



Oxfordshire Cross Country League

ESTABLISHED 1987

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2023 AGM AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, 21st June 2023

Time: 19:30hrs – 22:30hrs

Venue: Online Meeting

Present:-

Dene Stringfellow – Manager
Ros Kelling – Treasurer
Dan Wymer – Committee
Theresa Lambie – Committee
Richard Hart – Committee
Matthieu Marshall – future committee
Clare Curnow – Cherwell Runners & Joggers
John Styles – Abingdon AC
Daisy Gladstone – Abingdon AC
Emma Gould – Bicester AC
Hans Price – Woodstock Harriers
Steve Frame – Hook Norton Harriers
Annie Fernandez – Radley AC
Alex Kirkman – Great Milton
Tom Baker – Eynsham Road Runners
Kelly Lehman – Oxford Tri Club
Bryan Clinton – Swindon
Ian Robinson – Banbury Harriers
Phil Marshal – Newbury AC
Hilary Savage – Harwell Harriers
Kit Villiers - Headington
Will Atkinson – OAA
Mike Suggate – Didcot
Melanie Cumberland – Radley AC
Sarah Davies – Oxford City Athletics Club
John McCormack – Witney Road Runners
Ken Swan – Benson Striders

1) Apologies for Absence

Simon Gale – Team Kennet
Jacky Pinnock – Eynsham Road Runners
Steve Connolly – Swindon
John Exley – Oxford City Athletic Club
Jason Campbell – Highworth
Regina Lally – Witney Road Runners
Paul Groves – Bicester AC
Gary Warland – Alchester
Gareth Smith – White Horse Harriers
Liam Hosier – Kidlington Running & Athletic Club
Neil Preddy – Woodstock
Jeremy Kay – Didcot

Dene opened the meeting, and said that Covid had sped up online matters meaning meetings like the AGM can be held online with more people attending than in person.

2) Review of Minutes of 2022 AGM Meeting

Swindon Striders and Radley College Harriers were joining the league. There was a discussion about the winding up procedure which was put on hold – it is one of the voting items on the agenda this time (but will be put on hold again).

Does everyone agree the minutes are accurate? Agreed.

- 3) Matters Arising - none
- 4) Manager's Report

All the fixtures went ahead this time round which was a relief after the loss of Round 3 for the previous season and the impact of the pandemic on the season before that.

After the changes to the OXL's funding in order to ensure the League's future and the introduction of an online entry system it has been a real boost to see that the participant average for the season remained on a par with that for the 2021-22 season, despite the Committee's concerns that numbers might be severely impacted.

The Round 1 fixture at Newbury Showground, hosted by Newbury AC, saw a lower turnout than normally expected over recent past but still managed highest attendance across all the 5 fixtures. Phil Marshall, Andy Tuttle and the rest of the Newbury AC organising team did a sterling job given last-minute course changes that needed to be implemented to allow the fixture to go ahead. The ladies were not too enamoured when then heavens opened during the latter stage of the final race of the day. The only real issue at Newbury Showground, apart from truck drivers attempting move large vehicles across the course when races were about to start, was that the finish funnel needed to be longer to avoid runners backing up across the finish line that occurred in the men's race.

The course adjustments made for the Round 2 fixture at Cirencester Park, co-hosted by White Horse Harriers AC and Didcot Runners, were a great improvement. Many thanks again to Neil McColl, Alan Smith, Mike Suggate along with the rest of the White Horse Harriers AC and Didcot Runners organising team for putting on another well-organised event.

The combined Round 3/Oxfordshire Cross Country Championships was held at Shotover Park, hosted by Oxford City AC. Again, changes to the courses had to be made owing to restrictions in place. Thankfully, the changes required did not prove to be insurmountable with Richard Hart and John Exley coping admirably. The only issues that arose were the boggy location of the finish line (- *very uncomfortable for the*

timekeepers) and the last runner of the ladies race going the wrong way due to the course signage having been taken down.

At Cotswold Farm Park, hosted by Witney Roadrunners, the Round 4 fixture was blessed with positively balmy weather, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed after the strong wind and rain the previous season. A big thank you goes to Dan Wymer, Fraser Howard, and the rest of the Witney Roadrunners organising team for putting on another excellent fixture. The café was excellent!

This fixture saw the introduction of a card payment facility to help ease the replacement numbers process which was a positive improvement. A very big thank you to Emma Gould and colleagues (*Bicester AC*) for volunteering to deal with the replacement numbers.

