



Essex County Athletic Association

Minutes of the Essex AA Executive meeting held in the clubhouse of Chelmsford Athletic club, Melbourne Park, Chelmsford on Monday 6th November at 19:30 hours.

Participants:

Gerry O'Doherty (Vice Chair), Allison Gillan (President), Gary Chandler (Treasurer), Malcolm Bailey (Secretary, John Weir, Elaine Forrest, Diane Wooller, June Cork, Ron Dawson, Jean Tierney, Richard Charleston. Kaye Merrywest, Paul Merrywest, Ray Pearce, John Clarke, Rick Thompson.

1. Apologies for Absence

Andy Catton (Chair), Peter Bates, Linda Bates, Paul Mingay, Claire Levey, Chris Akehurst (President Elect)

In the absence of Andy Catton, Gerry O'Doherty took the chair for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of Monday 5th June 2023.

The minutes of the meeting on Monday 3rd July 2023 were **approved** as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed: Jean Tierney

Seconded: Elaine Forrest

3. Matters Arising from last meeting.

Summary of Actions

Agenda Item	Matter	Action required	Update
8	Track & Field meeting to be arranged	Date to be agreed and contact made with all clubs to invite them to the meeting	An invite was sent to all clubs to this meeting which took place on Wednesday 11 th October 2023. Disappointingly, only six clubs sent a representative; two sent their apologies and a further six did not respond.
8	2024 Indoor Track & field Championships	Venue to be booked	Venue booked for 2/3 March 2024 (Lee Valley) Covered under track & field agenda item 9 below.

4. Treasurers' Report

Gary Chandler reported on the following:-

- 2023/24 Essex AA club affiliation fees

These were due on the 1st October 2023.

Of the 51 clubs affiliated last year to date, 41 have renewed.

Those that are outstanding were contacted by email on 4th November. Two have since paid.

- County race clock

We purchased a race clock over 10 years ago. This was hired out to clubs. Over the last few years there have been very few hires with most Race Directors now buying in the services of a chip timing company to support their events.

A decision was made to advertise the clock for sale on Facebook. An offer was received from Haverhill Running club to purchase for £250. This was accepted.

5. a) Correspondence

An email has been received Adrian Day, England athletics. They are looking to re-establish a formal competition for Sportshall Athletics in London. The email was read out at the meeting and is reproduced in the minutes- see appendix 1.

It was agreed that the email would be forwarded to all Essex affiliated clubs that are based in the London Boroughs.

b). Club & Committee Changes

Two changes:-

- Phoenix Striders
- Halstead Road Runners

An updated club secretary affiliated list will be sent to all Essex affiliated clubs with these minutes.

6. Networking

Nothing to report.

7. Regional Reports

We have not received any minutes from the East Region Council and we continue to chase. The next London Regional Council meeting will take place on 8th November 2023.

8. Track & Field

As noted earlier a Track & Field meeting took place on 11th October at the Brentwood Centre.

All track & field clubs were invited but the attendance was hugely disappointing. A hybrid option was offered to all clubs but only one club and two committee members joined the meeting via the Zoom link.

Minutes from this meeting have been sent to all club secretaries. They have also posted on the County website and all interested parties are invited to read these minutes.

Main topic of discussion at this meeting was the low numbers of senior athlete's competing at the County Track & Field Championships.

The chair of the meeting commented that of the 16 Senior Women's events at the 2023 Outdoor championships only one event had 5 or more competitors entered. In the male championships, of the 17 events only five had more than 5 entering.

Noted that this is not just a problem within Essex as other County & Southern champs are also experiencing a similar reduction in the numbers entering.

Reasons and actions that could be taken to address this were discussed (i.e. committee members speaking to athletes at club sessions). County has already taken some action with events being moved to a separate day, away from the County programme (i.e. 5k and 10k track championships).

It was noted that there are now a number of other events being organised which offers athletes alternative meetings, where they can achieve standards.

Timetabling of events was also mentioned. A member at Chelmsford feedback that there were three events that they were considering entering but these were all taking place at the same time.

It has been agreed that timetabling for both the 2024 Indoor and Outdoor championships will be published earlier, than in the past.

Situation is not helped with UKA issuing licences to other events on the same day as the published and fixed dates for all County Championships.

