

Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Midland Counties Athletic Association held on 28th September 2025 at Coventry Godiva Club Room.

Present: Stewart Barnes Mary Hodges President Glyn Jones President Elect/ Coventry Godiva Colin Fox Past President Chris Hitchman Leamington C& A Maureen Bullen Past President.

Virtual Attendees: Mary Williams Centurian AC Serena Bignell Corby AC Mary Baker Saffron AC Jan Febery Acting Hon. Secretary /Life Member/Past President/Cheltenham and County Harriers

Apologies: Liz Evans (Official) Julie Singleton (Official) Wendy Kane (Official) Hazel Merrell (Official) Kate Nash (Official) Eric Horwill (Kingswinford) Stuart Woodman (Official) Sandra Woodman (Official) Graham Heeley (Endurance Officials Co-ordinator) Emma McLeod (SSHAC Membership Secretary) Denise von Roretz (Official) Ruth Hickinbottom (Official) Carolyn Franks (BDICC League) John Hallet (Official) Noel Butler (L & HC) Steve Webb (Solihull and Small Heath) Rob Mulgrue (Dudley and Stourbridge) Margaret Werrett (Officials T & F Secretary) Becky Freeman (Solihull and Small Heath)

Sadly, we lost a number of members over the past year. A Minutes silence was observed to honour those who had given service to the Association. All had made a great contribution to our sport:

Richard Float (Past MCAA Treasurer and Starter) John Pickles (Official – Starter)

Barry Parker Level 4 Track Official) Brian Kilby (Marathon runner) Everton Caines (Coach at Solihull & Small Heath AC

The President Mary Hodges read the Notice of the Meeting.

1.To receive the Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting: It was proposed by Stewart Barnes and Glyn Jones that the Minutes be accepted subject to a correction to read Ray Boden in the apologies.

2.To receive and consider the Annual Report:

The Chairman presented the Annual Report.

The Association remains in the offices of Radclyffe House although in a smaller yet sufficient working space. Given the current difficult financial circumstances, it was natural step to reduce rental charges. We are grateful for the help assistance and understanding of our landlords.

On the competition front all the events that the Association provided were successful. Inasmuch as they met the desired presentation allowing athletes to perform in ideal conditions and with expert officiating.

It is challenging to understand why some people struggle to grasp that certain events, such as indoor meeting, are beyond our financial means due to the high cost of facilities which makes them unviable. Every year, 2025–2026 is no exception, the office makes enquiries with several facilities, including Loughborough, Cardiff, and Manchester, on availability and cost viability. Should they meet our requirements on those issues, further problems would need to be addressed. Cardiff and Loughborough, for instance, would only be available after 1 pm. Cardiff would require overnight accommodation for officials– we do have to consider them as well as athletes.

For several years. The High–Performance Centre at Alexander Stadium has been unavailable due to refurbishment. We are endeavouring to make enquiries to see if it is possible to provide competition there this coming winter. It is difficult! There will be many issues to negotiate, but we will be trying to surmount them as a matter of urgency. Our athletes need indoor competition, but it cannot come at the detriment of the Association's stability and future.

I have written the Track and Field report, although brief, in this one, as we do not have a Track and Field Secretary! Andy Day who was acting is not able to continue, let alone take on the role in a definitive position.

The same, unfortunately, can only be said about the Road Secretary's position. It is only through the hard work of Val and Sarah in the office, along with Richard Carney and Pat Carlan, that the Spring and Autumn Relays this year have been able to take place.

What is clearly evident is that for the Association to continue and exist, there is a pressing need for more helpers to take on roles to provide our athletes with the competition they need, which the Association is renowned for providing. We constantly have people on Social Media criticising and offering advice, but do not put themselves forward for any of our voluntary roles.

It is difficult for me to say, but there is now a distinct possibility that we will not be able to put on all competitions for our athletes, without further assistance. Too much work for far too few willing volunteers,

On a more positive note, the Women's Cross Country League continues to thrive with 46 clubs represented in two divisions. The majority of the races are a

combined venture with the Birmingham and District Cross Country League, making the day an experience and reducing costs to both organisations.

The Midland Track and Field League continues to provide club athletes with competition. Club representative competition at this level has reduced over the last 20 years or so, with the advent of event-specific and more 'Open Meetings' giving athletes different opportunities.

I do need to point out that both these Leagues are self-funding and financially viable with little input from the office although they are there for back-up as and when required,

Today the Presidency of the Association passes from Mary Hodges to Glyn Jones. Thank you, Mary, for your support and work during your term of office. Best wishes to Glyn, more renowned for his work on the Race Walking section of our sport and Association.

I said at last year's Annual General Meeting that this would be my last in my current role. Unfortunately, we have had no concrete enquiry to take over. I enjoy my work for the Association most of the time, but my main reason for needing to stand down is to allow for continuity planning. I do not want to leave without someone in place, that would be unfair to both the Association and the staff in the office. I have informed the Management Board that I will continue for a maximum of 12 months, which is a definitive commitment for the sake of the Association.

In completing this report, I would like to thank all who have assisted Association over the past year, including Technical Officials, marshals, and volunteers, for your help The Management Board for your support and not forgetting Val (Day) Sarah (Whapples) in the Office, with volunteer help from Karen(Constandinou)

Mary thanked Stewart for a very comprehensive report.

3.To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts:

During my tenure in this role. My main comment has remained the same: 'Another testing financial year' for the Association. This year is no change.

The Association's income has decreased, despite higher entry fees and the England Grant (excluding Covid years), which has remained stagnant at £33,000. We have requested an increase on more than one occasion, but inflation is no reason for an upsurge!

