

Meeting of the Welsh Athletics General Council; Tuesday 12th January 2021, Dydd Mawrth 12th Ionawr 2021

Present:

Joyce Tomala	(JT)	Regional Representative – East Wales.
Lynette Harries	(LH)	President – Welsh Athletics.
Jamie Clode	(JC)	Secretary of General Council.
Chris Moss	(CM)	Head of Development and Participation – Welsh Athletics.
Rob Sage	(RB)	Head of Corporate Services – Welsh Athletics
Sue Alvey	(SA)	Chair of General Council
Dai Williams	(DW)	Regional Representative – South Wales
Rhiannon L-P	(RLP)	Head of Competition – Welsh Athletics
Adrian Palmer	(AP)	Programme Manager – Welsh Athletics.
Graham Webb	(GW)	Vice Chair of General Council
Kay Hatton	(KH)	Regional Representative – North Wales
Sharon Leech	(SL)	Road and Cross-Country Committee
Dic Evans	(DE)	Regional Representative – West Wales
James Williams	(JW)	CEO – Welsh Athletics

Papers circulated in advance:

None

1. Apologies for Absence

Lucy Archer (Regional Representative – South Wales), Rob Campion (Regional Representative – West Wales)

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3. Welsh Athletics Update including AGM (JW) 6.35pm

Everyone has been very busy even though there are no activities ongoing. During this lockdown, there has not been a formal suspension of activity, due to no events and most facilities are already closed. Activities have been restricted without a suspension of the sport. Everyone needs to play their part in managing the spread. All clubs need to respect the guidelines, there have been reports of groups travelling to facilities, this must not be the case and all rules should be respected. Failure to do so, will impact the reputation of the sport and prolong spread and then may lead to lose of facility.

DW - Region have put together a letter to notify clubs do not travel, as this has been seen at the Tonypanydy track.

JW - great.

It is likely that lockdown will continue until Easter with a possible gradual return after this, but times are uncertain so it is very difficult to plan and give revised guidance. Hopefully, late spring we may be able to start to return, albeit with restricted numbers. A decision was made to cancel the indoor senior & Junior and the XC Champs. XC had been the planned return event when all this started.

An Ask us session will be held at the end of Jan also a repeat of the chairs and Secretaries meeting.

Regions need to continue to feedback challenges being faced by clubs. There is a huge bank of material available on the Welsh Athletics YouTube channel.

Whilst continuing to support the elite athletes. Only top 2 tiers have permission to travel and use the facilities at Cardiff Met and Leckwith. The list of athletes is determined by Welsh Government in accordance with Sport Wales. Welsh Athletics are pushing for increase in list where possible and will publish a list of the elite athletes and the definition of elite.

There has been a positive response from sport wales on funding, had a very small uplift, but will allow for planning and looking to make first draft of budget. A commitment has been made to invest in facilities and technology to support the return of sport. Also have addition funding from sport wales to support coaches and look to do targeted support around females in coaching and athletes transferring into coaching.

Working towards a new insights platform which will enable analysis of how the sport is performing.

Officials recognition being run by Zoe Holloway and has been highly regarded and thanked by officials.

Before Christmas athletes' awards were announced, thank Chris, Rhiannon and rob for pulling this together.

6 working groups have been established for UK Athletics and a member from Welsh Athletics sits on each group and now also have a seat on the Board (Steve Perks).

There has been a lot of debate about UK members council, minor changes have been made, around working groups and board. But will be a wider consultation on items to take the sport forward.

A consultation on equalisation of distance for cross country has been launched

Next tranche of Board recruitment will be looked at end of the calendar year. As part of this work will also recruit for the subgroups and athletes' groups.

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Main change at AGM was addition of masters and Seniors working group. These groups are built into the structure. Membership fees are to be retained as was.

JT - Can you confirm we will get regular updates from UKMC?

JW - Main reason was no update, was nothing really to update as primarily focused on vision for the council. Traditional reporting has not taken place. Once format has been agreed, after wider consultation, this will return.