It was agreed that the format of the 2024 championships would be the same as 2023 with a comment on the entry form to the effect that if senior athletes do not support the 2024 championships, some events would be dropped from the 2025 championships.

2024 Indoor Championships will be held at Lee Valley – weekend 2/3 March. SEAA had already booked our normal date in February. Andy Catton has written to SEAA to express our disappointment but so far, they have not responded

Eastern AA has been contacted and although they prefer their championships to be in February they have agreed to combine their event with ours in March.

2024 Outdoor Championships will be held at Chelmsford AC – weekend 12/13 May. Track has been booked.

5k track championships will be held at Brentwood on Wednesday 12th June 2024

Track relays – will be moved to September. Date still to be confirmed.

10k track championships will be held at Chelmsford as part of Chelmsford AC miles of miles event. This is taking place on Saturday 29th June 2024

9. Cross Country

Dates of the 2023/24 championships.

Writtle (Vets)	2nd December 2023
Main Champs	6 th January 2024.
(All age groups)	

A County Endurance committee meeting was held Monday 2nd October 2023 and minutes of this meeting have been sent to all club secretaries and posted on the County website.

This meeting was attended by representatives of 19 clubs.

The County XC relays took place on Saturday 23rd September at Weald Park. A full debrief of those championships is set out in the minutes of the Endurance meeting of 2nd October.

2024 XC Relay Championships – to avoid any clash with SEAA events it is likely that they will be held on 12th October.

2023 Vets Championships – entry for this event will close on 25th November 2023.

2024 XC Championships – entry for these championships will open as soon as the Vets championships close on 25th November. They are being hosted by Basildon AC at Gloucester Park.

Nick Wetheridge (Basildon AC) attended the Endurance meeting on 2nd October. He has proposed a number of ideas which he hopes will re- invigorate this event to make them more spectator friendly and enhance the running experience for the athlete.

A trial for this event was held at the second fixture of the Essex XC League. Feedback was positive. Comments included 'Challenging course; proper XC course'. There will be some minor tweaks for the championships in January.

These include, for the men; there will be 3 laps of 4k (rather than the 4 of 3k initially proposed), longer finishing strait. The female race will be 2 laps of 4k.

Nick is seeking sponsorship of 3k to fund the cost of hiring a marquee which athletes will run through. Currently in discussion with two potential sponsors.

However, if he is not successful the meeting was asked to consider a proposal of County funding this up to a maximum of £3k for one year, on a trial basis. Profit for the 2023 championships was circa £3.2k. It was argued that we are effectively using the profit from this year's championships to support next year's.

This prompted some debate amongst the committee and this proposal (support up to a maximum of £3k) was put to the committee.

Proposed: Ron Dawson
Seconded: Jean Tierney

This was supported, unanimously by all those present.

10. Road Running

Howard Williams's trophy

Over the last few years, there has been a very low response from clubs who are eligible to vote.

At the recent Endurance meeting it was agreed, that we would promote this for at least one more year. Although with a change as to how voting will take place.

- It will open up on 1st January 2024 (or soon after)
- Responses from individual runners. They will list their top three races and advise what club that they are a member of.
- When voting closes, the votes cast by each club member would be consolidated into one vote (1st, 2nd and 3rd) from that club and from then the overall winner would be calculated.
- As in previous years, club members would not be able to vote for their own club event.
- Closing date 31st January 2024.

A Survey Monkey has been set up by Scott Darney.

If there is not a great response this time, it was proposed that the trophy is donated to the Ingatestone 5. Howard Williams organised the first event (this year it was the 38th anniversary) and was the Run Director for a number of years. It was agreed that this would be a fitting tribute to the memory of Howard

2024 Grand Prix races

5 miles – Ingatestone (18th August)

10K – High Easter (July)

10 miles - Stebbing 10 (10th November)

Half Marathon – Pleshey (15th September)

20 miles – Carver Barracks (17th March)

Marathon - Halstead. Entries open (12th May)

The 5k road championships which are being held at Northern Gateway will continue to be a County Championship event but will not form part of the Grand Prix series.

Essex is sending team to compete at an Invitational Inter Counties event at Brighton on 19th November. The selection race was the Billericay Striders 10k which was due to be held on 5th November. Unfortunately this race was cancelled due to extreme weather conditions.

Following the cancellation of the selection race, and recognising the very short time to submit team declaration, the county publicised that runners should contact the county if they wished to be considered for selection. The team will be selected from those that come forward.

