

# Welsh Schools Athletics Association

## Management Committee Meeting

### 10am Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025

#### **1. Apologies & Present**

Apologies: Gwilym Williams (WSAA President) & Ieuan Jones (WA Performance Coordinator).

Present: Steve Jones (WSAA Chair) SJ, James Williams (WA CEO) Ja Wi, Jo Warner (WSAA Immediate Past Chair) Jo Wa, Euan Coney (WA Competitions Track & Field) EC, Andrew Jenkins (WA) AJ, Darran Williams (WA Competitions Officer) DW, Gareth Oldham (WSAA Treasurer & Powys) GO, Sharon Leech (WSAA Vice Chair) SL, Steve Mitchell (WA National Talent Development Coordinator – Endurance) SM and Alex Donald (WA Endurance Competitions Manager) AD.

#### **2. Approval of minutes / matters arising from previous meeting held 21/01/2025**

Minutes approved Jo Wa seconded by GO.

#### **3. Actions arising from previous meeting (21/01/2025)**

**3.1 GO: WSAA & WA Finance & Charity Commission.** All outstanding paperwork has been submitted. GO is still to meet Andrew Thomas to arrange access to the WSAA reserves account.

JW 4 year retrospective gift aid payments form donations to WSAA has been received and shows in the balance of the WSAA reserves.

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**3.2 AJ feedback from school districts current composition of key personnel/officers** has been received from Powys, Dyfed, Afan Nedd Tawe & Cardiff & the Vale. Feedback on finance regarding income and expenditure for current and future sustainability of school district events has been forthcoming from Dyfed and Afan Nedd Tawe School Districts.

JW – all eight school districts applied for WA modernisation fund which has helped alleviate the immediate financial challenges of the school districts, albeit a short term solution.

SJ – School district personnel and financial stability will become a standing item on future WSAA Management & Executive meetings, for broader discussion and action planning.

### **3.3 Age group changes 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.**

SJ - English Schools are currently out to consultation with their county associations. All other three Home Countries are on board to accepting the proposed changes. Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025 SIAB meeting will have a proposal submitted to accept the changes from the SIAB age group changes discussion group.

JW – requested that a member of the UK Athletics age group changes task group can join the SIAB working group. SJ – in principle yes will check with rest of SIAB sub Committee.

## **4. Fixtures**

**4.1 19/02/25 WSAA Cross Country Championships @ Brecon.** A good spectator friendly course was constructed. The number of finishers was relatively stable and in general the day went well with prompt and accurate results.

**4.2 09/03/25 Welsh U13 & U15 Sportshall final @ Llantrisant** the best attended final for a number of years with 5 of the 8 school districts entering pupils. A new venue was found at short notice, due to the usual venue of Cwmbran being double booked. Thanks to Zoe Holloway for finding so many volunteers, to make the final possible. The qualifying teams for the UK final on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at Stoke are U13B Cardiff & the Vale, U13G Powys, U15B Powys and U15G Cardiff & the Vale.

**4.3 22/03/25 SIAB U15 & U17 Cross Country International @ Falkirk.** The very long journey was even more of a challenge this year due to the bus breaking down on route adding an additional 2.5 hours to the total travel time. Nevertheless, all athletes still performed to the best of their ability. No individual medals were won, two bronze team medals were won in the mixed 4 x 1500m junior & middle age group relays.

**4.4 05/07/25 Welsh Schools U15 U17 & U20 Championships** will be held at Aberdare as it is the most cost effective venue. Due to the facility layout, consideration will need to be given to adjusting this years timetable, with particular focus on long throws, as a single cage venue, the number of trials for pupils will need to be amended. Action DW to draft new timetable for scrutiny of WSAA officers.

**4.5 09/07/25 Welsh Schools U14 & U16 Cup & Plate Finals** will now be hosted at Aberdare not Brecon as it is the most cost effective venue. It is important that all event information for finals is distributed much earlier than 2024. The timetable should revert to a 1pm start to allow extra travel time for the North Wales School teams.

