

# MANCHESTER AREA CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE

## MEETING NOTES

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT SPORTCITY REGIONAL ARENA, MANCHESTER ON WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2014

**Those present - Clubs represented and by whom:** *Belle Vue Racers* – Frank Rogers; *East Cheshire H & Tameside AC* – Gary Matthews; *Macclesfield H & AC* – Bob Lynch\*; *Manchester H & AC* – Arnold Bradshaw\*, Brenda Bradshaw\*, George Lawson\*\*; *Manchester Frontrunners* – Jono Guildford; *Manchester YMCA Harriers* – Stephen Hindmarsh\*, Jon Paramor, Stephen Symons; *Middleton H AC* – Peter Gilligan\*; *Moston & District Harriers* – Lorraine Barlow; *Sale Harriers Manchester AC* – Mike Wharton; *Salford H & AC* – Ruth Bardsley\*, Pete Budd, Julie Laverock\*; *Stockport H & AC* – Pete Torrance; *Swinton Running Club* – Steve Doxey; *Trafford AC* – Sue Exon, Jeff Prest; *Wilmslow RC* – Nick Bishop\*; *West Cheshire* – Mike Lamb.

**Apologies for absence - Clubs not represented at the meeting:** *Altrincham & District AC* – Mike Jones; *Liverpool Harriers & AC* – Arwel Williams; *St Helens Striders* – Frank McAllister; *St Helens Sutton* – Christine Dempsey; *Salford Metropolitan AC* – Jennifer Crowther\*\*, Debbie Hulme; *University of Manchester* – George Bilsby; *Wirral AC* – Norman Waterson, Graham Patterson; **Officials** – Tony Riley\*/\*\* *Referee*; Joan Royle\*\* *Judge Recorder*.

**Apologies for absence - Clubs represented at the meeting by others:** *Belle Vue Racers* – Lynda Guy; *Manchester H & AC* – Debbie Beresford & Ed Fazakerley; *Sale Harriers Manchester AC* – Dave Rodgers.

\* denotes member of the cross country working group; \*\*denotes official.

#### **Chairman's Welcome and Remarks** – Nick Bishop

A very warm welcome to you all and thank you for attending our AGM. I have just completed my first year as Chairman of our League, a role which I have thoroughly enjoyed and I should thank Bob Lynch, my predecessor for his years in post prior to me. The season will perhaps be remembered most for the conditions..... aside from Heaton Park, conditions have been wet with the going heavy underfoot. The final race at Wythenshawe Park was all of that but with strong gales thrown in! The League has again shown a healthy increase in numbers participating. The League is now in its eighth year and numbers continue to rise. Brenda will have a full breakdown, but in simple terms: 3,841 runners and 52 guests took part, an increase of 10.4% on 2012/2013. In the “senior” team events... we had 25 ladies teams complete a minimum four races, with a further 27 competing in three or less. We had 33 men’s teams complete in a minimum four races, with a further 33 competing in three or less. In the junior events, we saw greater numbers of girls taking part than boys at the younger age groups but with both reducing in the elder age groups. A number of new clubs affiliated with the league. They are most welcome and I hope they enjoyed their experiences! Competition throughout the races was strong and the League should be delighted that one of its member clubs provided the race winner in the “Saucony Men’s National Cross Country Championships” in Steve Vernon.

Without the help that is provided by a number of people and groups, we would have no League. Personally, I am very fortunate to have a very able team who make things happen in a most efficient and selfless way. We have the host clubs together with the marshals and match day officials that make the race days what they are. We are indebted to match day officials whose work can go unnoticed and yet we have results available within an hour of each race. Personally, if I looked at one area that we need to be mindful of, it is this one. While we have a committed team of volunteers, we cannot rely on them for ever, and we need to think about future needs and requirements. One way that clubs can help is to try to anticipate likely runners taking part both

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ahead of the season but also before each event... a large number of late entries were processed on the day by League Officers.

For the sixth successive year, a post match presentation of awards was held after the last race, attended by some 100 people who enjoyed a subsidised Hot Pot and presentation ceremony. The subsidy is provided by the League. A new award was given following a request for clubs to nominate one person from their club who helped to make cross country happen from within their club... *The Mr or Mrs Cross Country* of each club. Five nominations were received and the award was given to Jono Guildford of Manchester Frontrunners. The award was provided by one of the League sponsors, Decathlon. All runners that attended with their race number were also entered into a free raffle to win two prizes of the "Ground Control" fell shoe, kindly donated by Running Bear of Alderley Edge. Views on the format of the presentation are always welcomed from clubs, including how to integrate the juniors into the presentations. The finances are obviously a critical part of the League, and these will be covered by our Treasurer Stephen Hindmarsh. If I may make a couple of points. The Costs of First Aid Provision increased dramatically due to the change to a new provider. This is covered under an agenda item. We are indebted to the League sponsors: Manchester City Council, Colgate Palmolive Dental Health Unit, and this year for the first time, Decathlon. Sponsorship is an agenda item. We made the decision to increase individual entry fees from 50p per head to 75p per head this season to safeguard future finances. While we have a healthy cash reserve, we still need to be mindful of income and expenditure.

