



Oxfordshire Cross Country League

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## 2022 EGM Minutes

Date: Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

Time: 19:30hrs

Venue: Online Meeting

Present:-

Dene Stringfellow (*Manager*)

Ros Kelling (*Treasurer*)

Dan Wymer (*Sponsorship Secretary*)

- Abn - David Bedlington
- Alc - Gary Warland and Richard Harris
- Ban - Ian Robinson
- BnS - Ken Swan
- Bic - Emma Gould, Paul Groves, Tom Gould and Richard Gould
- BTC - Andy Levis
- Chw - Clare Curnow
- Did - Mike Suggate and Theresa Lamble
- Eyn - Hugh Morris and Tom Baker
- GtM - Pat Read
- HwH - Steve Hetherington
- Hed - Kit Villiers
- Hkn - Steve Frame Steve Brain
- Kid - Liam Hosier
- New - Phil Marshal Andy Tuttle
- Oxf - Chris Prince
- Rad - Melanie Cumberland
- SwH - Steve Connolly
- Tkt - Simon Gale
- Whh - Simon Leech
- Wds - James Bolton
- Wit - Richard Stocking
- RCH - Dan Studley

### 1) Apologies

Nichola Poulton (HwH), Jason Daniels (Hig), Charlie Sidaway & Tom Doble (OxB), Richard Hart (Oxf), Daniel Anderton (OTC).

## 2) Welcome & Purpose

Dene welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for joining – a great turnout of 34 people. The purpose of the meeting was restated as given on the Agenda and then Dene handed over to Ros.

## 3) Season to Date

Ros confirmed that all the documentation would be sent out with the minutes after the meeting.

Ros gave a brief rundown of the season to date, and the hosting of Round 4 at Cotswold Farm Park (CFP) – see *Season to Date Summary document attached*. The meeting was then opened to the floor for 10 minutes for questions and comments on the season so far.

### ***Comments & Questions Arising***

Emma Gould – Is there a set amount which had to be covered at CFP? Dan Wymer – doesn't matter how many athletes – we pay CFP for the number who cross the finish line. If less than 500 runners the cost of first aid will be paid on top. We had 570 runners.

Emma Gould – Why didn't OXL want to go back to Bicester heritage? Ros – OXL didn't want to go back to a venue twice in a season for variety of courses for athletes. Plus, we wanted to take the opportunity to look at a new venue.

Emma Gould – If Round 4 was allocated to Bicester and Banbury, why did the OXL take decision to have different course and venue. OXL agreed this was a fair point and needs clarity and is worthy of building into next AGM and putting something into the constitution. **Action:** *Constitution proposal to be added to forthcoming AGM.*

Ian Robinson – How do the overall numbers compare to 2 years ago? Dene – Significantly down. Bicester usually 1000, this year 870. Senior men not much difference, but junior and senior women both down on numbers.

Richard Stocking – The constitution states only 2 events can be outside of Oxfordshire – needs changing?

Dene – Agreed constitution needs changing – **Action:** *Constitution amendment proposal to forthcoming AGM.*

Dave Bedlington – Great venue to run at. Juniors especially loved it.

Tom Gould – Are entries down compared to entries at the start of the season?

Dene – Yes, they are down by about 15%.

Mike Suggate – Where are the League standings?

Dene - Now in updated results – just published.

Chris Prince – Really good season. Is this a test season regarding distances run? Can we do a survey?

OXL – Difficult to do as we need to capture those who are not running XC now, big undertaking to ask every athlete. Would need to be electronic. Dan Wymer to add to jobs for committee at the end of the meeting.

#### 4) Securing the League's Future

Ros handed the meeting to Dan Wymer who ran through the challenges for next season outlining the League's current fee policy, the lack of sustainability along with alternative possible fee policy proposals – see *Securing the Future document attached*. In addition, Dan read out the feedback received from Nick Bull (*Team Kennet A&TC*) that outlined a suggested proposal along similar lines – see *Team Kennet Feedback document attached*.

Dan then opened the meeting for comments and questions.

##### **Comments & Questions Arising**

Ian Robinson – Asked for clarification regarding £15/athlete.

Tom Gould – £3 mark is reasonable. Looked at what has been taken for car parking – £4/car equates to about £3/athlete. It would be good to distribute what has been gained per event equally over the host clubs. Bicester AC made a 'profit' of approximately £500 - £600 for events they have hosted, whereas others have struggled to break even. Would leave uncertainty if charged as per athlete each event, whereas if the League charged for the season up front there would be a guaranteed amount of money at the start of the season. 'Thank you' money could be paid to each host club to cover expenses for the event, and 'profit' could be spread over the host clubs once the season has finished. This would mean cheaper and more expensive venues could be evened out. A model similar to Motavation could be used – e.g. £15/athlete and it is up to the club how they collect this money.

Dan Wymer – Agreed this seemed to be the simpler system as a lot of additional work for the League Treasurer to invoice each club every round and ensure the money has been paid, and also additional work for the clubs. It may also mean the cost of race bib numbers come down as we will know how many are needed.

