

<b>WELSH ATHLETICS ROAD/CROSS COUNTRY COMMITTEE</b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
<p data-bbox="247 369 1204 436"> <b>MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2020</b> </p> <p data-bbox="247 459 1204 504"> <b>PRESENT: -</b> </p> <p data-bbox="247 504 1204 571">           Alex Donald, Martin Green, Chris Jones (later), Steve Jones, Sharon Leech, Rhiannon Linnington-Payne, Kevin Tobin         </p> <p data-bbox="247 571 1204 616"> <b>APOLOGIES : -</b> </p> <p data-bbox="247 616 1204 660">           Graham Finlayson, Nikki Haines         </p> <p data-bbox="247 694 1204 739"> <b>MATTERS ARISING (from previous meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020)</b> </p> <ul data-bbox="295 772 1204 896" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual races offered by WA for the winter (see Competitions)</li> <li>• School virtual challenges (see Competitions)</li> <li>• New chairperson of WW Region confirmed as Rob Campion</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="247 952 1204 996"> <b>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED</b> </p> <ul data-bbox="295 1008 1204 2027" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW forwarded an email from NI Athletics (Kerry Woods) which states that the International Cross Country scheduled for January 2021 in NI will be postponed until January 2022</li> <li>• SL attended GC meeting 3.11.20. Confirmation of group activities of max 30 people to recommence 9<sup>th</sup> Nov as per Government guidelines, WA hoping that numbers using facilities can increase. New facilities opening at Newport and Carmarthen. UKA governance changes, Steve Perks to represent WA at meetings</li> <li>• RLP attended meeting with Home Countries to discuss equal distances at Cross Country. Home Countries to launch a consultation around equal access to all distances. A survey will be conducted among athletes and those involved with Cross Country, to see if it could be more inclusive. For example two distances could be offered for all genders, a 6K and a 10K, they could choose which to run. Men and women could be in same race or kept separate, depending on responses. UKA will launch the survey, WA to promote, so that athletes respond to the survey. When a consultation has been launched previously, the proposal of equal distances has been overwhelmingly voted down. A further consultation to take place because World Athletics are moving towards equal distances so are setting a precedence for other competitions lower down</li> <li>• Meeting dates to be discussed, in line with Governance Calendar. SL said that it's difficult to set dates so far in advance as often meetings are scheduled around fixtures, KT proposed setting</li> </ul>	

dates for the next two meetings, two weeks before Regional meetings, but that we may meet more regularly. KT also pointed out that this Committee meets more regularly than the other discipline Committees (ref minutes on WA website)

## **2020 ROAD & CROSS COUNTRY COMPETITIONS PROGRAMME**

### **Domestic:**

- RLP updated that there will be a series of Road Relays, beginning with the Regions, then a National one, linking in with the Home Countries. The Regional Relays are suggested to be run in the same format as the usual Championship Road Relays would be, with similar distances, rounded up or down to make it easy for people to measure. The senior race would be the longest distance of 5K. In the New Year, WA will host a national Road Relay, linking in with England Athletics, so that results can be compared.

The North Region have already held theirs, with everyone logging their own individual time and running on their own. The National Relays will mirror how the Road Relays would have been had they taken place, but virtually. England are hosting a Regional round then a National round, Scotland are not hosting a Regional round, but WA are keen that our Regions do. South and East have confirmed their interest to host, the West have yet to respond. RLP will email Rob Campion to see what interest there is among Clubs in the West. WA will set up the entry/results via Open Track. Entry will be free for athletes unless the Region decides to charge. MG told RLP that the North had had issues with Open Track, RLP to look into it once she receives details from MG

- RLP keen to set up actual races as opposed to too many virtual events, however there are many barriers to this. The difficulties are that Councils are not allowing events on their land. The proposed Pontypool event has been cancelled, the Bridgend event has still not been given the go ahead. Pembrey is due to host 3K junior races for those athletes on the RDP. Frustratingly, events in England can go ahead for 2000 people (not Tier 3) from 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, this is not the case in Wales. AD confirmed that local authorities are refusing permission for any event to go ahead. Private land could be used, but if the landowner asks the local authority, they will say no. It seems that once the safety advisory group are asked to authorize, they put a stop to it.

