**Welsh Athletics Joint Track and Field and Officials Committees.**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 6th October 2020.**

**PRESENT**

Rhiannon Linington-Payne (RLP), Sue Hooper (SH), Crispin Backsall (CB), Joyce Tomala (JT), Bethan Akanbi-Mortimer (BAM), Lynette Harries (LH), Alan Currie (AC), Lynne Brier (LB), Darran Williams (DW), Jamie Clode (JC), Sue Maughan (SM), Phil James (PJ), Zoe Holloway (ZH), Eban Geal (EG),

1. **APOLOGIES**

Kath Elias

Joyce Tomala welcomed DW back to the committee and welcomed EG as a new member of the committee. JT requested that all members introduced themselves before the meeting progressed.

1. **WELSH ATHLETICS UPDATES**

**a. Competition Manager (RLP)**

**Track and Field Pilot Events**

RLP reported that the track and field events that been held over the shortened six-week summer season were deemed to be a success and that positive feedback had been received by officials and athletes. No positive cases of Covid-19 were reported from Welsh Athletics activities.

JT had requested that RLP provided some financial feedback on these track and field events. RLP said that total expenditure across the six-week period was currently just under £1600, although they were still awaiting invoices for 1st Aid provision and some late expenses from officials. There was an income of just over £2500 across the six events. RLP felt that the finances would probably balance themselves out once all finances had been settled. RLP said that use of venues at Rhondda Cynon Taff, who had waivered some higher charges for a period of time, had helped to balance the finances.

JT asked if expenditure at the track and field events included Covid equipment. RLP confirmed that a separate, centralised budget code had been used for purchasing PPE, cleaning equipment and other Covid related items and expenditure across different disciplines, such as coach education and the setting up of the elite athlete bubbles.

**Indoor Events**

RLP confirmed that no definite decisions had been made about the forthcoming indoor season as there was still uncertainty about the status of NIAC from January 2021.

RLP confirmed that Scottish Schools have announced that the annual combined events international, normally held in Glasgow at end of November is cancelled. This is because the Emirates Arena will not be open. RLP said that the Welsh Schools management meeting last week consequently confirmed that the combined events meeting that was to be held at the beginning of November, and acts as selection for the international would no longer take place. RLP said that Welsh Athletics hoped to host an alternative combined event in the New Year.

RLP explained that there is still uncertainty surrounding indoor sports and how it moves forward. the current indoor limit is still 30 people, which includes everyone present in the room, not just 30 athletes / participants. This is different to outdoor regulations that state 30 participants in the exercise itself, as well as others i.e. coaches etc. This slight difference between indoor and outdoor guidelines means more limits again to indoor events. RLP confirmed that Chris Moss sits on the indoor sports advisory group that discusses indoor provision and reports back to RLP on a weekly basis. RLP said that during the next few months they would be looking to modify the outdoor guidance documents that were created as home countries to be suitable for indoor use in next few months, once they are a bit closer to hosting indoor events.

SM reported that the Return to Sports groups that feed into Welsh Government and influence the regular review of guidelines anticipate no changes to guidance during the next few weeks. The message from Sport Wales is that they are must advocate a safe return to sport. SM went on to say that lots of sports want to get back into action, but sport does not want to be liable for rising cases of Cpvid-19. SM said that Sport Wales were taking a very cautious approach, and although this was very challenging, responsibility for ensuring the long-term viability of sport was key.

SM reported that changes to current arrangements were unlikely to change within the next few weeks. SM referred to a parental petition, with specific reference to an athletics mother, who had addressed Welsh Assembly about the issue of young people being able to cross the borders of lockdown areas to participate in their sporting activities. SM felt that this issue was unlikely to even be discussed until the end of October.

LB asked if there were plans to hold localised cross country and road running events in the absence of an indoor season. RLP confirmed that there were discussions of this nature. RLP will be meeting with Regional endurance co-ordinators next week to discuss delivering as many localised events as possible, utilising park run courses if feasible and including as many clubs as possible. RLP went on to say that with local lockdowns in place, it was not feasible for a small group of people to organise and deliver these events and that it has to be done regionally by clubs and regional co-ordinators etc. RLP also said that Welsh Athletics were considering “indoors for outdoors” activities for certain events, especially endurance, and that this was being discussed and considered at UKA level across all of the home countries.

