**Welsh Athletics Joint Track and Field and Officials Committees**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 25th November 2020.**

**PRESENT**

Rhiannon Linington-Payne (RLP), Sue Hooper (SH), Crispin Backsall (CB), Joyce Tomala (JT), Jeff Mapps, Bethan Akanbi-Mortimer (BAM), Lynette Harries (LH), Alan Currie (AC), Lynne Brier (LB), Darran Williams (DW), Sue Maughan (SM), Phil James (PJ), Zoe Holloway (ZH), Eban Geal (EG), Geoff Wickens

1. **APOLOGIES**

Jamie Clode

1. **WELSH ATHLETICS UPDATES**

**a. Competition Manager - Indoor events, including Indoor Championships (RLP)**

RLP updated the committee on the status of holding indoor events and gave a brief overview of government restrictions on indoor events.

RLP stated that there were currently no numerical restrictions on Under 18s. Based on this, it should hypothetically be acceptable to hold junior opens within the reduced capacity of NIAC. Referring to Welsh Government guidance on senior athletes (Over 18s), RLP said that there was a group limit of 15 athletes or multiple groups of 15 athletes permitted in a venue, depending on the capacity of the venue. RLP said that she had a meeting planned with Wendy Rogers, duty manager at NIAC, to discuss how Welsh Athletics could gain permission for events to take place. RLP invited a discussion from the committee on staging indoor events as championships at NIAC.

JM felt that Under 18 athletes would be the most likely to bring a parent / guardian and potential coach with them to competitions. Along with officials, the numbers would then start to build up and limit that number of athletes able to compete.

RLP said that NIAC would have the actual figures and calculations for how many people were allowed access to leisure activities and that figures for education and leisure differed. RLP said that for lectures, about 150 people in total were permitted in NIAC, but this was not likely to be the case for leisure activities. This would form part of her meeting with Wendy Rogers.

JM went on to say that Cardiff Archers were talking about holding some small club competitions and that this may assist in providing some competition for younger athletes.

RLP felt that clubs should try to facilitate their own competitions if they had access to facilities, so that there were more opportunities for athletes.

JT told the committee that she had learnt in a recent meeting that Scotland would not be holding championships, but they would be holding open meetings on weekends during the new year.

SM read out current advice and restrictions on the Welsh Government website, stating that activities that included more than 30 people outdoors and 15 people indoors in attendance at the same time was prohibited, although staged or staggered activities with no more than 30 people outdoors and 15 people indoors in attendance together was permitted.

RLP said that the same Welsh Government guidelines stated that Under 18s were not included in this numerical limit.

BAM said that she had been told by Caerphilly Sport that they were permitted to return to indoor training with 30 Under 18s in training. This contradicted the advice that SM had just read out, where the limit is 15 for indoor events.

RLP felt that this was probably be based on their calculations on how much space was available to them.

SM felt that sporting bodies must also consider the reputational risk to the sport involved, should an outbreak occur and be traced back to an individual sporting event or club. A lot of work has been done within the sporting sector to keep people safe, so the impact on the reputation of the sport also needs be assessed, not just the number of participants.

LH added that absolute clarity on the points discussed above was vital when RLP meets Wendy Rogers.

JT asked RLP if she was involved in dialogue with Swansea about organising competitions.

RLP confirmed that she had corresponded via email, but numbers permitted indoors in Swansea were low and not many athletes would be able to participate in competition, once officials had been considered as well.

JT asked about North Wales facilities and RLP said that Deeside was not currently considering indoor meetings.

CB said that Deeside were now open for training, but indoor events and competitions were unlikely.

1. **DISCUSSION:**

**a. Ratification of Welsh pole vault Record**

A lengthy discussion took place once again on the ratification of the Under 20 women’s pole vault record that has been presented to the committee in the past two meetings. RLP updated the committee on some discussions that had taken place between herself and Ed Hunt regarding the raised runway. Ed Hunt advised RLP that the runway should be retested independently every time it was to be used, unless permanently set up in the same position, on the same stadium. PJ agreed with this, quoting the Manchester and Newcastle games as examples, where the temporary tracks must be certified every time they are put down. It was confirmed that there is no paperwork in existence to prove that it has been formally tested since it was first used. Several committee members who are involved in officiating said that they felt uncomfortable with the runway, from a health and safety perspective, and felt that the use of the runway placed restrictions on the timetabling of some indoor events, such as high jump and long jump.

