**WELSH ATHLETICS OFFICIALS COMMITTEE**

TRACK AND FIELD

Minutes of meeting held on 21March 2019 at Brecon Carreg Room, CISS

**1. PRESENT**

Sue Hooper (Secretary & Starter/Marksman Rep), JoyceTomala (T&F Committee), John Elward (South Region), Olive Dobson (Walking), Lynette Harries (co-opted), Dave Jessett (Field rep), Alan Currie (Track Rep), James Williams (WA) and Tom Marley (WA).

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Received on behalf of Jeff Marsden (PF), Lyn Cushing (GC), Zoe Holloway (WA), Donald Melrose (West) and Denise Harris (North).

**3. JAMES WILLIAMS**

3.1 Welsh Athletics is launching a new strategy for athletics, following on from a period of extensive consultation with all interested parties. Representatives of staff, clubs, coaches, officials and others have been involved. The aim is for clarity of purpose and a ‘one team’ approach, making for a better quality, more sustainable model. The basic objective is to increase the numbers of people involved in all aspects of the sport.

3.2 There are currently 30 staff members. WA delivers 30+ competitions per year which is far greater than is provided by England, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Staff will be encouraged to focus on particular areas of their remit (schools, clubs, etc). In the current economic climate, all funding sources are under stress. There will definitely be reductions in income from some sources and it is up to WA to manage the risk as well as they are able.

3.3 An area of concern is the number of officials who attend tutorials and take the initial steps towards qualification and then disappear. About 120 officials attended courses in the last 12 months but only about 20% continued. Various reasons are quoted, such as difficulty with the system of progressing and too many fixtures. Some have only limited ambition and have no desire to advance beyond a basic level.

3.4 Another concern is the lack of photo finish at some meetings, particularly in the West. Rebecca Ward is aiming to become proficient at pf set up and operation, which will be a welcome development. WA is the only governing body in the UK which invests in photo finish equipment. In England some tracks have their own systems in situ. In some instances systems have been hired from external sources. WA would meet the expenses of technicians brought in to operate systems. Some clubs are moving toward employing people, a move which is supported by WA.

3.5 WA will prioritise Welsh meetings over other, national meetings. There is every likelihood of meetings having to be cancelled this year due to a shortage of officials. Joyce Tomala pointed out that the number of Welsh officials attending YDL fixtures is relatively low. Club involvement in recruiting and retaining officials is critical.

A new simplified results system has been designed.

**4 TOM MARLEY**

A communications matrix had been circulated before the meeting, outlining areas of responsibility for recruitment and notification of officials for meetings. The meeting felt that too much responsibility had been placed on the Officials Secretary and that there was no indication of any WA involvement, Much of the work, such as advising officials which meetings they had been selected for, was better delivered from the office where all communication records are kept. There needs to be a defined policy, and the willingness of the present Officials Secretary to undertake functions which could be handled by the office should not be seen as a default position for a future successor.

It was pointed out that it is not the role of this committee to select all officials for meetings. Generally speaking there are insufficient numbers for selection to be necessary, and officials are merely reminded which meetings they have made themselves available for, the assumption being that unless advised otherwise, they will be required. The committee selects Referees and Chiefs, and some other functions. The matrix did not sufficiently indicate responsibility for pursuing extra officials in the event of a shortfall. Tom agreed to add two columns to the matrix, one indicating WA staff involvement and one indicating who will follow up on the further chasing of officials for events.

A questionnaire had been sent on to WA requesting answers to some matters of interest to this committee. In responding to the questions the following comments were made.

There is no direct replacement for Derek Crowder.

There is no intention by WA of appointing a Volunteers Coordinator.

Safety issues are being reviewed in light of an accident at a recent meeting. One area of concern was of coaches encroaching onto the competition area. They need to be given a location from which they can operate, but this should be outside the competition area.

Closing dates for championships have been increased from two weeks to three before the event. Any earlier date would be unfair to athletes.

Final timetables are issued once entries are completed. Attempts are made to accommodate athletes who compete in a number of events, sometimes not in the traditional combinations.

The case of an official being subjected to abuse has been resolved to the satisfaction of the official concerned. There is a line between what is the responsibility of WA and that belonging to clubs in such matters. All clubs have Welfare Officers.

Development of a welcome pack for new officials is ongoing. Input from officials would be welcome.

COG meetings are difficult to arrange when some people are not available. It was felt that there is no necessity for all parties to attend, and a core of appropriate people would be sufficient.

It is intended that most meetings will eventually use of electronic guns. This is a welcome development but there are issues over responsibility for holding and transporting the equipment. The use of these guns does not require the user to hold a firearms licence.

**5. DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR OFFICIALS**

After consulting with UKA, Dave Jessett confirmed that once an official has been upgraded to a particular level the appointment cannot be rescinded except in extreme cases relating to discipline or welfare issues. There are no such issues in Welsh athletics at present.

Athletics is an inclusive sport and it is important that all officials are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential. It is recognised that some officials need extra consideration and may require guidance in their development especially when advanced to a new level. Every effort should be made to assist such officials.

There is an assumption that once they achieve Level 3, officials are capable of acting as Referee or Chief at meetings up to a certain level. It is not clear whether the procedure for progression to Level 3 offers officials any training or guidance in that direction. Dave Jessett will raise the question with UKA.

**6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting, on 7 February 2019, were circulated in advance. They were checked for accuracy. The item in AOB regarding suitability of cages referred to YDL fixtures. With this addition the minutes were accepted as a true record.

**7. MATTERS ARISING**

Dave Jessett will question the method used by Seko of measuring distances in the throws.

Organisers of the UKA Officials Conference contact officials of all levels, inviting their attendance.

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Joyce Tomala pointed out that minutes of meetings shown on the WA website are not up to date. Tom Marley will look into this.

UKA have requested proposals for rule changes prior to producing their updated rule book. Officials are invited to submit any proposals they would like to have considered. Proposals need to be coordinated and then forwarded to UKA.

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the committee will be held at Brecon Carreg Room on Thursday 23 May 2019, commencing at 6.30.