



Oxfordshire Cross Country League

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**Oxford Mail**

## 2019 AGM Minutes

*Date:* Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019

*Time:* 19:30hrs

*Venue:* Small Hall, Exeter Hall, Kidlington

### **Present:**

#### *League Officers:*

Dene Stringfellow (*League Manager*)

Richard Stocking (*Treasurer*)

#### *Club Representatives:*

*Alchester RC:* Vincente Bayliss, Richard Gould, Gary Warland

*Banbury Harriers AC:* Andy Bartlett, Ros Kelling

*Bicester AC:* Emma Gould, Richard Gould

*Bicester TC:* Lucy Davidson, Stephanie Harrison, Elliot Newman

*Cherwell Runners & Joggers:* Clare Curnow, Sharon Darke

*Eynsham RR:* Jacky Pinnock

*Headington RR:* Kit Villiers

*Hook Norton Harriers:* David Bannister

*Kidlington RC:* Liam Hosier

*Newbury AC:* Phil Marshall

*Oxford Tri:* Tracy Makin

*Team Kennet T&AC:* Colin Price

*White Horse Harriers AC:* Simon Leech

*Witney RR:* John McCormac, Lindsey Smith, Dan Wymer

*Woodstock Harriers AC:* James Bolton, Sonnie Jane

**Voting Members: 15**

## 1) Apologies

The following apologies were recorded:

*Banbury Harriers AC: Ian Robinson*

*Didcot Runners: Theresa Lambie, Mike Suggate*

*Great Milton AC: Pat Reid*

*Harwell Harriers: Sabiene North*

*Radley AC: Rose Webb*

*Woodstock Harriers AC: Neil Preddy*

*Oxon AA: John Sear*

## 2) Minutes of 2018 AGM

The minutes of the last AGM held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 were unanimously accepted as an accurate record of the meeting with the following proviso: the correction of the misspelling of "Haedington RR" to "**Headington RR**" under the **Present** section.

## 3) Matters Arising

The General Data Protection Regulation (*GDPR*) privacy policies have been reviewed and implemented and the policies added to the OXL website.

The proposed online entry system was investigated as actioned. Concerns over sharing personal data (*young athlete personal data, in particular*) resulted in the decision taken to build a custom online entry system. The online entry system was not completed in time for the start of the 2018-19 season – **action Dene ongoing**.

The inclusion of athlete consent within the online entry system framework also remains outstanding – **action Dene ongoing**.

The review of the existing entry system to investigate switching to either a club or individual entry system with future income meeting the setup costs (*including the cost of chip timing*) of all fixtures (*for the season*) with the retention of any surplus funds as a cushion against future costs remains outstanding – **action Dene liaise with Jackie Pinnock (Eynsham RR)**.

## 4) Manager's Report

It was a relief to complete a full season of fixtures after the cancellation of fixtures during the past two seasons.

Owing to the stepping down of Paul Thomas as Endurance Officials Secretary/Coordinator it was necessary for the OXL to take on the responsibility for the contacting and scheduling of the attendance of Oxon officials at OXL fixtures, covering the roles of fixture referee and timekeepers. The continuing very small number of endurance officials necessitated the requirement for volunteers to shadow those roles in an effort to increase knowledge of the roles within member clubs of the OXL and to encourage volunteers to step forward to support the County in those roles.

The volunteers for the shadow roles were all supplied by the host clubs. It was disappointing that no volunteers for the shadow roles were offered by non-hosting member clubs.

The 1st round fixture at Newbury Showground, hosted by Newbury AC, was once again well-organised and well-attended. It saw the highest turnout of athletes in the men's race and overall athlete turnout ever recorded.

The return to Cirencester Park for the 2nd round fixture was again very successful, albeit the catering provision failed to arrive on the day. Otherwise the fixture was a great success and a lot of positive feedback was received from clubs and athletes alike. A credit to the host clubs White Horse Harriers AC and Didcot Runners in the first joint operation.

