

Welsh Athletics Board Meeting Minutes

16th July 2025.

Meeting held remotely via video link and in CISC, Leckwith.

Present: James Williams [JW], Lynne Brier [LB], Steve Perks [SP], Bernard Jones [BJ], Lynette Harries [LH], Joyce Tomala [JT], Chris Pratt [CP], Nigel Walker [NW], Paul Brooks [PB], Dai Williams [DW], Rob Campion [RC], Katy Evans [KE], Jonathan Ford [JF], Laura Mason [LM], Catherine Lewis [CL], Fay Benningwood [FB], Eleanor Cartlidge [EC], Tom Overton [TO], Sharon Leech [SL], Christine Vorres [CV], Dan Clements [DC], Phil Draper [PD], Chris Gough [CG], John Hatton [JH], Kay Hatton [KH], Lorna Kerr [LK]

Apologies: n/a

Circulated papers:

1. 2025-05 WA Board July 2025 – Finance update for BOARD.pdf
2. Sports Wales Board Paper July 25.pdf

1. Welcome

SP welcomed the members of the Board and the General Council to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

n/a

For information:

3. Welsh Athletics Update

JW presented a high-level overview of WA activity over the past 12 months.

Financial update-

- Due to additional investment from the Welsh Government WA can go into the financial year without the need to make funding cuts. This is thanks to a stable Sport Wales investment. WA can then plan long-term by generating small surplus budgets to put toward investments in the next few years.
- Welsh Athletics have acted on two main income stream focuses: the physio clinic & physiology hub as well as the new podcast

Membership-

- Positive trend in membership back to pre-COVID levels
- Mindful of membership challenges, including junior membership numbers
- New initiatives being launched/developed to support this
- Positive growth in coach and officials education

Competitions-

- Extremely successful summer championships with increased entries in most age groups
- Delivery models such as Cardiff Athletics hosting RWTW and throws league are a success
- Continued para-integration with wheelchair races and frame running

- Review of the sports hall offering has meant wider schools' engagement

Safeguarding-

- Numbers of trained CWO is increasing
- Live action plan to ensure development and progression of safeguarding work continues with a meeting with the CPSU in the next few weeks

Facilities-

- New lead within WA (Zoe Holloway)
- Resurfacing in multiple tracks (Neath, Haverfordwest) and pole vault area in Treborth
- Ongoing dialogues with facilities around the country to look at future grant applications

Starting Blocs-

- Large focus on local engagement, but with a review of the offer within clubs to be developed

Daily Mile-

- Huge growth in this area alongside a recent win at the WSA Sports Industry Awards for Most Influential Campaign

CWG-

- 12 months to go with 11 athletes achieving nominations standards (excluding para & mixed 4x4)
- Different experience in Glasgow (smaller games, no Games Village, shorter programme etc)
- CYWG host to be announced in November

UKA/HCAFS/WA Relationship-

- Good relationship with UKA, with staff members developing through WA to UKA.
- Looking to review race licensing process as well as the course measurement process and certification
- Looking at Power of 10 relaunch

Staffing updates-

- Appointment of Chris Anthony as Head of Development
- Zoe Holloway to move to Club Modernisation and Facilities Coordinator
- Jessica Hardy to depart at the end of August, with Elle Cartlidge to assume responsibilities
- Josie Rhisiart has departed Run Wales, so a structure review is currently happening and recruitment for a specific North Wales project lead is currently in place

Looking ahead

- Members' survey to launch in September
 - BJ highlights that the Master's Advisory Group were going to send a survey and wants to ensure nothing is duplicated. Survey will be communicated to ensure no duplication
- Commonwealth Games preparation
- Sports Development focus for new Head of Development
 - The operation of clubs
 - Coaching pathway

LH asks for more information on the approach to this review. JW confirms that the survey results from the HCAFs coach education management group will contribute to the review.

The review will hopefully ensure an ongoing CPD process for Coaches so the review should benefit them.

- c. Junior engagement
- d. Informal competition offering

4. UKA Update

SP updates on UKA.

Important times for athletics in the UK with upcoming competitions:

- Diamond League 2025
- Diamond League 2026
- CWG games 2026
- Home European championships 2026

UKA financial situation is now stronger due to strict guidelines. The sponsorship with NOVUNA for the Diamond League, as well as getting the BBC back on board, is a huge benefit to UKA.

This weekend's Diamond League sold out, as well as interest in the 2026 Diamond League.

The UK Government backs the bid to host the 2029 World Championships.

For discussion:

5. Katy Evans junior offer review (embargoed?)

JW presents the background to the junior offer review. Following the age group review, Sport Wales provided WA with funding.

KE presents 'Project 2030', which aims to get 10,000 mini and junior participants in our sport by 2030.

- KE visited as many clubs as possible to gain insight into the junior offering. Our competition-heavy model does not work for those who lack confidence as well as clubs having overstretched volunteers.
- Children want to learn new skills as well as having a good time as well as having a supportive, friendly and fun environment
- This particular project mainly focuses on ages 4-12 and aims to normalise parents, siblings etc, to help out with sessions, increasing volunteer opportunities
- The core focus will be on:
 - a. Engagement (easy, flexible, casual, parental expectations)
 - b. Governance (child-focused, prioritising safety and fun)
 - c. Workforce (representative of the community, upskill, tailored workshops)
 - d. Grassroots (Starting Blocs, varied targets, progressive, year-round access)
 - e. Competition ('have a go' festival, inter-club competitions, officials-free zones)
- The offer will be pressure-free and supportive with clubs able to opt in and host sessions (those who do will receive support from WA).

CL praises the initiative and that there is no formal coaching requirement.

LH asks about the welfare of the initiative. This will be reinforced through the Coach Education process.

BJ suggests including those outside of clubs who can assist (cross-country leagues, schools associations etc).

SL asks if schools will be involved. KE implies that this will be able to be hosted within schools, but do not want it to be confused with the current 'WSAA' offer.

CV asks where this will be safely hosted. Would WA help alongside local authorities/schools where the sessions could be held (especially indoors in the winter). A number of environments suggested by members on the call.

- Only 23% of our membership is help by juniors which is very unusual within sport. KE spoke to 25% welsh clubs as well as YAAs, junior athletes, school children, WA staff, the Board and sub-committees, WSAA, National organisations, charities & sporting bodies, England Athletics, Sport Wales, Welsh Government.

FB asks on the membership value for those people. KE answers that a recognition level could be built. The key part of getting the juniors on board will be the affinity with WA rather than a formal offer. Any income generated will be reinvested.

TO thanks KE for the effort that has gone into the review.

RC asks about LiRF licenses/social running covering the junior offer (insurance etc).JW answers that this area would be a 'next phase' for the review.

6. AOB

n/a