



Essex County Athletic Association

Minutes of the Essex AA Endurance meeting held in the clubhouse of Chelmsford Athletic club, Melbourne Park, Chelmsford on Wednesday 6th October 2021 at 19:30 hours.

Representatives from all Essex AA affiliated clubs were invited.

Participants:

Andy Catton (Ilford AC) (Essex AA Chair), Gary Chandler (Springfield Striders), Malcolm Bailey (Tiptree RR and Mid Essex Casuals), Gerry O'Doherty (Billericay Striders), Brigid Wallen (Witham RC), Diane Wooller (Colchester Harriers and Essex AA Officials Secretary) Paul Mingay (Colchester Harriers), Allison Gillan (Springfield Striders), Ron Dawson (Southend AC), Richard Charleston (Chelmsford AC), Susan Edwards and Michael Wilson, and Jacob Stevens (East London Runners), Kelly Clark (Victoria Park Harriers and Tower Hamlets Athletics Club), Nick Wetheridge (Basildon AC), Chris Sewell (Springfield Striders), Brenda Stone and Kelvin Stone (Thurrock Harriers)

1. Apologies for Absence

Claire Levey (Ilford AC), Bob Langley (Halstead RC), Martin Chester (Havering AC).

2. 2022 Essex 20

Gary Chandler provided the following update:-

- Unable to hold the event at Rochford as we are unable to use the school as our HQ due to building works being undertaken at that venue
- Other venues considered but unable to find a suitable location that are able to support the race
- Proposed that the event will take place on 6th March 2022 at Carver Barracks which is situated approximately 1 mile north of the village of Debden.
- Race will be organised by Event Company – Active Training World. Established company that have organised a number of events.
- Entry fees will be higher than in the past for this event. Gary has negotiated a fee of £15 for Essex affiliated runners and £23 for other runners.
- There is ample parking – over 2,000 cars can be accommodated
- To break even, we need an entry of at least 400 runners
- Course will be four laps
- To keep entry fees as low as possible there will not be a medal or t/shirt given to all finishers
- However, to promote the Environment – it is proposed to offer the option to all runners of sponsoring the planting of a tree. This will be an additional cost to all entrants of £2.75 – those adopting a tree will receive an on line certificate and a GPS location of where their tree is planted.
- Other options were considered – as an example Chelmsford AC are sourcing wooden medals from the UK for their 10k in November.
- The option to 'Plant a Tree' was supported
- This event is normally 6 weeks before the London Marathon but this event is taking place in October 2022 again. However, with the Event Company organising/promoting the race (without any support required from within Essex) it is hoped that it will be a very popular

event. There are still a number of the ‘bigger’ marathons in England during Spring 2022 including Manchester and Brighton. The Essex marathon will also be in May (see later).

- It is hoped that the 2022 event will incorporate an ‘Invitational Inter Counties’ race.

3. Essex Road Relays

It is anticipated that these will be hosted by Colchester Harriers.

Paul Mingay reported that due to issues raised by the owners of the Garrison Running track, Colchester Harriers have approached the ‘Northern Gateway Sports Park’ which is located just off the A12 at Colchester on the opposite side of the road to the Colchester United football ground. Initial discussions have been positive. The route will be on the cycle track. It was suggested that the preferred date would be Sunday 20th March. Once a venue and date has been agreed, clubs will be advised. At the last road relay championships, a junior race was organised but these were not a County event. In 2022, a junior event will again be hosted but will be an Essex Championships race.

4. Howard Williams Trophy

This trophy is awarded by affiliated clubs to the ‘Best Road race in the County’. It was agreed that there has been sufficient races in the County for this trophy to be awarded in 2021. All affiliated clubs will be sent a voting paper during December to seek their nominations.

5. Selections for 2022 Essex Grand Prix Events

It was agreed that the following events will be the County races for 2022

5 miles - Braintree (racecourse – date to be confirmed); awaiting confirmation from club

10k – Felsted (July) awaiting confirmation from club

10 miles – Witham (May – date to be confirmed)

Half Marathon - Pleshey Half (September – date to be confirmed)

20 miles – Carver Barracks (6th March)

Marathon – Halstead Marathon (8th May)

6. Course Measurer update

Chris Sewell attended the meeting. Chris is currently working towards achieving accreditation to become an Official Course Measurer. He has completed his theory course and he will be attending a practical course on the 6th November in Leeds. County has agreed meet his expenses to attend this course. It is hoped that from this date, Chris will be accredited to measure road courses in Essex. This will be confirmed to all clubs, once Chris has received his accreditation.

7. Inter County events (including Fell Championships)

It is proposed that the Orion 15 which is taking place on 20th November will be a qualifying event for the 2022 Inter County Fell race. If there is an Inter County event in 2022, an Essex team will be organised by Alistair Gillan. If any Essex affiliated runners are not taking part in the Orion 15 and are still interested in taking part in these championships please contact Alistair via the Essex County Athletics Facebook site.

8. Selection for the 2022 SEAA Inter Counties XC – 11 December 2021

At the time of the meeting the Essex XC league, fixture two was not going ahead. Since the meeting, Chelmsford AC offered to host this event and the following has been announced:-

“Please note that Essex XC League 2 at Writtle on 30th October will be a trial race for selection for Essex representation at the SEAA Inter County Cross Country Champs at Oxford on 11th December

U13, U15 & U17 boys

All age groups Women and Girls.”

A debate did take place at the meeting about the difficulties in organising Essex League XC races. The Essex league needs clubs to come forward to host these events. It is appreciated that some venues are seeking exorbitant fees (for instance Stubbers in Upminster have quoted £1,500 plus £3 per spectator). It was also noted that there is only a small core team of volunteers that manage this league and additional support will be required to ensure that this league continues in the future. It is likely that fees to clubs to enter the league will increase next season.

