



Essex County Athletic Association

Minutes of the Essex AA Endurance meeting held in the clubhouse of Chelmsford Athletic club, Melbourne Park, Chelmsford on Monday 31st January 2022 at 19:00 hours.

Representatives from all 51 Essex AA affiliated clubs were invited. Thirteen clubs were represented.

Participants:

Andy Catton (Ilford AC) (Essex AA Chair), Gary Chandler (Springfield Striders), Malcolm Bailey (Tiptree RR), Gerry O'Doherty (Billericay Striders), Diane Wooller (Colchester Harriers and Essex AA Officials Secretary), Paul Mingay (Colchester Harriers), Allison Gillan, Alistair Gillan (Springfield Striders), Ron Dawson (Southend AC), Richard Charleston (Chelmsford AC), Michael Wilson, Alexandra Rutishauser (East London Runners), Paul Mee (Victoria Park Harriers and Tower Hamlets Athletics Club), Nick Wetheridge (Basildon AC), Maud Hodson (Eton Manor AC), Scott Darney (Witham RC), Dan Steptoe-Thompson, Karl Graves (Boxted Runners)

1. Apologies for Absence

Claire Levey (Ilford AC), Martin Fox (Loughton AC), Martin Chester (Havering AC), Brigid Wallen (Witham RC), Mark Lawes (Tiptree RR)

2. Minutes from the last Endurance meeting on Wednesday 6th October 2021.

All outstanding matters are covered as an agenda item in this meeting.

3. Cross Country – review of the 2021/22 season to date.

Allison Gillan (County XC Secretary) provided a report on the three County Cross Championship events that have taken place during the 2021/22 season:-

- Cross County relays.

These took place on 2nd October at South Weald County Park. New venue for the championships. Weather conditions were not ideal but event went well. This was the same weekend as the London Marathon which may have affected entries which were down from 256 (2019 – did not take place in 2020 due to Covid) to 158 teams. Championships comprised a Senior ladies, Senior Men's, Mixed and girls and boys events.

- Vets, U13 Girls and Boys and U15 Girls and Boys Championships.

These took place at Writtle University College. Entries also down on the last time these took place from 714 to 620. Unfortunately, the date clashed with a schools event.

- Seniors, U17, Ladies and Men and U20 Ladies and Men.

These took place at Gloucester Park, Basildon on 8th January 2022. Entries marginally down on 2019 from 618 to 592.

Due to reduced number competing over all the championships, total income was down by approx. £1,700 to £9,000 on 2019.

Allison proposed various options for the committee to consider for the 2022/23 season:-

- Chip Timing
- On line entries
- Review of entries fees
- County championships for Seniors, U20, U17, U15 and U13 all taking place on the same day. Vets to remain as a separate event.
- Dates for next season's championships to be agreed at the meeting

Allison compared our championships against other Counties.

- We were probably the cheapest (£3). Other Counties charge between £6-12. Most have chip timing and entries are taken on line rather than via paper submission. The later is more time consuming for the County XC Secretary.
- Chip timing will help with the results; this year on a rather wet day it took three days for the team result sheets to dry out! Results would be produced quickly.
- Holding all the champs on one day, with chip timing will reduce the number of volunteers required to support the event. Also, to reduce the time that the volunteers are out on the course, the possibility of two shifts was proposed. Some Counties managed to timetable all the races within a three hour timeframe.
- Some Counties set a cut off time for each race. This was considered to be a good idea as it supports the volunteers out on the course.
- We hold our Senior races last but other's earlier in the day.

Points debated

- Some concern was raised that by holding the main championships for all age categories on the same day that juniors could be taking part in the County/Southern/Schools and Essex League events all in the same month.
The Essex league fixture that normally takes place in January could be rescheduled.
Schools date was changed this year but will move back to its normal date next season. So this is not considered an issue for next season.
- An U11 event was proposed. Not a County championship race but other Counties hold a race for this age group.
- Should we agree a three year deal on each venue? Weald (relays), Writtle (Vets), Basildon (Main Champs)
- Should we support non resident qualified athletes taking part? Some counties do in their events!
- With U13 & U15 events not taking part on the same day as the Vets should the ladies event be a separate race? They currently run in the same race as the O50's. This was supported.
- Relays – should we hold a mixed relay event? Should the mixed relay distance be cut from 5k to 3k? Should the mixed event, be a formal county championship event? There was an argument put forward that mixed races, should not be a County event. Do the best runners take part or do clubs enter their runners into this event as they may stand a better chance of winning a County medal than in the same sex event? Noted that mixed event relays are becoming more popular.