Headington RR were brought onboard to co-host the combined Round 3/Oxfordshire Cross Country Championships fixture at Horspath to avoid the lack of marshal support the last time Oxford City AC hosted an OXL fixture. Following Oxon AA's backing down with respect to the requirement for U15 and U17 athletes to run separate distances for this fixture (*a not inconsiderable additional organisational burden for the host clubs over the past few seasons*), it has been agreed henceforth that the only alteration compared standard OXL for the combined fixture will be that race distances alone may be increased to meet the County's selection requirements for higher level competition.

It was agreed the host clubs would make the final decision (*with the full backing of the OXL committee*) as to whether or not the Round 4 fixture at Adderbury went ahead in February owing to the potential adverse forecast weather conditions. Thankfully, it was decided the fixture would go ahead despite concerns from various quarters. In the end the fixture was successful with the race conditions being more than acceptable on the day. Great credit goes to the host clubs, Banbury Harriers AC and Bicester AC, for all their hard work and persistence.

It was disappointing that the final fixture of the season hosted by Abingdon AC and Radley AC at Henley Showground (*new venue*) witnessed the worst weather conditions of the season. In stark contrast to the balmy and sunny conditions setting up the previous day, on the day it was extremely wet and cold. The fixture was well organised by the two host clubs and positive feedback was received. Unfortunately, although the early presentation went reasonably smoothly, the main awards presentation had to be cancelled owing to a system crash that corrupted the system configuration and results output.

In the aftermath I realised I should have taken responsibility for the main presentation and kept everyone informed. For that I sincerely apologise. At the subsequent management committee meeting it was agreed that:

- a. The responsibility of handling the presentations should not be delegated to a non-committee member.
- b. If results have failed to be produced by 30 minutes after the scheduled presentation times, the presentations should be cancelled to avoid the scenes witnessed on the day in future.
- c. A solution to avoid any such catastrophic system failure in future will be implemented prior to the final round next season.

There were no trial clubs for the 2018-19 season.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleague, Richard Stocking, for all his support and counsel over the past and previous seasons. It has been greatly appreciated. As you are aware Richard is standing down as OXL Treasurer at the end of this meeting – more on that later.

## 5) Treasurer's Report

- a. The League's finances remain in a healthy position. There has been increase of just over £400.00 in the League's bank balance as compared at the time of the AGM last year. The current bank balance exceeds £1,400.00.
- b. The attempt to increase the sponsorship received from the Oxford Mail for the 2018-19 season was met with a negative response. The sponsorship received therefore remained the same as the previous season: £200.00.
- c. It was noted that the England Athletics affiliation fee has increased by 50% (*from £100.00 to £150.00*) for the 2019-20 season.
- d. No queries were raised regarding the accounts as presented for the 2018-19 season.
- e. Acceptance of the accounts for the 2018-19 season were proposed by Kit Villiers (*Headington RR*) and seconded by John McCormac (*Witney RR*). The accounts for the 2018-19 unanimously accepted.

## 6) Entry & Results Secretary's Report

- a. The fixtures averaged in excess of 760 participants over the course of the season. This represented the highest average participants since the records first reported by Frank Briscoe for the 2006-07 season
- b. The popularity of the OXL and total number of athlete entries continues to rise. Over 2,200 race numbers were required for the 2018-19 season.
- c. The continued issues in relation to championship entries, the issuing of race numbers and the timely delivery of the championship results for the Oxon XC Championships at the Round 3 combined fixture led to the proposal at the Oxon AA EGM held in February earlier this year that the organisation of the Oxon XC Championships should be handled by the OXL. That proposal was agreed at that AGM – ***action Dene in liaison with Oxon AA.***
- d. As reported earlier in the League Manager's Report the results system failed to produce the reports required for the main awards presentation. It was, in fact, the third time the results system had failed during the course of the season.

