

Midland League, Report of The Chair – November 2023

As those of you who have attended League AGMs over recent years will recall, your Management Committee have been seeking to respond to the general decline in League Competition with innovations which seek to make the League more attractive to athletes by being more competitive, requiring less travel and hopefully moving to shorter meetings.

I believe that these innovations have been broadly successful and, whilst there is always room for refinement, are delivering on the objectives above. They have led to improved quality of competition and more opportunities for athletes to represent their clubs.

We can also say that the Midland League are regarded as leading the way to a point where our sister leagues and England Athletics are looking closely at our model.

At the same time, we are very much aware that some clubs are struggling for both Athletes & Officials. This has affected the viability of the Regional Divisions 4. It has also proved difficult to find venues with only 5 clubs in some Divisions, hence our proposal to compress the league.

In this context I would like to thank all those Clubs & Officials whose flexibility has ensured that all matches can take place, sometimes in challenging circumstances.

Once again, this year we have benefitted from a strong and committed Management Committee who have worked in your interests to deliver the League and I would like to pass on my personal thanks to them. Two of our long serving Committee Members, Iris Morris & Lyn Orbell, are stepping down this year and I would like to thank them both for their wisdom and commitment to the League over many years.

The proposals from the Committee aim at stability & refinement, whilst remaining aligned with our wider objectives. However, if the proposed UKA Age Group changes are adopted this might result in more significant changes for 2025. If this is the case, we will seek to work closely with the YDL to provide appropriate competitive opportunities for all Age Groups.

There are a number of Proposals from Clubs which seek to reverse the changes that I have described above. I believe that these proposals would have a hugely negative effect and strongly oppose them. I believe that the League will slowly wither and die if we reverse the League's modernisation steps and I would urge you to reject them. The AGM will of course be the ultimate arbiter in these matters and if necessary I, and others from the league management committee, will be happy to step aside if the AGM believes we are wrong to introduce these modernisation initiatives.

Finally, I would like to pass on my personal thanks to Richard for all of his hard work on behalf of the League.

B.J.Acford – 15th November 2023