Round 5 was co-hosted by Abingdon AC and Radley AC again at Henley Showground. This time round the sun shone! It is a stunning venue. The fixture was another great success and a credit to Gary Richards, David Miell-Ingram, Melanie Cumberland and the rest of the Abingdon AC and Radley AC organising team. The awards presentations once again went smoothly, albeit a good number of the prizes remained uncollected.

Another positive boost during the course of the season has been the additional support the League has received from Theresa Lambie (*OXL/Didcot Runners*), now able to act as Referee having qualified in rapid time, and Annie Fernandez-Jones (*Radley AC*) progressing her qualifications. Along with Daisy Gladstone (*Abingdon AC*) this has helped to bring down the average age of the officials supporting the OXL, which bodes well for the future - assuming others will continue to step forward in future to fulfill the roles of the elder officials. I thank you all for your commitment and support.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank John Sear, Matthew Smith and Heather Cleford for their unstinting support over many years along with Will Atkinson, Andrew Garner, Gareth Smith, Doug Scott and Alan Vincent for making themselves available when the League has been struggling for officials.

It must be said, however, that there would be no fixtures at all with the volunteers that give up their time to help with the marshalling, car parking and results recording. I hope volunteers will continue to step forward and support the League in the future.

Over my time involved as League Manager as well as handling the entries and results I think it worth noting the following important points.

Committee Member Volunteers

The members serving on the OXL Committee are volunteers. They also all have day jobs. The Committee members do their best to ensure the League is the best it can be, but sometimes errors and oversights do occur from time to time. Instead of being vilified for those mistakes they deserve more support and understanding. There are only so many hours in 24! They are just trying to do their best.

Fixture Volunteers

A real disappointment was the unnecessary abuse dished out to volunteers giving up their own free time to allow the OXL events to go ahead. It has been a recurring theme. The people that do this need to be made aware that they are jeopardising the very foundation of the League. Please can I ask that all clubs make every club member, official, parent and supporter to direct their wrath to a club representative instead of subjecting the volunteers to it. The volunteers have been asked to do a job. There is a reason for their instructions. By abusing them there is a strong likelihood that he or she will never volunteer again. The League cannot afford to lose its volunteers. I can only apologise to those volunteers and assure them that the OXL Committee will try to do its best eradicate such behaviour.

Online Entries

With the shift to an online entries system it is incumbent upon club membership secretaries and team

managers that athlete records are accurate to ensure entered in the correct age category and are correctly recorded in the results. Athletes will be entered as registered in the EA registration database and will be likewise be recorded as such in the results.

Late Race Starters

The start times for races are publicly available both under the fixture page on the OXL website as well as on the Site & Courses Map. Any runner arriving late must go with a club official to consult the League Manager and Fixture Referee to ascertain whether or not approval to start late may be given. If that involves an athlete running in different race, particularly if over a longer distance, the decision is less likely to be favourable. In all cases the the League Manager's and Fixture Referee's joint decision will be final.

Course Signage

A point of clarification for all fixture directors is that marshals must receive confirmation that the last runner has passed their station before taking down any course signage. A means of communicating where the last runner is in the final race of the day could possibly be to communicate the Letter sign the runner has passed on the last lap to a co-ordinator by txt message who makes a loud speaker announcement at the finish and distributes that fact to the other marshals.

Entries & Results Queries

Upon taking on the League Manager role there were no guides in place and a significant amount of time and effort was expended to put them in place. It is evident, however, that the vast majority no longer bother to take the time to read any instructions, which is big frustration for the Committee. The tone and content of many of the queries directed to the League could easily have been dealt with by a club team manager or club official. A proposal will be put to the assembly later under the Voting Proposals section of this meeting to try to mitigate the issue.

Round 5 Prizes Collections

Much time and effort has been spent over the years to ensure prizes get delivered to the intended recipient. It would be very helpful as well as save a lot of time if each club could ensure a club representative attends the awards ceremony to ensure all the awards are collected on the day of the final fixture.

As I stand down at the end of this meeting, I would like to thank Ros Kelling, Dan Wymer, Theresa Lambie and Richard Hart for all their support and patience over the past season. It has been another season of significant change - hopefully for the better. I would also like to take the opportunity thank past colleagues Richard Stocking and Frank Briscoe for their assistance and support in the early years of my role.

I ask that everyone does all they can to continue to support the OXL Committee. The League's future depends on it. I hope the League continues to thrive and be a nurturing ground for future young athletes.