GW - Report of the last commonwealth, when will it be seen.

JW - it was on the last website, will check and share.

Kay Hatton - Condition of tracks was discussed at regional meeting, who should we be looking towards for funding?

JW - Fully aware and have been included in many emails with Chris Moss. Bangor University have agreed a funding package to resurface Menai, aligned to Island games. Have supported a small level of funding for Deeside. But we always need to cast the net as wide as possible.

KH - Colwyn bay and Wrexham have challenges.

JW - Wrexham cosmetic, aware of Colwyn Bay and impact of other sports.

CM - Picking up the challenges with Colwyn bay. Committed to working with Freedom for the improvements at Wrexham however they are mainly cosmetic. It is not cheap to replace a surface and maintain facilities, look to work in partnership with owners, local authorities to take these forward where possible.

4. Return to training update (CM) 6.50pm

Return to Training / Activity Update:

There is very little to update at this point. As we have been throughout the pandemic we continue to work closely with the Welsh Sports Association, Sport Wales and Welsh Government to lobby the support for an accelerated return to sport.

Facilities:

As previously reported, progress has been made with facility development projects in; Caerphilly, Carmarthen, Newport, Cardiff International Sports Campus (Throws), Cardiff Met (Throws).

Welsh Athletics National Awards:

The 2020 National Awards for were completed at the end of the year with a slight streamlining of awards and to help spread a little positivity – celebrating what was good about 2020! I would like to place on record our thanks to Rhannon and of course the Joyce Tomala National Awards Panel for their time and helping to facilitate the awards for 2020.

Virtual Conference Series:

We will launch the 'Unite' Virtual Conference Series which will be taking place this spring. The conferences will take place on the following dates;

- Saturday 20th February: Teachers and Parents Conference
- Friday 5th and Saturday 6th March: Run Wales Festival
- Sunday 7th March: Officials and Volunteers Conference
- Saturday 13th March: Clubs Conference
- Saturday 27th March: Youth Development Conference (Coaching)
- Sunday 28th March: Run Leaders Conference

Welsh Athletics Webinar Series:

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In the coming days / week we will be launching a full series of support webinars (at least one a week until the end of May). As part of this, just to highlight; the 'In conversation with' series will also highlight the Welsh Athletics National Award recipients. I will contact Lynette and the other members of the Service Awards Panel in order to establish a similar platform for a select number of our Service Award recipients.

National Running Campaign:

Tomorrow, under the Run Wales heading, we will launch a National Running Campaign entitled #FromMyDoor. The rationale is fairly simple - during the various lockdown periods we have encountered, more people have been using running, jogging, walking as opportunities to be active. The campaign is aiming to encourage 500,000 people across Wales to get out and get active over the coming weeks as we build towards St. David's Day (1st March 2021).

We all know how important exercise is in helping to keep people fit and health from both a physical and mental well-being perspective. Throughout the last 9/10 months specifically, Welsh Government have encouraged people to get out and exercise and, with the current restrictions in place, walking and running activities are one of the most accessible and viable exercise options. We want to take advantage of this and engage with a new community of runners as well as encourage people to make a lifestyle choice towards running (walking, jogging, etc) as their preferred form of exercise.

A full and national Press Release has been issued (today) and there has already been interest from ITV (will be on at 6pm) tomorrow as well as BBC Radio Cymru, BBC Wales and other more local media outlets.

[Note: I have attached the press release as well as the toolkit for reference and further information]

Club Modernisation / Grassroots Grant Scheme:

Obviously with all that has happened throughout 2020 and as we enter 2021, we would like to make the fund available to help clubs that have a specific need related to COVID-19 and support improved engagement, investment in technology / digital platforms, improving and increasing communication, etc. I will also highlight that the #BeActiveWales Fund (Sport Wales) is also available to clubs and should be applied to in the first instance.

Parents in Sport:

We have partnered with a number of other governing bodies to bring a Parents in Sport series for both coaches and parents of younger athletes involved in sport. There were 2 sessions before Christmas and there are a number of sessions taking place over the next couple of months.

