

Minutes of the London Regional Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 27th August, 2014
At Kings Cross Premier Inn, London

Present

Peter Crawshaw (PGC) – London Council Co-Chair / Officials Portfolio
Tony Shiret (TLS) – London Council Co-Chair / England Council Chair (items 5 onwards)
Geoff Morphitis (GM) – Clubs Portfolio
Tim Soutar (TJS) – Governance Portfolio
Steve Bosley (SB) – Schools Portfolio
Ben Noad (BN)
Susan Cook (SC) – Co-opted member
Anthony Soalla-Bell (ASB) – Co-opted member

Apologies

Lorna Boothe (LB) – Coaching Portfolio
Richard Pettigrew – Co-opted Member
David Ralph – Chair, Kent County AA

In attendance

Bob Smith (BS) – EA London Area Manager
Paul Merrywest (PM) – Representing Chair, Essex County AA
Ivor Wiggett (IW) – Representing President, Middlesex County AA
John Gandee (JG) – SEAA Competition Ltd
Tom Pollak (TP) – Chair, Surrey County AA
Sarah Wade SW) – EA.

Basis of preparation

Outcomes show the decisions made at London Regional Council Meetings but not the full debate at those meetings to reach those decisions. Publication of separate Minutes and Outcomes allows the Council to have a full debate for the record (Minutes) while keeping interested parties informed of important decisions reached (Outcomes). The related Minutes were formally approved at the Council Meeting on 22nd October.

1. Welcome / Apologies

PGC took the chair and opened the meeting. SC and ASB were welcomed to their first London Council meeting.

PGC passed on LB's apologies and explained that there had been confusion regarding her changed e mail address, which had resulted in her not having received some notifications of meetings. PGC had however, had prior to the Council meeting a lengthy and useful discussion with her regarding in particular Coach Education, and especially the difficulty that is evident in attracting sufficient numbers to the Athletics Coach course and indeed in supporting course attendees to complete the processes required to attain their licences (see also items 3 (c) and 4(b) below).

2. Minutes 16th April: confirmation of accuracy

Agreed that PGC should sign the minutes as an accurate record, subject to correction of Paul Merrywest's name / position within Essex County AA.

3. Matters arising where not already on the agenda

3a) Co-opting of members of the London Council

It was formally agreed that Susan Cook, Anthony Soalla-Bell and Richard Pettigrew be co-opted onto the London Council, as a result of invitations made following discussions among Elected Councillors at the previous meeting. PGC undertook, as envisaged in those discussions, to initiate an advertising process (via the London Athletics website) for applications to be made for recruitment of up to a further three co-opted members (as permitted by the EA Articles).

Action: PGC to have appointments of co-opted members put on London Athletics website, and to initiate process for others to express an interest to the London Council

3b) Update on discussions with YDL management

PGC gave an account of the meetings that he had had with YDL management over lunch on 13th June (also attended by GM, TP and Kate Jenrick of Highgate H, as well as Nigel Bongers of Holland Sports, SB having been invited but had to pull out) and (at the request of the EA National Council) in Athletics House (also attended by Mike Heath and representatives of North East Region – other Regions had sent written submissions or had met directly with YDL). The focus had at this stage been on airing of issues, rather than finding solutions, though PGC had attempted to draw up a summary of the potential solutions to the main issues (e.g. travel time/distance/ length of comp.), with a personal view of the pros and cons of each.

It had been felt too that it would be useful to articulate (as there was nothing in the YDL constitution re their aims and objectives) the aims of the YDL, reflecting what had been included in the Whole Sport Plan, in support of the request for Sport England funding. Mike Heath had provided PGC with some material, from which he had drafted a short statement, which had now been agreed by both Mike and UKA and was now being shared with YDL management. PGC reiterated the messages that had been included in his letter on January to Chris Jones, including that it was important that YDL ask well in advance of their AGM what clubs wanted and options to address the key issues. Thus far, the only area that had been the topic of consultation had been re travel time: GM and TJS expressed disappointment that more radical solutions had not been offered, and TJS observed that clubs were passionate (even “tribal”) about their competition with their rivals. TJS reiterated that plans to revise the areas covered by divisions would not in his view make too much difference in terms of travel but may see reduction in competition level. GM felt the YDL was missing the point, and that travel was more of an issue for North clubs. He sees the issue as more re size of operation, number of athletes, officials, logistics (too many events and age groups – taking U13’s out all day for one event is not acceptable. SC queried if there is any YDL provision for athletes with a disability (there is not) and commented that rivalries were no less fierce within Disability Athletics.