## 7) 2019-20 Season Notices

The following notices ahead of the 2019-20 season have been confirmed:

### a. Dates & Venues for 2019-20 Season

All the fixtures are scheduled for the first Sunday of the month including the combined Oxfordshire County Championships fixture. The following venues and host club(s) are provisionally confirmed for the 2018-19 season:

#### i. 2019-20 Fixtures:

***Rnd 1: Sun, 3 Nov 2019 – Venue and host tbc.***

**Rnd 2: Sun, 1 Dec 2019** – Cirencester Park (White Horse Harriers AC/Didcot Runners).

**Rnd 3/OxonXC Champs: Sun, 5 Jan 2020** – Bo Peep Caravan Park, Adderbury (Banbury Harriers AC/Bicester AC).

**Rnd 4: Sun, 2 Feb 2020** – Lawns Park, Swindon (Swindon Harriers).

**Rnd 5: Sun, 1 Mar 2020** – Henley Showground (Abingdon AC/Radley AC).

ii. **2020-21 Provisional Fixtures:**

**Rnd 1: Sun, 1 Nov 2020** – Newbury Showground (Newbury AC).

**Rnd 2: Sun, 6 Dec 2020** – Venue and host tbc.

**Rnd 3/OxonXC Champs: Sun, 10 Jan 2021** – Venue and host tbc.

**Rnd 4: Sun, 7 Feb 2021** – Venue and host tbc.

**Rnd 5: Sun, 7 Mar 2021** – Venue and host tbc.

b. **Divisions for 2019-20 Season**

The following team promotions and relegations were confirmed on the basis of the two-up-two-down ruling as voted at the 2016. As three teams in Women's Division 2 failed to register a team score for the 2018-19 season the top three teams Women's Division 3 have been automatically promoted in this instance.

<b>Women</b>	Division 1:	<b>promoted:</b> White Horse A, Witney A <b>relegated:</b> Newbury B, Woodstock A
	Division 2:	<b>promoted:</b> Hook Norton A, Oxford TC A, White Horse B <b>relegated:</b> Newbury C, Newbury D, Team Kennet A
<b>Men</b>	Division 1:	<b>promoted:</b> Swindon A, Witney A <b>relegated:</b> Bicester TC A, Woodstock A
	Division 2:	<b>promoted:</b> Cherwell A, Kidlington A <b>relegated:</b> Newbury C, Radley A

c. **Member Club Affiliation Fees Review**

It was confirmed that the League the affiliation fee structure for member clubs for the 2019-20 season will remain unchanged from the 2018-19 season.

d. **Online Entries & Chip Timing Update**

As detailed previously under the **Matters Arising** section the following actions remain outstanding:

- i. The completion and delivery of the online entries system.
- ii. The inclusion of athlete consent within the online entry system framework.
- iii. The review of the existing entry system to investigate switching to either a club or individual entry system with future income meeting all fixture setup costs.

e. **UKA Rules Update**

It was noted that UKA had finally taken the decision to implement a rule that

bans the use of any headphone devices in cross country races. The UKA position finally falls into line with rules already implemented by the majority, if not all, fixture directors. The existing OXL rules already cover the issue.

The discussions at UKA/IAAF level regarding gender equality in respect of race distances remain ongoing. A decision on the matter is awaited and may or may not affect, in particular, championship events. With respect to gender equality race distances for all OXL fixtures the matter is covered in detail under the ***Proposals for Discussion & Voting*** section below.

With regard to the relatively recent introduction of the Non-binary gender to the RunBritain online entry system and the UKA's ongoing pilot in that respect, it was felt that any decision on the matter should be deferred owing to the fact that the Ug's race is the only race where athletes run in a non-gender specific race. It was generally agreed that it would be wholly impractical to add Non-binary category races to the fixture schedule.

