Birmingham & District Invitation Cross-Country League
1926 – 2025

Minutes of the 100th AGM held at Halesowen Athletic & Cycling Club 6th June 2025 at 7.00pm

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 100th AGM

Obituary
Before the start of the meeting, the members were asked to have a minute's silence in respect of Jim Skidmore (President 1980/81 who served the League for 54 years! Dudley & Stourbridge) Ted Schuck (President 2003/04)

Apologies for Absence These were received from Malcolm Bowyer, Paul Hawkins (Stratford AC), Terry Haines (Severn AC), Keith Perry (Official, Halesowen), John Vickers (Official), Noel McKakly (W&B, Referee), Peter Ball. Len Quartley (Bromsgrove & Redditch), Matt Leydon (Spa Striders), Mike Hughes (Weston Tempo), Peter Dear, Mark Hadley (Halesowen), Sally (Knowle & Dorridge), Phil Pollock (RSC Official), Neil Cressy (Kenilworth), Ian Clarke (Race Sec Div 3, Cobra & Tri), Bill & Kay Adcocks (Past Presidents).

Present at the meeting
Vince Carroll (Rugby & Northampton AC), Terry Alcock (Solihull & Small Heath AC), Glen Lock (Race Referee, W&B), Rob Mulgrue (DASH, Past President, Official), Simon Hudson, Pete Dunlary (Aldridge), Richard Carney (BRAT), David Lee (Massey Ferguson), Steve Howes (Solihull), Wayne Broadbent, Sally-Anne Tully (Sphinx AC), David Norman (Wolves & Bilston), Craig Hinks, Graham Heeley, Past President (Sparkhill), Nick Wilson, Paul Smith, Chris Hamer-Hodges (Nuneaton), Martin Ludford Treasurer, Richard Carney (BRAT), Keith Burgess (Birchfield), Gavin Harrison, Scott Stokes (Syned Striders), Paul Sanderson (Telford AC), Edward Brown, Tommy Shaw (U of B'ham), Andrew Kaighan (Chelt & Co Harriers),Joel Freeman (CLC Striders), Simon Gilson (Centurion RC),James Rose (Severn AC), Paul Evans, Marcus Mumford (Black Pear Joggers), Bob Carey (Past President, Sphinx), Nav Akhtar (COBS), Paul Allen (Halesowen) Phil Pollock, David Sutton, Simon Heard (RSCAC), Rita Brownlie (Broms & Redditch MWCCL), Rebecca Freeman (Solihull & Small Heath AC, MWCCL), Bryan Mills (Webmaster, Tipton), Noel Butler (Chair, Leamington) Carolyn Franks (Hon Sec, Past President, Cheltenham & County Harriers).

Minutes of the 99th A.G.M.
The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the AGM & the Executive Minutes.
The Chairman apologised regarding the fact that we had not consulted the clubs on whether we did the AGM by Zoom. He felt it was actually important to meet once a year allowing members to meet, make contacts & to instal the President. RM thought it would be very hard to control by Zoom. The general feeling of the meeting was to keep it as it is.

Chairperson's Report

The buildup to season 2024/25 proved to less traumatic than the previous season with all the executive positions being filled and the offers to host fixtures were more plentiful so we managed to get venues for all fixtures. It is especially pleasing to see smaller and newer clubs starting to host and doing a great job.

I managed to get to all three divisions during the year. I started with Division 3 at Pelsall North Common in November and went to Betley in December to see Division 1 and completed all three with a trip to Top Barn, Worcester in January for Division 2. In February I was meeting manager for the Division 1 fixture at Leamington.

The three divisional secretaries did a wonderful job and I would like to record my thanks to Bryan Mills (Div 1), Nick Wilson (Div 2) and Ian Clarke (Div 3) for their hard work during the season. As Nuneaton will be in Division 3 next season Nick Wilson will be standing down as divisional secretary for Division 2.

Division 2 used the on-line entry system and this seemed to work well and at this point I should thank Sarah Bland for all her help with this.

Martin Ludford our Treasurer had a very good first season as you will see from the accounts he has prepared for the AGM.

