



Essex County Athletic Association

Minutes of the Essex AA Executive meeting held remotely via Microsoft Teams Video on Monday 1st March 2021 at 19:30 hours

Participants:

Andy Catton (Chair), Gary Chandler (Treasurer), Claire Levey (Secretary), Gerry O'Doherty (President), Brigid Wallen (President Elect), Malcolm Bailey (Minute Secretary), Kaye Merrywest, Paul Merrywest, Diane Wooller, Scott Darney, Chris Akehurst, Paul Mingay, Allison Gillan, Gary Floate, Hayley Pegg, June Cork, Melanie Peddle, Keith Palmer.

1. Apologies for Absence

Jean Tierney, Ray Pearce, Ron Dawson, Linda Bates, Peter Bates, Richard Casey

Due to technical issues June Cork, Richard Casey and Ron Dawson were unable to contribute to the debate during the meeting. Feedback from both June and Richard is included in Appendix 1, to these minutes.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of 11th January 2021

The minutes of the meeting on Monday 11th January 2021 were **approved** as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed: Brigid Wallen Seconded: Kaye Merrywest

3. Matters Arising from last meeting

Agenda Item	Matter	Update
2	Vacancies on the Executive Committee and Team Manager roles	Advertised on the County Facebook site. See agenda item 8 below. Volunteers have come forward.
3	Potential overpayment by Phoenix Striders of their 2020/21 affiliation fee	Overpayment still to be claimed
7	Track & Field meeting to be arranged to take place during February 2021	Meeting took place on Tuesday 9 th February. Minutes have been sent to all clubs and posted on the County website.
9	Contact a potential host for the Essex Marathon	The organisers of the Chelmsford Marathon have accepted the offer to host the 2021 County championships. Event taking place (subject to any restrictions that may be place at that time) on 17 th October 2021. Entries are open. Gary Chandler is in contact with them re Essex requirements

14	Consider a proposal to host a virtual inter club County event. Further research to be undertaken.	See below
14	Write to Sue Deaves to congratulate her on receiving an MBE in the 2021 New Year Days Honours list	Actioned. Andy Catton has written to Sue Deaves

Andy Catton welcomed Hayley Pegg, Gary Floate and Melanie Peddle to their first Executive committee meeting.

- **Possible County Virtual Event.** Scott Darney updated the meeting with regard to his research into a possible virtual inter club county event. The event organiser that he contacted, has quoted for two possible scenarios:-
 - Individual event – they collect the entries and results for £250 and provide us with a download from which we calculate the winning teams;
 - As above but for a team event they would require an additional £1 per team entered.

Feedback from the committee however, from their club members is that the appetite for virtual events is not strong. With the possibility of the relaxation of restrictions over the next few months it is hoped that events may be able to restart. Parkrun has already advised that it is hoped that adult events will start again on Saturday 5th June.

There was unanimous agreement from those present not to host a County Inter club virtual event. Scott was thanked for taking the time to investigate the possibility of holding a virtual event.

4. Treasurers matters

Gary Chandler reported that the annual insurance premium is now due to cover the various County trophies. Renewal premium is as last year - £806. The County trophies are insured for £50,000 with one item specifically listed on the insurance schedule. The question whether we should obtain a revaluation of these trophies was discussed. It was agreed that this would be pursued once the trophies are collected in readiness for the AGM in December. Potential valuer's are sought.

5. Correspondence

Nothing to report.

- Club & Committee Register Changes

There have been two changes of club secretaries:-

- Laura Prime (Harlow Running Club)
- Sally Dobson (Colchester Harriers)

An up dated club secretary's list will be sent to all clubs.

6. Networking

Nothing to report.

7. England Athletics Regional Reports

London Region meeting took place on Thursday 25th February. Paul Merrywest attended.

Kent and Middlesex are planning to hold their County Track & Field championships on the 2nd weekend in May. Nothing from UKA confirming dates and there is a suggestion that there could be a delay in issuing licences.