## 8) Proposals for Discussion & Voting

**Note:** *Owing to the length of time required to discuss and reach a decision with respect to the first voting proposal (Proposal A), it was necessary for the remaining proposals and items on the Agenda to be dealt with relatively swiftly.*

The following proposals were discussed and voted upon during the meeting:

### **Proposal A – Equal Gender Race Distances**

To open the discussion with respect to this proposal Lucy Davidson (*Bicester TC*) was given the floor to outline the case for equal gender race distances. Lucy argued the following points:

- The vast majority of running events are raced over equal distances irrespective of gender (*essentially just cross country leagues similar to the OXL that are not due to historical reasons*) including the world cross country champs, parkrun, 10ks, marathons, etc.
- It is harmful to juniors to allow them think boys/men are able to/should run further than girls/women.
- Although not included in the original proposal, equal distances for the junior female athletes could be achieved by either meeting-in-the middle or by setting the female junior distances to the same as the male junior distances. At one fixture, there is only 200m difference anyway. There is no reason why the girls cannot be asked to race the same distances as the boys.
- Realistically, if the fixtures were designed from scratch today, it would be very surprising for a decision to be taken to set race distances based on gender alone.
- Although it is true that some women would prefer not to increase their distance, **distance should not be gendered. It should just be personal preference.**
- There are also men that would prefer to run a shorter race and some that do not take part because of the distance.

- Equality is achievable and important for everybody, not just the women that would choose to run further.

It was argued shorter race distances for female athletes were demeaning to female athletes and the OXL should change this antiquated policy with respect to its fixtures. It was also highlighted that although female athletes already compete over equal distances both on the track and on the road, it was conceded that field and hurdles events continue to lack parity.

If the assembly were to vote in favour of the proposal the following options were proposed for the assembly to review and vote upon to address the inequality:

- **Option A** – 8-8.5km for all seniors. Small change to existing race distances. Minimal impact to duration of fixture, evidence of which can be provided.
- **Option B** – Women to run the courses as the existing men 's race distances. The order of the races to be reverted to the women running before the men.
- **Option C** – Alternative common race distance.

In general support of the proposal Richard Stocking (*OXL Treasurer*) referred the assembly to the UKA rule book and to Rule 250 that states:

*"Distances at IAAF World Cross-Country Championships should be approximately:*

*Men 10km Women 10km*

*U20 Men 8km U20 Women 6km*

*The distances recommended for U18 competitions should be approximately:*

*U18 Boys 6km U18 Girls 4km*

*It is recommended that similar distances be used for other International and National competitions."*

However, as stated, that rule currently only applies to world, international and national cross country competition. In addition, the rule currently specifies differing gender race distances for athletes competing in the Under 20 age categories and below. It would therefore appear the ongoing discussions at UKA and IAAF level must be reviewing that aspect of Rule 250 as well as if and how any rule reached should or should not be applicable to regional championship, county championship and non-championship events.

Email correspondence received from representatives of clubs unable to attend the meeting were also read out to the assembly. Gary Warland (*Alchester RC*) rightly pointed out that according to the current OXL constitution proxy votes could not be counted. The responses reflected the general view of the assembly that the proposal was a contentious issue amongst the assembled representatives of member clubs.

It was apparent that support for the proposal was largely, albeit not exclusively, from clubs having no junior section. It was also of note that the representatives of three clubs Gary Warland (*Alchester RC*), Phil Marshall (*Newbury AC*) and James Bolton (*Woodstock Harriers AC*) all publicly stated their adult female members were unquestionably against the proposal on the grounds such a move would inevitably discourage participation among female club members leading to lower athlete turnout for those clubs. It was also argued that the proposal implied that male

athletes would have no say on the matter as to whether or not their current race distances should be shortened.

While Ros Kelling (*Banbury Harriers AC*) and Emma Gould (*Bicester AC*), representing clubs with junior sections, both felt there was no reason in principle why female athletes cannot run the same distances as male athletes both strongly asserted that the current proposal did not properly take into consideration the U15/U17 athletes or the transition process required to achieve equal gender race distances. If the adult race distances were increased to 8-9km, the graduation of the U17 athletes to the senior ranks could be enough to destroy the confidence of young athletes and take them out of the sport entirely. On that basis both felt the proposal in its current guise could not be voted upon.

