

DORSET COUNTY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROAD RUNNING COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 9th April 2018, AT THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, BLANDFORD

The start of the meeting was delayed by approx. 15 minutes due to difficulties experienced parking near to the venue, which was also hosting another function.

1. PRESENT

Jerry Shield	WAC (chair)
Richard Nunn	WAC (treasurer)
Inès Braun	Dorset Doddlers
Steve Buller	Poole AC
Pete Clarke	WSPH
Graham Filmer	Poole AC
Khalil Ghabaee	Poole Runners
Ian Graham	Bournemouth AC
Adam Hewitt	Gillingham Trotters
Peter Wallis	Christchurch Runners (meeting notes)
Ian White	Bournemouth AC
Norman White	WSPH
Gary Worsley	Littledown Harriers

2. APOLOGIES

Victoria Casson	Westbourne RC
Jean Henry	Westbourne RC
Debbie Dowsett	Bournemouth Joggers
Kevin Dowsett	Littledown Harriers
Nicola Taylor	Royal Manor of Portland
Joanne Kain	Gillingham Trotters

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 [@ 7.6 Feedback on Christchurch Runners' Christmas 10K] IG advised the comment came from IH rather than him. (*post meeting note: also; "PW advised the Race HQ may be relocated to The Grange School", not the race start*).
- 3.2 PW thanked VC and JS for their work forwarding his suggestions for discussion of Athlete Eligibility for the league competition that is to be discussed at this meeting.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

- 4.1 Club representatives were once again reminded to point out to their clubs that their competitors in UKA and League races must wear their Club colours, in accordance with UKA Rules.

- 4.2 *Discussed during race reviews, but moved to Matters Arising as this reflects Action at 8.2 of January's minutes;*

In response to feedback that a proportion of runners are bored with the events that have been selected many times for the league and find that completing all 12 events is too challenging, those present discussed suggestions from the floor for changing the format and the number of qualifying League races.

Suggestions included; to reduce the number of races in the League series, to consider including what was considered to be the more popular Multi-terrain and Cross-Country races (e.g. White Star events).

It was noted that several years ago the series only consisted of 10 races. Specifically 7 of 12 races to count was raised and immediately rejected as being unfair on those who do the longer or otherwise more challenging races.

As the league is specifically the Road Race League, including multi-terrain or Cross-Country races was considered a departure from our terms of reference.

Various reps expressed a view that clubs should aim to put on new events each year to increase the variety of races on offer, although the race calendar is already full, it was considered by some too difficult to gain the necessary council approvals for new events and that finding willing volunteers and officials was likely to prove impossible given their already challenging diary. It was also suggested that more should be done by the League to give a boost to race organisers who have established a new race after a few years of building a good reputation (specifically aimed at the May Day race organised by Poole AC. *As discussed previously, this race clashes with the North Dorset Village Marathon and there are few choices of long races to provide a balance of events in the series, and it had been suggested that this race may do better if moved to a different date if it were to be considered*).

After discussion this proposal was rejected.

- 4.3 The committee discussed a proposal from PW that DRRL give consideration to a previously held view that DRRL rules as-written permitted runners who are not UKA affiliated but who are members of affiliated clubs that are also members of the DRRL should be allowed to represent their clubs in DRRL series races, also being recognised individually in the League's tables.

Note: the wording below reflects my attempt to provide a fair account of both side's views but note taking while I was also presenting the only opposing view during the meeting was quite a challenge. I have tried to record what was said and by whom during the debate but it is unlikely this will be 100% accurate or be as unbiased as those holding the opposing view may prefer to see recorded.

PW explained his club's situation; There are approx. 50 members but very few choose to pay the extra fees to become UKA affiliated. New members typically approach his club after running alone or from parkruns, social running groups and their club's Couch to 5K course – all of which are free. It was not reasonable to expect this welcome influx of predominantly social runners to be keen on paying UKA fees on top of club subs and optional club kit purchases, for something they were unlikely to see any benefit from, at least in the short term.

He drew attention to the fact that 100% of his club's subs received in 2017 were spent on their Club UKA and DRRL fees. Given that only 5% of his club's members opt to be UKA affiliated, his entire club's subs therefore subsidises a tiny minority who participate in any external races, let alone DRRL qualifying races, and that this situation was not sustainable.

PW had previously identified (*as circulated with Agenda*) that UKA rules had an Eligible Athlete exemption clause, which would allow the DRRL series to include competitors where their participating Clubs' non-affiliated members pay the unattached levy and wear club colours, confirm their membership of a Club and comply with all other UKA rules of competition at the race. i.e. the selected DRRL races would be conducted entirely in accordance with UKA rules of competition but that the DRRL series which receives these race results should still be able to recognise participation by bona fide first claim Club members of DCAA clubs, which was a recognised ambiguity in the current DRRL rules and was his understanding of their interpretation until earlier this year.

