

Present: Dennis Wall, Dan Gilroy. John Driscoll, Glenys Potter, Debbie Erskine, Danielle Erskine, Ryan Morrison, Jill Gore, Eddie Gore, Ellen Molloy, Cath McGrath, Lisa Davies, Eddie Fulton, Mark Davies, the O'Keefe family.

1. Dennis introduced the Conference, and presented the Agenda.

2. Where we are now.

Dan summarised the current state of affairs. He referred back to previous conferences held in 2003 and 2005, and gave lists of the actions from them. Some items had been accomplished, but many were still relevant today. Membership increased after the track opened, but has remained essentially constant since 2005, although there has been a welcome increase in the U17 and U20 age groups. The number of active coaches has increased somewhat, but there has been little or no progress through the coaching levels. The number of officials remains quite strong, even after the regrading exercise carried out by UKA.

Dan then outlined the sessions we hold at the various venues, the competition structure on offer, and the events which we organise, pointing out that the Half Marathon has been passed over to Active Leisure. Our Schools Liaison activities were then indicated, including the formal links we have made with some schools and with Chester University.

Our Clubmark status was renewed in December 2010, this involved, among other things, re-writing various codes of conduct, and making safety assessments of the facilities. The major headings of the scheme were shown to the Conference: The Playing Programme; Duty of Care and Safeguarding; Club and Community; and Club Management. Finally, the Club Development Plan, as detailed in the Clubmark folder, was outlined. This plan is the basis for the present agenda.

3. What we want

The discussion here acted as a lead into the rest of the Conference. The main topic turned out to be that of retaining the membership, and minimising the drop out rate. The suggestions arising are summarised under the Actions Section.

4. Facilities

This topic is now of major importance to the development of the club following the decision of the Cheshire West & Chester Council (CWAC) to develop the site at Stanney into a leisure complex, following the closure of the school. Dennis pointed out that we, as major users of the site, have been involved in meetings with CWAC to put forward our ideas. We presented a site plan, drawn up for us by McCormick Architects, as a starting point. It is essential that these discussions continue.

The conference then listed the various additions we would like to see on the site:

An indoor athletics area, based on that at Deeside, for example.

A stand alongside the track.

Toilet facilities adjacent to the track,

A clubroom, which could also be used as an organising point for track meetings etc.

A weights room.

Storage for track equipment, eg under the stand, to replace the present containers.

Storage for our other equipment – sportshall apparatus etc.

We would expect the present gym, sportshall, and changing rooms to be retained in some form.

The Conference then discussed how the site development might affect our usage of the track etc. For example:

Would we hire the track as we do at present?

Would there be site security, and when would the site be open during the day?

How would we charge for training, and could there be a pass system?

What will happen to the track fund?

All these issues will have to be discussed with CWAC, otherwise we could be in for unpleasant surprises on the financial front.

5. Increasing membership

This was discussed at some length, and the main ideas are given in the Actions Section.

6 & 7. Events & Social

Ideas for events, in addition to the Road Races we organise already, are summarised in the Actions Section. Extra social occasions, as well as the Bingo / Quiz nights, awards evening, and coaches / officials dinner already ongoing, are included.

8. Finance

Although the Treasurer was unable to attend, he sent his thoughts as an e-mail, pointing out how our financial circumstances are changing, due to the handing over of the Half Marathon, and the development of Stanney. The latter may require us to spend a substantial part of our reserves on expensive equipment projects, eg HJ or PV bed covers, or weight room furnishing. Hence, he recommends that many of our activities should be run on a break even basis. Exceptions might include costs of coaching courses, and small losses on the awards evening, and on coach travel. He further suggested that we should increase subscriptions annually, instead of a large increase every few years.

ACTIONS

Retaining membership:

- More social activities, including those specific to the various groups.
- Organise a club championship
- Highlight certain league meetings.
- Encourage the team mentality.

Facilities:

- Maintain the dialog with CWAC about the development of Stanney
- Present our wish list, to include
- Indoor athletics facility
- Stand at the track
- Weights room
- Storage facilities
- Initiate discussions with CWAC about charging policies at Stanney

Increasing membership:

- Concentrate on 1 school initially (eg Whitby HS)
- Find volunteers to progress the school / club links agreements
- Posters in schools and public places
- Try to get school sports sections to train at Stanney (eg on Saturday mornings)
- Seek sponsorship eg with Essar (ongoing)

Events & Social:

- Arrange a come and try day
- Take part in Sport Relief
- Put on a talk/s at a school (as we have done previously)
- Become involved in disability athletics
- Have a barbecue at the track, eg after a Cheshire League meeting
- Arrange nights out for various groups
- Put on a Treasure Hunt

Finance:

- Maintain our involvement with the Half Marathon (via Active Leisure)
- Put on an Open Meeting at the track
- Find a different venue for the Awards Evening
- Increase coach travel fees to £5
- Minimise the losses on the Awards Evening and other Social events
- Plan to increase subscriptions gradually on an annual basis