It was proposed and accepted that the raised runway should not be used for future championship competitions, including regional championship. It was also decided that the record in question would be accepted, but no other records set with the use of the raised runway would be accepted.

Following on from the discussion of the pole vault record, AC put forward the following outdoor records:

Under 13 girls 100m – Nel Desir (Cardiff Archers) - 12.34. This record was set in a meeting in Worthing, with a wind reading of +0.4.

Under 20 women’s javelin - Bethany Moule (Cardiff) – 51.27m. This record was set at the British Championships in Manchester.

Both records were accepted and ratified by the committee.

RLP asked about a walking record that may have been set in Aberdare at one of the Welsh Athletics open meetings. DW agreed to investigate the details of this potential record and share information with AC.

**b. Planning for Officials Conference**

SH and ZH led the discussions on the Official’s conference.

ZH said that they were planning a virtual conference on 7th March for officials and volunteers and had sent some information to officials committee members, suggesting some potential topics. It was requested that the email is shared with all committee members, not just the officials on the committee.

**Action**: ZH to send to SH so that she can share with all committee members.

SH suggested that seeding would be a purposeful topic that could also added to a future coaching conference so that volunteer coaches could also develop their understanding of the seeding process.

DW added that Open Track have help guide videos on you tube on the seeding process that could be added to the website. See link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLDAe5Ib3pWbtW8iq3u6rUg/videos>

ZH confirmed that there is going to be a parents and teachers conference and that Hannah Pretty had suggested that a Level 1 officiating course could be put on as one of the breakout activities for this conference. ZH said that they would probably use Zoom as a platform for this conference.

**Action** - JT asked that committee members came back to her with any possible ideas by 9th December.

**c. Mentoring Update (ZH and LH)**

ZH spoke about a very productive two-part mentoring session held in October with eight attendees and officials. A follow up meeting took part after the two sessions to discuss allocating mentees before Christmas so that everything was in place by the outdoor season next year.

LH confirmed that she has reviewed and updated the mentoring policy document for technical officials. LH pointed out that the officials committee had already done a lot of work on mentoring and that the documentation was available. However, it is missing from the Welsh Athletics website. LH sent a copy to ZH and SH and between them, the documentation was reviewed and updated. LH confirmed that the structure for mentoring technical officials has now been updated and shared. It now needs to be put on the website and shared on a regional and national level. LH suggested that Welsh Athletics consider a mentoring policy for the whole sport. LH confirmed that she has already mentioned this to Steven Perks and would also like to take this suggestion to General Council as part of the strategic plan. JT suggested that we revisit this in our January meeting once everyone has had a chance to review the updated document and discuss what needs to be shared on the Welsh Athletics website.

**d. List of Mentors and Mentees**

JT asked ZH for a list of Mentors and Mentees in its current state and identify which regions they belong to so that support can be offered through the regions. ZH confirmed that she was still trying to contact about 30 potential mentors and would like to run another mentoring session with potential mentors before the official’s conference. ZH confirmed that she has produced mentor resources and a progress template for mentors to use and would welcome feedback on this. ZH asked that this is looked at in advance of our next meeting, to be discussed in January. LH highlighted the difficulties of being allocated mentees from a different region from the mentor. JT and LH both felt that it was important to offer support through the regions to make the process more accessible to both mentors and mentees.

Action - SH to update the list and share it with the committee prior to our next meeting.

LH asked if there were any training events specifically for practising teachers e.g., Level 1 officiating courses. ZH said that she was willing to arrange training for teachers, but they would have to book through the normal channels. PJ asked how many teachers have been put through the training in recent years and stayed within the sport. SM referred to retention rates and questioned whether the specific training of teachers was cost effective and would teachers ever become full time officials. ZH said that some online courses had taken place, such as race-walking courses and some technical officiating courses, and that she would be happy to support teachers to attend these courses and become qualified officials. However, access to training would still have to be set up via the normal channels.

**e. Official’s Survey**

ZH shared a brief overview of the UKA officials survey and the following points were summarised:

71 Welsh officials responded to the survey.

Some officials are still unsure about officiating during the indoor season and would prefer to return after a vaccine was available. Some were still limiting their travel and preferred to stay local. Some officials felt less confident about an indoor return to officiating than an outdoor return and would prefer to return for the outdoor season 2021.

