

**WELSH ATHLETICS MOUNTAIN, TRAIL & ULTRA RUNNING COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2025 ON-LINE VIA TEAMS MEETING at 7:45pm**

- Attendees:** Neal Hockley (NH) Craig Jones (CJ-WFRA) Sharon Jones (SJ) Arwel Lewis (AL) Bethan Logan (BL) Steve Mitchell (SM) Ffion Price (FP) Owain Schiavone (OS)
- Apologies:** Mike Blake. Dic Evans. Steve Livett. Tom Meredith. Matthew Roberts, Peter Ryder
- Introductions:** (SM) on behalf of the committee welcomed (CJ) WFRA Chairperson to the meeting and new committee members Bethan Logan (East) and Ffion Price (Somewhere in the middle? Ffion will be a key representative in the Builth, Mid-Wales area)
- Actions from previous meeting/Key Points:** All actions/key points to discuss are on the agenda;
- 2026 British/Welsh Championships (SM)** As voiced by (PR) and other members of the committee, there is great value in amalgamating the WFRA and Welsh Athletics Welsh short and long mountain/fell running championships events, it will avoid confusion with an already busy race calendar and hopefully ensure that the best Welsh mountain/fell runners compete in the championship events. (CJ) Has already discussed the possibility with the WFRA championships coordinator (Ellie Salisbury) The WFRA introduced two race championships format this year in line with the British status of one short and one medium/long category race/s which has to date proved beneficial & successful though, the WFRA championships are only eligible for WFRA members as is the case with Welsh Athletics registered athletes for their championship events. (AL) With the 2026 "Short" British Championships race being held at Pen y Fan, would the WFRA be incorporating their "Short" Welsh Championships into the event. (CJ) It would be more beneficial to keep the British/Welsh championships separate to ensure the status of the Welsh championships as a stand-alone event. It was also agreed by the WFRA committee that for 2025, the "short" race would be in the South and the "Long/Medium" race in the North and to alternate the events every year hence, in 2026 the "Short" race will be in North Wales and the "Long/Medium" race in South Wales. (SM) enquired if there was any interest in an uphill only championship race? As was the case with this year's Trofeo Nasego international where there was an uphill only race followed by an up & down race the following day, there is a requirement for an uphill only trial race which was not the case this year mainly due to the short timeframe and the Italian race being earlier than usual this year. (BL) queried whether the Wyddfa Twilight race was going ahead in 2026 due to the end of the sponsorship for the event? (AL) The event is listed on the Snowdon Race website for 27th June 2026 though TBC. (BL) We could also use uphill split times in the event of requiring a trial race in events such as the Cader Idris or Snowdon races? (SM) Unfortunately, as queried by (PR) via email, there is no information or advance notice of the proposed Welsh Athletics 'Long' trail championships event Run, Walk, Crawl 50k (Black Beacon?) on November 1st. to align

with championship distances, it would be a significant undertaking and require much preparation and training with ample time to prepare for the athletes. **(SM)** due to the situation and complexities of the event, there will not be a 'Long' trail Championships this year. **(BL)** queried whether we could incorporate the 'Long' event into an UTS or UTMB event such as the 50k Llanberis event on 16th May 2026 as opposed to one of the sky races which are run over very rugged and difficult terrain. **(NH)** the costs involved with entering those events (£189.00) may be a disadvantage and a deterrent for some athletes. **(AL)** there has been a couple of declarations of interest via email for the 'short' trail championships to be incorporated into the Beast of Bryn event where they have 6.5m and 10.5-mile races. **(SM)** possibly too short for our stipulated 'short' race distances. Decided to continue with the Nant yr Arian Silver Trail Half Marathon in 2026 as our Trail de Guerledan 26km trail race and "short" trail running championships.

6. **Welsh Inter-Regional/Short Mountain Running Championships (Cilcain) (AL)** once again, the event was well attended and well organised. A strong South Wales men's team made the North work hard for the team gold medals, unfortunately, as **(OS)** explained, he was unable to select a West Wales team for the event due to various other commitments, injuries etc by their athletes. **(BL)** pointed out that **(AL)** was short of W/A championships medals for the event for which **(AL)** has emailed a request for the medals which amounted to: 1 W/A Gold – 3 W/A Inter-Regional Gold and 1 W/A Inter-Regional Silver medals. **(AL)** The event was also the North Wales Regional Championships and would the WFRA be supportive of regional championships in the future with most of the medal winners being WFRA members.
7. **B&I Championships – Review (Y Fron) (AL)** Overall the event went very well with all the international teams' athletes and staff accommodated in en-suite rooms at Bangor University. Despite a short downpour of rain an hour before the first race, the skies soon cleared to leave a clear, dry and sunny day for some very competitive racing in which the Welsh athletes performed very well achieving one individual silver and one individual bronze as well as three team bronze medals to finish 3rd team overall behind, as expected a strong English and Scottish contingent who had to be happy with a share of the overall team prize. **(AL)** was very appreciative of the personnel who assisted on the day to ensure that everything was in place for an established international event. **(SJ)** While it was disappointing that there was no representative from Welsh Athletics present on the day (for which **(SL & AD)** along with James Williams have immediately apologised with James stating that it was probably an oversight which will not occur again) The overall atmosphere and camaraderie amongst the teams was superb in a very scenic setting on testing but fast race routes. It was not surprising that the Welsh athletes who ran and competed well at the event had prioritised mountain running and trained specifically for the event, checked or had previously raced the race routes and earned their medals, those who had not certainly showed their lack of experience as they struggled with the complexities of mountain running, especially running downhill. The only athlete to not complete the race/s was a Welsh athlete who though very capable with running uphill had not reced the course and unfortunately suffered an injury on one of the downhill sections