BAM queried the guidelines / guidance about being able to accommodate and train / coach athletes from other clubs within their local authority, especially insurance cover for this.

RLP said that she had discussed this with Chris Moss recently and they were putting some ideas together on how it may work. RLP used tennis as an example, where they had waivered club fees so that participants could train in localities closer to them within their own boroughs, rather than their own clubs in different boroughs. RLP said that athletics bodies were looking at this, but it was something that clubs themselves would have to buy into and it would all depend on the capacity of the clubs, especially those holding training sessions already at maximum capacity. RLP went on to say that this could be challenging with local lockdowns expected to be rolling in and out, especially where there is a high student population e.g. Swansea and Cardiff.

LH contributed to the discussions about crossing boundaries, by saying that there was a need to air on side of caution because many local authority boundaries are tricky and complicated. She acknowledged that people were trying their best to work within the rules but emphasised that absolute clarity was needed on the guidelines and that it was necessary to take local advice as well.

**Impact of Local Lockdowns**

RLP acknowledged that we had already touched upon the impact of lockdown in some of the points discussed above.

RLP went on to say that lockdown began just before last two weekends of Welsh Athletics events had they had to advise lots of athletes that events were cancelled, and they were no longer able to compete. RLP said that most participants had been compliant and understood why these actions had to take place. Moving forward, RLP said that we can expect to dip in and out of local lockdowns for the majority of winter, based on Welsh Government advice. Welsh Athletics are therefore putting plans in place and engaging with as many clubs as possible, so that local activities and competitions can take place. in place to enable as much activity as possible to take place, to avoid total non-participation as in the previous lockdown. The aim is to avoid total non-participation as in the previous lockdown and provide opportunities for as many participants as possible.

JT queried parental requests on cross border training asked if Welsh Athletics had received anything on this matter. RLP said that Welsh Athletics had not received anything from individual parents. RLP said that Welsh Athletics had been quite clear in the guidelines that they had shared with their members. They had monitored Welsh Assembly guidelines and matched them up with Welsh Athletics guidelines. RLP acknowledged that although boundaries themselves are complicated, the guidelines on travelling were clear.

LB added that a parent / coach from Swansea Harriers was aggrieved that his child was not able train because he was out of county and that a possible complaint to Welsh Athletics was in the pipeline. LB confirmed RLP point about guidelines being clear enough, in that she herself knew that she was currently unable to coach at Swansea because she lived in Neath Port Talbot.

CB also said that they had been affected by this regulation in Colwyn Bay as two senior coaches who live out of county were not able to travel over the boundaries to coach. CB expressed concern about the petition of families wanting to cross borders for participation in sport, as this would entail a lot of movement around Wales.

**Action** for all, particularly regional representatives on the committee to communicate with RLP, JT, SH and LB if they are aware of any localised lack of understanding or lack of regard for the rules in Wales, so that we all know what is going on, especially with anything that may interest local press. JT suggested that some who may live just over the border, outside Wales, may not necessarily understand that we are legally bound to the regulations in Wales.

**b. Review of Inter-Regional Championships**

JT reported that the target group had held a very productive meeting and that they have some good ideas moving forward, including a handbook that would be circulated to all regions. JT said that she had started working on timetables and duties etc for 2021 and if it doesn’t happen, it will roll on to 2022. JT confirmed that inter-regional championships would still be happening. JT said that they will meet again in November to further discuss their plans.

JC asked what would happen if the 2021 didn’t take place – would inter-regional plans be rolled forward to 2022 or would 2021 be skipped?

JT confirmed that it would probably be rolled on to 2022. The West Wales region were meant to host in 2020, so they have now been asked to host in 2021 and they will possibly be asked to host in 2022, if necessary. JT said that the reason behind this was that there was currently a shortage of officials in North Wales, so they were trying to delay the championships being held in North Wales for as long as possible. The decision to roll the season forward was not about travelling to North Wales, just their ability to host the meeting, given their current position with officials.