Cashless Clubs / Payments via Bank Transfer:

We did a webinar back in August highlighting the benefits of going cashless. Note: we will not be accepting cheques in the Welsh Athletics office from 1st April 2021 and are encouraging all clubs to complete payments to the organisation via electronic means.

5. Competition Update (RLP)

7.00pm

We find ourselves in a full lock down so no competitions and events permitted.

We are seeking permissions from WG to hold elite only events. Providing details to Welsh Government for sign off and hope to have feedback in next couple of weeks, targeting athletes with specific events. Throws events, British indoor champs people also.

Remainder of community will remain virtual and these will run until end of march.

A relay event in collaboration with other home counties has been organised. There will be a Welsh wide event and winners will go on to national competition

Officials conference to be held 7th March and webinar on hosting virtual events, how to use open track and other platforms that are available. Looking to engage officials to help scrutinise results throw relays, to help bring transparency.

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Equalization of XC distances, a survey has gone to all clubs for all thoughts and feedback. World athletics use same distances, UKA and home counties are looking to mirror this. Looking to make opportunities fair and equal. Closes end of January and results will be reviewed across home counties and a working group setup. Planning for post lockdown, whenever that may be. Plan A is to proceed as normal from April onwards with an expectation around number restrictions, several proposals around formats to create as much competition as possible.

DE - I'm not against ladies running longer distance, but would not like to see distance for men watered down. English national has reduced. Cross Country was the bread and butter of distance running, Welsh champs down to just over 6miles/10k, used to be at least 12k, don't want Cross country to lose integrity of challenge. There are now several shorter races available, including shorter relays.

DW - Following on from DE, master's man have been merged with ladies race, how will this be affected.

RLP - At present, just looking to consult and review response and take action from there.

6. Inter-Regional Review (JT) 7.10pm

To provide an update, task group has produced a draft handbook, to be discussed with regional reps on 18th and then will go to regions, the T&F and official in Feb and hope to put to GC in March meeting.

7. Election of Vice Chair (SA) 7.20pm

Vice chair must be elected, previously GW has stood in and performed this role. SA would like to propose JC for this role for this year.

DE – Graham has performed previously, so would like to nominate GW.

JT – Would this be a conflict of interest for JC to chair and produce minutes.

We will need to vote to decide.

JC - stood down nomination, JT makes a valid point around Graham lead so that Jamie can continue to do minutes, it would be hard to do both roles.

JT - would be good to do some shadowing for the development of the board and this would be a good time to do so.

RS - will feed into skills-based board.

LH - We need people to shadow and develop skills and bring new people so that they can benefit from working with several people.

SA - Thank you Graham, elected to Vice chair.

Agreed that GC would like to ensure that interested people are given the opportunity to shadow roles.

8. AOB – Notified in advance 7.30pm

Tony Clement gave an update via email, this mirrors what JW has covered. He has now stepped down as UKA member and has a role on ethics and standards committee. JW had already covered Steve Perks taking on a board role.

KH - Trinity issues

Our region has been holding a few virtual events, come to notice that when people have re-joined WA, takes time to flow through. Why does it take so long? Who can help progress? Fell and trail go straight to the system. Road has closed 7 days before.

CM - If there any issues or delays, best to raise to CM and then they can review and look to say why these are occurring. Working with UKA to improve and hoping a new system will be in place in the coming months. We can pick up outside of the meeting to discuss.

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DE - If asked what the benefits are of joining WA in current climate, what is best way to provide full details.

CM – I am happy to send the response previously drafted, for you to share.

Next meeting 4th March.

RS - governance subgroup met today, all online until 31st of March, all meetings are to be online until notified further. Will be reviewed and guidance issued in accordance.

JT - moved regional meeting and T&F meetings to align with the governance calendar. Will have more frequent meetings if/when competition resumes.

SA - thanks all for your time, hope to meet in person soon.

9. Date of next Meeting **7.50pm**

4th March 2021 at 6:30pm