A lengthy discussion ensued, GM again put forward his / his club’s key proposal: broadly to remove specific U13s’ competition from the Lower Age Group (with dedicated U13s’ competition being delivered primarily via local leagues), and to transfer U17s’ events from the Upper Age Group to the LAG, so enabling a reduced day length for the UAG. This could potentially help to move U17’s events away from GCSE dates, U20 events away from A-level dates. No solutions or agreements were made: PGC while appreciating the strengths of GM’s arguments, commented that for many clubs the inclusion of U13 competition within

the YDL is seen as important to their members. It remains, in his view, important that YDL consult fully with clubs and make recommendations accordingly.

TP felt that athletes don't want to do club meetings anymore- there are event specialist meeting around for athletes to find appropriate and good competition. His club, Hercules Wimbledon, are happy with network competition so have no plans to re-enter the YDL.

PGC reported there may be changes in age group structures in 2016, so there may be a deferral of any major structural change to YDL age groups until any decision is made on that. Other options include rotating events, reducing meetings to 3 per year, possibly with a Regional Final? On the point of clubs not in YDL, YDL had requested in the July meeting that EA to ask networks why clubs within their structures have chosen not to be in YDL.

Reference was made to YDL having announced that there is a deadline for next year's entry to be 30/9/14 so by that date should come up with a London Council position for clubs to know/follow. PGC said that this was news to him, but that he would seek to find out the position at National Council next week.

Action: PGC to check with National Council / YDL management re alleged 30th September deadline.

3c) Review of other outstanding issues from previous meetings

GM asked for news of the agreement of revised responsibilities / related SE funding split between UKA/EA: report due? PGC pointed out that Tony Shiret has written a good summary in his blog. PGC commented that an important outstanding issue is coach education, where UKA continue to set the strategy / determine the structure of courses. Assistant coach going well, but Athletics Coach is not, as low numbers getting licences. Main criticism is current structure driven to educating coaches in some depth across all disciplines, and takes long time so puts people off having a go. GM requested figures- PGC said that BS will provide headline numbers for London in his report (see 4 (b) below), and that he (PGC) is working with Graeme Allan to come up with more granular statistics for London, covering both coaches and officials. Key things are how many on courses, how many get qualification.

GM had previously requested how clubs' links with the individual officials attending a course can be communicated- no method to do this. PGC said that the club affiliation is not a mandatory field on the course application form. This means that County Officials Secretaries and others with access to Trinity may not know who is with each club (and they may in any case be constrained from forwarding details to clubs due to Data Protection Act issues.

SC questioned why people are not encouraged to complete their details on membership portal pages: she offered to work with SW to look at ways to address that. Consensus was that at the moment it is not straightforward or easy - if it was simplified/ encouraged/ given clear instructions then more would complete details. GM would like for CCSO's to be involved in showing how the portal works- easier to get information to filter down through networks- easiest way to get people to use it.

Actions: BS to ask Chris Mallender if there is any training planned for clubs on use of the portal.

SC and SW to look at ways to incentivise / motivate members to log on to portal.

4) Report London Manager

4a) Run/ Participation

BS Run! Figures are good, 5640 participants, 1012 disabled. New Head of Participation at EA is Andy Anstey, who is working closely with the Run Group, focussing on how to increase numbers. A number of staffing changes have occurred – Vanessa Doabry is the new Activator in Haringey/Islington, Jake Waldron has now finished working as Wandsworth Activator, David White (Southwark) is going on sabbatical for 6 months. Jared Keely (Saracens) will be returning home to Australia at the end of his contract. Tim Howells has been appointed as the new Joint Run! Manager. His CCSO role has now been advertised, which will result in some reduction in the service to clubs and coaches in North London until a new appointment is made. New appointments currently require Head Office go ahead for replacement.