Proposed EA webinar on Thursday 4th March to outline the situation; possibly after discussions have taken place with relevant Governmental department

East Region has advised that (pending formal confirmation) that:

- Permit applications open 15th March

- Rule of 12 training from 29th March along with competitions with social distancing, adult athletes on their own; juniors plus one. Local competition only.
- Thereafter, possibly 17th May is the date the sport could return – still requires clarification
- Possible meeting on Tuesday 2nd March to discuss 'return to sport and competition' (**Further update received – following meeting – see appendix 2**)

EA are encouraging athletes to affiliate – there has been a substantial reduction in affiliations over the last 12 months. Athletes reminded that insurance cover is not in place if they are unaffiliated.

UKA/EA working relationship significantly improved

Significant number of responses received (Over 10,000) following the questionnaire sent out about equalisation of distances for Female and Male XC Championship events. Feedback will be sent out in due course.

EA volunteer awards will be held in November, again this will take place, virtually.

There has been a significant increase in number of people running during lockdown(s). A question was raised by a committee member, 'How do clubs take advantage of this running boom?' This is probably an issue that clubs need to tackle; suggestion made that clubs could contact local press to publicise activities and to encourage people to join.

8. Track & Field

Track & Field meeting took place on Tuesday 9th February. Minutes have been sent to all clubs and posted on the County website.

Volunteers have put their names forward for the various vacancies for:-

- **Track & Field Secretary**
- **Track & Field Managers**
Senior Men
U15 Boys and U20 Men
U13 Boys

Hayley Pegg appointment as Track & Field Secretary was approved by the committee
Proposed Andy Catton Seconded Claire Levey

It was agreed that Job Spec's would be sent to the volunteers for the various Track & Field Managers. Claire Levey to coordinate,

Chelmsford AC has been provisionally booked for the Outdoor Track & Field Championships but a decision cannot be made at present as to whether these will go ahead. Need to wait for further advice and guidance from EA/UKA.

Concerns were raised at the meeting as to whether athletes will have sufficient time to prepare for these championships.

Further decisions still need to be made with regard to holding the Multi-events and relay championships. When further information and guidance is available a Track & Field meeting will be arranged; all clubs to be invited.

There is a desire to hold the 5k track championships – this is a popular event which is normally held mid week. This can be organised fairly quickly once we have a better understanding of the guidance on a return to competitive running. Unsure at this time, whether there will be a 10k track championships.

2022 Indoor Track & Field Championships. Paul Merrywest is to contact Eastern Counties to inquire whether that they are still happy to continue to hold a joint event. We are to confirm possible date with Lee Valley.

9. Cross Country

Nothing to report, at this time.

10. Road Running

Update on Grand Prix events for 2021:-

Pleshey 5 – It is planned that this will take place (June 25th); further details to follow

Essex 20 – possibly sometime in August. Waiting for the school that is used as the HQ for the event are happy for us to use the venue.

Pleshey Half marathon – planned for 19th September

Chelmsford Marathon – entries are open – race to take place (subject to any restrictions) on 17th October

Chelmsford 10k – planned for 21st November

Gary Chandler has contacted a club to enquire whether they would be happy to host the 10 mile Championship event. Awaiting a response.

It is currently hoped that there will be a full calendar of Essex Road Championship events this year. Scott Darney raised the possibility of County holding a 5k road championship event. To be discussed at a later meeting.

11. Trophies

There remains a vacancy for the County Trophy secretary role. A volunteer would be welcomed. Andy Catton will be collecting medals etc from Mike Emms sister as and when restrictions allow.

12. Walking

Nothing to report.

13. Officials

The meeting was informed of the sad news that Catherine Bauer had passed away on 21st February 2021. Catherine was a respected and valued Essex and Harlow field official for many years; she will be greatly missed by everyone. Our sincere condolences go to her family and friends.

Diane Wooller has contacted a number of officials seeking their availability for the Outdoor T& F which we hope will take place in May. Champs. So far, a good response has been received.

There have been some virtual official courses. Diane Wooller advised that she has been notified of the names of four people that have completed a field and one that has completed an Endurance course.

14. Schools

Richard Casey was unable to attend the meeting but he subsequently sent a report. Please see appendix attached to these minutes.

