

OXL AGM Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 7.30pm via Zoom

Present

Dan Wymer – Manager

Ros Kelling – Treasurer

Theresa Lamble – Officials

Matthieu Marshal – entries & results

Richard Hart - committee

Apologies for Absence

Simon Gale – Team Kennett

Sarah Davies – Oxford City AC

Jenny Connolly – Swindon Striders

Voting Members

David Warlow – Hook Norton Harriers

Ian Robinson – Banbury Harriers AC

Joe Murray – Abingdon AC

Caroline Johnstone – Woodstock Harriers

Kit Villiers – Headington RR

Tom Atkins – Harwell Harriers

Emma Gould – Bicester AC

Duncan Lawrence – Oxford City AC

Jonathan White – Alchester

Mike Beard – Swindon Harriers

John Paul Hamilton – Team Cherwell

Alex Kirkman – Great Milton

Melanie Cumberland – Radley voting

Julie Rayfield – Reading

Phil Marshal – Newbury

Tom Baker – Eynsham

Theo Potter – Kidlington

Non-Voting

Annie Fernandez – Radley

Cameron Weir – Abingdon

James Charles – Banbury

Courtenay Chessell – Swindon Harriers

Dan welcomed everyone.

Last years AGM minutes and matters arising – any concerns or points to raise?

Melanie Cumberland missed off the list – Radley AC

**Managers Report** - Dan thanked the committee, host clubs, Bicester AC, officials & volunteers, team managers, Fit2Run, Tempo and everyone who competed over the season.

Last years proposals – chip timing has been a great success reducing volunteer burden, increasing speed and accuracy of results – the only concern reported was about reducing opportunities for officials. Purchase of walkie talkies – we are still figuring out the best way to use these after some ‘user’ issues.

Venues – all our venues again provided the challenge that OXL athletes have come to know and enjoy. We said farewell to Cirencester Park which leaves a venue short, and Cornbury are asking for a steep increase in fees. South Parks Oxford is a possibility, but we have no host club. We need clubs to help locate venues and provide or make contacts with landowners for new venues.

Participation – Dan showed graphs showing overall entry numbers are slightly down, but those who entered did more races. There was growth in every fixture. Gender split seems constant. The U15 girls outnumbered the boys. The older junior age groups are shrinking in numbers, whilst the younger age groups are growing.

Results – juniors – 3 individual titles went to Swindon Harriers and Abingdon, 2 to Oxford City, and 1 for Newbury and Reading. 4 team titles went to Swindon Harriers, 3 to Oxford City, and 1 for Abingdon, Banbury and Radley. Seniors – 3 individual titles went to Abingdon, 2 to Oxford City and Banbury, and 1 to Swindon Harriers, Witney, Woodstock & Highworth. Women Div 1 was won by Headington, Div 2 Highworth & Div 3 Thame. Men Div 1 was won by Swindon H, Div 2 Abingdon B, Div 3 Thame.

Finances – another higher than budgeted surplus means the league is in a very good position (more from Ros later) and has funds to cope with some event cost challenges that are on the horizon.

UKA Age Group Changes – the 2026/27 season will see age groups move to even numbers. It looks relatively simple for us – U9 will be U10, U11 will be U12 etc. Our distances are still within guidelines. Thank you to Emma and Ros – both junior coaches - who have agreed to investigate the changes we need to implement.

## Accounts

Ros ran through the accounts. Much easier to compare years now we have done 3 years of our new model.

Income has stayed pretty much the same as 2023/24.

For expenditure

Trophies and awards – slightly down mainly due to a more competitive quote and still having medals from the previous year we could use.

Chip timing including numbers – obviously the chip timing was a new cost for the year – Dan has covered the improvements this has made.

Other – we bought walkie talkies which Dan has covered, and also strong envelopes for the chipped numbers.

Round costs – have increased which Dan will go through.

Entry system – this has gone down due to less work on setting up the system by Open Track, and no results being produced. The agreement with them is £275 + VAT/fixture, so £1650 for the season. They have been taking a fee from every entry so invoice us the balance due, which is very hard to keep track of. This was agreed at the outset to help our cashflow, but now that we have the reserves it would be easier to pay the £1650. We will set this up for next season.

This has led to a surplus of £4,391 for the season.

Thank you to Joe Lyne from Headington who has looked through the accounts thoroughly, and picked various pieces of paperwork to see, and provided us with an independent audit report again. Much appreciated. On his advice from last year we have also set up a second signatory on the account.

Mike asked about Open Track results which Matthieu answered, and Annie asked if we had reached out to them to solve the problems – again Matthie confirmed we had.