4b) Education: coach/ official tutor recruitment/ training

BS – 245 officials on courses- mostly L1. Problem was lack of L1 tutors. Now addressed, with a number of London Activators recently trained. 600 on coaching courses. mostly LiRF. BS felt courses were occasionally cancelled because of lack of demand, not lack of publicity. SC doesn't think courses are well advertised- hasn't been able to find a course to suit on internet searches. BN feels that courses are too long- people don't want to commit that time. SC sees a problem with advertising through networks is relying on individuals to pass the information on. PGC is keen that the reporting of both course attendance and issuing of licences be a regular item at London Council meetings, and that more granular / focussed data is required: he is working with Graeme Allan with a view to GA presenting at the October London Council

GM gave feedback on officials course, that the content was archaic. PGC agreed that improvement is needed in a number of areas, and that to his knowledge there is consistent concern among course tutors at lack of action by UKA to improve things. The content is due to be reviewed in autumn at a workshop scheduled to be part of the South of England Athletics Officials Association (SEAOA) annual conference on 16th November at St Mary's Twickenham, as it is recognised by tutors that material is out of date and not fit for purpose. It is hoped that an SEAOA backed representation by a group of tutors may carry weight with UKA. GM asked if responsibility for officials content is with UKA- why are they not doing anything?

TP suggested there should be a paid person responsible for doing this. PGC said that the appointment of a National Council representative to the UKA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) should help to get UKA to prioritise grass roots issues. TP: this is an issue of responsibility- UKA write rules- home countries implement. TJS concerned that current system is creaking- events will start being cancelled if not addressed. GM- England Age Group Championships are this coming weekend- all L3 officials are going so no senior officials left for LICC / other local meetings. BS commented that people generally want to help out their own club. TJS made a plea that we ensure there is a paid person to take responsibility.

Action: PGC to take up these issues with EA National Portfolio holder and National Council

ASB asked if there are programmes being run that we can outline to clubs to help them recruit more volunteers? SC felt there are disabled people who would volunteer- where is the signposting for officials/volunteers. Could put basic club opportunities on Team London? PGC commented AthleAcademy is running a pilot for involved clubs (NEB, Orion H, Aldershot). ASB pointed out that Community Sports Leaders Award/ Junior Sports Leaders Awards require volunteer hours- should be better links to advertise roles .

Action: PGC / SC to discuss with BS and Tim Howells ways in which clubs can be supported to use Team London and other London volunteer recruitment channels

4c) Discussions with GLA re future projects including Capacity Building, Club Development Fund and London Grassroots Legacy Programme

BS: two possible areas of funding- Capacity building- will include officials/coach education (75% funding for courses in lieu of time in clubs). Waiting for more details- will be awarded to one responsible body. Major events fund- money to support organisations in lead up to 2017, interested in work/activity at facilities. Looking at compact athletics facilities- exploratory meetings at the moment. SC asked for facilities in Richmond Park for wheelchair athletes to be considered.

4d) South Coaching Conference 27/9/14

Has been advertised and bookings being taken. Councillors to let BS know if they wish to attend

5. Counties – update on competition plans and meetings / communications with England Athletics

PM: problem with Lee Valley indoors, as is getting more difficult to get bookings at LV at times wanted. TLS may investigate who is booking. Date for next year county champs- UKA recommending same May dates, with Inter-Counties August 1&2. PM wanted an update on online entry system? PGC informed that he has requested that Andy Day holds a post-implmentation meeting to discuss. There is a fixtures conference on 27/9/14. TP wants 3rd weekend in May for Surrey Championships. TLS commented that without consensus view from counties on nominated dates nothing will change

6. SEAA: update on competition plans and meetings / communications with England Athletics

JG: SEAA indoors have booked 3 weekends at Lee Valley due to reduced time availability of the facility- Weekend 1 (before Xmas) Combined events, Weekend 2 U15/U17's, Weekend 3 U20 and Sen.

7. EA matters

TS reported on several areas.

He is trying to improve direct communication with councillors, working with IT/ Andy Barber.

Update on progress of discussions with UKA and Sport England regarding 4 year cycles of funding from SE. Currently all SE money is given to UKA to distribute onwards to EA. Agreement close to finalisation so money given direct to EA. This is linked closely in turn to discussions re responsibility for delivery / strategy formulation.

UKA is no longer due to make payments to EA re commercial. EA now free to try to market commercial rights themselves

Club Affiliation to go up from £75 to £100, Athlete Registration £10 to £12, wef 1st April 2015.
Communication to clubs due to go out within the next few days.

Relaunching RunGroup soon, to heighten participation focus.

8. London Region Volunteer Awards

Seven awards only this year. Awards to be decided by co-chairs by 12/9/14. Any views to chairs.

9. Portfolio's

TJS if anyone has issues on governance please let TJS know and he can look into it.

Meeting Ended 9.40pm