15. Any Other business

At the recent track & field meeting views had been sought on participation in or format of the Southern Inter Counties event following an email received from SCAA.

Essex has been a major supporter of these events over the last few years where we have been very successful. Essex and Middlesex have managed to field full strength teams whilst other counties have struggled. Reasons for this were discussed.

A response by County will be formulated by Claire Levey and sent to Andy Catton for his approval.

Keith Palmer mentioned that he holds a stock of Essex vests which needs to be collected at sometime. He confirms that the current stock is sufficient for our current requirements.

With the first Monday of the month for both April and May falling on a Bank Holiday it was agreed to hold the next Executive committee meeting on Monday 26th April 2021.

Summary of Actions

Agenda Item	Matter	By Whom
4	Revaluation sought of the County trophies	Trophies collected for AGM; revaluation then sought; before passing them to winners for the year.
8	Role Spec's to be sent to all volunteers for the vacant Track & Field Managers; follow up to then confirm that they are happy to accept role/ If so, DBS will need to be obtained on the volunteers	Claire Levey – possible follow up at the next Track & Field committee meeting
8	Dates to be agreed for Multi-events and Relays and possible 5k track championships	A Track & Field meeting to be arranged once further information is available to enable decisions to be made.
8.	2022 Indoor Track & Field Championships	Booking to be made at Lee Valley with Paul Merrywest to contact Eastern to confirm that they are happy to hold a joint event
10	County 10 mile Road Championship event	Confirmation from a possible host club that they are happy to incorporate this into their race (subject to any restrictions in place at the time). Gary Chandler is in discussion with potential host club.
11	County Trophy Secretary - vacancy	Volunteer still sought
15	Response to SCAA re participation and format of Southern Counties track & field events	Claire Levey to respond

Meeting finished at 20:56

Draft Agenda for the next Executive Committee meeting to be held via Microsoft Teams on Monday 26th April 2021 Start time 7.30pm

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting – 1st March 2021
3. Matters Arising
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Correspondence
Club & Committee Register Changes
6. Networking
7. Regional Reports
8. Track & Field
9. Cross Country
10. Road running
11. Trophies
12. Walking
13. Officials
14. School's Liaison
15. Any other business

Appendix 1

Email received from June Cork

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The NAL from my understanding is still deciding how to run the matches this season, with regard to minimising travel etc although I think the dates are fixed.

The East Anglian League - fixtures were pencilled in only. Noel Moss [League Sec] a few days ago circulated all the Club Secretaries asking their views on the way forward and various suggestions were proposed, including the reference to travel but clearly excluding 2nd May from his original schedule, indicating "from June onwards".

The dates* still hang in the balance since [of course] Counties may/may not move from 8/9 May.

[Original info from Noel Moss]: 2nd May, 30th May, 27th June, 25th July and possibly either 22nd August or 5th September, with the final on 19th September 27th June will probably be the day after the Eastern AA Championships.

As soon as he circulates his next update I'll let you know their position.

Potential August Fixtures

For information, Southend AC are, once again, hosting the Centurions 100 Miles Race Walking Championship on Saturday/Sunday 7th/8th August which might make it challenging if either day that weekend is nominated for the "20" . [Pam's our Clubhouse Manager and also runs the Refreshments table at the 20].

Southern inter counties

Why not include only those Counties who are interested enough to produce teams, if the Southern Counties won't take them all on?

Email received from Richard Casey

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Please could athletics clubs pass on the following information on to their young athletes and parents so that they have an idea of what the English Schools committee is considering for this year's championship. In addition there is an update from English Schools which they are currently working on, which will affect young athletes, as it will restrict the numbers of competitors.

During the coming weeks, I will be coming up with a plan to enable the Essex schools championship in June to go ahead in a covid safe environment. Hopefully this will give the young Essex athletes the opportunity to achieve the national and entry standards they will need to qualify for the national schools championship.

Please circulate within your county as well as to local athletics clubs.

