

MANCHESTER AREA CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE

MEETING NOTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT SPORTCITY REGIONAL ARENA, MANCHESTER ON WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2015

*Those present - Clubs represented and by whom: Altrincham & District AC – Mike Welford**;* *Chorlton Runners – Leona Beaumont, Val Brennan, Ben McCormack, Helen Stevens, Jen Turner;* *Dragons RC (Sale) – Simon Skentelbery;* *East Cheshire H & Tameside AC – Gary Matthews;* *Glossopdale Harriers – Neil McGraw, Neville McGraw;* *Macclesfield H & AC – Bob Lynch*;* *Manchester H & AC – Arnold Bradshaw*/**, Brenda Bradshaw*/**, George Lawson**;* *Manchester YMCA Harriers – David Ashton, Stephen Hindmarsh*, Jon Paramor, Stephen Symons;* *Middleton H AC – Peter Gilligan*, Craig Sutherland;* *St Helens Sutton – Christine Dempsey, Helena McColdrick;* *Sale Harriers Manchester AC – Mike Wharton;* *Salford H & AC – Ruth Bardsley*, Julie Laverock*, Jackie Mason;* *Salford Metropolitan AC – Alan Thomas;* *Stockport H & AC – Pete Torrance;* *Swinton Running Club – Steve Doxey;* *Trafford AC – Jeff Prest;* *West Cheshire – Mike Lamb;* *Wilmslow RC – Nick Bishop*;* *Officials – Joan Royle Judge Recorder.*

Apologies for absence from Clubs not represented – Manchester Frontrunners - Jono Guildford; *Liverpool H & AC - Arwel Williams;* *St Helens Striders – Frank McAllister;* *Winston Runners – Paul Lockett.*

Apologies for absence from individuals whose clubs were represented - Mike Jones - Altrincham; *Dave Rodgers - Sale;* *Pete Budd – Salford;* *Jennifer Crowther** & Debbie Hulme – Salford Met;* *Sue Exon – Trafford.*

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

Chairman's Welcome and Remarks – Nick Bishop

Good evening everyone, a very warm welcome, and thank you for attending the League AGM. For much of the day during race meetings, I tend to be away from the heat of battle, either presenting race day awards, or liaising with other officials.....but from my perspective, the competition this season always looked keen, and the excitement felt from spectators, clearly evident. Race days were busy affairs, and Brenda will tell you more about the exact numbers, in just a few moments. We had a number of new clubs affiliate with the League this season, which helped to contribute to the growth in numbers competing. If I may mention one club that embraced race day with a passion. Chorlton Runners..... they had good turnouts always and their ladies team finished Third, in Division Two. Just returning to the words “embrace and passion”. We also had a proposal, from a Chorlton runner, to his girlfriend.....and on the finish line! Delighted to report, that the answer was YES!

For the second year running, the League also produced the winner, in the “Saucony Men’s National Cross Country Championships”Charlie Hulson of Sale. An awesome achievement, and a great credit for the League. What you see, and enjoy come race day, is the result of the hard work of an excellent committee. (Brenda, Arnold, Bob, Stephen, Julie & Ruth) and to whom, I am as always, very appreciative. We are also very grateful to host clubs, and to the volunteer marshals. One area that I mentioned last year, was our race day officials. Allow me to just say, that they are maturing, like a fine red wine.....but, just like any good red, it does have to be drunk one day. Without our race day officials, we would struggle to put on our races. They do have a long day, standing out in all conditions. Their contribution is vital, and we are very appreciative of them all. For me this is an area that we need to focus on. The officials are qualified, so it’s not as simple as merely calling on someone.....but, it is great fun to be involved and to have the best viewing seat in the house.

We are always looking for suitable volunteers and, in particular, so too is Julie Laverock, our very capable “Entries and affiliations” co-ordinator. We are seeking two people to work with Julie on race days, to help with processing race day queries.....Julie is more than willing to help to train any suitable volunteers. One point: the role is simpler if clubs can do their best to adhere to the registration dates provided, as opposed to waiting to race day. That would make a big difference!

For the seventh successive year, we staged a well-attended “Senior Presentation” held in the Courtyard Café, as soon as practical after the final race. Over 100 attended, and I would recommend this to clubs as

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a great way to see out the season. In addition to the athlete awards, two other prizes were given. The League's Special Merit award was given to the sprightly Bob Towell of Salford Harriers. A raffle also took place for two pairs of Ground Control fell shoes, donated by Running Bear of Alderley Edge. Amazingly, the winners are an item in their own right.....the evergreen Colin Rathbone & Carole Williams of Vale Royal. They can now skip through the hills together, in matching footwear! A junior presentation was also held earlier in the day.