Entries and Results - Matthieu confirmed 3<sup>rd</sup> year of using Open Track for entries which is working well. Couple of technical hitches, but can transfer to Sarah for chip timing easily. Has hoped Open Track could sync the results from chip timing. Worked for R1 and R2 but R3 with county champs couldn't make it work. Lost numbers caused issues too. Participation – total number of entries slightly down.

Any questions on entries and results? None

Theresa – summary of officials and volunteering. Thank you to everyone from the clubs and officials. Great season. Chip timing thought would loose some officials but didn't at all. Chip timing was great. Host clubs and communication great through the season. Didn't have to chase anyone – rewarded with chocolate. Bit of feedback saying officials were being taken away and so would loose officials, but didn't have that environment at all – used officials in other areas which was better for the athletes. If anyone would like to come and volunteer to help and officiate – easier to help now we don't have soggy bits of paper. Get lunch voucher! Speak to team manager. We have upped the mileage expense rate to 45p/mile to match the government rate. We would also be open to funding officiating courses.

Emma – could Theresa put something together to put out to membership to entice people in.

Theresa agreed. EA have changed pathway to now easier to move up ladder.

Theresa felt the season had gone very well. Walkie talkies have also helped.

Dan said it had helped to have a committee member leading up officials.

#### Proposal Documentation

New member club applications – Kidlington Running Club asked to rejoin the league – great to see. No need to vote in as any Oxfordshire club can join. Welcome back Kidlington.

Race schedule adjustments – to improve gaps between the races and line up junior age groups. We have had some marshal problems separating out runners from different age groups. Want to combine U11's now – gives us an extra 10 minutes. We didn't do this before due to the numbers, but now that we have chip timing we can now combine them.

Mike from Swindon - How will this help the U11's – big numbers on the start line. Will this put off junior athletes? We do have wide start lines, and can separate girls and boys if needed. All other age groups have combined.

From a young runners point of view they like to be able to take the tape first. Some welfare issues.

Annie – can we have separate funnels and finish tapes?

We could ask Tempo re having a longer mat with 2 finish lines.

Annie – it was noticed last season that some of the girls suffered in mixed races. Could announce first boy and first girl in each race. An announcer could be another role to fill – could swap throughout the day.

May need to re-brief someone if swapping throughout the day.

Theresa – we did speak about whether to split the boys and girls – do risk assessment and split the round. Need to figure it out round by round.

Dan – would need megaphone.

Julie – not much difference in U9's to U11's but big differences in, say U17's. Also seem to be no problems with senior men and women.

Dan agreed – U15' and U17's look very similar so difficult for marshals to distinguish.

Dan – need to consider as we look at new venues. Cirencester did cause problems. Looking not to extend the time of the overall races.

Emma – at Bicester Heritage we had separate start lines for each race. Her U9's U11's don't question mixed races – just want to have fun and run.

Dan – we did change the start procedure this year – corral them and walk them forward.

Theresa – not always successful!

Annie – the younger they are the sooner their parents think they need to be on the start line shivering in a vest. Need to put something in the instructions – be nearby but not on the line until 5 minutes before. Could we have a PA system? Would be useful to have on start line. Also add to instructions you will have a warning – there is no gun.

Mike – we have a whoop whoop at Park Run. For saving of 5 minutes in schedule seems a lot more effort than saving in time.

James – a PA system is fundamental to the starting of a race.

Ian – would a 2 minute stagger cause complications? Girls would at least know if they were in front.

Joe – what would the numbers be from U9's to U11's? Ideally juniors would be progressing through the races.

Dan – U11's are the biggest junior race. Numbers drop off as the age groups progress.

Emma – maybe give some of the athletes credit – at junior Park Run they are used to running with mixed genders and adults.

Dan – if we don't combine them as U11's they will combine at U13's anyway – they are combined as U9's.

Vote – we have 17 voters

Vote to combine U11's – 16 for, 1 against, no abstentions. Vote passed.

### Encouraging Participation

Providing senior and masters runners with a less vigorous option and encourage participation at U17 level. Overall entries are healthy, but low numbers at U17's and older masters. For U17's it can be very intimidating running on their own. Create open category within U17 race – older masters or slower seniors who would favour 5 – 6km. No prizes – purely about participating. No scoring. Treated as guests. Don't want to dilute U17's. They have to choose for the whole season, but with chip timing there may be some flexibility. May be complications determining a masters runner in U17 race conflicting with senior race, but should be minor.

Alex – overall a brilliant idea. One concern – can you race some shorter some long during the season – eg for county champs.

Dan – could prepare for that. Does pose some problems for Matthieu doing results.

Annie – have gone from a maybe to a no as a club. How many do you anticipate would want to do this? Concern would it make the last race more elite with more people going for prizes.