English Schools Track and Field Championship 2021

I know that many of you have been thinking about the summer and wondering whether we will be able to stage a Track & Field Championship this year. Along with Geoff Durbin and Andy Hulse, we have been working for several months to see whether we could stage an event, and how it could be staged. We have discussed it with a variety of people, and have enrolled the services of an acknowledged expert in safe planning of sports events under Covid conditions. We placed our plan before the Officers for approval in principle and have today presented it for discussion to the Summer Events Committee. We will continue to work with UKA and England Athletics to ensure the safe success of the event.

Effectively, our belief is that we need to make plans that, unless matters deteriorate vastly between now and July, will be capable of being carried through. We cannot afford to plan for a normal Championship, with the costs involved, and find out a few days or even weeks beforehand that the restrictions put in place around competition (and possibly life!) don't

allow us to stage such an event and we find ourselves committed to hotels already booked and needing to be paid for. Decisions connected to the Championships need to be made early enough so that everyone knows what to expect and how to plan for it. The Prime Minister may have implied that life will return to normal just after midnight on June 22nd but, if any of his predicted dates are even a few days out, we may miss all the deadlines to stage our championships.

I have attached a paper for your information (see below) setting out the basic plan, with much detail still to be added to be ready to stage a Covid safe event. Questions remain to be answered and we know that some will be very unhappy that we aren't planning a normal Championship and others of the opinion that we shouldn't be planning anything because athletes won't have had much time to prepare. Our view, echoed by the Officers and the Summer Events Committee, is that we should offer something to our young athletes, even if we can't take risks in staging a full Championship.

English Schools Track & Field Championships 2021 Update: (February 28th, 2021) It is our sincere wish to stage a championship over the normal weekend in July, but we need to be aware of the uncertainty of the situation in England, despite all the plans being put in place following the government's announcement a few days ago. We are desperate that athletes have competition, and especially a championship, having missed out last summer and through most of the winter. We must, however, take account of the health and well-being of all our participants, as well as the ongoing financial survival of the Association. Despite the government statement on the route out of the pandemic, all the dates given are subject to the success of the vaccines and the hoped-for reduction in infections continuing through the spring and summer, and, although the dates given suggest life may well be getting back to normality during the summer, we cannot risk committing to spending the sort of money we normally spend on hotels and other costs, only to find restrictions aren't lifted sufficiently to allow a normal championship. For that reason, decisions need to be taken now on the format of the championship, rather than waiting until later. Even this week, the infection rate is still rising in some areas of the country and thousands of people are still in hospital and being added to every day, as well as the sad deaths of hundreds of people every single day. The turnover for the championship is in the hundreds of thousands of pounds, with hotels costing a substantial amount, of which less than half is returned from entry fees. In the absence last year of a grant from England Athletics and a much-reduced contribution from our sponsor, New Balance, because of their own financial constraints brought about by the pandemic, we cannot commit to those costs and then find we must cancel hotels, losing deposits already paid to the hotels. Some of the hotels require deposits immediately we book, so we decided that this is too big a risk for the Association to take on. Taking all of this into account, we are planning a reduced championship over the normal weekend, with one age group each day (Friday to Sunday) and the ability for most athletes to travel on the day of the competition and return home afterwards. To achieve this, we need to place restrictions on entries beyond the normal selection process of counties so that numbers are within the limits we can handle in a session from around 12:30 to 18:00 on each day. This will allow for reduced numbers of officials, reduced numbers of team staff and using only adult volunteers in small numbers. The plan is to invite Senior (U19) athletes on Friday, Intermediate (U17) athletes on Saturday and Junior (U15) athletes on Sunday. The venue is booked for all three days and sufficient officials are available all three days. We don't know whether county associations will be allowed to take county teams on coaches or in minibuses to the event, so suggest that athletes will travel independently if that is not possible. A small number of team staff would be accommodated

throughout the weekend if counties wish it and meet their athletes on arrival. Much detailed planning has already taken place and will be published when these plans are finalised, hopefully before Easter. All the planning to stage the championships is done by volunteers with no professional staff to support it, which means we must take account of what individuals are able to do in preparing for the championship. We may receive some negative feedback around this decision, but one of our high priorities must be the continued existence of the Association and a “hit” in the region of £200,000 would come close to ending our existence, which we are sure is a much worse outcome than a reduced championship where at least some of our athletes can compete. Points being considered:

- Will counties be able to hold their county championships on June 12th? If they don't feel able to do so, they may wish to offer the date to local clubs to stage a Covid-safe open meeting to allow athletes the opportunity to perform.
- Will there be Covid-safe meetings in May/June for athletes to achieve entry standards? We would suggest advising athletes to find suitable competitions to attend and for counties to talk to local clubs to find what possible opportunities exist for competition for their athletes.
- Will there be a tier system or anything similar in May/June/July? This may restrict travel across the country. England Athletics will be publishing permitted competition regulations throughout the spring and we advise county secretaries keep up to date with what is shown on there. We need to comply with these regulations at national and county level. The current regulations and help pages are at: <https://www.englandathletics.org/athletics-and-running/news/guidance-update-2021/>
- Schools may be unlikely to allow group travel. That is why we are thinking that many athletes will need to arrive with their parents / guardians or an appropriate adult.
- The level of restriction in the Manchester area and the Government's position on large scale Covidsafe meetings may restrict the number of support (parents/guardians, etc.) adults allowed within the stadium. We need to consider that if only athletes/officials are allowed in the stadium, are the Championships viable; with parents bringing athletes to Manchester, where would they go? Our current expectation is that capacity of the stadium may be limited to 50%. If we staged a normal Championship and brought 2000 athletes and 500 team and technical staff to the championships, there would only be a small number of spaces left for parents and other spectators. Our plan brings less than a quarter of that number of athletes each day allowing us, we think, the freedom to allow all parents to be present in the stadium, as we expect many to be bringing their child to the venue. Virtual meetings have been held with the stadium management, the city council staff, and a Covid safety expert (who advises British Athletics for their own major events) who is supporting us. We are also liaising with both UKA and England Athletics to help us ensure the safest outcome for our Championships. There will, of course, be further meetings with everyone involved. We believe that the option below is the preferred structure. If restrictions are increased beyond what the Prime Minister envisages, and it is not possible to hold a Championship the 'fall-back' option would be a virtual competition as held in 2020. Plan for a three-day Covid-safe event – 9 th, 10th and 11th July
- The three age groups would be held over three days with the Senior age group on Friday, Intermediate age group on Saturday and Junior age group on Sunday.
- The number of competitors to be limited – maximum of 16 per event in both track and field events. For track events this means heats to finals. Field will be straight finals. It is possible that government regulations may even insist that 12 is the largest size of a competition bubble, so may have to be used for field events and endurance finals, rather than 16. Although the timetable would allow us to hold three heats of sprint events, and so allow 24 athletes in those events only, we feel that is fair to all to allow the same number in all events. We would welcome comments from County Secretaries on this point. We have chosen 16 as the number, as this is the maximum number that would allow us to stage three field events or two high jumps or pole vaults during the session.
- Counties to select, using the normal entry standards, from athletes within the county obtaining performances from Covid-safe open meetings or County Schools championships. Athletes should be encouraged to report performances to their County Secretary. Counties to forward nominations to

ESAA. The closing date will be the same as normal, but the entry system may be different. County Secretaries will be given information on the entry system to be used.

- Immediately after entries close, ESAA will select Championship athletes from County nominations, with the aid of Power of Ten rankings on the date decided and report them to counties as soon as possible to inform athletes. We would remind counties to obtain a licence for their county championship and forward results to Power of Ten.

- If counties can bring their athletes as a group, they will need to organise this themselves. They will then need to arrange for each group to return home after their competition day. If not, athletes will need to arrange travel to the Championships with parents or others (and their own accommodation if required). ESAA will be discussing some support for athletes from counties who would not be able to travel within one day to the championships. We may be able to suggest some hotel names.

- Athletes and those accompanying them should bring their own refreshments although there will be some for sale at the stadium. As in previous years, no bottled water will be distributed. Athletes should bring their own (non-glass) bottle and water fill points will be available around the stadium.

- Event will start at 12:30, with times to arrive at the event site published in advance. Depending on the progress of the disease, we may also insist on arrival times at the stadium, before which athletes should not arrive, and may also insist that athletes leave after their event, although we hope that this will not be necessary.