In summary, the League is in good shape, and provides an excellent stage for athletes of all ages to test their abilities.

### ***Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 March 2013***

Minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 had been posted on the website pre-season and were sent to Club contacts both pre-season and pre-meeting. They were accepted. *Proposed by Ruth Bardsley, seconded by Julie Laverock.*

### ***Treasurer's Report – Stephen Hindmarsh***

The Treasurer presented the Income & Expenditure figures together with explanatory notes. Bank balance stands at £6,396.45 having started with £8,202.43 which meant an excess expenditure of £1,661.93 unlike last season when income equalled expenditure. He addressed each item and, whilst sponsorship appears to be up, numbers were not part of the MCC sponsorship deal this season so the sponsorship from the new sponsor, Decathlon, was to cover numbers. Costs for the Hot Pot were about the same. Venue hire fees have continued to rise as have the costs for medical cover. We will have more money for race fees due mainly to the increase from 50p per race to 75p.

*There were no questions.* However, Bob Lynch (Macclesfield & Working Group) made the point that the League has become very expensive for Clubs particularly when compared with the North Staffs League. This view was not generally shared by the meeting.

*Arnold Bradshaw (Manchester Harriers & Working Group) thanked the Treasurer for all his hard work.*

### ***Stats for the 2013/2014 Season – Brenda Bradshaw***

Competing Numbers and Fees Due sheets had been sent to each Club prior to the meeting. Total race fees due = £2,877.00 (2012/13 £1,698.50; 2011/12 £1,553) plus £114.00 (2012/13 £119.50;

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2011/12 £72.50) due from Clubs whose entries did not reach the 75% target of competing against entered. This latter figure improved overall against last season at 76.9% but work is still needed by some clubs (2012/13 75.5%; 2011/12 75.8%; 2010/11 72.8%, 2009/10 60%). An encouraging point is that the average number of competitors taking part in each race continues to rise with 695 in 2013/14 (621 in 2012/13; 583 2011/12; 512 2010/11; 466 2009/10; 445 2008/09). The following statistics were emailed to club contacts prior to the meeting: (1) Number of runners per category per match; (2) Veteran runners split into category; (3) Number of races; Number of runners; Number entered; % competing against entered; Fees due; (4) Number of individuals completing 4 or 5 races. Figures were also given showing entries received on match days and the number of re-issued race numbers. If both these figures could be improved, it would be a huge help. On the day entries and re-issuing numbers causes a lot of extra work and stress for those having to cope with queues of runners at registration. Clubs were asked to look at the figures and if their club is prone to having match day entries and/or to having members who need new numbers, to see if they can make improvements. They could perhaps encourage their members to look at the website for the updates and notes on competing in the League and forward the emails sent to club contacts to their members.

*Mike Wharton (Sale Harriers Manchester) will look at improving their communication. Sue Exon (Trafford) said problems arise because the Club is anxious to keep unused entries to a minimum.* The League appreciates this latter point but asks that clubs make use of the facility that allows late entries up to 48 hours prior to each match day.

### ***Election of Officers***

As the incumbents were willing to stand again, and in the absence of any other nominations for the posts, the following appointments were proposed and accepted by the meeting:

- ✚ Chairman – Nick Bishop
- ✚ Secretary – Brenda Bradshaw
- ✚ Treasurer – Stephen Hindmarsh
- ✚ Entries & Affiliations Co-ordinator – Julie Laverock

*The Working Group consists of the Officers (as above), Ruth Bardsley, Arnold Bradshaw, Peter Gilligan (former Chairman M&D & MACCL), Bob Lynch (former Chairman Cheshire & MACCL) & Tony Riley (former Chairman NWW & MACCL).*

### ***Medical Cover***

Julie Laverock advised the meeting about her research between seasons to source a new medical cover provider. She looked at several organisations including Mountain Rescue, The Red Cross and the company she eventually settled on – Jigsaw. The latter had done similar events although not athletics, they were keen and their technician's qualifications were impeccable and perfectly suited to the needs of the League. Cost is obviously an issue but medical cover is a priority.

*Bob Lynch expressed his concern at the cost and feels we should endeavour to find a cheaper alternative or ask Jigsaw if they can provide the service cheaper. Steve Symons (Manchester YMCA Harriers) spoke for the retention of Jigsaw who provided an excellent service. He would not want to see the League engaging a company based on cost. Lorraine Barlow (Moston & District Harriers) spoke in agreement with Steve's views. The Secretary read out an email received from a parent of an U13 Boy: "At Boggart my son cut his leg during the U13 race following a big pile up. We took him to first aid straight after the race. Despite it being busy with other injured juniors, he was seen to promptly and the paramedic took time to assess and treat him, taking time to check his blood pressure and carry*

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*out a few other checks. Despite it being busy, it was not rushed at all so a job well done I think. So I thought I would just let you know as sometimes people are too quick to criticise but not quick enough to praise.”*

**Action:** Julie Laverock to see if there is an alternative provider who can provide the same level of cover at a reduced price; Nick Bishop to ask Jigsaw if they are able to reduce their cost whilst retaining the same level of cover.