This interpretation was thought (by PW) to act as a stepping stone towards encouraging social runners to take part in road races and to take up UKA affiliation in due course, if individual runners felt it appropriate. He felt that preventing recognition of participation by such club members contributed to the perceptions of elitism that have been expressed at several DRRL meetings by many clubs.

PW pointed out that the DRRL had not always insisted on UKA affiliation for DCAA affiliated club runners to be included in the league tables. IG responded that it was not easy to determine whether competitors who declared their club affiliation were in fact members of those clubs.

PW stressed the implications on his club of excluding non-UKA affiliated club members from DRRL, that it would effectively expel his club from the league. He felt that this would also be likely to impact on many other smaller clubs whose membership is also more likely to be predominantly social runners and where their participation in DRRL races is already minimal.

NW explained that club members are welcome to try out UKA races within the league series as unaffiliated competitors [*but without their participation counting towards their club score*] and thereby get a feel for participation. If this proves to be something they would enjoy, they would see the benefits of the £2 discount and qualifying for their team as being incentives to sign-up to UKA which would then lead to greater participation. PW responded that in his opinion it would be more likely to be perceived as off-putting to runners who would have to pay extra to be treated as second-class competitors, and that they would have to enter 8 races a year before the unattached levy broke even. He felt this was extremely unlikely to be a temptation for someone trying out 'external' races for the first time.

KG expressed his club chairman's opinion that it was ridiculous to allow non-UKA affiliated runners to count. He added that if we were to allow this loop-hole there would be little incentive for the majority of club members to affiliate to UKA.

RN disputed the suggestion that there was any possible exemption from the Eligible Athlete rule for the DRRL tables as (in his view) the DRRL was a body that exists within the umbrella of UKA and therefore that it would be contrary to our UKA membership if we were to allow non-affiliated runners to count in our league tables.

IG pointed out that the Permit Officer role (who would have been approached to allow the exemption as per an earlier copy of UKA rules) had disappeared many years ago, but that it didn't follow that the rules had taken this into account in recent updates. Once again RN

disputed the option to relax the Eligible Athlete rule.

PW and IW tried to access the UKA Rulebook to confirm the latest rules do have an exemption clause, but the mobile phone signal strength available at the time did not offer access to the internet.

Post meeting note: UKA Rules, Rule 6 ([see http://www.uka.org.uk/competitions/rules/](http://www.uka.org.uk/competitions/rules/)) has a similar ‘in whole or in part’ exemption clause relating to Eligible Athletes.

GW advised that Littledown Harriers have a few ‘social members’ who do not pay the UKA affiliated fee, but that the majority do (willingly) sign up to UKA, as the £15 pa subs is not too great a sum for most people’s budgets. He added that they had decided to charge a £12 fee for attending their Couch to 5K course, which is then taken as a deposit towards club membership fees if participants choose to graduate to club membership (going towards the purchase of a club vest which members are proud to wear, and their club joining fee as well as UKA affiliation). This idea may offset what may otherwise be an off-putting amount. PW replied that he was not prepared to adopt this strategy for his club.

IB suggested that DRRL could support the smaller clubs’ participation by doing more to encourage their engagement – for instance by giving a greater discount to join the DRRL. RN responded by saying that smaller clubs already receive a 50% discount. PW explained that his club’s contribution still effectively represents a subsidy for the awards and prizes awarded to members of larger clubs, who receive the awards.

IB suggested that smaller clubs could perhaps affiliate to UKA under a banner of many small, local clubs and be recognised within UKA licensed races as being members of this umbrella club for competition purposes. The logistics of this proposal are complex, for instance the question of what kit to wear raised the point that such members would not be representing their actual club, so would still have to compete under this independent club’s colours to qualify. Their actual club would still have no representation in the DRRL, and would have to find a way of identifying a fair contribution to DRRL costs and a fair way to split this cost among the member clubs. Although not ideal this compromise may offer some scope for further investigation by the clubs that would be affected.

By this point it was clear the mood of the majority was unsympathetic to the suggestion.

JS asked those present to vote on whether the proposal should be considered further:

Voting was 12 against, with only 1 in favour. Therefore the proposal was dismissed.

PW made a closing statement, pointing out that this decision would almost inevitably see his club’s departure from the DRRL, after decades of involvement. This was a matter of personal regret, having served as League Administrator himself, also taking the DRRL minutes on many occasions, and his club previously taking on the DRRL secretary role for many years.

