

## **Minutes of General Council Meeting 7 May 2025**

### **Present:**

Lynne Brier (LB) – Chairperson  
 Joyce Tomala (JT) – Vice Chairperson / East Wales  
 Kay Hatton (KH) – Chairperson North Wales  
 John Hatton (JH) – North Wales  
 Sharon Leech (SL) – Road / Cross Country  
 Rob Campion (RC) – West Wales  
 Bernie Jones – Masters Forum  
 Graham Finlayson  
 Christine Vorrés  
 Lynnette Harries- East  
 Chris Pratt - South  
 James Williams

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Fred Malkin, Gerald Davies, Arwel Lewis

### **2. Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of interest declared.

### **3. Actions from previous meeting**

See below:

Item Number	ACTIONS	Person responsible
5	Lack of safeguarding courses LB- Contacted Dawn Gully – all sorted and happy.	
8	Welsh Webinar to discuss changes to age groups  Ongoing. T & F committee already met with James. JT – understood changes to be discussed with whole of Wales. LB – Need to ensure athletes don't end up in 2 different age groups in different disciplines.	<b>LB – Chase up with James.</b>
8	Officials' expenses and refreshment arrangements – Understood to be awaiting a response from WA It was agreed that it would be beneficial to keep this item on the agenda of the various	LB – Send a note to JW and Andrew (Finance) representing feedback to GC. <b>Ongoing</b>

	discipline and official's committees for discussion and progression. Ongoing.	
8	<p>The South Region not represented at recent meetings:  <b>LB</b> Read out a letter from Fred – citing some of the reasons that the South are not attending meetings. Regional board lost members due to stress issues. Very few younger members involved in the committees. Fred is seeking a meeting with JW to discuss this situation.  <b>CP</b> – agreed he couldn't devote the time he hoped to regional meetings but agreed to cover GC meetings.</p> <p><b>JW</b> – His response was read out in full.  <b>** See attached copies of emails.</b></p> <p>The members discussed the roles at regional level and the difficulties faced trying to recruit volunteers for these committees, also possible solutions. KH advised that a document is available that contains descriptions of the roles of the regional council members. CP stated that the roles may already be uploaded on the WA website.</p> <p><b>JT</b> – Wednesday has already been identified as the most convenient day of the week for meetings for the vast majority of those attending.</p>	<p><b>LB</b> – Arrange for JW to meet with members of the South. LB to attend and possibly other GC members who could maybe contribute.  Hybrid meeting suggested.  To be an extraordinary meeting with only this item on the agenda.</p> <p><b>KH</b> – send LB Descriptions of roles</p> <p><b>JW</b> – collate issues from each region to ensure relevant members of staff are in place to respond.</p>

#### 4. Introduction to Katy Evans

LB - Katy unable to attend – but will attend next meeting. Katy has been appointed by WA to conduct a review of the sport from a young person's perspective – with a view to understand why numbers of youngsters in our sport is not growing and retention is a problem and identify areas for growth. Katy will be reaching out to clubs.

JW – added that junior athletics are not currently the go-to activity for youngsters, retention is still poor, we are competing against many sports. Katy will explore if we can do anything differently to retain youngsters.

#### 5. **Regional Matters submitted to General Council for discussion:**

## **KH – North Wales**

### **i. Race Licenses – T & F licenses**

Are other regions aware that T & F licenses used to be free but now cost up to £200. RC - regions can apply for a license for all your events in one go and only pay once. Most were aware of this as an email was sent out. Endurance licensing portal is not yet working in respect of Adjudicators – and Trail events still cannot be licensed online, the process is very manual. KH simply wanted to share this information.

**Update** - The cost of T&F licences will be £15 for the 2025 season as detailed in the letter that Darren forwarded to Kay after the meeting and £25 in 2026.

**ii Stripe Account** – This is new to North Region – a stripe account is needed to set up events? JT spoke to Darren, this will be in place for next year. Each region to have it's own account to take payments for events.

**RC-** West Wales already have an account and have used it for a few years.

## **6. Reports submitted**

SL – Road/XC Committee

### **i. **WA 10K series has been confirmed as follows:****

*Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May Bryn Meadows Caerphilly 10K (East Wales)*

*Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July Porthcawl 10K (South Wales)*

*Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July Helena Tipping 10K (North Wales)*

*Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September Admiral Swansea Bay 10K (West)*

*Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November Tata Steel Richard Burton 10K (West)*

### **ii. **WA have introduced a £75 charge to athletes, if they are selected to represent WA abroad.****

**JT** – This is not new, and was £50 many years ago, so £75 is comparatively reasonably.

**SL** - When WA select an airport to travel from they chose the cheapest flights regardless of where the airport is in relation to Wales. (eg: Stansted) This is detrimental to the athletes when the accessibility and cost of fuel to the airport is not considered. Also, flights from Thursday to Monday – meaning lost working hours. School staff cannot take an extra days.

**LB** – Athletes have always been charged, but there must be more consideration of travel for the athletes.

**LH** – Made an observation that in the past athletes had many opportunities to compete abroad, on many levels – and that some governing bodies are still able to support their athletes to attend these competitions.