5) Treasurer's Report

Ros ran through the accounts for the season, and a breakdown of the big differences shown through having the online entries alongside paying the host fixture costs.

Alex asked if athletes could pay for just one fixture – this has been previously discussed and agreed too complicated to administer.

One request was some clubs would like to pay by bank transfer – this isn't currently available.

What is included in the round costs? Course hire, toilets and medical provision.

John – it would have been helpful to have known there was only going to be one race number. The information sent out stated there was only going to be one race number – but the website needed to be updated. This is on the agenda for us to discuss as a committee. We need to be conscious that hundreds of numbers get thrown away – we need to get the balance right.

6) Sponsorship Update

Dan confirmed Fit2Run have agreed to sponsor the 2023/24 season again for £500.

7) Entry/Results Report

Richard Hart reported - I joined the committee this time last year to help with the online system. Research was done by Ros and Richard to find available systems which was narrowed down to Open Track. A number of team managers had used the system previously. Thank you for the feedback clubs have given, which we have fed back to Open Track. Hopefully some of the glitches will be ironed out. 95% of it worked really well – a straightforward system which cut out errors and was easy to use. But there were some errors where the system left us some work to do. The system allocates numbers to runners, and all we have to do is to allocate batches of numbers to each club. These are locked in at the start of the season. Some clubs exceeded their number allocation – we will adjust these for the next season. We did have to allocate another number batch to clubs which only Open Track could do. In future we will be able to do this. Another issue was at the point of selecting athletes they could sync with EA – a number reported that nothing seemed to happen – the progress meter didn't show this, but this has now been improved. When you sync with EA you had many more athletes than your current membership – this is because EA included all athletes who had left your club. This shouldn't happen going forward. One of the features which would be helpful is a 'save' button so Team Managers could enter athletes and a treasurer pay for the entries – Open Track are looking into this. Lost numbers during the season caused us a lot of additional work – athletes sometimes just putting on the wrong number – Dene has spent much time sorting out who the athlete was and corrected the results. We have not been able to change the number in Open Track, but going forwards we should be able to do this.

The biggest cause of headaches were the U9's and U11's as some were not on the EA register so the Open Track system did not pick up their details, so we had to devise a system to enter these athletes. Unfortunately, there were too many errors inputting dates of births, incorrect spelling of names etc – we were not able to change these, but going forward we are going to look at this system with Open Track and put in safeguards to ensure this doesn't happen again. As a committee we have discussed – not for the 2023/24 season – that all U9's and U11's be registered with EA. Alex said this would be a big cost for the athletes. Annie – there is the incentive that if U9's and U11's join EA there is a free course for parents to be officials – could all be linked.

Large payments – this is something we discussed with all the large suppliers we talked to, and they are all locked into card systems and they take a small percentage for each entry. They are very reluctant to change this.

We have participation figures which show that this system didn't have any negative effect on entries. As a committee we felt that the high quality of entries was a positive.

Last season Dene ran the results system manually. The results were input into Open Track – with a delay. The results are there, but the standings have not been priority as they have moved on to the track season. There is more work to be done there. People may need to be patient with results being produced.

One thing all clubs need to bear in mind is with the transfer to online results there will need to be a change in the way results are computed – they cannot be done in the same way as they have been done. Going forward the committee will need to simplify everything as much as possible.

Richard was thanked for his huge input into making the online system work.

a. League Statistics Update – see **Appendix A**

Dene ran through the stats – overall very slightly down. The last fixture had a slight increase over the previous season. Probably going to take another couple of seasons before the League knows what it's regular participant levels are going to be. Still a slight hangover from the pandemic. Round 1 had the largest number of runners – just by 1 over round 3.

8) 2023-24 Season Notices

a. Fixtures Update for 2023-24 Season – see **Appendix B**

At this stage Cotswold Farm Park is confirmed, and provisional confirmation for rounds 1, 3 and 5. Still to be verified where round 2 will take place – we have 2 potential venues. Worth saying is Witney RR have potentially sourced 2 other venues which bodes well for the future. With more funds available the League is in a better position to approach more venues. Once the AGM has finished we will come to host clubs to confirm all fixtures, plus for the following season (2024/25).

b. Divisions for 2023-24 Season – see **Appendix C**

In the original notice information, the divisions had not been updated – apologies. 2 go up and 2 go down as per the last 4 or 5 seasons. This will be posted on the website before the start of the season.

