



**COUNTY CHAIRS EXPLORATORY GROUP MEETING**  
**held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013**  
**at Athletics House, Alexander Stadium, Birmingham**

**Counties:** Ray Morgan (RM) – Warwickshire; David Staines (DS) – Essex;  
Jean Simpson (JS) – Greater Manchester;  
Arwel Williams (AW) – Merseyside; Mark Wall (MW) – Northants;  
Peter Crawshaw (PC) – Surrey; Colin Goater (CG) – Hampshire  
John How (JH) - Buckinghamshire

**Present for EA:** Andy Day (AD); Sue Banks – *mins* (SB)  
Kevan Taylor (KT) – *part time*

**Apologies:** Tom Pollak (Surrey); David Ralph (Kent); Richard Nash (Suffolk);  
Sandra White (UKCAU); Chris Jones (EA)

**In attendance (presentations):** Michael Hunt (MH); Jane Fylan (JF)

AD welcomed everyone and passed on Chris Jones' apologies for his non-attendance at today's meeting.

**Minutes of the last meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

**Matters Arising/Feedback from County Chairs**

Out of 44 counties 25 have registered for grants. All but one of the applications had been approved. AD reported that there had been only a brief process in the checking to see what the grants had been spent on but the Counties had been asked to give feedback. He felt that if EA should do this again in 2014 that it would be done slightly different.

- AD asked the group to feed back their thoughts on a possible 2014 process so counties could feedback their future needs
- Concern was expressed about the lack of seniors at various events, compared to last year. RM felt the trend seemed to be that County Champs attracted more juniors than seniors, although members felt it would be more of a worry if this was the case with juniors.
- Competition dates for next year was discussed in detail with various comments made:-
  - Can't Counties decide on dates for their locality?
  - Bank Holiday not a good time for disability athletics – prefer second weekend in May to access as many disabled athletes as possible;
  - Down on number of officials at competitions – this affects the people who do officiate;
  - Clubs failing to get message across (re numbers down on Seniors);
  - Coaches should make it clear about entering League then County;

## DRAFT

- Introduce a club level into County Champs?
- Hampshire against change of dates although Channel Islands were not a problem – entries better than since 2006;
- Problem to set up a League Calendar if the County Champs on a different weekend, need continuity of leagues same weekend;
- Commonwealth Games will also affect calendar next year;
- Members then questioned how more ways can be found to get more seniors to attend County Champs raising the following points:-
  - Need connection between county and area;
  - Clubs not informing athletes – possibility of forming a closer working relationship with network?

AD summarised by saying i) The County Champs date needed to be looked at and ii) We needed to think of ways of influence seniors to come back to competitions. He asked the question of whether we accept the fact that athletes are voting with their feet and focus our attention for these Championships on juniors(?).

AD went through the dates for 2014 as follows:-

- 10/11 May : BAL Womens League – *to be confirmed*
- 14 May : Youth Development League
- 17/18 May : BMC Loughborough International
- 24/25 May : County Champs
- 31 May : Welsh & Scottish Commonwealth Games Trials (2 day event)

DS felt the weekend of 17/18<sup>th</sup> May would be the best possible option for the County Champs as it was less busy. AD confirmed that the Area Champs would be held during the weekend of 14 and 15 June. AW suggested perhaps Counties could be given alternative dates. RM felt it could be worked out backwards – England/CAU Champs first, end of season then look at area – end June? AD would work with CAU to see if this would be possible. **Action: AD**

- Referring to the grants for the Counties, RM congratulated AD on putting this through so promptly. Technology equipment had been the most popular resources requested. AD felt members needed to think about what they should do next year as this may have created an expectation for the Counties that £750 would be offered to them every year. Discussion took place and suggestions were made such as photo-finish equipment for the ones who really needed it or 'buying' the Area Champs.  
All counties to feedback their needs for 2104 via RM. **Action: RM**
- Discussion on how to attract athletes took place and suggestions made were to offer free entry to County Champs but they need to show that they had competed before being re-imbursed. RM to write to Counties to see what they think could make a difference to participation. **Action: RM**  
AD also confirmed he would speak to Cherry Alexander about today's discussions, including moving forward with two alternative dates for Champs and then this message will need to be communicated to the County Secretaries.  
**Action: AD**

## Health and Safety

AD introduced Michael Hunt (UKA Health & Safety/Facilities Co-Ordinator), saying that at the last County Chairs meeting members had been expressing some concern about risk, particularly at athletic events.

MH then commenced by saying that it would be useful to get an overview from all present on what concerns they had. PC said his main concern was what competition providers should do with regards to providing a risk assessment and if there was not a risk assessment in place should the event be cancelled. AD stated that he was also questioning when it was England Athletics' responsibility or the stadium's (competition provider) responsibility.

MH proceeded with his presentation saying that this covered the basics and this would help to answer some queries.