It was apparent that some clubs had neither taken into consideration the implications of the proposal for clubs with junior sections nor the issues that would need to be addressed in order to implement equal gender race distances effectively.

It was stated that possible options might be to force an EGM or to poll all female athletes at the end of each of the following season's female races. Dene Stringfellow advised that forcing an EGM for the proposal in its current guise would almost certainly be counterproductive and might result in outright rejection.

Another option suggested that trialling equal gender race distances at the 2019-20 combined Round 3/Oxfordshire Cross Country Championships fixture might be the best approach to assessing the introduction of equal gender race distances. Dene also emphasized that it was not out of the question that equal gender race distances would be required in any event for the fixture incorporating the Oxfordshire Cross Country Championships pending the ongoing UKA/IAAF negotiations on the subject as that was known definitely to be on the agenda. Another suggestion was that other events where equal gender race distances have already been introduced ought to be contacted to learn how the transition to equal gender race distances was achieved as well as the issues the events had to address to effect the transition.

Further discussion ensued with arguments and counter arguments both for and against the proposal as well as, importantly, whether or not the proposal in its current form should be voted upon.

On the basis of the lengthy discussion and the general agreement of the assembly it was eventually decided that an initial vote should be taken as to whether or not member clubs were generally in favour or against the introduction of equal gender race distances with the proviso that a working party should be formed to investigate the issues raised and to present a more clearly defined proposal at a later date.

***Initial Votes for Proposal A:***

For: 6  
Against: 8  
Abstention: 1

***Action:*** Dene to arrange a meeting within one calendar month to establish a working party to review and to put together a more clearly defined proposal on the subject of achieving gender equality race distances, covering the issues to be addressed, to be presented to member clubs in due course.

## Proposal B – Overall Standings Calculation & Prizes

Following a short summary of the proposal that the overall standings calculation ought to be reviewed in the light of tied scores over the course of recent seasons that have led to unsatisfactory season end presentations leading to shared prizes and additional administrative overhead and costs as detailed in **Appendix E** of the 2019 AGM documentation.

The proposal was therefore should the existing standings calculation method be changed to address, issue as far as possible, the tied positions issue?

### **Votes for Proposal B:**

For:	15
Against:	0
Abstention:	0

As the initial proposal for change was met with unanimous approval a short discussion followed to review the options as to how to best address the overall standings calculation. Option A as detailed in the associated section of Appendix E, based upon head-to-head results between tied athletes/clubs was positively received.

However, James Bolton (*Woodstock Harriers AC*) an alternative solution pointing out why he felt the current standings calculation method is additionally flawed, namely in relation to category standings in races that include multiple categories. James stated it was his opinion that category standings should be based purely upon the results of the athletes in the category. James cited an instance where he felt he should not have won a particular prize in his own category when he felt another athlete's performances deserved the prize owing to the detrimental effect of non-category athletes on the ranking positions.

While James felt that head-to-head results are a valid potential solution he felt that an amended category calculation method should be introduced in the first instance to determine an individual athlete's category ranking and then the method outlined under option A should then be applied if ranking scores are still tied.

On the basis of the discussion the following options were put forward to the assembly for voting upon:

- **Option A** – In the event of tied athlete scores individual rankings to be based upon head-to-head results over the course of the season. In the event head-to-head results fail to separate the athletes, only then for the non-counting result to take precedence with a lower non-counting result ranking above a higher non-counting result and any non-counting result ranking above no non-counting result.  
Likewise, in the event of tied team scores, team rankings to be to be based upon head-to-head results over the course of the season. In the event head-to-head results fail to separate the teams, the finishing position of the last counting athlete in the race where teams finish with the same score will determine a team's ranking.
- **Option B** – Category results to be calculated independently of overall results to more accurately reflect the category results for individual athletes. If individual athletes ranking scores are still tied then the individual athlete

ranking method outlined under Option A will apply.