**Action Point** – Sharon put concerns in an email – send to LB and LB to take it to WA on behalf of the Committee.

**JW** – joined the meeting during this discussion – he confirmed the charge to athletes; he is not aware of any other governing body that doesn't charge. Sadly T & F international meetings are not as popular as they were, so the opportunities for youngsters to experience this level of competition are not so available. The athletes contribution is insignificant compared to the overall costs of sending athletes to compete abroad. Endurance events, and trail/mountain events are still being represented. It's a small contribution to ensure the events still take place and there are processes in place for Athletes that may struggle with the cost.

WA has not pulled away from any fixtures, but other nations are no longer sending athletes.

SL – Noted that (for Endurance specifically), It was good to see that England, Scotland, Midlands travelled to Wales and were grateful to compete in the Cardiff 5k on the weekend. Its good that other nations can come and compete against Wales. Its something that we need to keep pushing.

JW – Athletes selected to represent GB – the cost is covered by WA.

**LB** – Advised JW of the content of the earlier discussions regarding the South Region representation at meetings. JW acknowledged the commitment and pressures asked of volunteers and questioned the purpose of regional committees, and what is the purpose of general council? Regional committee's pressures come from arranging competitions, but these may not resonate with endurance clubs. The challenge facing the regions is how to engage with people. What structure do we want for the future to enable the right people to come up with the right solutions. How can we create a forum for the clubs to come together to discuss best practice and the challenges they are facing.

The governing structure that we have has been in place a very long time and different challenges are emerging. It may be time to make changes to the structures in place to enable the right people to make the right decisions.

Action Point – LB to arrange a meeting with JW and representatives of the South and anyone else from the board and/or WA staff. LG to conduct a swat analysis to help JW ensure the right members of staff attend.

JW - Discussed the reasoning for engaging Katy Evans to help identify if anything different could be done to improve junior engagement in the sport.

JT – questioned if the perception that T & F events take all day puts athletes off, when the reality is that they can do their event and leave.

## **7. Dates of future meetings:**

Confirmed dates are as follows:

Wednesday 16th July 2025 – (joint meeting with Board)

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025

## **8. Any Other Business**

BJ – Re survey for masters – WA are about to conduct a survey of athletes that Bernie can have full access to.

LB – Concerned regarding the lack of representation from Welsh Schools on General Council committee and the T & F committee. SL is willing to represent but there is a chasm between Schools and WA.

JW – have a discussion in the future and explore opportunities to bring in new people. Andrew Jenkins is the contact between Schools and WA.

JT noted that sometimes its can be difficult to know who to contact.

## **Action Point**

The meeting ended at 7.20pm.

**Copies of emails between LB, JW and FM regarding representation of the South Region at meetings:**

Good evening, Lynne,

Regretfully, yet again, I won't be able to attend the Council meeting tomorrow as the representative of the South Regional Board for the very same reasons as previously, Wednesday night is our Club Track Night and with the limited number of coaches it is impossible for me not to attend.

I would again like to suggest that the council, either agree on a different night for the meetings (for me a Tuesday, Thursday or Friday suits) or it agrees to alternate meeting nights rather than permanent Wednesdays.

I notice one of the main Agenda items tomorrow refers to the lack of attendance of South Wales Representatives at Council meetings and that you would be discussing this with James Williams. From a South Wales Regional Board perspective it should be noted, particularly from a Welfare point of view, that our Regional Board have lost the last 2 elected Chairmen due to stress related issues, with both walking away from all regional involvement and relinquishing some, if not most, of their Club duties as well. Our current Regional Secretary has also declared his need to relinquish some of his regional responsibilities due to being inundated at work and his Club duties (including coaching) and his heavy involvement organising Junior competition for the Region. We also have a senior member of the Board from Aberdare who has had to relinquish most of his athletic involvement for the same reasons.

When you look at the remaining Regional Board make-up, you will see there are very few younger members, and it is this that should be on the agenda if the council wants Junior Athletics to survive.

It is my intention to try and organise a face-to-face meeting with James Williams as early as I can as there are a number of discussion items that I firmly believe need airing.

Again, my apologies for not attending tomorrow but both Kyle and myself have no option but to honour our coaching responsibilities tomorrow night.

Kind regards

Fred Malkin- Chairman

Barry & Vale Harriers A.C.

**James William's Response:**

Thanks Fred,

Just for clarity – the point raised about the South is not something that Welsh Athletics has raised.

We are acutely aware of the challenges and stresses that volunteers are under – we absolutely need to ensure that volunteer officers do not get to the point that the workload is so much that they walk away from the sport.

At the same time, I want General Council to be a forum where challenges and opportunities are shared – we need the voices of the clubs in that forum to achieve that.

I would be more than happy to arrange to meet (virtually or in person) with yourself and Kyle to look at this – I am sure Lynn as a Board member would be happy to raise any concerns to ensure it is discussed further.

We want to support the regions, I have felt for some time that process of regional meetings has got in the way of actually creating a forum to allow best practice, collaborations and challenges to be discussed – this is the only way we move the sport forward.

As an aside, we have appointed Katy Evans to undertake a review of the sport from a young persons perspective, her aim to report back on ways that we can reinvigorate parts of the sport to enable greater growth and retention of young people and volunteers – so hearing your experiences is essential in this.

Finally – my number is 07802 180319 – feel free to call me at any time to discuss any additional points or concerns.

Regards

James Williams.