

MANCHESTER AREA CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT SPORTCITY REGIONAL ARENA, MANCHESTER ON MONDAY 16 MARCH 2020

Those present - Clubs represented and by whom: Altrincham & District AC – Fiona Cosgrove, Carole Harrison, Graham Harrison; Chorlton Runners – Neal Wainwright; Didsbury Runners – Matthew Gittins; East Cheshire H & Tameside AC – Gary Matthews; Manchester H & AC – Arnold Bradshaw/**, Brenda Bradshaw*/**; Manchester Tri Club – Sonia Harris, Jude Wall; Manchester YMCA Harriers – Stephen Hindmarsh*, Jon Paramor; Marple Runners – Jeremy Woodham; Quays RC – Neil Atherton, Stephen Symons; St Helens Sutton AC – Helena McGoldrick; Sale Harriers Manchester AC – Mike Wharton; Salford H & AC – Ruth Bardsley*; Stockport H & AC – Kevan Garner, Iain Murdoch, Pete Torrance; Trafford AC – Jeff Prest; West Cheshire AC – David Alexander; Wilmslow RC – Nick Bishop*; Winston Runners – Peter Walters.*

Apologies for Absence

*From Clubs not represented: Belle Vue Racers – Annie Hirsch; Macclesfield H & AC – Rob Hasler, Bob Lynch; Liverpool H & AC - Arwel Williams; Salford Metropolitan AC – Jennifer Crowther**, Debbie Hulme; Swinton RC – Steve Doxey; Wirral AC – Anne Rosbottom.*

From individuals whose Clubs were represented: Salford Harriers & AC – Pete Budd, Julie Laverock*; Wilmslow RC – Andrew Whittingham.*

*[*denotes member of the Working Group; **denotes Official]*

Chairman's Welcome and Remarks – Nick Bishop

The Chairman welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.

Thanks go to our sponsors... Run North West, Athlete Matters, Colgate-Palmolive & City of Manchester Athletics. The support we receive from them is very much appreciated and needed.

Thanks too to “our” officials. We are very fortunate that they continue to give their help and expertise. We can't operate without officials and we would like to encourage more to join them.

The working group manages the League on behalf of the clubs. We have a great team but regrettably Julie Laverock, due to family commitments, has decided she can't continue. Julie has been an invaluable group member and will be missed. Her duties include: receipt of affiliations; dealing with new club enquiries; back-up first-aider; sourcing first aid provision; liaison with first aid provider prior to and on match days; production of course maps; storage and set up of registration tent; twitter account manager. Anyone willing to join the working group and take on one or more of these duties please let us know.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25 March 2019

Minutes of the meeting held on the 25 March 2019 had been posted on the website pre-season, they had been emailed to Club contacts pre-season and emailed again pre-AGM. Copies were also available at the AGM. *Carole Harrison (Altrincham & District) proposed acceptance of them as a true record and Mike Wharton (Sale Harriers Manchester) seconded. All agreed.*

Treasurer's Report – Stephen Hindmarsh

The Treasurer presented the Income & Expenditure figures advising that, whilst the object is to balance the books, we hadn't quite managed it as we have an excess income of £1,389.46. The comparison with the previous season's expenses explains the surplus. Affiliations this season are almost the same. The fees per race are those for last season and show an increase over the previous season. The main difference is in the awards expenditure as we didn't have to purchase medals this season having purchased two season's worth in the previous season. Expenditure on equipment was less. Venue expenses are difficult as we don't always receive invoices. *Nick*

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Bishop added that it's increasingly likely that we will have to pay more for venues and thanked the Treasurer for his report. Neil Atherton (Quays RC) proposed acceptance of the Accounts and Helena McGoldrick (St Helens Sutton AC) seconded. All agreed.

Election of Officers

As mentioned earlier, Julie Laverock has resigned from the working group. The other members of the working group were willing to stand again and, in the absence of any other nominations, the following appointments were proposed and accepted:

- ✚ Chairman – Nick Bishop
- ✚ Treasurer – Stephen Hindmarsh
- ✚ Secretary – Brenda Bradshaw
- ✚ Members – Ruth Bardsley, Arnold Bradshaw, Pete Budd

Mike Wharton (Sale Harriers Manchester) proposed the acceptance of the above and the proposal was seconded by Graham Harrison (Altrincham & District) and accepted by all present.

Following acceptance, Ruth Bardsley volunteered to take on sourcing medical cover and Brenda Bradshaw will take on affiliations. The Chairman pointed out that, whilst the current members have given assurance that they are happy to carry on and that they would give 12 months' notice of leaving, we do need more people willing to take on different aspects, particularly those conducted by Julie Laverock.

Affiliation and Entry Fees for 2020/2021

The Treasurer proposed all fees remain at the same level, i.e. affiliation fee per club £50 (*except Host Clubs for whom the affiliation fee is waived*); fee per runner per race £1; fee per unused entry for Clubs not achieving a 75% or greater return on entries 50p. Re-issued numbers on match day £1. However, it is recognised that we may face considerable increase in venue hire and the meeting agreed that there should be some flexibility on race fees should the need arise. *Proposal accepted.*

Sponsorship for 2020/2021

Nick Bishop – sponsorship continues to play an important part in the running of the League. It's important to bear in mind that, whilst it's not the intention to make a profit, it is important that we have a reserve to fall back on should the need arise. The Secretary confirmed that Colgate-Palmolive will continue their support, i.e. £600, franking, photocopying and stationery. It is anticipated that Manchester City Council will continue to allow us use of their parks at a set fee. The Chairman advised that he will contact Run North West and Athlete Matters regarding their support.