9. XC 2021 relays debrief.

Allison Gillian the Essex XC secretary summarised the day:-

- Event held at Weald Park, Brentwood. Hosted by Billericay Striders
- 156 teams took part
- Participation down – London Marathon took place the following day
- Weather conditions for the junior events were fine and medals were awarded on the day
- Unfortunately, the weather conditions changed significantly for the Senior events, when heavy rain fell which caused a number of logistical problems.
- It took Chris Akehurst three days to calculate the results for the Senior events due to the problems that were encountered (final paper results sheets were not an ‘easy’ read)
- Medals for the Senior events were not presented on the day and will be given out at future events.
- There was a ‘Springfield Striders’ Gazebo put up on the day but this could not cope with the number of people wishing to use it, which created additional problems
- We need to plan for poor conditions for future events
- There was a first aid incident on the day. It appeared that the First Aid Company that we hired for the day appeared to lack the necessary skills required to deal with the injury that the runner had sustained. They will not be used at future events. We had hired them for another championships and this booking will be cancelled.
- Overall, positive feedback received from all those that took part.
- Chip timing will be considered at future events. Although this caused problems when this was used in the past. The company that we used previously, we understand, have taken steps to address the issues that we encountered on that day.
- Over the years, we have used a paper based system for entries. We need to look at an on line system. Richard Charleston mentioned that Chelmsford AC have an on line entry system that we could use.
- Everyone thanked the team; officials and volunteers who helped organise and support the event on the day.
- Allison Gillan announced that she will be stepping down from the role of the County XC secretary at the end of this season. A new volunteer will be needed to support this extremely valuable role. Allison suggested that it may well require at least two people to cover the role.

10. 2022 relays – do we drop the mixed race/ Do we increase the number of ladies that make up a team from 3 to 4.

Spread of times for Ladies, Men and Mixed as follows;-

Category	Fastest team	Slowest team
Ladies	59 minutes	1 hour 53 minutes
Men	50 minutes	1 hour 32 minutes
Mixed	1 hour 12 minutes	2 hours 1 minute

A firm decision of either proposal was not agreed. Another option discussed was to reduce the distance to 4k rather than 5k (although the route was shorter than 5k this year)

Agreed that we would seek the views of all affiliated clubs.

11. Update – Essex Vets & YA championships

Allison advised that:

- Venue booked – Writtle University College.
- Hosted by Springfield Striders
- New First Aid company sought
- Course will be the same as in previous championships
- 5 year age bands will be awarded V40, V45, V50, V55 and V60
- First race will be M50+ and W40+
- Second race will be M40/M45

12. Update Senior, U17 and U20 XC Championships

This is being hosted by Basildon AC at Gloucester Park, Basildon

Nick Wetheridge advised that organisation of the championships is going to plan.

Distances for the Senior Ladies and Senior Men were discussed. At the previous two championships, the distance for Senior Ladies and Senior Men was equalised at 10k. This generated significant feedback from runners both in favour and against.

The equalisation was a trial period of two years and depending upon the success/failure of the trial, County were going to decide whether to retain both events at 10k or revert back to Ladies running over 8k and the men 10k.

Stats provided that entries into the Senior Ladies event dropped (from 2018 levels) by 11% in 2019 and 19% in 2020. Committee members had also received negative feedback from the ‘top’ runners at their clubs that they did not like running over 10k as they considered the distance ‘too far and consequently the race was not as competitive as in the past’

Essex was only one of the few Counties that equalised the distances. Inter Counties was also run over 10k for both. To date, they have not announced the distance for the 2022 event although there were mixed views in the room with suggestions that it was going to stay at 10k and that someone else mentioning that they heard that it was to be reduced back to 8k.

There had been massive support to return the Ladies championship distance back to 8k from Ladies coaches, within Essex and nationally.

Strong feelings were expressed by those attending on both sides of the argument but it was decided that the Senior Ladies distance would be 8k for the 2022 championships, as already agreed by the Essex AA Executive Committee.

13. County Affiliation fees 2021/22

Clubs reminded that the £15 fee is now due. Please can all affiliated clubs check that these have been paid.

14. Missing County Cross Country/ Road trophies

Progress has been made locating a number of missing trophies. Will all clubs kindly please check whether they are holding any County trophies

15. New trophy for the Ladies 5k track championships

County has awarded a trophy for the Men's championships for a number of years but has never presented one to the winner of the Ladies Championships.

Susan Edwards has been talking to an artist about designing and producing a trophy. Susan shared a number of possible designs with those present at the meeting. To be comparable with the men's trophy it has been suggested that this will be between 18" to 24" high. Cost would be in the region of £3,000. The maximum that County would be prepared to donate would be circa £200 and various fund raising events are being organised. East London Runners, for instance are organising a quiz night. All clubs are asked to consider how they could support the fund raising activities. It was suggested that the trophy should be named after a 'well known Essex runner' which would help raise the profile of the event.

16. Any other business

The Chelmsford marathon takes place on Sunday 17th October. Gary advised that he is experiencing problems trying to resolve who qualifies as an Essex qualified runner as he is struggling to receive an appropriate response from the company organising the event. It is likely that medals will not be awarded on the day, to avoid presenting them to the wrong runners.

Once this event is over, Gary will be contacting Chelmsford AC about the Essex Champs at the 10k event.

It was also noted that medals are not being collected on the day at various events. This is causing problems as medallists are being chased at later events. It has been agreed that County will expect winners from future events to contact us to arrange collection of their medals.

The 2022 Southend 10k is likely to take place on 18th September.

Meeting ended at 21:45.