- Should the championships events be on a Sunday rather than a Saturday?

Gerry O'Doherty advised that the XC relays next season will start at 10am. It has been agreed that the parkrun which takes place at Weald will be cancelled that day. This is considered to be an excellent venue with good car parking facilities.

Alistair Gillan has been in discussion with Writtle College about opening up other parts of their grounds so that different courses could be set. This has received positive feedback from the college. We have indicated that if this incurs additional costs for Writtle, we would reimburse them.

Costs of hiring venues. Gloucester Park was initially asking for £1500 but Nick Wetheridge managed to negotiate a discount on this amount. Likely cost for next year will be £1500. Weald Park charge £2 per runner.

Dates for 2022/23 season championships

Weald Park (Relays)	24 th September 2022
Writtle (Vets)	3 rd December 2022
Main Champs	7 th January 2023.

Recommendations for the Executive committee (supported by the Endurance Committee)

- All Championships – On line entry and Chip timed
- All age group county championship events to be held on the same day. A separate Vets championship will still be held on a different date.
- Continue to hold events on a Saturday
- Mixed relays to continue (majority of the meeting supported this proposal)
- Increase cost to enter to possibly £8 (to cover increased costs – venue, chip timing)
- U11 event to be included

4. Distances for the main County Championships

This is a contentious issue with strong argument on both sides of the debate. By way of background, Essex agreed to 'equalise' the distance for the Ladies and Men's race to 10k for a trial period. Previously the Ladies competed over circa. 8k and the men circa 12k. To equalise both events were raced over 10k.

The Inter Counties XC is over 10k for both; although they have still to announce distances for the 2022 championships. World Champs are also held over 10k. The Essex Championship race is a selection race for the Inter Counties.

We are also waiting for guidance from both England Athletes and UKA.

The 2022 Essex County championships the Ladies event was held over 8k and the Men's 10k.

Feedback has been received from clubs supporting both the equalisation of distances and the men's distance reverting back to 12k.

Other Counties Ladies championships

- Cambridgeshire 5,800m
- Suffolk 8,000m
- Surrey 8,400m
- Hertfordshire 8,000m
- Norfolk 10,000m

Noted that this year vs. 2019 that approximately the same number of women took part when it was over 10k as 8k. One club mentioned that their elite ladies refused to run over the longer distance.

Progression as athletes moved up the age range – development is an issue and concern was raised that there was a potentially a big step up in distance for an U17 lady moving up to the Senior category.

The following proposals were considered at this meeting:-

1. Proposal - To revert to equalised senior men and women XC distances. In favour 5 - Against 9.
2. Proposal – Men’s senior XC race reverts to 12k. In favour 12 against 3

ACTION

- To be discussed at the Executive meeting on Monday 7th February 2022. Minutes to be circulated to all committee members asap. before that meeting. **By Secretary**

Richard Charleston advised the meeting that to commemorate Arthur Tullett, who sadly passed away last November that Chelmsford AC and the family have raised/donated monies to support the purchase of a trophy which will be awarded, annually to the winner of the O60’s Men’s XC championship. During his athletic career, Arthur had won this event and it was felt fitting and appropriate to honour his name with a trophy for this championship.

5. Howard Williams Trophy

Awarded to the ‘Best Road Race in Essex’ each year by the clubs affiliated to County.

Of the 51 eligible clubs that could vote, only 16 responded. All clubs were chased on two separate occasions. Each club voted for their top three. 3 points awarded for their first choice, 2 for second and 1 for third.

The top four nominations were:-

Place	Event	Points Received
1st	Tiptree 10	17
2nd	Chelmsford 10k	14
3rd	Pleshey Half	13
4th	Stebbing 10	12

Thank you to the clubs that voted and congratulations to Tiptree for winning the trophy. Current holders are Springfield for the Pleshey half and they will arrange for the trophy to be handed to Tiptree.

6. Essex 20

This is taking place on Sunday 6th March 2022. New venue Debden Airfield, Carver Barracks, Saffron Waldon.

Event is being organised by a professional event company – Active Training World (“ATW”).

To date, we have received 303 entries of which 212 are qualified to run in the Essex Championships.

Entries are down from previous years and feedback from ATW is that races are down some 30-40% on pre Covid levels. They are also experiencing a 40% 'no shows' at events!

The race continues to be published via social media sites.