11. Fell running

Nothing to report

12. Trophies

We have endeavoured to find a volunteer to take over the role of Trophy Secretary for some time, without any success.

Unfortunately a number of Track & Field trophies are missing, despite a considerable amount of time spent investigating the whereabouts of these trophies.

A question was asked ‘If we were to ‘mothball’ the Track & Field trophies (some of which are potential valuable) where would be keep them?’

A suggestion was made that the trophies for each discipline is managed by the respective County Secretary. The records and distribution of the road trophies are already looked after by the County Road Secretary

It was agreed that we would trial this but the current distribution of trophies needs to be reviewed.

13. Walking

This post is vacant on the Executive committee and a volunteer to take over this role is sought.

14. Officials

Invitations have recently been sent out for the 2024 Indoor Championships. There is a potential clash with the World Indoor Championships that weekend, which are being held in

Glasgow. It is not known who will be offered the opportunity to officiate at these champs, but it could impact of the volunteers coming forward to support our County event.

15. Proposed new County website

This is still work in progress although it is acknowledged that this needs to be resolved as soon as possible. It is nearly ready to be launched with County having already funded two thirds of the cost.

We have set a deadline of the 31st December for its launch although it is acknowledged that some sections will not be completely updated.

16. Updating the Essex County Constitution.

Work has started on this and it is hoped that a revised Constitution will be presented to the Committee shortly. A working group has been established and they will be meeting in the New Year. It is our aim to adopt a new updated Constitution at the 2024 AGM.

17. Schools Liaison

Sebastian Cirillo has agreed to take over this role.

18. Preparation for the 2023 AGM which is taking place on Monday 4th December 2023.

All those present confirmed that they were happy to remain on the committee.

Resignations from the committee during 2023 have been received from Paul Mingay, Linda Bates, Peter Bates, Susan Edwards and Hayley Hemmings.

Allison Gillian is stepping down from the role of County XC Secretary – Vicky Trevor has volunteered to take over the role

Committee agreed to offer the role of President Elect to Richard Charleston. No other nominations were received.

Proposals for Life membership to Essex AA were considered and agreed. Gary Chandler will source the Life membership plaques

A suggestion that we should consider Life membership/Long service awards will be discussed at our next committee meeting in February.

Those not present at the meeting and those that support Essex in an Official capacity will be contacted by the County Secretary before the AGM to establish whether they are happy to remain in their respective roles.

There will be refreshments after the AGM and Allison Gillian has very kindly agreed to arrange.

19. Any other business

Three issues were raised under ‘any other business’

1. At the Southend 10k an athlete dropped out of the race at around 9k but as this person walked back to the HQ of the event they passed the chip timing mat and this registered a time. The athlete’s time was good enough for them to finish in the top three of the County championships within their age group. At the medal presentation, they collected their medal.

County were subsequently made aware of this and the medal returned and redistributed to the correct winner.

We sought an explanation from the athlete concerned, but to date regrettably they have not responded.

The committee consider this to be a serious matter and we have decided to ban the athlete concerned from all County Championship events for 2024. The name has been shared with the XC, Road Running, Fell and T&F County secretaries. The athlete will be advised of our decision although they will have the right to appeal if they decide that this is an action that they wish to pursue. If they do, a panel will be convened from members of the Committee to hear the appeal.

2. Message from England Athletics in connection with the proposed changes from current age groups of U13, U15 and U17 to new age groups of U12, U14, U16 and U18 was discussed

EA, after a robust and open debate, the following two actions were approved:

- Firstly, the England Athletics Board voted unanimously to establish a **designated task force** to build on the core principles of our existing strategy and insights from existing research, by working with people from across the sport (including clubs, schools, athletes and volunteers) to understand the complete picture around engagement of young athletes, what works well and what is driving the increasing number of young athletes to drop out of the sport.
- Secondly, the England Council followed by the England Athletics Board separately voted, both by an overwhelming majority, to **approve the age group change proposal but with requirement for further consultation around implementation and a revised timeline**, with the request of **1 April 2026** for the changes to be implemented.