Points covered included:-

- Insurance cover from UKA – crucial a safe environment maintained;
- Duty of Care – What is reasonably prudent (could be deemed negligent);
- Reasonable Care – As event organisers responsibility to inspect the facility and equipment;
- Negligence – all the following three could be a civil claim:-
  - The injured party must prove that the party alleged to be negligent had a duty to the injured party specifically to the one injured or to the general public;
  - The injured party must prove that the defendant's action (or failure to act) was negligent – not what a reasonably prudent person would have done;
  - The injured party must prove that the damages/injuries were caused by the negligence.
- Facility Owners – even if they provide a risk assessment event organisers have a duty to check the venue (and important to document);
- Event Safety Responsibilities – Event organiser must 'make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks';
- Risk Management – *Diagram showing Risk Management Process was shown;*
- Event Organisers' Responsibilities – List was shown and discussed with members saying that vehicle control can be very difficult at many events, particularly parking. MH confirmed that the question of what is the route out of the car park/facility needs to be asked and things like this needed to be 'ticked off'. MH confirmed that he could provide a guidance document to show what issues to look for. **Action: MH**
- Questions asked after an accident – List of questions were shown and MH stated that this helped event organisers to cover everything at the event and to get it documented.

Discussion followed with members raising various issues including:-

- Some members appoint a manager to do a pre-event checklist – MH confirmed he could provide a checklist for members to follow. **Action: MH**
- UKA inspect tracks as a matter of course – should be done annually;
- Risk Assessment – place to go to ask the questions.

MH advised members that if they are not happy with anything at an event, they should not let the event happen as they would be the first person to be asked 'why was this event allowed to take place?' He confirmed that Risk Assessment was quite a simple process. Members felt it was important to keep the Risk Assessment up to date (legal obligation) and they should recommend this to counties.

MH agreed to work with 1 or 2 members of this group and then provide templates to members that would help.

### **Competition and Participation – Is there anything we can do together to boost local participation levels?**

Detailed discussion included the following points/views:-

- Leagues changed format (ie Junior league);
- Put 3 or 4 events together so competitions fit in most competition frameworks;
- Look at more localised multi-tiered competition;
- More demands on officials – get parents (who attend with youngster) to officiate;
- Athletes like open events but harder to put on opens because of fixture list;
- Participation comes from networks – look at county competition – maybe give every county one entry into a joint CAU/EA Championship at the end of the year. RM to ask Counties?
- Drop out from U17s and U20s – need to provide competition – suggestion of open meeting for U17s;
- Could run Senior competition like Quadkids with points format would allow a variable amount of athletes.

### **Welfare Issues Presentation and Discussion**

Jane Fylan, UKA Welfare Officer, told members that although she had a small presentation, she preferred a more open discussion regarding any welfare issues members may have.

PC reported that one concern of his as a competition provider was to get clarification of the policy concerning school athletes staying overnight. JF replied saying that through the county committees a designated person can be given the role of Welfare Officer for any team travel. She confirmed that it wasn't necessary to put a special policy in place, but to use the national policy. Having knowledge of the policies and procedures would help these situations to run smoothly. Discussion took place regarding counties not having Welfare Officers but JF confirmed that they would be covered by the national policy.

JF also confirmed that the policies were on the EA website. Need to make sure counties putting on the events are aware of the policies.

RM to make counties aware. **Action: RM**

JF offered to provide a tick box fact sheet to help when putting on events but stated that many of the event providers would cover many issues. She understood that volunteers took on a huge responsibility and emphasised that herself, David Brown and Kysha Ferguson were always available for support and advice – she then

proceeded to inform members of all contact details, encouraging them to pick up the phone if they needed to. She said the key was awareness and understanding.

*KT joined the meeting*

### **Regional Councils and Counties**

An issue had been raised during the consultation process regarding the role of the Regional Councillors. A question had been raised about County Chairs sitting on the Regional Council. RM stated that in the West Midlands there had not been an election as no one put themselves forward to sit on the Council.

Discussion followed and PC stated that the Counties are not mentioned in the current Articles. He said that from the Foster Report it had been the aim to create a flatter structure with Regional Councils being the representation of the volunteers.

KT confirmed the Articles showed recognition of the Board, National Council, Regional Council, member organisations and individual affiliated members. He said at the moment there was no governance facility for Counties, although he confirmed that there had been a great deal of discussion on this at the consultation events. DS felt there should be a direct link to EA and clubs. RM saw it as two separate structures (competition and governance) but felt it work was now in progress to get Regional Councils closer to Counties and vice versa. JH stated that every county has access to a member sitting on a Regional Council and RM felt there should be a formal connection.

KT then distributed a document for members on 'Governance – Role of Counties' and ran through the ideas for consideration. KT confirmed that the vote of the Chair was the only limitation to co-opted members. He said he was aware of the Counties' keenness to be involved. Members agreed on the points except the line – '*or at least invited to a minimum of 2 meetings per annum*' be deleted from the second point.

### **Any Other Business**

- RM referred to the online entry system saying that the Hampshire system seemed to be better than the new system some counties were at the moment acting as 'guinea pigs' for.  
AD agreed to look at the Hampshire system. **Action: AD**
- ON behalf of the County Chairs JS thanked SB for her support as this was her last meeting before she left EA.

***Date of next meeting: Late September/early October – AD to confirm***