



Welsh Athletics Track and Field Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 9th June 2021 via Teams Conference Call.

PRESENT

Rhiannon Lington-Payne (RLP), Crispin Backsall (CB), Joyce Tomala (JT), Lynette Harries (LH), Alan Currie (AC), Lynne Brier (LB), Darran Williams (DW), Jake Morgan (JM), Adrian Palmer (AP), Sue Hooper

1. APOLOGIES

Bethan Akanbi-Mortimer (BAM), Kath Elias (KE), Mark Gold (MG)

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No declarations of conflict of interest received.

3. WELSH ATHLETICS UPDATES

RLP informed the committee that Welsh Government updates had confirmed a significant and unexpected increase in the number of people who could attend events. However, she stressed that organisers still needed to consider the restrictions on social distancing, which remain in place by law. Additionally, it was confirmed that parents and coaches will still count within the restrictions, whereas athletes and officials do not, and it is the responsibility of organisers at different venues and facilities to carry out their own risk assessments on how many individuals they can safely allow into an event or competition. It was agreed that this was a positive announcement by Welsh Government, hopefully meaning the start of a return to more traditional timetables, with people being able to remain at the competition, rather than leaving after their own events.

RLP also confirmed the following:

- Junior and Senior Welsh Championships can go ahead as normal, taking into account facility capacities.
- The Welsh International – Scotland do not want to take part this year and England and Northern Ireland are still unsure because of possible travel restrictions and budget etc. However, the date would be kept as an opportunity for a competition in some format.

JT asked about events taking place in Newport, bearing in mind that the council's legal department did not want events to take place.

RLP confirmed that the new restrictions meant that events at Newport would be able to go ahead.

Inter-Regionals

A discussion took place around which age groups should be invited to the inter-regional competition on 28th August and which venue should be used.

JT expressed concern that Under 13 and under 15 athletes have not had much competition because of restrictions placed upon the YDL fixtures, whereas Under 17 and Under 20 had been provided with much more competition. Following a lengthy discussion around age groups and programmes of events, restrictions and risks etc, it was agreed by the committee that only Under 13 and Under 15 athletes would be invited to the inter-regional competition this year, to be held on 28th August. It was also agreed that it should be a full programme of events for these age groups. Inviting more age groups to this competition would create additional challenges around social distancing and managing the facility. It would also mean a reduced menu of events for all age groups.

A discussion then took place around the venue, and it was agreed that the only possibilities were Swansea or Carmarthen.

JM felt that Carmarthen would be more suitable because of its perimeter fence. This would allow them to manage spectators more effectively. However, risk assessments would have to be revised and adapted for whichever venue agreed to host the competition.

AP asked JM if Carmarthen had a specific capacity in mind, considering that it was a multi-use facility, which would affect the numbers using the toilets etc. AP also stressed that managing the numbers i.e spectators / parents / coaches, to protect staff and volunteers at events must be a key feature of the risk assessments. It was noted at this point that a small minority of parents / coaches had made the job of the officials and volunteers more difficult this season. Committee members and Welsh Athletics staff stressed during the discussion that they are extremely grateful to all volunteers who give up their time and will not tolerate the behaviour of those who breach the rules and potentially put the health of others at risk.

Action: JT agreed to speak to representatives from West Wales to gather their thoughts on where the inter-regional competition should take place.

4. DISCUSSION

a. Track and Field Selectors

Following the recent selection process for the Loughborough International, JT reminded the committee that in the past, specific individuals had been co-opted as selectors for international matches. JT felt that it was the remit of the track and field committee to appoint selectors for internationals, but not actually sit on the selection panel themselves.

AP was of the opinion that it was the responsibility of the track and field committee to select international teams. JM and CB were nominated as track and field representatives on the selection panel for the Welsh International and the Manchester International.

JT suggested to the committee that we need to revisit the selection policies and policies for international match selectors.

JM had been present in the meeting to select a team for the Loughborough International and suggested that more needed to be done to prepare selectors in advance of selection meetings.

It was agreed that selection meetings would continue via Teams for the foreseeable future as it meant that they were more accessible to everyone, especially those in North Wales.

It was confirmed that Zoe Brown is to be the team lead for the Manchester International and will be emailing selectors to let them about dates of meetings etc.

b. Policy and Procedure for Ratification of Records

AC has checked out the websites of all home nations and confirmed with the committee that although they all differ in the records that they keep, they all base their records on the same rules surrounding eligibility:

- Birth
- Parentage
- Residency

c. Under 18 Records

AC has now scrutinised all performances and has found Under 18 performances for all events, apart from decathlon. AP confirmed that no Under 18 Welsh athletes have completed a decathlon.

AC pointed out that throws, hurdles and steeplechase records were more complicated to record because the weight and height specifications can differ between Under 17 and Under 20 athletes, bearing in mind that the Under 18 age group will include athletes that are either second year Under 17 or first Year Under 20.