Stephen will take you through the accounts which, on face value, appear in a healthy state. We do just about break even, or operate at a small loss, and this has been helped by the increase we made to race entry fees last year.....these still offer excellent value for money. The League could not exist without the support received from sponsors: Apteco, who sponsored the League this season have, I am delighted to say, agreed to sponsor again next season; the City of Manchester Athletics; also supported by Waters Wilmslow Half Marathon & Colgate Palmolive's Dental Health Unit. Sponsorship is not large, and we are always keen to talk to organisations who may have an interest in being associated with the League.

Thank you again for your continued support. The League is in good shape and October will be upon us more quickly than you know it! Thank you.

Presentation – The League wanted to show its gratitude to Mr Tony Riley for his services as Referee. Tony retired at the beginning of the season following eight seasons as Referee. He also served on the working group and was the League Chairman for one season. Regrettably Tony was not able to attend the meeting and the award will be given to him by Ruth Bardsley.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12th March 2014

Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th March 2014 had been posted on the website pre-season and were sent to Club contacts both pre-season and pre-meeting. They were accepted as a true record. *Proposed by Peter Gilligan, seconded by Mike Wharton.*

Treasurer's Report – Stephen Hindmarsh

The Treasurer presented the Income & Expenditure figures together with explanatory notes and went through all the items. He advised that the aim is to break even, i.e. we don't want to make either a loss or a profit so the excess of £127.01 is a satisfactory result. He pointed out the bank balance of £10,366.90 which had benefitted from receipt of £3,843.44 from the North West Womens Cross Country League. This sum is a one off item and comes, belatedly, from the combining of the three Leagues, NWWCCL, Cheshire and the Manchester & District.

George Lawson (Manchester Harriers) asked if there would be a venue charge for Sherdley Park. Chris Dempsey (St Helens Sutton) advised not. Mike Welford (Altrincham) queried payment of unattached levy fees to Northern Athletics. The Secretary confirmed that the fees were paid to Northern Athletics.

Stats for the 2014/2015 Season – Brenda Bradshaw

Competing numbers and fees due sheets were given out at the meeting. Total race fees due = £2,869.50 (2012/14 £2,877.00; 2012/13 £1,698.50; 2011/12 £1,553) plus £220.00 (2013/14 £114.00; 2012/13 £119.50; 2011/12 £72.50) due from Clubs whose entries did not reach the 75% target of competing against entered – overall 70.3% of those entered actually competed (2013/14 76.9%; 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 765 in 2014/15 (695 2013/14; 621 2012/13; 583 2011/12; 512 2010/11; 466 2009/10; 445 2008/09). A list of award winners and the roll of honour for 2014/2015 were given out together with the roll of honour for the League from its start in 2006 to the present (*posted on the website 27/2/15*).

The following statistics were not available for the meeting and will be emailed to club contacts in due course: number of runners per category per match; veteran runners split into category; number of races; number of runners; number entered; % competing against entered; fees due; number of individuals completing 4 or 5 races. [*Subsequently emailed to club contacts 4/4/15 and posted on the website 5/4/15. BB*]

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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:

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

Proposed by Pete Torrance, seconded by Peter Gilligan.

The Officers are aided by Arnold Bradshaw, Peter Gilligan and Bob Lynch who complete the Working Group. *Both Ruth Bardsley and Tony Riley have retired from the Working Group having served the League since its start in 2006.*

Medical Cover

Julie Laverock reported that Jigsaw had proved to be reliable and efficient and she will liaise with them regarding cover for next season. They will be asked to provide cover for four hours from 11:45 am rather than 12 noon. Mike Wharton asked what the League's legal obligation is to cover time outside this four hour period, i.e. when warming down. Julie advised that she is the League's qualified provider so we have cover whilst she is on site.

Sponsorship for 2015/16

Nick Bishop reported that Apteco, the Company that came on board this season, have agreed to continue their sponsorship next season. Rob Downs, one of the Company's Directors, competed in four matches and took the title of First V50 whilst his boss, James Alty, competed in Match Five. There is also the possibility of support from a new source and discussions are to take place with Jackie & Duncan Mason. It is anticipated, but not yet confirmed, that The Wilmslow Half Marathon will continue their support and it is confirmed that the sponsorship and support of Colgate-Palmolive's Dental Health Unit will continue. There will be a final payment of the current sponsorship from the City of Manchester Athletics.