1. **DISCUSSION**

**a.** **Ratification of Welsh Pole Vault Record (AC)**

AC updated the joint committee once again about the ongoing discussion surrounding a potential Welsh Under 15 pole vault record and if records should be permitted when they have been set with the use of the elevated runway. AC has asked Ed Thompson about this and Ed Thompson passed the query on to Scott Simpson. Scott Simpson’s reply was that the elevated runway has never been officially signed off under IAAF regulations, however, has been inspected by Welsh and UK officials on numerous occasions. Scott Simpson informed AC that numerous records and standards, including Olympic qualification and Welsh All-Comers records have been set on this runway in the past and that he sees no reason why such records, including the most recent one, shouldn’t be ratified. No previous performances have ever been queried.

PJ advised the committee that IAAF regulations state that elevated runways, such as the one in question, must be bounced tested to be valid. If not, they do not comply to any track standards. PJ went on to say that we will not get any records ratified with this runway at any championship, not even at City Games, as it is not deemed as in IAAF facilities handwork. PJ said that here is too much spring in this runway. PJ suggested that the advice of Facilities Officers who look after UK sites, in particular Richie Jenkins, is sought.

RLP suggested that the advice of Ed Hunt from England Athletics was sought. JT agreed with this.

LH expressed concerns about health and safety issues surrounding the elevated runway, in addition to the point been discussed surrounding ratification.

LB asked PJ if the runway had ever undergone necessary bounce tests and can such runways go for certain amounts of time without being tested.

PJ replied that because it was a temporary set up, it must be surveyed every time it is installed, even if it is being set up in the same location, in order to comply with World Athletics. PJ said that the same rule applied for long jump runways and sprints tracks, such as those used in Manchester and Newcastle City Games. They must be bounce tested and level checked every time because they are temporary structures. This is the only way to get a certificate. PJ confirmed that Ed Thompson uses a 2 metre spirit level to survey the runway, but this does not mean that it is officially surveyed as level, as required by World Athletics.

AC asked who could carry out this survey. PJ was not sure about this and also thought that it would be a costly action. PJ agreed that athletes liked this because of the bounciness and springiness, but it is not compliant with IAAF regulations.

**Action**: RLP to contact Ed Hunt to find out if the runway needs to be certified each time it is set up and if it underwent tests when it was first used. RLP to report back in the next meeting.

JT confirmed with AC that this discussion is brought back to next meeting.

AC asked if he could assume all other records previously discussed were accepted, with this record left pending. AC asked who would be requiring the update. DW requested that they were sent to him.

SM suggested that for transparency purposes, any guidance surrounding the runway should be shared with the pole vault community across Wales, so that it becomes common practice in Wales. Everyone concerned needs to know that further advice has been sought on the matter, and that it is not just Welsh Athletics advice.

JT requested that this is followed up as an action when advice has been received.

LB asked if the athletes who have used this runway been at an advantage, considering its bounce and springiness, and will existing records that have been set on this runway now be reviewed. JT suggested that this point be revisited once we have received advice from Ed Hunt, to be discussed at our next meeting.

b. **Welsh Athletics AGM Matters**

JT confirmed that the AGM would be in the form of a webinar this year and that invitations had been sent out.

JT said that amongst the changes proposed to the by-laws was the renaming of the Track and Field Officials’ Sub-Group to the Track and Field Officials’ Committee and amending the numbering of the by-laws accordingly.

JT asked RLP if the changes were on the Welsh Athletics website. RLP thought that the date had been publicised on the website, but felt that any other information, such as proposed changes to the by-laws were more likely to go the members only at this moment in time.

JT asked LH if she knew more about this. LH has spoken to Steve Perks and he advised her that he was in touch with media at Welsh Athletics to ensure that all required information be put on the website, including in particular, information on proxy votes.

JT asked JC if he had received any information in his capacity as board member for South Wales. JC said that he had received the same information as JT and had placed a link from the website to the Teams chat. This information includes proposed changes to the by-laws.