The committee accepted all the performances that AC presented to them as inaugural records at the Under 18 age group.

AC is to continue updating all other records.

Both AP and JT thanked AC and BC for their hard work once again.

5. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

a. Changes to UKA Rules for Competition 2022 – 2024

In the last meeting, committee members were instructed to contact AC if they had any queries or comments to make about the changes to rules for competitions 2022 -2024. AC confirmed that nobody had contacted him regarding changes to the rules.

RLP said that UKA were planning a webinar for athletes on the new rules, including rules about kit and shoes.

JT reminded the committee that the official deadline for responding to the changes to the rules is in July, should anyone wish to make a comment or query.

b. Regional Feedback on Numbers of Athletes and Officials Intending to Return to Athletics

In the Previous meeting, it was agreed that regional representatives would contact their clubs to find out how many athletes and officials were intending to return to athletics. This followed concerns about dwindling athlete numbers and a lack of officials.

JT confirmed that she had received feedback from some clubs that athletes are starting to return. Unfortunately, officials are not so keen to return yet and there is still a shortage of officials.

SH confirmed this and said that it was very difficult to entice officials back. It also seemed to be the same group of officials attending every competition.

SH suggested introducing athlete to official programmes and parent to official programmes in a bid to attract new officials. Concerns surrounding current lack of officials seems to be nationwide and not just a problem in Wales.

6. REPORTS

a. Regional Issues

North Wales

CB communicated the concerns of North Wales about lack of officials within the region. He also shared the following information on behalf of North Wales:

Colwyn Bay has received an investment of £250,000. Regular meetings are to be set up amongst the regular users of this facility

The track at Deeside is apparently in good condition, but there could possibly be problems with the committee not being ready to host competitions.

Wrexham is ready for competitions. Work has been carried out on the cage and it is now fit for competition.

The first YDL held in Wrexham went well.

West Wales

JM said that it had been difficult to recruit parents to become volunteer officials, mainly because they are not permitted to be trackside and are therefore not so easily accessible to recruit.

Haverford West is still in a state of uncertainty, with the club trying to communicate with the council about updates to the facility.

Updates to the Carmarthen facility have now been completed and they have been provided with new equipment and resources.

East Wales

JT stated that there were issues with the Newport facility because the legal department would not initially allow competitions to take place. Hopefully, this is now not the case, with changes to the levels of restrictions.

Brecon held an inter-club competition recently and had provided good feedback on how it had gone.

JT asked RLP about the cage at Newport and RLP said that the issues with the indoor cage has been fixed. RLP did not know about the state of the outdoor cage.

LH asked about the state of the pole vault in Newport as she was in the process of drawing up the duty sheets for officials, in readiness for the forthcoming competition. LH felt that pole vault as an event, had not been adequately catered for due to problems with some venues.

RLP said that she did not foresee a problem because Newport was deemed to be a good venue for pole vault.

South Wales

There was nobody present to represent South Wales. MG sent his apologies that tonight's meeting clashed with another meeting.

JT reminded the committee that their regional annual general meetings were likely to be due and the track and field committee needed confirmation that all regional representatives will be continuing to play their part on the committee.

Action - LB to contact Jamie Clode to confirm whether Mark Gold will still be representing South Wales.

b. Officials Committee

SH confirmed that the officials committee have been looking at selecting officials for the three main events, namely the Welsh International, Junior Championships and Senior Championships. There are still a few ongoing discussions regarding timekeeping and photo finish, but details will be released soon. SH confirmed that officials will be contacted by email and details would hopefully also be put on the website.

SH reported that a few more officials had attended the most recent mentoring course. A guidance document was being finalised by Zoe Holloway and Lynette Harries and this will be placed on the Welsh Athletics website.

Concerns about the new competition licensing requirements were discussed. It seems that this document appeared on UKA website with no consultation having taken place. Although the new document was to be rebranded and reworded, the rules themselves were meant to be unchanged. The new document will need to be compared to the previous version.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DW confirmed that new tablets have arrived for field officials to use in competitions. They are very robust and user friendly.

LB asked about competitions for Under 11s. RLP replied that it was the responsibility of clubs to put on competitions for this age group as Welsh Athletics do not currently have the capacity to do this. It was suggested that clubs look at triangular matches. RLP stated that Welsh Athletics can advise and provide guidance but cannot currently provide competitions, although they will

try to review competition structure now that there are changes to restrictions. RLP said that they may be able to restart junior league fixtures, but lack of officials could be an issue.

AP said that the UK Schools Games organisers are very keen for Wales to send a team to Loughborough. AP confirmed that if Wales send a team, it will be limited to approximately ten athletes. Eight teams will compete, and athletes must be in top twenty Power of Ten rankings. This is to take place on the first weekend in September. UKA and Youth Sport Trust are to cover a significant amount of the costs this year.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 14th July 2021

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 13th October 2021

Wednesday 8th December 2021

Wednesday 9th February 2022

The meeting ended at 8pm

DRAFT