Tom Gould – Felt this would also mean each host club would know how much could be paid for a venue.

Dan Wymer – The budget could be set for the season. The Team Kennet model meant slightly more than was actually needed would be collected to give the League a buffer in case of emergencies.

Dene – In terms of medical service provision – this could be booked to cover all 5 fixtures to cover cost. Aware that host clubs may have a preferred medical cover provided. Would mean this could be budgeted for at the start of the season.

David Bedlington – Agreed with Tom's comments and seasonal model. Abingdon discussed may charge seniors more to incentivise juniors to run.

Dan Wymer – A separate charge for juniors and seniors to differentiate. Many more seniors than juniors. At Cotswold Farm Park about 500 seniors.

David Bedlington – Could say £3 now but may actually be £4 in the end – felt it would be more sustainable to go a bit higher. Additional £1 makes very little difference to athletes but may incentivise clubs to host a fixture. Fully support what has been outlined.

Ros – Additional money would help secure the League as we are conscious that is a factor.

Dene – It may also mean we can host more fixtures on Oxfordshire as we have a bigger budget to offer venues.

Dan Wymer – This may also give us a greater provision for toilets as never enough – could be budgeted in.

Gary Warland – If we are going to charge a flat fee for the season we need to guarantee 5 races – as far as practically possible. We can't have the January fiasco again. Commitment has to be there from the League.

Dan Wymer – Difficult as don't know how we can guarantee that.

Gary Warland – League and host clubs have to ensure venue is booked. Needs to be a contract – like Bicester Heritage – to guarantee.

Dene – Valid point. Meetings were booked to ensure everything was in place, but Dene was not made aware that the fixture for Round 3 had not been booked.

Emma Gould – Surprised this happened as when Bicester were hosting they had numerous emails from Dene. Seems to be imbalance of how clubs are checked upon.

Dene – That is why the Race Directors' Guide was written.

Dan Wymer – There were communications going to host fixtures plus extra meetings.

Ros – Horspath is a different situation – you don't book the venue and have a contract.

Emma Gould – You don't agree to do a cross country event until you are sure the venue is booked.

Ian Robinson – It is between the athletics club and the rugby club.

Gary Warland – Not the first time there have been issues at Horspath. Most central location. If there was a guarantee of a reward you may find better hosts.

Ian Robinson – You are in danger of alienating clubs. Needs managing.

Dan Wymer – Maybe it will be an added incentive to be able to reward hosts.

Simon Leech – Ros made a comment about WHH hosting Cirencester. Happy to continue hosting Cirencester, but would prefer to find a venue locally and find another host club for Cirencester.

Emma Gould – Moving forward from Tom's idea of paying up front need to consider how we would deal with constantly adding runners on during the season. Also fixture normally combined with county champs – why do Oxon AA not routinely contribute. If struggling financially, why are they not contributing. No contribution in 2020. Can it be formalised that they make a contribution?

Dene – This has been raised with leading OAA Committee members. Committee felt there should be some contribution. Dene will follow up. OAA did contribute previously when no car parking could be charged.

Emma Gould – There should be a set amount from OAA and that can be factored in when organising budget.

Tom Gould – Can this be included in the next OAA meeting?

Dene – Yes, this will be included.

Liam Hosier – £3 - £5 sounds reasonable. Not that long ago – 2018 we talked about this but there was no appetite. Strongly encourage anyone who doesn't agree to speak out now. Was voted out previously.

Dan Wymer – Whatever proposal we draw for the AGM needs to say if we don't vote this in there will be no races next season. it's about how we set this up.

Tom Gould – It is the League who is responsible with our money. The League will need to be transparent and trusted. Transparency on exactly how much has come in and how much each host club will get, and what will happen with any excess at year end. This needs to be written in somewhere at the start.

Ros – This will be run very much as a business, but it is run by volunteers. We need more on the committee.

Dan Wymer – The host clubs will be very much more involved as they will be putting numbers into the budget. A wider circle needs to take responsibility. Does each fixture need a rep on the committee?

Ian Robinson – Would be in favour of increased affiliation fee and keep runner cost down. Asked for online entries.

Dan Wymer – The whole League needs streamlining. Too much sits with Dene.

Andy Levis – BTC use [myclubhouse](#) – allows for registration. All managed online. Custom built platform.

Dan Wymer – Also [opentrack](#) which is free to use, but need people to research.

Dene – The [eventrac](#) system may be another possibility.

Kit Villiers – Agree raise affiliation fee and reduce athlete fee. CFP was difficult as had to collect/athlete. No car share. What does new club pay?

Dene – New member clubs pay the lowest fee of £80 in their first season.

Ros – It was something the League discussed. It is up to each club – Banbury Harriers had an honesty box and charged car parking.

Dan Wymer – Witney were 'rewarded' with no charge. Car sharing is a good point – green and helps venue. There needs to be clarity as the start of the season.