which resulted in a DNF **(SM)** Selected athletes for international events should prioritise whatever discipline they are competing in. **(SJ)** It was also disappointing that there were no Welsh “Open” entries for the event despite the event being on “Home” ground while there were several, English, Scottish and Irish “Open” athletes competing. **(SM-NH)** Selection policies to signify performances in the trial races and performances in mountain races. **(SM)** Looking ahead to 2026, possibly utilise the GB junior trial race/s on 1st May (uphill only) & 3rd (May up-&-down) race/s as our trial race for the U18 Mountain Running Cup the date of which is 21st June 2026. **(NH-SM)** Though travel times/costs may be an issue for some of the athletes/parents, those athletes who aspire to represent Wales and are committed to mountain running should be willing to compete in any trial races for international events. **(AL)** Note: The GB up-&-down trial race also incorporates the British Inter-Counties Mountain Running Championships where hopefully, all four Welsh regions will be represented.

8. **UKA Relays Update: Saturday 18th October) (AL)** The event organisers (Meirionnydd RC) have a stand-alone website for the event with all the relay legs finalised and maps uploaded except of course for the orienteering leg. **(AL)** had previously checked the race venue and proposed race routes for approval beforehand and though the race routes may be short in distance, they are very challenging regarding the height gain, descent and underfoot terrain. Race recces are not allowed. Private Farmers land; the main farmer is very obliging and supportive of the event going ahead. **(NH)** expressed his surprise that there were less than what he would have expected Welsh teams entered with the event being in Wales. **(AL)** the first phase of the entry system was only for those who had performed well in last years relays, the 2nd phase of entries was open to all with the allowance of one team per category. With a provisional 200 team limit, there are 202 teams listed.
9. **Junior Age Groups from 1st April 2026 & Senior Home International future: (SM)** To align with the World Athletics governing body, all discipline age groups will correspond for clarity when identifying which age group an athlete should be competing in an event across the board. It will certainly be clearer for all athletes, their parents, and coaches and hopefully, end the current confusion around age groups. **(SM & AL)** recently met with the UKA International Mountain/Trail Running Committee to discuss the future age groups for the B&I international. It was decided that from 2026 forward, the current format would be introduced: U20 2-year age band. 4 to run. 3 to count. U18 3-year age band. 5 to run. 3 to count and to review the situation after the first year. **(SM)** we may struggle to field full U20 teams in the B&I event with the proposed format due to the lack of available and capable athletes in that age category. **(CJ – NH)** The WFRA have investigated junior training investment, a possible opportunity for co-working for W/A & WFRA. **(NH)** The WFRA will probably follow suit with the incoming age categories to prevent confusion in consideration of the British Junior Inter-Counties Mountain Running Championships. As for the senior home international **(SHI)** all the home countries were committed to supporting the Snowdon race **(AL)** on a request from the home nations liaised with the Snowdon race organiser to ascertain whether the event could start earlier (12pm) to enable the teams to depart after the event and save on accommodation costs. while no date was set for

the **SHI** with discussions on whether the event should be a trail **SHI** instead which could impact on us (Wales – we already have the Guerledan, France trail Inter-Celtic event) Decided to continue with the **SHI** in 2026 which will once again be athlete self-funded as was the case this year

10. Budget: (SM) No change

11. AOB: (SM) Congratulations to Eden O’Dea (39th of 107. GB & NI Team 7th) for her performance in the World Championships Uphill only race today with Kris Jones (Short) & Lizzie Richardson (Long) yet to compete in the World Trail Running Championships in Canfranc. Spain 25-28 September. **(NH)** requested an updated calendar of events for 2026 from **(AL) (CJ)** to arrange to meet and liaise with **(AL)** next week to discuss Welsh championships options.

12. Date of next meeting: Thursday 27th November 2025 at 1945