- There are large free car parks within five minutes' walk of the stadium and all participants will be expected to use these.

- Two/three team managers will be accommodated by ESAA if counties decide to keep a small team of team staff at the venue for the whole period of the Championships.

- We will appoint officials mainly from the North to cut down the need for accommodation and reduce close contact as far as possible.

- Seedings will be done in advance and published online. Results and onward seedings will be published online to reduce or remove requirement for paper to be handled. Athletes and teams will be encouraged to look at their phones to view start lists, results, progressions to finals and so on, again to cut down on the need for large groups to crowd round results boards. Stadium announcements will support this process. No paper results will be available at the Championships but will be available online immediately and distributed to counties following the Championships.

- There may well be no formal medal ceremonies, again depending on the progress of the disease, but athletes will be directed to the medal area to collect their medal and certificate immediately following their event.

- In view of the size and scope of the event, we believe the cost of live streaming is prohibitive and do not intend to proceed with it.

- Similarly, we do not intend to have a large screen. All results will be displayed online.

- External throws area. The venue has contacted the local academy and we plan to use their cage for three of the long throws. We recognise that this is less than ideal, as they only have a cage and no javelin facility, but this is a challenge we must face.

- If the Covid restriction requires it, we will use one of the concourses opposite the track with a rubber surface rather than the indoor space. Athletes will go straight to their event site at the time given to counties, rather than use a Call Room, again to ensure the Covid safety of the athletes and others.

- A provisional timetable for each day has been produced and will be circulated closer to the Championships. We will also distribute details of the requirements for each group of participants, so that they are aware of their own responsibilities before and during the Championships. This may well include details of face mask requirements, one-way systems that may be in use, times when people should arrive, whether temperature checks are required and where they will take place, as well as contactless check-in procedures.

- It is not considered appropriate to use school volunteers so we will not be inviting counties to nominate Young Officials this year.

- We will be working with the venue, the city council, the stadium owners, UK Athletics and England Athletics to produce a Covid-safety plan which will need to be presented to a Safety Advisory Group meeting of the Local Authority for their approval before the event can take place. Distribution to County Secretaries & ESAA General Committee, copied to England Athletics. **Prepared by members of ESAA Summer Events Committee following their meeting on 27th February 2021.**

Appendix 2

Feedback from recent EA webinar – 4th March 2021

Main points:-

EA meeting with Sport England on 22 March to seek more clarity on competition COVID restrictions, what numbers are allowed at each 5 week point in "road map", are 5,000m / 10,000m races allowed and what "travel limitations" means.

For road running - wave start "COVID secure" races (as allowed last Autumn) can re-start after 29 March. But again no clarification on travel - so assume "local" only.

Group training as from 29 March - one coach plus 12 athletes max.

Inference was T & F league competition could start in April / May (if local ?) with socially distanced field events and 6 (or 8 ?) runners on track depending upon lanes. No spectators and for young athletes one parent only allowed on site.

No mention of County Champs dates or recommendations. Otherwise as above for league competition. Again what travelling is allowed by May is critical and currently unknown.

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Return to Competition..... the road map

The East Region Council are very pleased to advise that a webinar will take place on March 18th at 7.00pm on the subject of 'Return to Competition.' The aim of the webinar is to try and provide answers to any query regarding 'Returning to Competition'. The webinar will cover all aspects of the sport including road running and track and field.

On the call will be

Nichola Skedgel - Competition Partnerships and Innovation Manager England Athletics

Clive Poyner – East Region Councillor with permit review responsibility for track and field matches

Amy Frith - England Athletics Club Support Manager for the East Region

East Region Councillors - representing each County and local competition providers

If you would like to understand the latest position with respect to competition in the late spring into the summer then this is the webinar for you. Anyone with an interest in the subject can come along whether you are club organisers, officials, coaches or competition providers. The link to register is detailed below.

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Mar 18, 2021 07:00 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://englandathletics-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcuc-mhqDsuHtXDwkMgP0xHnNvWkLA_cdKj

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

We hope to see you on the 18th March at 7.00pm

With best regards

The East Region Council