**Regional  
Reps / RLP**

Despite the news of a vaccine, the likelihood of events for more than 30 people here is still very slim. There is no set date from the Welsh Government, the end of March is a guide date, however it could well be the end of the summer before we see mass participation return.

KT asked about the possibility of a track race. Again the limit would be 30 people. RLP has enquired about hosting a race on 19<sup>th</sup> December at the Clydach Vale track, she is looking into that and has put in an application with the SAG of RCT, but there is a strong possibility that they will say no.

- KT asked whether WA are lobbying the Government to ask why other sports are allowed to go ahead yet athletics/ running is not. AD confirmed that DSP, JW and MSO are lobbying the Government, however they carry no real weight and concerns are not being taken seriously. Local Authorities have also tried to lobby Government but no success as yet. If there's no chance of an actual race, then the way forward may be more virtual races or races just for senior elite and junior RDP athletes

**International:**

- n/a

**Schools:**

- SJ updated on Schools AGM. Inter Schools cancelled rather than postponed. Welsh Schools Cross Country due to go ahead on March 6<sup>th</sup>, but that likely to change. SIAB may go ahead, not confirmed as yet
- School virtual challenges have been set. SJ confirmed that the Sportshall challenge took place, uptake was not great, but some schools did take part. SJ said that schools now have an option of doing cross country, but understands that it will be difficult for some schools to participate, if children are not allowed in changing rooms

**PERFORMANCE**

- KT asked if elite athletes can be supported to go to races in England if they can go ahead. RLP confirmed only the supported athletes are deemed as elites (Commonwealth Games Podium or Potential). CJ joined the meeting at this point and so was able to answer some queries. As individuals, athletes can enter races in places like Gloucester, however there is an announcement to be made on 3<sup>rd</sup> December by the Welsh Government, about travel restrictions. There is a likelihood that Welsh are not allowed to travel to England, unless for work/ educational

reasons, (apart from at Christmas to see family). Non-funded athletes will therefore find it difficult to travel to England to race. Programme athletes are exempt from any travel rules and so WA would look to support these athletes to compete, as they need race opportunities as part of their CWG preparation.

WA are also looking to support these elite athletes to attend training camps, however that again is not an easy task, due to the strict rules which the Welsh Government have imposed. The other Home Countries have not imposed such strict sets of rules. For example, when athletes come back to UK from a Camp, they then must isolate for 5 days and have a Covid test. If negative, they can continue to train/ live as normal. For those who work outside of the home, this makes it very difficult to travel. WA are looking to be more flexible to be able to financially support athletes to prepare for the 2022 CWG, in light of the difficulties.

- Camps will have restricted numbers, it's hoped that a small group will travel to Portugal on 3<sup>rd</sup> January and later in the month another group to Spain. English and Irish athletes are already out there, the Welsh are certainly at a disadvantage due to Covid rules and are being adversely affected, from grassroots to elites

#### **AOB**

- KT suggested co-opting new members onto Committee, suggestions were Alaw Beynon Thomas and Rob Samuel. SL to speak to Alaw, MG to speak to Rob. If interested, they can attend next meeting
- MG said the North Virtual Road Relays were a success and hopes that the other Regions will also participate
- CJ concerned that Local Authorities and the Welsh Government are not supporting athletics at present
- KT asked about British Athletics taking over the National Road Relays so that they're more inclusive. CJ confirmed there are moves ahead that the Home Nations will have more involvement in the future to ensure there's more engagement from all the Home Countries and Clubs

**MG/ SL**

#### **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

- Wed 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 5.30pm. Microsoft Teams invite will be sent to members for another virtual meeting