AC followed on by clarifying that individuals would have to register their interest for access to the webinar and would not be permitted to just log on. Their place would have to be booked.

JT felt that it wasn’t clear about who was permitted to attend the webinar meeting. Was anyone permitted or was it just members? LH said that only members have a vote, but anyone was permitted to attend. LH felt that this needed to be clarified, especially for those who were regular attendees at Welsh Athletics AGM meetings.

SH informed the committee that there was a link on the Welsh Athletics website that allowed anyone to register their attendance at the meeting. SH said that you only need to put 2020 AGM in the search bar.

1. **ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

a. **Photo Finish Training**

ZH said that she had met with the UK education sub-group and highlighted the need to introduce a photo finish technician’s course. She received some concerns regarding venues, cables, track layouts, cameras at venues and regional kits across the UK etc. It was felt that it was difficult to hold one standard technical course because all tracks were deemed to be different. PJ added that he didn’t see this as a problem, considering that every track complies with 400m ruling or 200m ruling. PJ said that no matter which stand was used, the camera still had to be placed on finish line and aligned. He felt that there was a big gap in the training over the years. ZH said that Cherry Alexander at UKA will discuss this with PJ will be happy to collaborate with Seiko on this course. ZH has a meeting with the home countries forum coming up and will propose this course to the home countries.

PJ said that him and ZH have had lengthy discussions about photo finish training and feel that certain individuals from the peer group pushing back and not favourable with this, based on every track different being different. The problem is that people don’t understand photo finish and the fundamentals behind it. There has been a big gap in training over the years. PJ has spoken to Cherry at UKA and would like his photo finish team to become a centre of excellence to train others.

**Action: Update at next meeting**

ZH added that she wants virtual online tutor training to take place and is trying to get access to resources for PJ. Hopefully PJ will have access to resources and training can take place in different venues across UK once pandemic eases. Courses could be run in Crewe for North Wales and Cardiff or Newport for South Wales. PJ said that he hasn’t seen the courses as they stand so he can’t make them fit for purpose and add into them so that people can be trained.

PJ said that the last five weeks of very small groups for intense training have been very productive, but more people are needed. One or two people have taken it on in previous years, but not disseminated information or training down the line, causing lack of numbers for photo finish. PJ referred to officials becoming burnt out because of lack of numbers to share the responsibility.

b. **Officials**

SH reported that she is still working through the non-technical officials work – ongoing.

ZH and SH are currently looking at going into colleges to recruit new officials and this is ongoing.

Youth Ambassador Programme – SH is discussing and working on levels and pathways with ZH and this is ongoing.

SM asked for clarification on officiating at 2022 Commonwealth Game. SH contacted England Athletics and UKA Athletics and received information from Andy Day at England Athletics that the decision on CWG officials will be made by National Governing Body i.e. UKA.

SH said that she felt that the track and field meetings held in the Summer were well organised and a great success and confirmed that the officials had enjoyed them. SH sent personal emails to all officials to thank them for attending the meetings under difficult circumstances.

SH received an email from Andrew Clatworthy with regard to nominations for the peer group additions for next year, once current members have stepped down (one from each group). They are as follows:

Field – Shona Malcolm

Photo Finish – Cameron Lindsay

Start Team – Alan Bell

Timekeepers – Jason Pender

Track - Noel Mckakly

SH said that the 2019 / 2020 list can be seen for on UKA website – three from each group with one to be stepping down at end of year

SH has received an email from Donald Melrose to say that he will be stepping down as West Wales representative at their AGM next month. A new representative will now be needed for officials committee from West Wales region. JT advised SH to contact Nathan Jones, secretary of West Wales to inform him of this.

JT asked JC if they had received a response from South Wales for a representative on the officials committee. JC said that there was no interest in the South and felt that perhaps the timing was wrong at the moment.

JT said that the East Wales region were facing the same issue, despite advertising via personal email messages, website, Facebook etc. SH is going to start attending meeting in the East for the time -being as she lives in the region.

RLP expressed concern about why people don’t want to come froward, even when they want to see the sport progress - What are the barriers?