GO – NASUWT have confirmed that they will have a grant for this years finals again, and that we are very grateful for their support.

#### **4.6 19/07/25 SIAB U17 International @ Derby**

SJ – travel logistics and accommodation, accommodation is being arranged by English Schools, we are awaiting details. WSAA team travel is likely to be independent, saving budget on bus and logistics for pick ups all over Wales, with the team expected to make their own way to the hotel on the Friday late afternoon for distribution of kit, team meeting and other items.

SM – outlined the SIAB selection policy for scrutiny. The policy was adopted with one amendment the title of International Secretary being changed to International Team Lead to reflect the WSAA Constitution changes from the WSAA AGM.

**4.7 22/10/25 Welsh Inter Schools Cross Country Championships.** Results of the survey on the future format of the Championships were discussed at length, with lots of different viewpoints expressed to the advantages and disadvantages of a combined or split championships. Only 17 survey responses were submitted, none from athletes. Reverting to a stand alone event held in October midweek was the consensus from the survey results . This will add another fixture to the WA competitions department budget and stretch their workload further. On balance it was felt that the Inter Schools and Inter Regionals target two different markets. Moving forward the 2025 events will be split with the schools being scheduled for the final Wednesday before half term on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025. Races will be reduced in length to circa 2km, 3km & 4km to encourage more unattached pupils of all abilities to participate. Welsh Colleges will still be invited to incorporate their championships. Further consideration will be given to team sizes and entry fees to encourage as large an entry from schools as is practical. There will be no expectation for our performance athletes to participate, the fixture will not be any element of being a fixture considered for selection for any WA representative opportunities.

#### **4.8 TBC/03/26 SIAB U15 & U17 Cross Country International @ TBC**

AD – it is Wales turn to host the international and the date and venue is still TBC. Newtown will not be the venue as no suitable accommodation is available. AD is still looking at alternative sites with venues in North Wales now top of the list and is open to suggested locations. North Wales is most accessible for all home countries by ferry, flight and car, any venue should have enough appropriate accommodation nearby. WSAA Officers must be able to confirm the venue by no later than the SIAB Saturday 19th July 2025 meeting so home countries can start planning logistics.

### **5. Senior/U20 Age Group International Opportunities**

SJ - to encourage both retention and performance WSAA would like to see opportunities for U20 athletes to represent Wales on and off track reinstated.

SM/JW – Wales are the last of the home countries trying to retain the U20 International and were struggling to find other teams to compete against. Event specific representative matches were now the focus of the U20 age group, examples of the Armagh Road Races and Sean Pickering throws fixtures were given. The top U20 in the UK are aiming for World & European qualification in GB&NI vests. It was felt that the event specific fixtures currently best bridge the gap between SIAB and UK vests for U20 at this moment in time.

## **6. Teachers Education & Initiatives**

AJ - A successful workshop was held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025 funded by Carmarthenshire County Council with 11 candidates present. Cardiff Met have expressed an interest at booking one primary and one secondary workshop before the end of this financial year. Otherwise, we have struggled to get any interest from other educational institutions or unitary authorities due to their ever decreasing and tightening budgets.

We hope to run both Primary & Secondary Workshops open courses during 2025/26 academic year as open courses scheduled on inset days, as an alternative to group bookings. In addition, costs have been reduced to £500 a course for group bookings, with school and unitary authority budgets getting tighter and therefore it is harder to put courses on, despite enthusiasm from staff to attend. More promotion from both WA & WSAA via email and the various social media channels is required to raise the profile of these Primary & Secondary Workshops with the outcome to hopefully get more courses to run.

SL - many schools struggle with enough equipment to deliver athletics in PE lessons for the field and hurdling events.

JW – clubs can always apply for equipment through the Be Active Sport Wales grant as part of applications for other club development funding, with potential to lend equipment to schools for use.

## **7. AOB including date of next meeting**

SJ – WSAA Executive Meeting will be Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

All - Date of next WSAA Management meeting 10am Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Meeting closed at 11.20am