Race Scheduling – Junior Race

The meeting was asked to consider running the junior age bands as follows: Race One – U11 Boys & Girls; Race Two U13 Boys & Girls; Race Three U15 Boys & Girls; Race Four U17 Boys & Girls. This would make it possible to provide the correct distances. The current schedule means that the older runners are running far below their recommended distance, i.e. the U13 Boys compete with the U15 Girls with maximum distances of 3,500 and 5,000 metres respectively. *Helena McGoldrick/St Helens Sutton - the change would be a good thing for the U17 Girls in particular as they currently step up from 5,000 to 8,000 when they move up to the Senior Race. Bob Lynch/WG pointed out that age group changes are being made nationally so if the League does make changes for the coming season, we may well have to change again the following season. Julie Laverock/WG – we will need to ensure that everyone is aware of the changes. Decision - it was agreed that we should give it a try next season. In addition - Julie also spoke about deadline entry dates and the importance of keeping to them.*

Affiliation and Entry Fees for 2015/2016

Taking the advice of the Treasurer 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.

Divisions – Senior & Veteran Teams

Clubs were asked to consider changes to the divisional structure due to the increased number of competing teams. Nick Bishop presented his suggestion. In essence the top three divisions would all be “A” teams with a separate division for all “B” teams and a further division for the remaining teams, i.e.

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“C”, “D” etc teams. For illustration, at this stage, he has just looked at the senior men. *Following discussion, the meeting agreed that we should have a re-structuring and further work will be done.*

Awards for 2015/2016

The current overall Junior awards give U11 individuals a medal whilst U13, U15 & U17 individuals receive a medal plus money in the form of an M&S Gift Card. Following discussion it was agreed that the U11 awards be changed to fall in line with the others.

Dates & Venues for 2015/2016

Manchester, St Helens Sutton, Sale, Salford and Stockport all volunteered to host matches next season. St Helens Sutton requested Match Two, Salford want pre-Christmas and Stockport Match One as they are hosting the Police Championships post-Christmas. Manchester would prefer Match One but agreed, reluctantly, to host Match Four and Sale are happy to host Match Five. Taking all that into account and using the recommended League dates, the following was agreed, subject to the venues being available:

Match 1 - Woodbank Park – Saturday 10 October – Stockport H & AC

Match 2 - Sherdley Park – Saturday 7 November – St Helens Sutton AC

Match 3 – Boggart Hole Clough - Saturday 5 December – Salford H & AC

Match 4 – Heaton Park – Saturday 16 January – Manchester H & AC

Match 5 – Wythenshawe Park - Saturday 13 February – Sale Harriers Manchester AC

Portaloos - last season we had three at all matches except Heaton Park and it was agreed we do need them. Steve Symons (Manchester YMCA) kindly volunteered to book them again for next season and will endeavour to get them at the same cost. The Secretary suggested we need four at Sherdley Park. The League to liaise with the host clubs and Steve Symons.

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

Any Other Business

Help from non-host clubs - it was felt that the level of help had been good but it was suggested we ask clubs pre-season to state the match they would prefer to cover rather than allocate clubs to a particular match. The Chairman, in his opening remarks, referred to help being needed on the registration desk. Chorlton Runners, following their first successful season with the League, put themselves forward as willing to help and it was suggested that they help with registration and help host clubs, who have the expertise but may be struggling with manpower, mark the course. *Discussions between the League and Chorlton will be made pre-season.* Should any other clubs feel in a position to help in any way, please contact the League.

Cheating – Following Match Three, the League received very positive comments regarding the organisation of the League from Neil McGraw of Glossopdale Harriers. However, he was not impressed with some of the runners who thought it was appropriate to continually cut corners by running on the wrong side of the clearly flagged course. This wasn't a grumble about the course which was more than adequately flagged and marshalled but rather about the honesty of his fellow competitors. Neil added, at the meeting, that it does seem to be a problem generally, not just for the League. *Action: the League will do all it can to encourage runners to keep to the course and asked that Club contacts do the same.*

Comment – Steve Shaughnessy, Stockport Harriers, sent his thanks to the committee and sponsors for a very enjoyable season. He enjoyed every match and appreciated the hard work put in throughout the season and on the long and often cold match days.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8:45 pm.