LB to invite SJ to the next meeting to give an update on Welsh Schools.

JT also thought that it would be beneficial to invite Chris Jones and Adrian Palmer to the next meeting to give a six-monthly update, as well as Chris Moss to provide an update on facilities.

Action – Invite Adrian and Chris Jones to the next meeting

Action – Invite Chris Moss to give update on facilities

DW said that he has emailed image of Swansea walks performance to everyone in the meeting.

RLP said that Welsh Athletics were hoping to obtain permission from Welsh Government to hold an elite discus competition this coming weekend, as well as a 10k track race for men and women and a 10k walk competition for athletes preparing for Olympic marathon and Olympic walk trials on 6th March. Permission has also been sought to hold an elite throws meeting in Aberdare. RLP said that Welsh Government will give discuss these applications on an individual basis. RLP with update in due course.

JT asked about the likelihood of councils putting a stop to the events. RLP said that meeting organisers will have worked in advance with councils to finalise details and plans.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday 7th April at 6:30pm. The time has been moved to accommodate members who also need to attend the endurance committee meeting at 5pm on the same day.

9. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

JT asked the committee to look at dates for future meetings because she needs to send dates to Rob Sage for the Governance Calendar. The Governance Calendar states that regional meetings should be held a week after committee meetings. JT pointed out that if championships are to take place, a sub-group meeting of this committee will need to take place to decide who will be the chiefs etc.

Future meetings are as follows (all commencing at 6pm):

Wednesday 9th June

Wednesday 11th August

Wednesday 13th October

Wednesday 8th December

Wednesday 9th February

The meeting ended at 7:20pm.