It was also noted that all others dismissed the earlier suggestion that this decision may be perceived as being elitist.

5. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT.

5.1 JS advised that Dave Hicks has offered to act as the Men’s team manager for the Southwest Championships races in October. As yet there was no volunteer for managing the Women’s team although a volunteer from Littledown Harriers was to be approached after the meeting.

Action: GW to seek a volunteer Women’s team captain/manager from within Littledown Harriers.

The Southwest Championships races are:

- a. Exeter Half Marathon (aka Great West Run) 14th October
- b. Gloucester 10K 28th October

5.2 JS reported at the last meeting that; “*there were less people competing consistently across the*

races of the league. There were only 50 men and 28 women who had completed 7 or more league races in 2017". He has since reviewed the figures and had looked over a longer time period to spot trends in participation.

In 2015 100 competitive runners took part in the series. 2016 saw this rise to 116 and last year the number dropped to 81. Therefore on reflection he felt this may not represent more than a natural fluctuation in attendance figures.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

6.1 Before the meeting RN had reminded a handful of clubs that they had not yet paid their DCAA (club DRRL affiliation) fees and that payment was overdue.

6.2 Finances have not moved significantly;

Recent payments:	£36	website hosting and fees
	£179	Towels for 24 age group prizes (see 8.4 of January 2018 minutes)

Nett change: £232 increase

6.3 RN also reminded the committee that there is a sum of in excess of £20k which is held 'ring-fenced' in the DCAA treasurer's account (*this money is reserved for DRRL use but is held in a common account with Track and Field athletics*).

RN stressed this amount had been built up over many years, from the time when the county organised the Purbeck 10K and retained the unattached (unaffiliated) levy from all UKA Permit races organised within the County.

[County level was lost many years ago, as UKA no longer recognises any hierarchy level between club and regional level. The unattached levy is now retained by race organisers, which is why it is therefore requested that race organisers voluntarily make a reasonable donation from this income towards funding County-level activities, as many do regardless of whether their race is within the DRRL calendar].

While this considerable sum of money is available to meet a genuine need, before releasing significant amounts the committee should bear in mind this amount would be difficult to accrue again, once spent.

7. FEEDBACK ON RACES SINCE LAST MEETING

7.1 **Blackmore Vale Half Marathon:** There were more entries this year, and it was considered to be well organised overall and the level of marshalling was very good. However the lack of toilet facilities and very limited parking for the number of competitors were considered to be significant problems.

7.2 **Lytchett 10:** "Nice cake!" Comments were received that with this also being an Imperial Series race it was too difficult for runners to gain an entry. It was proposed by some that a greater number of places should be reserved for DRRL clubs so that people wanting to enter the series had more time to do so. It was pointed out that race organisers are requested to reserve sufficient places for a club team to compete only when that club requested places, and that many races can be swamped by larger clubs selecting a race for their club championships.

ACTION: Club secretaries are asked to remind their members that it is their responsibility to enter races in good time, especially races that are likely to prove very popular. The DRRL should try to ease the burden on race organisers rather than put in place measures that encourage late entries.

7.3 **Bournemouth 10:** The 8:30 start time was a challenge for some, including the council who had not arranged to open the toilets at the Bournemouth pier end of the prom in time.

The option of using chip timing to allow runners to compete in races as a time trial, thereby

easing congestion at toilets, was raised but results would still be taken by gun timing and first across the line so this option was not beneficial to DRRL competitors.

- 7.4 **Wimborne 20: (CANCELLED)** It was felt that the organisers had done their best to provide as much notice as possible by a sufficient range of channels of communication, under very difficult circumstances. All agreed that race organisers must put safety first and understood that this sometimes presents challenges (JS pointed out that when they had previously cancelled a race it involved sending out individual letters, so this was in fact rather easier than last time)!

Feedback came from the Grizzly (also cancelled) where competitors had demanded a full refund, in a distressing manner. JS said this had not been the case for the Wimborne 10.

Race entry systems should include a statement that races may be cancelled without refund, although organisers are free to offer a reserved place for future years if possible.

IB reminded us that Risk Assessments and Emergency Planning should by now be an intrinsic part of race preparations for all UKA races, and that anyone challenging the cancellation would find it more difficult to argue grounds that they should receive a refund.

The reason for cancellation of the Wimborne 10 was clarified. Although the course may have appeared viable, there were particular safety concerns with the car parking arrangements. Regarding concerns about the costs incurred, JS said certain mementos had been possible to carry forward but perishable items had been donated to Upton parkrun.