3. It was ^{noted} that a complaint had been posted on a social media site from an athlete based in Essex. The post is considered to be a personal attack on the integrity of the Chair of Essex AA. The complainant comments have also widely distributed onto a number of Social Media sites. Discussed in depth at the meeting to decide the best course of action. Agreed that we would refer this to England Athletics (since the meeting it has been established that EA have written to the complainant. We are contacting EA to request a copy of this letter)

20. Date of next meeting

Dates for 2024 still to be agreed at the forthcoming AGM

Suggested dates for 2024:-

Date (all Monday's) 2024	Meeting
29th January	Endurance*
5 th February	Executive
11th March	Track & Field *
8 th April	Executive
3rd June	Executive
1 st July	Executive
29th July	Track & Field*
2 nd September	Executive
7 th October	Endurance*
4 th November	Executive
2 nd December	AGM*

- All clubs invited to send a representative(s) to these meetings

Meeting finished at 21:33

Summary of Actions

Agenda Item	Matter	Action required	By whom
10	Howard Williams Trophy	Voting forms to go live on (or around 1 st January 2024).	Malcolm Bailey/Scott Darney
15	New County Website	To be launched by 1 st January 2024	
16	Updating the County Constitution	Working party to meet	County Chair & secretary
18	AGM	Contact to be made with all those not present at November Exec meeting to also to all Team Managers to ask whether they are happy to remain in post	County Secretary
19	Complaint received	To be referred to	Vic Chair/County Secretary

	from Essex athlete	UKA	
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Agenda for Annual General Meeting – Monday 4th December 2023 to be held at Chelmsford AC Clubhouse, start time 7.30pm.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 5th December 2022
3. Matters Arising
4. Presentation of Accounts
5. Presentation of Secretary's Report
6. Election of Officers and Executive Committee:
 - a) The President
 - b) The President Elect – Nominations
 - c) Life Vice Presidents & Life Memberships – Nominations
 - d) Honorary Treasurer
 - e) Honorary Secretary
 - f) Chair
 - g) Vice Chair
 - h) Vice Presidents/Life Members (Elective 6)
 - i) Members 20 (includes 1 from the Essex County Schools Athletic Association)
 - j) Honorary Auditors
 - k) Honorary Trustees
7. Presentation of Trophies
8. Election of Officers for Executive Committee:
 - a) Track & Field Secretary
 - b) Track & Field Team Managers
 - Senior Men
 - Senior Woman
 - U17 Women
 - U20 Women
 - U17 Men
 - U13 Boys
 - U13 Girls
 - c) Cross Country Secretary
 - d) Cross Country Team Managers
 - Female
 - Men
 - e) Road Running Secretary and Team Manager
 - f) Race Walking Secretary
 - g) Eastern Region AA Representative
 - h) Eastern Region England Athletics Representative
 - i) London Region England Athletics Representative
 - j) Officials Secretary
 - k) Championship Records Secretary
 - l) Trophies Secretary
 - m) School Liaison Representative.
 - n) Welfare Officers

APPENDIX 1.

Sportshall Athletics for clubs in London

We are looking to re-establish a formal competition structure of Sportshall Athletics for clubs in London.

<https://www.sportshall.org/clubs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c59Weh0nYnQ&ab_channel=gtjermy

Like London, every other English region has strong Sportshall Athletics programmes in the schools. However, every other English Region also has pathways for young athletes to compete in club leagues leading to Regional Finals (with the winners then progressing to an annual UK Final).

The Sportshall Leagues and Regional Finals around the Country provide an introduction and easy transition for young people into athletics clubs and help to retain young athletes over winter months through focused training and competition.

We are looking for interested clubs to form the vanguard of a development programme which we are sure will gather momentum as more and more young athletes experience club Sportshall Athletics for the first time.

We have a provisional date of 4th February 2024 booked at Westcroft Leisure Centre, Carshalton and we will be able to offer U11s, U13s and U15s competitions to the clubs that express interest. We intend that the respective winning clubs at this competition would have progression to our UK Final for U13s and U15s.

We understand that some clubs (particularly on the Surrey, Kent, Essex borders) will already have access to Sportshall competitions and the athletes that qualify for these Counties will still have the option to represent their London club or County. This proposal is about providing more opportunity for

more young athletes to engage in meaningful competition over the winter months as well as a pathway to enable London to once again be formally represented at the Sportshall UK Final.

If you have any questions or would like to express interest in joining us on 4th February and being at the forefront of this development programme in London please email adam@sportshall.org .