Any clubs who don't get standings in a season will automatically be demoted.

c. 2023-24 OXL Funding & Fees Review – see **Appendix D**

We were very cautious when we set the budget for the 2022/23 season, and ended up with a far bigger surplus than we expected. This means we could run a whole season with no further input – a fantastic position to be in. We have put in 90% of entries for 2023/24 season – so still conservative. Radley College Harriers have pulled out so we are down one club. Cost increases – we have budgeted for increases as it is difficult for host clubs to predict these. We have the history of fixture costs over the past few years, so the budget has been built with the best knowledge we have. After this season, if we see a similar increase in entries and costs stable, we could then look at reducing the entry fees so we don't build too big a surplus. A second season would give us more confidence if we do want to reduce the entry fees.

Phil – why were numbers based on 90%? Cautious budgeting. The previous year was built on 75% of the previous years entry fees.

Daisy – with the healthy reserve could we have more toilets? Would be welcomed by runners. We need to catch up with the host clubs to agree this.

Mike – very good value for money. Could give an amount to charity, or perhaps reduce the cost to juniors.

Mike – could possibly help with the increased EA fee for U9's and U11's.

d. UKA Rules Update – see **Appendix E** – no change.

e. Online Entry System Feedback – covered above

f. Entries & Results Enquiries Communication

Enquiries relating to entries and results – this creates a lot of extra administration if these are coming from individuals – many instances where the enquiries could be dealt with by the club. Committees view is that all communication about entries and results should go through team managers.

Richard – the tone of the enquiries are usually very polite, but a few enquiries have a rude tone. These would be better put through the team manager.

Annie – queries in advance or on the day? Should be both through the team manager.

Emma – Bicester AC send out information which is generally read. Emma would like to know if a Bicester parent or adult member ever sent a rude email/message.

Phil – agreed with Emma – he would like to know if their club was involved.

- 9) Proposals for Discussion & Voting – see **Appendix F**
a. Teams for U9s & U11s – *Nick Bull (Tkt)*

Previously the emphasis has been on participation, but Nick feels that having teams of U9's and U11's would increase participation and bring them in line with the other age groups. Committee are in favour of this but needs to be agreed by the clubs.

Phil – will there be enough athletes for team prizes? Might be touch and go for U9's, but about incentivising the athletes. 3 people/team.

Annie – it would also bring it in line with the track leagues where the QuadKids score for their club.

Not in favour – none, so agreed unanimous approval.

- b. New Member Clubs Proposals – *Dene Stringfellow (OXL)*

In the past all new clubs undergo a trial season. Last season no new clubs so nothing to report. Radley College Harriers – who underwent a trial the previous season – couldn't commit to the requirements so pulled out before the end of the season and have withdrawn from the League. Bicester Tri club were a member 2 seasons ago and were invited to join again without going through a trial season but have declined to join again.

- c. Winding Up Procedure Proposal Update – OXL Committee

Discussion from last AGM was included. The committee have not had the time to discuss this, so has been deferred.

- 10) League Constitution Review – see **Appendix G** for current OXL Constitution – no impact. Reviewed.

Kit – constitution says AGM shall be held not later than 12 weeks after last fixture. We are later than that but has been due to lack of time/small committee. Should we scrap this? The constitution can be amended – we should simplify things as much as possible, so if anyone sees anything which could be changed please let us know.

- 11) Officials for 2023-24 Season
a. Additional Committee Members Requirement

We would like to re-iterate the request for additional committee members. Matthieu has agreed to join the committee – thank you. We will be holding a meeting after the AGM to go through the job roles – we would like to have a committee of 8 from a mixed background – junior clubs, senior runners, parents etc. We won't turn away multiple committee members from one club. Please contact committee@ email address

- b. Election of Officials

All 4 current members are willing to re-stand.

Dan – Manager

Ros – Treasurer

Richard – committee

Theresa – committee

In addition:-

Matthieu – committee

All voted in.

12) AOB

Kit – thank you to Dene for all his amazing work over the last years. Dene – got involved because he loves the sport. Great to be part of a team. Wishes the committee every success. Good luck to Dan, who will be much better at delegating. The development of the junior section has been a credit to the clubs, coaches and League.

Alex – could we provide all of our marshals at a fixture close to our club? As a committee we will look at whether we can implement this.

Emma – thank you to everyone. Emma is the cross country rep on the OAA as a voice – so if anyone wants to bring up anything at the meeting please let Emma know – contact details on the Bicester AC website.

Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Please Note: *Links to the supporting documentation supplied in email notice to clubs as well as under the Administration section of the OXL website.*

Dene Stringfellow
League Manager

30 July 2023