One person who is stepping down from his role is our Auditor for many years, Chris McKeown from Spa Striders. He has made a significant contribution to ensure the accounts presented to the AGM are accurate and I take this opportunity to thank him for all he has done for the league. We need to replace him so could you please reflect on people you know who may be suitable to fill this role.

Also stepping down is our officials' co-ordinator Rob Mulgrew, who has worked hard with Mary Hodges from the women's league to ensure we have quality officials appointed to our fixtures. You will see from Rob's report on the work of the officials sub-committee what a positive impact the work Mary & Rob have been doing, has had on the quality and number of officials covering our fixtures.

I am pleased to say that Steve Webb from Solihull & Small Heath has agreed to fill this very important position. I am also pleased to inform you that Rob will be staying on the executive as a co-opted member where his skills and experience will be appreciated.

This means the league will have an experienced executive running its affairs next season subject, off course, to the AGM votes and a volunteer for divisional secretary of Division 2.

The joint fixtures with the Midland Women's League continue to be beneficial to both leagues and that arrangement will continue this coming season. I would like to thank Becky Freeman and Mary Hodges for their work in making to relationship work so well.

Last season Coventry Runner again sponsored our numbers, and we are extremely grateful for their generous support. I am pleased to say that they have confirmed they will continue their support next season.

Finally, I want to thank our Secretary, Carolyn for all the support she gives me to ensure the league runs smoothly and I am delighted that she has been nominated to be our President in our centenary year.

Noel Butler, Chairman

NB also referred to the following report on the appointment of the Technical Officials

For Birmingham & District Invitation Cross-Country League Executive Committee

Midland Women's Cross-Country League AGM

Report on the Appointment of Technical Officials for the Leagues, 2024/25

Introduction

The 2024/25 season was the second in which the Technical Officials for League fixtures were appointed by a Joint Committee (Mary Hodges for the Midland Women's Cross-Country League; Rob Mulgrue for the Birmingham & District Invitation Cross-Country League). A number of issues

with the new system were identified in the previous season, so we thought a report on the 2024/25 season was appropriate.

Background

The reason for the leagues deciding to act together in this way was it was seen to have the following advantages: Referees would know in advance who the Technical Officials would be for each fixture and so would be able to deploy them to best effect; the Referee would have to do only one briefing; officials could be developed by giving them experience of different roles.

The Joint Committee's objectives by appointing individuals to different roles were to enable them, if they so wished, to seek up-grading and to give them opportunities of working in more senior roles under a more experienced chief official. Thus in making the appointments we also had to take account of the levels of officials and their prior experiences. Clearly, some duties (e.g. Timekeeper, Line Judge) require particular qualities and experience and this also influenced our decisions.

It is often not appreciated how many Technical Officials are required for cross-country races in order to ensure that UKA and League Rules are enforced and that the results are accurate and complete. The roles needing to be filled are: Referee, Assistant Referee, Chief Judge, Chief Timekeeper, Starter (those being the chief officials), Line Judge, Judges, Judges' Recorders, Timekeeper, Timekeepers' Recorders, Start Marshals, Funnel Stewards. If there are insufficient officials to fill all of those roles separately, then some duties can be combined, e.g. a Start Marshal might also be a Funnel Steward or the Assistant Referee could also be the Chief Judge. The above roles are in addition to those of Course Marshals, which the host club provides, though sometimes, when we had a surplus of club volunteers, we were able to offer the host club some help.

The Appointment Process for 2024/25

We found the process much easier and quicker than in the first year. We found it necessary to have only one main meeting (against two in 2023/24) and that was completed in a shorter time. We also had a further brief meeting to finalise officials for the last round of fixtures. Of course, there were many e-mails and `phone calls to sort out issues that arose during the season. One main factor which made it easier was that an Officials Co-Ordinator was appointed responsible for all communications with Technical Officials and club volunteers. Mary Hodges took on this role. We hope that this change from 2023/24 made it a more certain process for individuals and took work off Divisional Secretaries and their equivalents for the Women's League.