- 7.5 **Weymouth Bay 10K:** Feedback suggested the race finish was chaotic and that the charity/commercial organisers need to improve this aspect significantly. The arrangements for handing out mementos also required improvement.

- 7.6 **Rotary Quarter Marathon:** Again toilet provision proved contentious, although not in the control of the organisers - mainly due to the public conveniences near the start being closed. A council contractor's van was parked on the course on the approach to the pier, being moved only just in time to avoid being in the way of lead runners – thanks to a marshal from Littledown Harriers for stepping in.

It seemed the race HQ arrangement were not good but that the bag drop arrangements were particularly problematic. It was reported that all left luggage was left in identical white bags in a van, with little apparent consideration to the problems of retrieving the bags was to be returned until it had been pulled out and a number written in pen on the side was checked. The delays introduced by this system left runners waiting over 30 minutes in very cold conditions.

Results had also proved hard for some to find on-line after the race.

- 7.7 **Bournemouth Bay Half Marathon:** This race was well resourced but results accuracy (based on reports obtained from electronic timing contractors) was an issue. Problems with results have happened before (being a charity race it had not always provided results in a format that was easy to compile for the DRRL series) and this was a reason why this race had not been considered for the DRRL series – however the race now fills up and does not require the additional promotion via inclusion in the DRRL series.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- 8.1 PW drew attention to the proposed wording for GDPR compliance that is to be included on Race Entry forms from May 24th. He expressed that in his opinion the wording was incoherent and also seemed inaccurate, based on his understanding of GDPR;
To comply with the Data Protection Act, race organisers should include the following wording on race entry forms:

"You agree that we may publish your Personal Information as part of the results of the Event and may pass such information to the governing body or any affiliated organisation for the purpose of insurance, licences or for publishing results either for the event alone or combined with or compared to other events. Results may include (but not be limited to) name, any club affiliation, race times, occupation and age category."

The committee agreed that, despite being stated inside quotation marks, the wording was intended as guidance only and agreed that there was room for improvement in the wording.

PW offered the draft Hoburne 5 race entry form to those present which included a proposal, intended to be in the spirit of the UKA wording, as sample text. He proposed that the DRRL committee use this feedback to formulate wording that could be used for other entry forms. IB, KG and IW offered to review the proposed text and give their feedback. PW will circulate the suggestion via the DRRL mailing list which may be copied for other races' entry forms.

Action: IB, KG and IW to forward their feedback [*within 1 week please*] for PW to assimilate the wording that reflects best practise, so that this may be suggested to other organisers of UKA affiliated races in our area. Also that the DRRL committee agrees what it regards as being appropriate wording for local use at the next meeting, based on a subsequent review of the updated Hoburne 5 race entry form.

Post meeting note: Dave Sanderson has since confirmed that the age criteria for the U17 County Championships shown on the draft form was incorrect. The U17 (and U21) categories are explained on the DRRL website at <http://drll.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Rules.rtf> but this is still unclear (conflicts with UKA Rules on the U17 category).

- 8.2 PW reminded clubs that their constitution and other governing processes should be checked against the imminent implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations (clearly impacting membership secretaries and any race competitor, sponsor contacts and volunteer contacts databases). IB pointed out the guidance available on the England Athletics website: <https://www.englandathletics.org/clubs--community/club-management/gdpr-and-data-protection-advice>)

- 8.3 Although not strictly DRRL business, Poole AC informed those present that their club member Melissa Courtney was representing Wales in the Commonwealth Games which would be broadcast at 1pm the following day. All present wished her every success.

Post meeting note Women's 1500m. 10th April: Bronze medal in a time of 4:03.44 also Women's 5000m on 14th April 15:46.60.

PW requested advice from Littledown Harriers/ Bournemouth Joggers about the technical arrangements and permissions they had required to operate their 'lock gate' road crossing system at the Littledown 5/ Boscombe 10K. For instance whether council permission or Traffic Management Officer (TMO) qualified staff were needed, for the Hoburne 5 race. He was advised to contact Kevin Dowsett for further details.

It was also noted that the Littledown 5 race had not yet confirmed a race date on the race calendar, which was causing concern. This was communicated as being down to the club still seeing a volunteer for the Race Director role, but that there was every confidence the race would still go ahead.

The Beast (Poole AC) was in a similar state, with race entries and further details likely to become available soon after 02 May as their race committee focussed on the May Day race.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

- 9.1 The meeting concluded at approx. 9.20 pm

- 9.2 The next meeting will take place on 2nd July 2018 (subsequent meeting 1st October 2018).