With respect to team results the overall individual race results will continue to determine team ranking scores. In the event of tied team scores the team ranking method outlined under Option A will apply.

Having initially established that the overall standings calculation method needed to be changed the votes for the proposed alternative calculation methods were cast as follows:

***Votes for Options A and B were as follows:***

<b>Option A:</b>		<b>Option B:</b>	
For:	1	For:	14
Against:	14	Against:	1
Abstention:	0	Abstention:	0

**Action:** Dene to liaise with James Bolton to finalise the standings calculation details ready for the start of the 2019-20 season.

**Proposal C – Athletes Wearing Wrong Race Numbers**

A short discussion covered the subject of the disqualification of athletes wearing race numbers for completely separate events – *i.e. wearing an Abingdon Marathon race number instead of an OXL race number, for example*. It was felt that although under the current system of race number allocation and distribution athletes wearing the wrong OXL race number was to some extent understandable, athletes wearing race numbers for entirely separate events was inexcusable and leading to additional unnecessary results administration overhead, particularly given the need to deliver the results promptly and meet press deadlines. The athlete should ultimately be held responsible for ensuring the correct event race number is worn.

On the basis of the reasons outlined and the short discussion that followed the proposal was put to the assembly for voting: Should an athlete be disqualified who wears a race number that is for a separate event in the OXL?

***Votes for Proposal C:***

For:	15
Against:	0
Abstention:	0

**Action:** Dene to add an additional rule to cover athlete disqualification in relation to wearing a wrong event race number to the OXL Rules.

**Proposal D – Women's Team Size**

Kit Villiers (*Headington RR*) outlined the argument for increasing the size of women's teams to 4 athletes from 3 in an effort to reduce the number of competing women's teams. The counter argument was put forward that such a move might benefit larger clubs from an organisational perspective, but would almost certainly impact clubs that struggle to raise sufficient athletes for teams.

On that basis the proposal was put to the assembly for voting: Should the size of women's teams be increased to 4 athletes?

### ***Votes for Proposal D:***

For: 4  
Against: 10  
Abstention: 1

### **9) League Constitution Amendments**

There were no amendments to the League Constitution required as a result of the 2019 meeting. However, one correct to resolve an omission was proposed as follows:

#### **a) Correction to item 6.4 (General Meetings section):**

The insertion of the missing EGM abbreviation from the brackets after An Extraordinary General Meeting as follows:

**6.4** An Extraordinary General Meeting (**EGM**) shall be called by the League Secretary upon receipt of a request signed by five member clubs and stating the object of the meeting, or upon being directed to do so by the Management Committee.

The above correction was unanimously approved by the assembly.

### **10) Election of Officials**

With member clubs having been informed in advance of the meeting, directly by email, via the website and via social media, that the current League Treasurer, Richard Stocking, would be standing down from his role at the end of the 2019 AGM, Ros Kelling (Banbury Harriers AC) responded to the request for a volunteer in the week or so before the meeting and agreed to stand for election. In addition, three further volunteers agreed to stand for election following a meeting at the beginning of April.

Dene Stringfellow also volunteered to stand for election again for the coming season.

The following officials were therefore duly and unanimously voted in:

<i>League Manager:</i>	Dene Stringfellow
<i>League Treasurer:</i>	Ros Kelling
<i>Sponsorship:</i>	Emma Gould
<i>General Committee Member:</i>	Richard Gould
<i>General Committee Member:</i>	Dan Wymer
<i>League Entries/Results Secretary</i>	Dene Stringfellow

### **11) AOB**

No other business was arising.

### **Close**

The meeting was closed at 22:15hrs.

*Dene Stringfellow*  
**League Manager**

21 June 2019