In the Report for 2023/24 we noted some major issues that arose in that first year: the Duty Lists were sent out a few weeks later than was desirable; lack of clarity over responsibility for contacting officials; there was no unified list of officials in the leagues; clubs having different volunteers for the women's race from the men's race.

We dealt with all those issues. A unified list of endurance-qualified Technical Officials was compiled making contacts easier. The Duty Lists were circulated about 4 weeks earlier (in late September for the first round of fixtures) and, as noted above, Mary Hodges took on the role of Officials Co-Ordinator responsible for all communications with Technical Officials and with clubs providing volunteers.

We appointed 7 different Referees and 13 different Assistant Referees during the season, thus achieving our aim of giving opportunities to as many individuals as possible to gain experience of senior positions. We have also had qualified Endurance Officials from outside our Leagues offering to help, thus increasing the profile of the Leagues.

Clubs required to provide volunteers have been prompt in notifying the names, so enabling Referees to be assured of who was coming and enabling them to allocate their duties appropriately. This was already the case in previous seasons for the Women's League but for the men's races hitherto Referees would only have known on the day.

Feedback from officials has been positive, especially on the use of only one e-mail address for communications.

As always, the bottom line is that throughout the season races were conducted fairly and accurate and complete results were produced, so thanks to all the various officials who made this possible.

Mary Hodges
Midland Women's Cross-Country League

Rob Mulgrue
Birmingham & District Invitation Cross-Country League

NB informed the meeting that Rob Mulgrue was stepping down & gave him the League's thanks for his unstinting work.

President's Address

Firstly, thank you to everyone for attending this evening. It is good to see everyone and to meet up again.

Being President of the League for the past year has been a huge and most unexpected honour for me, as, although I have been running in the League and team managing for several decades, I had never been involved or done anything to directly assist in the running of the League. So, when Carolyn phoned me two years ago to ask whether I would accept the role, it came as a massive surprise to say the least. Of course, I was only too pleased to accept although as I have said previously, I did feel rather unworthy of the honour. I feel a bit more comfortable about the appointment now, having also now been able to offer my services as Treasurer following Daniel Jordan's retirement last year.

Many of you will know me from races over the last 40 or so years, but for those who don't, I will give a bit of background. In my mid 20's I joined the newly formed Rowheath Harriers in June 1983 and ran my first Birmingham League race later that year. I've remained a member of the same club ever since although it has undergone two mergers and two name changes, becoming Birmingham Rowheath in 1996 and B.R.A.T. in 2010. My running was always pretty unexceptional but always satisfying and rewarding and I've often said that Cross Country is what gets me through the winter. When I reflect on it, both the Club and the League have been like threads running through my adult life. I love not only the competition but the community, camaraderie and atmosphere of cross-country race days.

This year has been a most interesting and enjoyable year for me, and has given me the opportunity to visit new venues and ones which I haven't been to for years. I met many old faces from over the years as I attended the races at Pelsall Common and Burbage Common, where I had the honour of starting the races, followed by Attingham Park and finally Newbold Comyn where I presented the League shield and medals to the successful teams and individuals in Division 1. Thank you to everyone who welcomed me to the various events.

Anyway, enough of me. I would like to spend a bit of time reflecting on what a marvellous organisation we have and what a committed group of Officials, marshals, volunteers, and helpers we are lucky to have in our member clubs, all of whom are involved purely for the love of the sport. Without all of these people there could be no races, no League. For me this was exemplified when I arrived at Burbage Common in December to meet Nick Wilson who had been on site since around 7 o'clock that morning setting up the course with a small group of helpers. He had also been organising the event seemingly almost single handedly for weeks beforehand, and he was also the Div 2 Race Secretary, a role he had taken on at the beginning of the season. This is just one example. So, thank you to everyone who has been involved in organising races this season.