Dan – when discussed as a committee felt it would be a few dozen during the first season. Wont know until we try. Don't feel most of the field would drop. If that did happen do we need to do something different? Long and short race?

Julie – you won't know unless you try. Thinks most people would want to do main race – will it really help the U17's? Make the whole race longer as slower runners?

Mike – been round the houses, but masters athletes would stick to their usual race. Different colour numbers? Don't think will help U17's.

Joe – echo previous 2 points. Potentially could encourage masters but not help U17's. Could it be reversed? Try for a season and reverse?

Dan – nothing is ever set in stone – any club can put a proposal to make a change. If fundamental problem EGM could be sorted.

David – as a smaller club have a slight concern may struggle to get teams out if some drop down. Not clear for marshals.

Phil – agree not sure how much benefit to U17's. Also we have lost masters women and U17 women due to distance of races. Equalised race distances and lost female numbers. Potential opportunity if brings more females back.

Dan – if popular could investigate a senior long race and senior short race. Could explore if appetite.

Julie – in terms of equal distance shouldn't look at making shorter distances for women – it's the way the sport is going. Could we try for one race?

Dan – would need to vote for or against. May have to look at again next season and giving that as an option to trial at a fixture.

Annie – shouldn't be looking to shorten races. Need to look at stepping up for nationals or too big a step.

Emma – have you given consideration to once someone has got their number how to monitor which race they will run in?

Dan – logistical issue for Tempo which Sarah would need to look at.

Emma – could we mark similar to county champs where someone runs as a guest.

Matthieu – yes would be similar to county champs.

Dan – essentially all the seniors are entered into the long race – would have to deal with short race on the day. Committee would have to look at logistics if it was voted in.

Vote – for introducing open category 5. Against 9. Abstentions 3. Not passed.

#### Host Reward Amount

Some feedback that some clubs got more money from car parking than reward, and some joint clubs not much incentive. Given the healthy finances of the league the committee would like to increase the host venue fee from £500 to £800. Felt £800 was a significant enough increase.

Annie – is there anything which says what the duties of the host club are?

Dan – yes in the manual there is a section for host clubs – official paperwork, on the day etc.

Dan – we need all clubs to find venues, not just host clubs. Benedict Pollard of Eynsham has put some feelers out – doesn't mean Eynsham have to host that. We don't have venues without host clubs.

Emma – could we have some information when contacting new venues – so we are all saying the same thing. Do we send to committee, or have a new venue co-ordinator? So we have a list of venues we have contacted.

Dan – yes, definitely. Cornbury – someone knew someone who worked there so we had an in.

Emma – yes same for Bicester Heritage – helps to know someone.

Dan – if someone has a relationship with a landowner it definitely helps.

Emma – with a budget would definitely help.

Vote – to increase reward 17. Against 0, abstentions 0 so passed

## Senior Team Divisions

Matthieu is bringing the proposal. Bit of an idea to group all of the teams from a club into the same division to allow some of the smaller clubs to race against each other rather than B or C teams. Gives more importance to A teams, and less significance to B or C teams. But for B or C teams you are competing for your club in that division eg Swindon B team are competing against Abingdon B team. Matthie put together a spread sheet of what the team divisions would look like – 8 teams in each division with 2 going up and 2 going down at the end of each season. Also simulation of what last season would have looked like if we had got this implemented then.

Dan – the premise behind it is the A teams are competing for winning/promotion.

Matthieu – at the prize giving some of the Abingdon B team didn't know what they had won.

Mike – do you think some of the teams like Swindon think what is the point of the B team competing.

Mike – could we then give all of the team members medals?

Matthieu – that would need to be a separate proposal.

Dan – we are looking to give out more prizes – medals to second and third teams whereas now we only give out first team medals.

Annie – we were baffled by this. Just to clarify – what stops the divisions becoming very large with B, C and D teams.

Joe – although the numbers will vary there will always be the same number of A teams in each division. Being from Abingdon I didn't know we had won – don't think it would impact it.

Ian – the runners in the race don't know which team they are in during the race – motivation for them to try and get into the A team.

Tom – if this does pass I don't look forward to being able to explain this to my club. Competing against B, C and D teams is not a problem for us only having one team out.

Kit – thank you Matthieu for all his work and can see the point of it. Who gets relegated/promoted? Seems complicated.

Matthieu – the whole of the club – A, B & C teams.

David – we have noticed with the big clubs, when it gets close there is suddenly a big influx of runners. Would definitely help for the smaller teams.

Cameron - How would the league put this on the website?

Matthieu – if this was to go through would clarify how it would work.

Mike – do you think the same clubs would yoyo up and down each season?

Matthieu – potentially – would have to look at this.

Annie – no reward for a B team winning division 2?

Joe – historically are B teams winning division 2 and 3, or is it mainly smaller A teams.