JT said that they’ve tried all sorts of methods, formally and informally, but felt that people didn’t want to commit themselves at the moment. ZH has put the job description on several websites.

CB asked if the job description had been made available for people to see. JT said that it had gone onto East Wales websites, as well as official’s newsletter etc.

SH said that the job description may possibly frighten people away and felt that perhaps individuals should be approached informally and invited along to a meeting to see what it was all about. SH said that she was happy to do this.

ZH suggested that the newsletter could refer to appointments of new roles and suggested that virtual calls be made to SH, as a contact to discuss the role in a more informal and relaxed manner. SH was happy with this with this and both JT and LH agreed with this action as a way forward.

JT confirmed the importance of a clear job description, referring to LB, who came onto the committee several years ago, not fully understanding what the role entailed because of a lack of job description.

JC asked about official’s career progression and the possibility of expecting them to give something back and train others once they reach a certain level. SM felt that as you progress, responsibilities become greater and more time consuming and this would not always be feasible. SM feels that a more personal approach was required and that to approach individuals personally was a much more flattering way to attract new individuals. PJ agreed with this, stating that there needed to be a fun element to the job to motivate people to progress and not disappear from the pathway.

ZH asked EG what attracted him into officiating and onto the committee. EG said that going into schools and colleges / universities was a good idea to attract new individuals.

**c. Dates of Future Meetings (JT)**

JT set the following dates based on feedback from previous meeting and to tie in with other meetings. JT said that there was scope to put another date in place if necessary. The following dates were confirmed and accepted:

* Wednesday 25th November
* Wednesday 6th January
* Wednesday 17th February
* Wednesday 24th March

1. **Reports**

**a. Regional Issues**

JT apologised that the original date that was shared for the next East Wales meeting was incorrect and that all concerned were informed that November 18th was the correct date.

There was no representative present from West Wales and LB said that emails sent to the West Wales representative were bouncing back. JT suggested corresponding with Nathan Jones. JT also requested that LB and SH contact Nathan Jones to discuss representatives from West Wales on the committee.

No issues were raised from South Wales and North Wales.

1. **Any Other Business**

DW thanked PJ for supporting his son with photo finish training.

SM said that the 2025 Island Games were to be held in Ynys Môn, and although a few years off, this could be a good way to recruit new volunteer officials.

JT asked if Welsh Athletics had any plans to hold a clubs meeting to discuss the future of the leagues and other issues. This meeting is normally held in November.

RLP said that there were no plans at this current time to hold a meeting and that matters and discussions concerning the 2021 season were currently on hold. RLP said that once UKA had produced a potential calendar, Welsh Athletics could then fit in their own additional fixtures and would be likely to arrange a meeting for this purpose. JT said that some individuals are starting to plan next summer and want dates of meetings and competitions. JT stated that she was keen for people to know that it is not welsh athletics holding this process up.

JT asked if there were any developments on the proposed competition changes that were to be made for Under 11, Under 13 and Under 15 athletes i.e. Louise Arthur League and South East Wales League.

RLP said that they had hoped to begin implementing some of the proposed changes last year over a three-year period, but everything would now need to be moved back a year. Changes to the Senior element were to be implemented next year and changes to the Junior element would be implemented the following year, once the success of the changes to the Under 17 and upwards structure had been reviewed.

JT asked who now sits on various UKA working groups as representatives of Welsh Athletics.

RLP confirmed the group structure is in the middle of a few changes, but listed the following:

* Domestic Competition Strategy Group which oversees track and field and off track - Rhiannon Linington-Payne and James Williams, who also sits on the CEO Forum for this group.
* Endurance Sub-Group (being set up) - Rhiannon Linington-Payne
* Education and Training Sub-Group for endurance and track and field – Zoe Holloway
* Home Countries education and training Forum – Zoe Holloway (ZH confirmed that a meeting of this forum was currently overdue and had not met since last November because of furlough)
* Facilities Sub-Group (in the process of being set up) – Rhiannon Linington-Payne and Chris Moss

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 25th November at 6pm via Microsoft Teams. JT thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting ended at 8pm