There will be an invitational Inter Counties event and so far 8 counties have committed to sending a team. The numbers that will take part from the Counties are not included in the number of entries mentioned earlier.

Cambridgeshire have approached Gary Chandler to ask whether there could also be separate Inter Counties Vets championships. It has been agreed as long as there are at least four Counties sending teams to compete in this race.

Gary advised that it was not our intention to present finishers medals. Rather entrants were invited to sponsor planting a tree. However, the event organiser has commissioned a medal which was not part of the package that we agreed with ATW. As it was their mistake, there will not be any additional charge for us to cover and now all finishers will receive a medal. Event details have been update to reflect this change.

7. Possible Road 5k County Championships

Scott Darney has been researching the possibility of County hosting a 5k road race championship. He has been in discussion with Northern Gateway Leisure Park, Colchester. Course could be 5 x 1k or 2 x 2.5k laps. Possible date end of July. Scott will put a proposal to the Executive committee to consider. Event could be included in the Grand Prix series.

8. Essex Road Relays

These are being hosted by Colchester Harriers. Date booked 10th April 2022. Venue Northern Gateway Leisure Park, Colchester. Course will be 2 laps of 2.5k. It will be 'chipped' timed. There will also be a junior event – each leg will be 2.5k.

Entry will be on line.

Gary Chandler has agreed to liaise with Colchester Harriers Race Director with regard to discussing the on line entry system, age categories and numbers that will be in each team. Previous years the senior race had 4 and Vets 3 runners in each team.

9. 2022 Grand Prix update

10k – Felsted (10th July)
10 miles – Witham (2nd May)
Half Marathon - Pleshey Half (11th September)
20 miles – Carver Barracks (6th March)
Marathon – Halstead Marathon (8th May)

Gary Chandler has been talking to Braintree AC about hosting the 5 mile championships at The Chelmsford Race Course. Unfortunately, Braintree have still not been able to agree a date with the racecourse. As a backup, Gary has spoken to Springfield Striders about moving the event to their Friday 5 race. This was going to be the venue for the 2021 championships but it had to be cancelled

due to Covid restrictions. Springfield Striders have indicated their willingness to support. Proposed date 24th June. Agreed that we would offer the race to Springfield Striders and Gary will now revert back to the club.

10. Dates for the track 10k and 5k County Championships.

Both events to be held at Chelmsford

5k – 8th June 2022

10k – 27th July 2022

11. Any other business.

- Possible Invitational Inter Counties 10k event

Gary Chandler has been approached by Sussex to ask whether Essex would be willing to enter a County team in an Invitational Inter Counties event in Sussex. Likely to be the Brighton 10k held in September.

This was fully supported by everyone present at the meeting. Selection event will be the Felsted 10k. Social media will be used to publicise this – top 3 in that race with one discretionary place.

- Senior Inter Counties Fell Championships.

This is being held at Llanberies, North Wales on Saturday 7th May. Alistair Gillan volunteered to coordinate an Essex team with selection events being the Orion 15 and Benfleet 15. Team is 4 with first three to count. Men's team has been selected with one reserve. Alistair will contact those selected to formally invite them to represent the County.

Alistair has also endeavoured to organise a ladies team but has not been able to find sufficient runners to take part.

Athletes can enter as individuals.

- Junior Inter Counties Fell Championships.

This is being held at Kettlewell, North Yorkshire hosted by Wharfedale Harriers. There has been some interest from Essex athletes to take part but not sufficient to enter a team. We are unable to enter an 'incomplete' team. Unless there is interest from other athletes that we would wish to offer an Essex vest to, we will not enter a team.

- Grand Prix series medals.

County presently award County medals to the top three in the overall grand prix series.

Alistair Gillan has designed two possible bespoke medals to award to the winners of the series rather than a county medal. He is currently in discussion with a company who will produce these medals seeking their advice re design and cost. Ideally, we would like the medal be sourced from UK products and environmentally friendly. Concern was raised that wood may not be a suitable product due to deterioration/decay of the medal/award.

Also, the cost of UK sourced products might be significantly more than those from overseas.

A suggestion was made that rather than a medal a shield might be a better option.

Are we able to include the year the medal/trophy was awarded? But this will have cost implications.

Everyone was impressed with Alistair's designs and he will continue to discuss this with his contact to seek their advice and likely cost. We might have to buy in bulk to reduce cost.

Alistair will report back at a future meeting.

Meeting closed at 20:54.