Dan – in the last few seasons we have had B and C teams being promoted. We have had 3 teams – A, B and C in division 1.

Tom – is there a half way house element to show the A, B and C teams so you can show B teams competing against B teams.

Dan – so you introduce a B team competition as a secondary layer.

Voting – for changing to new structure 8, against 6, abstentions 3 so passed

We will get documentation out to clubs after the AGM.

## Next season

Divisions – Dan I wont put up the slide as we have changed the divisions.

## Fixtures

We are returning to Cornbury for R1 – they have asked for more than double the fee for last year. We have a discount, but still more than double. There is a risk that we can't continue with this venue on a long term basis.

R2 still no venue as Cirencester can't host us. Slim venue of using South Parks – thank you Emma. South Parks are open to us hosting a venue – challenge is there is no parking. There is a Park and Ride with bus stops by the venue. 2 Park & Ride buses either side of the park. Or shuttle buses which run to and fro – but can't collect from park and ride. Don't have host for the venue.

R3 Horspath

R4 Cotswold Farm [ark

R5 Henley

We need venues and host clubs. The committee is small and we can't find venues. Large clubs can you tap into your members and find landowners/venues?

## Budget

Dan put in the high cost of Cornbury, and pencilled in some numbers using South Parks for R2. Significantly increased venue costs. I think this year we have to use Cornbury as we don't have an alternative venue. We have increased the number of toilets for better athlete experience. Use better medics – means costs increased. Factored in increase in reward fee. We have a larger surplus than we ever anticipated – want to spend it in a constructive way, and in place for

Julie – 2 things. Fixture at Henley – Reading could co host. Has Broughton been looked at?

Dan – car parking would not be sufficient. More than 3 times the number of runners.

Mike – if we went back to charging per car would that promote car sharing and cut car numbers?

Dan – too much man power needed, collecting money etc

Mike – South Parks could cause too many issues with buses.

Dan – there are certain responsibilities for athletes – get to venues early. Had to delay races at Cornbury due to traffic issues, but not for individual athletes.

Mike – if we found a venue that couldn't be R2 would that be a problem?

Dan – Cornbury can't move back. Henley only R5. CFP only Feb.

Richard – anyone could take on Jan fixture – unique in club controls the venue – not Shotover – so can be flexible. County would have to agree as county champs combined.

Dan – its about being creative – find parking for 500 cars and then find the venue for a run.

Average per fixture is £1800 for landowner fee. Some clubs where we used to think the venue was expensive could now be used – we have the finances. Its not that we can't afford – we don't have options.

Annie - SEAA at Parliament Hill don't have any parking. There is a move on the calendar to have the county champs on the same date on the calendar – likely to be December. On agenda for discussion.

Julie – Reading were looking at alternative venues – were quoted £3500 for Pangbourne.

Dan – asked Julie to get more information. We need people to do digging and find venues.

Chez – told by a club member – had to rent out Mordern cycle venue – apparently looking to get more users. Chez will investigate further.

Dan – need a contact at Blenheim.

Julie – could we have 2 at Horspath and change the course.

Richard – we have had that conversation. City Council wouldn't pose any objections if separated by a few months and find less muddy months.

Dan – some leagues run Oct to Feb – or could get 5 races over 6 months. Our committee of 5 are limited – it's back to the clubs to come up with more venues. Any option regardless of cost – lets have a look.

Affiliation fees worked on all clubs joining again. Don't budget for sponsorship until Fit2Run sign up. Entries – based on R1. Gives a loss over the year of £4,000 but we can use the surplus for that.

All the current committee are willing to stand again, but we do need additional people to take on jobs – doing trophies/medals/awards and liaising with suppliers. Helping with presentations etc. A key role.

Also secretary – Ros is treasurer and secretary. We do need a secretary to keep minutes, preparing documentation for AGM etc.

Other areas like social media, keeping website up to date – currently Dan.

Host club co-ordinator

Please get in touch with us – drop a line to committee@ We need extra perspective.

Richard has been sat on Chiltern League – they had a crisis 2 or 3 years ago when the whole committee resigned. They appointed a whole new committee of 12 people which works very well. None of the committee members has a particularly big job – all very manageable. Low work load. That's for 40 clubs – a committee of 8 would work for our league.

AOB

Tom – would be better to have volunteer rota ahead of first fixture. Dan was late getting club affiliation forms out – will do earlier this year. Helps us get prepared.

May have to pay for Park & Ride – not ideal.

Annie – Matthieu's proposal needs to be exactly as voted for. Agreed.

Mike – is there anything in manual for venue requirements? Dan – we will be doing a crib sheet.

Dan thanked everyone for joining the meeting and their contributions.

Meeting finished at 22.14.