### ***Sponsorship for 2014/15***

The Secretary was able to confirm that The Manchester Network (MCC) will sponsor the League in the amount of £1,000 and that Colgate-Palmolive's Dental Health Unit will provide £600, stationery, franking and Colgate goods. Nick Bishop advised the meeting that there is the possibility of a new sponsor who would provide enough sponsorship to cover the League's expenses. However, he wasn't in a position to disclose who that sponsor is but did allay the Secretary's concern that any new sponsor should not be a company in a business not conducive to the aims of the League, i.e. a loans or betting company.

### ***Affiliation and Entry Fees for 2014/2015***

Taking the advice of The Treasurer and the general feeling of the meeting, it was agreed there would be no change to the fees. Thus: affiliation fee per club **£40** (*except Host Clubs for whom the affiliation fee is waived*); fee per runner per race **75p**; unused entry fee per unused entry for Clubs not achieving a 75% or greater return on entries **50p**; re-issued numbers on match day **50p**.

### ***Scoring***

Currently for both teams and individuals, the best four races count. However, in the event of a tie, if one team has completed four races and the other five, the team or the individual completing five races wins. One of the reasons the League has the best four of five was to avoid host clubs and their members being penalised for hosting a match. Using the current method, in the event of a tie, a host Club is penalised. The League therefore recommended the following:

**TEAMS:** taking the best four races, if one team finishes higher 3 times, that team wins. If both teams finish higher twice, the positions of the last counting runners in each of the four races will determine the winning team. For veteran teams the positions gained in the veteran race are used.

**INDIVIDUALS:** taking the best four races, if one runner has a higher finish position 3 times, that runner wins. If both runners finish higher twice, their category position in each of the four races will determine the winner.

*The meeting agreed with the recommendations and the new system will be used in the 2014/15 season.*

### ***Awards for 2014/2015***

Awards will remain as per 2013/2014.

### ***Awards Presentation***

The Senior Presentation was held in the Courtyard Café at Wythenshawe Park and thanks go to Nick Bishop for organising it. It was well supported but the venue wasn't ideal. Nick's photographic montage was a bit out of the way and the main area wasn't really big enough.

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Regrettably the junior presentations were, once again, far from good. The gale force winds meant we couldn't erect the presentation tent and a power cut meant delays in getting the results sorted.

Further thought needed for both presentations.

### ***Dates & Venues for 2014/2015***

Offers were received from Manchester H & AC at Heaton Park, St Helens Sutton at Sherdley Park, Sale Harriers Manchester at Wythenshawe Park, Salford H & AC at Boggart Hole Clough and Stockport H & AC at Woodbank Park. Salford requested a match prior to Christmas as they have been asked to stage the Greater Manchester Championships in January. Stockport requested match one or two as they have been asked to stage a Police championships in January and they also have to consider the Friends of the Park; St Helens Sutton requested the November Match; Sale said they would stage the final match. In view of these requests, Manchester agreed to stage Match Four. The League was also asked to avoid the dates set by the North Staffs League – 27 Sept, 25 Oct, 15 Nov and 13 Dec. Taking all that into account, the following dates were agreed, subject to the venues being available:

Match 1 - Woodbank Park – Saturday 11 October – Stockport H & AC

Match 2 - Sherdley Park – Saturday 8 November – St Helens Sutton AC

Match 3 – Boggart Hole Clough - Saturday 6 December – Salford H & AC

Match 4 – Heaton Park – Saturday 10 January – Manchester H & AC

Match 5 – Wythenshawe Park - Saturday 7 February – Sale Harriers Manchester AC

Chris Dempsey (St Helens Sutton) in an email sent prior to the meeting, said they would need portaloos for their fixture. Steve Symons (Manchester YMCA) kindly volunteered to book them again for Sherdley Park and any of the other matches that required them. The League thanked Steve and will advise him as soon as possible dates and venues where portaloos are needed for next season.

Host Clubs were asked to let the League know as soon as the venues were booked and confirmed.

### ***Any Other Business***

**Ballot Paper** was received for elections to the England Athletics Board. It was agreed that The League should vote for Jean Simpson. *[Tim Soutar/Blackheath & Bromley and Neil Costello/Cambridge & Coleridge were subsequently elected having taken 153 (25%) and 125 (19%) of the votes respectively. Votes for the other nominees: Steve Gaines 120; Jean Simpson 99; Dave Moulder 91; Rob Whittingham 68; David Little 38.*

**Abbreviation of Club Names** looking at the results for individuals, it was noted that some club names didn't "fit in". As a consequence, it was difficult to tell whether an individual was from St Helens Sutton or St Helens Striders. The same applied to the three Manchester Clubs – Frontrunners, Triathlon and YMCA. Abbreviations will be suggested and the relevant clubs consulted.

**EA Club Conference** – EA are holding Club Conferences around the regions and the League is invited to attend one on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at Longford Park. The Secretary and Arnold Bradshaw will be attending. Should anyone else wish to attend they would be welcome but do need to register.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8:50 pm.