We are also fortunate also to have a committed group of experienced Officers along with the Executive committee who oversee the day to day running of the League to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as we can make it. However, we are always on the lookout for new people to fill various roles within the League as you will hear, either this year or in the next few seasons, so please consider stepping forward to assist in any way you can. Thanks especially to our Chair Noel Butler and to our long standing Secretary Carolyn Franks who both do mountains of unnoticed work behind the scenes to keep things on track. Thanks also to our three divisional race secretaries who look after athlete registration, allocation of race numbers and race results.

As I have commented elsewhere the League has great history and traditions which date back many years, and which make it the institution that it is, and regularly described as the best XC league in the country. As we enter our 100th year we are looking to preserve these traditions, while at the same time continuing to embrace new technology and ideas in order to move the League forward. We are hoping that our centenary year will be a year to remember including a celebratory fixture and additional publicity to further raise the profile of the League

Thank you again

Martin Ludford.

Statement of Accounts.

Treasurer's Report for 2024 / 25

This year we recorded a small deficit of £154. This compares with deficits of £1,571 for last year and £663 for the year before that.

We closed the year with £1,472 in the NatWest current account and £10,764 in the Santander deposit account, so slightly down on the previous year's combined balances. At the year end we also had debtors of £3,751 (Midland Women's League for race costs recharged) and a further

£510 (various Clubs for additional medals). Both these amounts have now been received into the bank account since the year end.

So, we remain in a fairly healthy financial position due to our reserves although we have been drawing on these for the last 3 years. This is not of immediate concern but we should be careful not to significantly deplete these reserves any further.

The costs of hosting our races have remained remarkably consistent over the last 3 years but we cannot rely on this continuing indefinitely, in fact it would be surprising if we do not see an increase in costs in coming years.

The cost of plaques and medals this year is lower as last year we invested in a stock of plaques to cover us for a number of years. Travel expenses have shown an increase over last year although this year's figure includes £106 relating to a claim for last year which came in after last year's accounts had been completed. Once this is taken into account the figures are more in line. Travel expenses are paid to qualified Officials who are appointed by the Joint Leagues Committee to officiate at races.

At the recent Executive meeting we looked at the club affiliation fees and have decided to recommend an increase of £10 for the coming season so that the affiliation fee will rise to £185 per club. I believe this still represents excellent value for money.

Thanks to Coventry Runner for sponsoring our race numbers again this season, this effectively covers the cost of our printed race number bibs, though we did run out of numbers towards the end of the season and had to buy a small additional supply. Coventry Runner have agreed to sponsor our numbers again for the 2025/26 season.

Thanks to Chris McKeown from Spa Striders for auditing the accounts again this year. Chris has acted as Auditor for the League for the last few years. Owing to work commitments, Chris has now decided to step down from this role, so a new Auditor will need to be found before next March.

Martin Ludford, Hon. Treasurer

The auditor wished the meeting to be aware of the following :-

Please note that an auditor cannot and will not vouch for the 100 percent accuracy of the accounts. An auditor reviews the accounts on a sample basis to ensure they give a true and fair representation of the League's financial performance for the year. That means there may be some minor errors that I will not have spotted.

Having reviewed the accounts on this basis, I do believe the figures presented give a true and fair representation for the 2024/25 financial year.

I would also like to thank Martin for the improvements he has made to the accounts which made the process of auditing them much easier.

Chris McKeown- Auditor

NB highlighted that this coming season we will be trialling the following expenses to the Appointed Officials :-

1. The standard mileage rate remains unchanged at 35p per mile.
2. If an official gives a lift to another official, they can claim 40p per mile
3. If an official gives a lift to two or more officials, they can claim 45p per mile

The advantages of these recommendations are that it will save at least 30p per mile for each official who is a passenger, there will be fewer cars requiring parking spaces at the fixture and it will reduce car journeys and thereby make a contribution to reduce pollution.

Constitution

RM explained the following amendment to rule C15.1 be added to the final sentence "on payment of a fee, the amount to be determined from time to time by the Executive"

GH pointed out that all monies collected is returned to the League.

It was put to the meeting & all parties but one accepted this change.

Make-up of the League for the 2025-2026 Season.