Most officials had felt safe and secure returning to athletics for the 2020 outdoor season and felt that meetings were generally well organised by Welsh Athletics in covering the Covid-related risks.

Officials generally enjoyed the social aspects of returning to officiating outdoors, with a more relaxed timetable of events, smaller fields etc.

Highlights for improvement included:

More assistance required to cover the cleaning process in throws events.

Too much of a gap between some events.

A Covid meeting before the match would be beneficial, as well as a post-match feedback meeting to discuss Covid-related matters.

The allocation of a designated official to monitor social distancing amongst officials and athletes.

More structure regarding the presence of spectators and coaches.

A possible online refresher module for officials who wish to return.

Keep officials up to date with changes to Covid-related guidelines and regulations.

Action: SH to share the list with all committee members.

1. **ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**a. Photo Finish Training Update**

ZH and PJ confirmed that they are to attend a Scottish Athletics online photo finish course on 5th December via Zoom, with a view to holding a similar course in Wales in the New Year. PJ has requested copies of the presentation and course content as a starting point for a course in Wales. To be discussed in the next meeting.

**Action** – To be put on the agenda for our next meeting with ZH and PJ providing an update for the committee.

1. **RATIFICATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

JT reminded the committee that minutes should be turned around in two weeks and members to reply within the requested timescale so that minutes can be accepted and put onto the website. JT requested that committee members reply to LB, JT and SH so that they can confirm that minutes have been ratified.

1. **REPORTS**

**a. Regional Issues**

CB brought up the issue with facilities in North Wales, stating that money needs to be spent on all the venues to bring them up to standard for competitions. Wrexham in particular needs cleaning, with a lot of sap on the track, long grass and weeds growing inside the track and around the track and issues with the pole vault beds. Colwyn Bay and Deeside both have problems with the football and rugby taking place infield. CB felt that the committee needed to meet with Welsh Athletics to discuss finance to rectify these issues.

RLP asked if the facility managers themselves were aware of these issues and why they had not actioned track cleaning etc.

DW added that issues had been experienced with Wrexham, e.g., reluctance to purchase equipment and cleaning the track at the last minute before competition. CB said that there was no money in Wrexham. CB went on to say that that Colwyn Bay track is splitting and that a complaint had gone to the Head of Leisure within the council regarding a broken Service Level agreement. To date, there had been no acknowledgement of the letter. SM added that this person would be leaving their role in the New Year and suggested that that the new person would need to be identified.

JT suggested that North Wales representatives on General Council bring this up at the next General Council meeting, so that it is added to minutes and actioned.

LH felt that this should then go from General Council to the Board of Directors.

JT shared concerns from East Wales about the lack of progress with the new cages at Newport. RLP confirmed that Ryan Spencer Jones has been to investigate progress with the cages and circles. BAM also said that the top layer of their track would not be placed until the Spring. She said that her club were also frustrated about lack of guidance for non-track facilities. JT felt that although this was frustrating, it was also difficult because of constantly changing regulations and interpretations of the regulations. RLP went through some of the guidance with committee members but emphasised that it was subject to change and that numerical limits were also dependant on regulations set out by individual facilitators.

JT said that in the last East Wales meeting, they had been informed of high jump workshops to be held in NIAC on Sunday afternoons, with a maximum of five participants in each group, including officials. JT to report back on the success of these workshops in the next meeting.

JT said that she would contact West Wales to find out if anyone had been appointed to represent West Wales on the Joint Track and Field and Officials committee.

1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**a. Fixtures 2021**

JT said that UKA would not be releasing a fixture list until December and that there was a need to start providing provisional dates in Wales. Therefore, inter-regional meetings were pencilled in for the first weekend of August 2021.

RLP offered to share provisional Welsh Athletics dates that have been pencilled in as possibilities for next year. JT suggested that it was put onto a word or excel table to be shared and discussed in the January meeting.

JT said that provisional YDL dates were in place to be posted on the YDL website.

**b. YDL Questionnaire**

JT said that she was co-ordinating the YDL questionnaire that had been circulated to all clubs and was also available on the YDL website for anyone who wished to contribute to it. To date, the questionnaires that had been received identified big differences in the numbers being allowed on various tracks in different regions. Following the questionnaires, YDL hoped to provide information to clubs by February.

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday 6th January.

JT wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The meeting ended at 8pm.