Emma Gould – There needs to be clarity at the start of the season.

Dan Wymer – Where does the line get drawn – we can't go out to each club for every decision.

Emma Gould – Felt it was such a big change it should have been put to clubs. We need to work together going forward.

Dene – Whatever is decided at the AGM needs to be clearly documented and have enough flexibility.

Dan Wymer – If we can get a proposal together which works for the season this will take away uncertainties.

Tom Gould – Need to realise that we nearly lost a host club as they were treated in a way they didn't feel valuable.

Chris Prince – On behalf of OCAC – believe cross country is very good value. Gwent League pay £4/adult and £1/junior. OCAC are looking at other ideas for still using Horspath without using the rugby pitches and are still keen to host cross country. Better for juniors not running round flat pitches.

Pat Read – Not as price sensitive as we think. Parents will pay £5 for each event at an open meet, and often do 3 events for a number of children. Great Milton pay junior

coaches and club administrator – parents more willing to pay the money than do the jobs themselves.

Ian Robinson – Our junior membership is higher than our senior.

Dene – If anyone has an idea for a model going forwards then please submit that information to us. We have to go to the AGM with concrete proposals for voting on so a decision can be made.

Ros – We need to know early as possible so we know what we can pay for venues.

David Bedlington – All seem in favour of upfront fee. Principle agreed – it is the detail which needs working through.

Steve Harrington – Isn't it a case of looking at the venue fee first, not how much we can pay? Also, the distance travelled to a race is more important than the fee/race. £1 here or there makes little difference, but more local venues would.

Dene – We would like to see more venues in the county. A number of us have looked for venues.

Dan Wymer – If we know the venue, we know what the costs are likely to be. If we are trying to find new venues, we need to know what we can offer.

Paul Groves – Up until now we have had to do minimal cost/venue. When in 2020 we booked Bicester Heritage for £1000 it was considered expensive, and too expensive for BBO. If there is a higher amount we can spend on a venue we can find alternative venues. Supports everything spoken about so no hidden costs or surprises.

Ros – Chiltern League pay £2,000+ per venue.

Dan Wymer – A good consensus. Can people send to committee what they think the affiliation and per athlete costs should be.

Pat Read – If members join through the year you will not get the full budget pre-season. Also, athletes may not do the first few races. If junior athletes are charged say £20 up front, will it put some off if they have not done cross country before and are not sure.

Dan Wymer – We need to have a simple model rather than have to manage something complicated and time consuming.

Dene – Could have a junior fee which covers 5 fixtures, and use just one.

Ros – Should we have a working party similar to EGRD? Thrash out these are the best 3 choices to put to the clubs at the AGM. Would be good to have all or some host clubs on board.

Dan Wymer – May only be 2 choices. It is then the detail which needs sorting.

Gary – Remember EGRD couldn't be voted at first attempt on as didn't include the juniors. Should we ask Kidlington how they manage Motivation and what works well? Easy for seniors, but more complicated for juniors. Happy to be part of working party.

Dan Wymer – Has one pager plus Team Kennet document which will be sent out to all. This will give people thinking and reading time, and they can come back to Committee with thoughts/ideas.

## 5) Committee Members

Dan Wymer stated the need for 5 to 8 people on the committee for the future of the League, for jobs such as:

- Minutes
- Social media
- Entry system
- Results system
- Prizes
- Club/host liaison
- Sponsorship

Along with anything else that people feel would benefit the League.

We don't want people to feel tied to the committee. We want willing volunteers. Do we need to have a club rota? Or each host club needs a member on the committee?

We would rather do it with willing volunteers. If we have a club rota people may not turn up.

Emma Gould – Would be better to have a list of jobs rather than a rota. Each person would have a purpose and make a difference. May not need to come to every meeting.

Ros – As an example, Bicester AC implemented the barcode system which has been a bonus to the League.

Agreed to send out a list of jobs – but this will not be exhaustive.

Tom Gould – Are the committee meetings open to all or just committee members? Could this be put on social media or similar, as OAA meetings are?

Ros – Open to all if people approach us to come and discuss. We have gone to Zoom due to Covid.

Dene – Zoom has opened up the meetings to many more clubs, and means anyone can have a say. Could be written into the constitution that one representative of each club at each committee meeting has a vote on all decisions as there is currently nothing to cover that.

Kit Villiers – Can all information go to team managers rather than club secretaries?

Dan Wymer – Would be better to go to both as we have the contacts anyway.

Dene – Recently, all information goes to 2 representatives of each club (team manager and secretary) so it is not missed.

Dan Wymer – If we have someone doing social media it can be put out there rather than being sent to certain people.

Tom Gould – Can we ensure that the important piece of information is very clear as can be missed.

## 6) Close

Dan Wymer thanked so many people for coming and contributing to the meeting.

Ros thanked everyone too.

Dene also thanked everyone, and felt meetings like this brings the League together and makes it a community.

The meeting closed at 21:30hrs.

*Ros Kelling*  
*League Treasurer*