The following will thus be the make-up of the Divisions:-

Make up of Divisions 2025-26

DIVISION ONE	DIVISION TWO	DIVISION THREE
Birchfield Harriers	Aldridge RC	Amazing Feet
Black Pear Joggers	Bournville Harriers	Centurion RR
BRAT	Cheltenham & County Harriers	City Of Birmingham Striders
Bromsgrove & Redditch AC	CLC Striders	Cobra R & Tri
Cannock & Staffs AC	Gloucester AC	Coventry Tri
City of Stoke AC	Kenilworth Runners	Dudley Kingswinford RFC
Coventry Godiva Harriers	Knowle & Dorridge RC	Dudley & Stourbridge Harriers
Halesowen A & CC	Loughborough Students	Kidderminster & Stourport AC
Leamington C & AC	Northbrook AC	Kings Heath RC
Royal Sutton Coldfield AC	Severn AC	Massey Ferguson
Rugby & Northampton AC	Solihull & Small Heath AC	Newcastle Staffs
Tipton Harriers	Spa Striders	Nuneaton Harriers
University of Birmingham	Stratford Upon Avon AC	Sedgley Striders
University of Warwick	Worcester AC	Sneyd Striders
Weston Tempo		South Birmingham Striders
Wolverhampton & Bilston AC		Sparkhill Harriers
		Sphinx AC
		Stourbridge AC
		Tamworth AC
		Telford AC
		Telford Harriers
		West Bromwich Harriers

Affiliation Fees – the meeting agreed to raise the affiliation to £185 for the coming season.

Dates for the 2025-26 season:

15TH November 2025, 6th December 2025, 10th January 2026 & 7th February 2026

Dates & Venues for the 2025/26 season.

	Div One	Div Two	Div Three
15th November '25	Leamington	Leamington	Leamington
6th December '25	City of Stoke, Betley Women Div 1?	Cheltenham with Women Div 1?	South Birmingham Striders & Women's Div 2
10th January '26	Black Pear Joggers Women Div 2	Spa Striders Burton Dassett Women D1	Telford AC, Attingham Park
7th February '26	Bromsgrove & Redditch AC Women Div 1 ?	Plock Court, Gloucester Severn AC	Coombe Country Park Sphinx/Northbrook Women Div 2 ?

? The Women's League to decide at their AGM, which venues they would choose to go to.

Election of Officers

President:	Carolyn Franks (Cheltenham & County Harriers)
Immediate Past President:	Martin Ludford (BRAT)
President Elect:	Noel Butler (Leamington C&AC)
Chairman:	Noel Butler (Leamington C&AC)
Secretary:	Carolyn Franks (Cheltenham & County Harriers)
Treasurer:	Martin Ludford (BRAT)
MCAA Rep	Graham Heeley (Sparkhill Harriers)
Auditor:	Vacant
Webmaster	Bryan Mills (Tipton Harriers)
Officials Co-ordinator	Steve Webb (Solihull & Small Heath)
Constitution (Co-opted)	Rob Mulgrue (Dudley & Stourbridge AC)
Race Secretaries	Division One: Bryan Mills (Tipton)
	Division Two: Joel Freeland (CLC Striders)
	Division Three: Ian Clarke (Cobra)

The following referees were co-opted onto the Executive; Noel Mckakly (Wolverhampton & Bilston), Chris Hitchman (Leamington C & AC) & Glen Lock (Wolverhampton & Bilston).

The meeting confirmed Bob Carey as a Vice Life President in recognition for all the years running in the League and then administrating.

League Website

Bryan Mills was thanked for his work on the website.

Any Other Business:

Andrew Kaighan asked if the numbers in each Division were considered. NB explained that the executive regularly checks this aspect to ensure the numbers of athletes in each division are equal. This is required under rule B3.1 which reads " The League shall be divided into divisions

of such a number as is necessary to have approximate equal numbers of competitors in all divisions

GH pointed out that clubs need to be aware at the beginning of a season what changes are planned for the following season so they know how many clubs will be promoted / relegated from each division.

Date and Venue of the 101th AGM

The date for the 101th AGM will be Friday 5th June 2026.

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed _____

Date _____