Dates & Venues for 2020/2021 (see dates update on p.4)

The designated league dates are not yet known so we're working on the corresponding dates to those used in 2019/20, i.e. 2020: 10 October, 7 November, 5 December and 2021: 9 January, 6 February. As always, the dates are subject to hosts and venues being available. The following comments were made:

- ✚ **Woodbank Park/Stockport Harriers** - Kevan Garner advised that they would be able to host a match. They recognise there is still the potential for parking problems but they feel these could be overcome. They would like the January match.

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- ✚ **Wythenshawe Park/Sale Harriers Manchester** – Mike Wharton feels the League has outgrown the Park due in part to re-development and to the inadequate parking when the main field is too wet. However, Sale would be willing to host the Tatton Park venue.
- ✚ **Tatton Park** – The League is hopeful that we will be able to return. We know that Brian Goulden, the mastermind behind the League having use of this very popular venue, is working hard to secure the venue for next season.
- ✚ **University Playing Fields/Kenworthy Woods/Chorlton Runners** – Neal Wainwright confirmed Chorlton's willingness to host a match but thinks they would struggle to provide marshals should their request for increasing the women's race distance be turned down (see item below on equalising). They would like to host match one but would be willing to take on any match.
- ✚ **Heaton Park/Manchester Harriers** – Brenda Bradshaw confirmed Manchester Harriers' willingness to host a match. They would like the opportunity to host match one but would consider others.
- ✚ **Arrowe Park/Wirral AC** – last season's match had resulted in the lowest turnout and there was some criticism that the lengths advertised were exceeded. Added to that, parking wasn't great. However, the course was good. The host club did a fantastic job but haven't said whether they would be prepared to host again.
- ✚ **Sherdley Park/St Helens Sutton** – Helena McGoldrick suggested they may be in a position to host a match - but not the last one. Whilst the venue hasn't been available to us for a few seasons due to development work, Helena felt sure there is still a course we could use. Helena will discuss the situation with her club colleagues and get back to us.

Any Other Business

Equalising senior men and senior women race distances – Neal Wainwright, Chorlton Runners: Chorlton Runners (CR) would like the distance run by senior men and senior women to be equal bringing them in line with many other cross country leagues around the country. CR believe this can be accommodated quite comfortably on the Kenworthy Woods course without extending the overall day and suggested it be used as a trial venue next season.

Mike Wharton of Sale, who was instrumental in devising the course that Chorlton host, commented that the women's race distance at Kenworthy should, and could, be longer. At the time of creating the course, it was recognized it was shorter (6,900m) than the approximate recommended League distance (8,000m).

Comments from attendees: *Nick Bishop* – he thought the question of equality had started in the South; *Manchester Tri/Sonia Harris* – not in favour and feels very strongly against increasing the women's distance; *St Helens Sutton/Helena McGoldrick* – if the women's distance is increased it would stop their Under 20's competing; *Marple Runners/Jeremy Woodham* – probably 50/50 for and against for their Club.

The Secretary read out comments received from affiliated clubs: *Wirral AC/Anne Rosbottom* ... "I suspect that increasing the distance would actually put ladies off competing. I'm afraid men and women are clearly not equal and whilst they frequently run equal distances on the road they have traditionally not done so over cross country." *Liverpool H & AC/Arwel Williams* ... "I have canvassed, on our club's social media, the view of athletes and personally mine are similar. As a County many of our senior ladies refused to run the 10K at the Inter Counties due to the increase in distance." Some of the views received: (1) "I'm all for equal opportunities in terms of number of race fixtures, prizes etc but the actual race distances being altered doesn't make it equal and isn't in the interest of female athletes and won't have a positive effect on the audience

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*that these events should be catering for. I don't think that would make the event more appealing to female athletes and certainly not beneficial for developing young athletes.” (2) “At the heart of a decision should be what’s right for developing athletes through the league and providing meaningful xc competition. Not, did we tick a box for the sake of equality that arrived at a point that serves neither the men or women effectively.” (3) “I’m not in favour. I think 8k is adequate over cross country for women. That’s just my preference. Anything more than that is a pure slog.” (4) I think this is a really tough call!! There’s the issue like the inter-counties where the distance was way over what it said. I suppose it depends on what they want to achieve. The L&D is equal but very few women show I don't think there’s a right answer!” (5)..... junior women would be running senior men’s distance!” **Macclesfield H & AC/Bob Lynch** ... ”please can we keep the women’s distances as now, which will encourage numbers competing and enable the race timetable not to be extended forcing host clubs to take down courses in near darkness.”*

Salford Harriers/Ruth Bardsley (and working group) asked for caution advising that making equality in one area often creates inequality for others. Speaking for Salford Harriers, their women, including their faster women, would be against extending the distance.

The Chairman, Nick Bishop, advised that all clubs will be given the opportunity to comment so that the Working Group can come to an informed decision.

Before the meeting closed, the Secretary advised that the race fees invoices would be emailed to club contacts as soon as they were ready and apologised that they weren’t already available.

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

UPDATE - Dates & Venues for 2020/2021

The English Cross Country Association issued the following statement on the 23rd March:

League designated dates are: October 10th, November 7th, December 5th, January 16th and February 13th, with a sixth date of 13th March if required. They went on to say “these could of course change if we are not on top of Covid-19 by the Autumn but for now they have been agreed”.

The League will endeavour to use the above dates but it will, as usual, depend on the availability of hosts and venues.