However, through inflation, the cost of providing for our promotional expenditures has continued to rise, and that considerable. Throughout the year, as usual, we have continually reviewed our outgoings. To this end, we have changed our IT support company, reducing our monthly costs by £60 without affecting the level of support we receive. We are grateful for the advice we received from Paul Day, who assisted with this move.

In September 2024, Birmingham City Council offered a return to Alexander Stadium (High Performance Centre) office space. A site visit by members of the Management Board and the Office Manager confirmed it would be a viable move; the financial aspects seemed to be advantageous. Over the next three months, despite acknowledgements, we received no further information on these requests.

In February 2025, smaller but sufficient office space became available at Radclyffe House. This combined with the natural reduction in rental charges, made it both feasible and acceptable, so we remain on Hagley Road without the cost of relocation to the Stadium.

In the difficult financial times that both the Association and the country find themselves in, it is not surprising that we find ourselves running at a loss year on year. There is only so much that we can increase entry fees without it affecting the number of entries, given the obvious decrease in income. The next fiscal year (2026–2027) will be even more testing! Birmingham City Council intends to implement vehicle parking charges at Sutton Park. I believe this will increase our expenses there by at least £500 for Officials and other car parking on each of the two Road Relay events.

We have recently implemented an affiliation fee (£20) for clubs to register their interest in competing in Road and Cross Country Championships. This income will be used to administer this scheme. It will mean that the office only communicates with those wishing to enter our events rather than every club within the Midlands and South West.

The current Association benefits enormously from the prudence of our predecessors who had the foresight to invest financially. The assistance provided by RC Brewin Dolphin (who administer the investments) generates a monthly income (£11627 for the year), which varies but helps mitigate the loss over the year. Unfortunately, due to the rising costs of the Association, we had to dip into these investments twice to the tune of £25,000, even with that help, we accumulated a total loss of £43,204 compared to £12,798 at the end of 2023–2024.

The breakdown of the loss:

- The overall events have generated £25,000 less surplus than last year. Running costs and lower income account for this (income 2025– £133,523 against 2024– £150,471 down £16,948)
- Expenditure 2025– 3176,727 with 2024–£163,267– up by £13,460
- **(£30,408)**
- Salary costs had increased by an inflationary £3,000 over the year (Tax, National Insurance and Pensions included)
- Last Year's rent charge was lower as it included a £14,000 release of Alexander Stadium cost reversal.
- In contrast, a £6500 refund was received against rent costs (the moving refund– our March rent had already been charged therefore a refund was required).

The above items net off to a reduction in income of £31,500, which is pretty much the difference between last year's loss and this year's loss. The difference between the increase in the loss and the amount we drew down on the investments is likely because the above items do not necessarily relate directly to cash. For example the £14,000 Alexander Stadium cost reversal was just a provisional reversal, it was never actually paid or refunded.

The Association, whilst financially viable, cannot continue to incur such a loss. Financial stability is essential, so any advice, assistance or suggestions will be greatly appreciated. The current financial year is going to be extremely testing! Another change we are encountering is that England Athletics is changing its granting system; whether this change benefits the Association remains to be seen. The 'given' grant of £33,000 ends in March 2026! The entire grant funding will be pooled and all competition providers will have the opportunity to apply for a portion. The application process has recently been released. It is now being appraised and is being readied for our applications.

I must finish by extending my sincere and heartfelt thanks to Val (Day) in the office who keeps a very tight hand on the finances of the Association to ensure that our accounts are always in the black and invoices paid without penalty.

In answer to a question raised Stewart confirmed that the England grant had not yet been received and that the year ran 1st April to end of March.

It was proposed by Mary Williams and Colin Fox that the Financial Report be accepted.

4.To Elect the proposed Honorary Officers of the Association:

President: Glyn Jones Proposed by the Management Committee. Glyn expressed his surprise at being proposed for the role as President. He stated it was a great honour for which he is grateful and will support Management Board athletes and volunteers and wherever possible will attend Championships. He stressed the need for more volunteers to come forward to cover the various vacant roles. He asked those present to spread the word.

Chairman: Stewart Barnes. Stewart agreed to serve for a maximum of a further 12 months.

Treasurer: No candidate nominated. Stewart Barnes agreed to continue as Acting Treasurer.

Hon. Secretary: No candidate nominated. Jan Febery agreed to continue as Acting Hon. Secretary.

The new President then took the Chair.

5.To appoint the Independent Examiners of the Accounts:

AGS (Wolverhampton) were confirmed for a further one-year period.

6To note the Trustees of the Association:

Lyn Orbel Stewart Barnes Jan Febery Steve Tupholme

7. To note the Officers of the Midland Counties Race Walking Association:

Chairman:

Hon. Secretary: Ann Perry

Competitions Secretary: Glyn Jones

Financial Adviser: Peter Boszko

8. To note the election of the Chairman and Hon. Secretary of the Midlands Cross Country Association:

Chairman: Michael Robinson

Secretary: Bill Nock

9. To note the election and Hon. Secretary of the following Committees:

a. Track and Field:

Chairman: Lyn Orbel

Secretary Vacant

b. Road Running:

Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Vacant

c. Officials Co-Ordinator: Margaret Werrett (appointed by Management Committee.

10. To note the election of the Chairman and Hon. Secretary of the following Committees:

a. The Midland Track and Field League:

Chairman: Brian Ackford

Hon. Secretary: Richard White.

b. The Midland Women's Cross Country League:

Hon. Secretary: Vacant

11. To elect the representative to AAA Management Board: Stewart Barnes was confirmed for a further period.

12. Any other Business: Mary Hodges stated that whilst Reports are not required for the AGM she would like it to be recorded that this year the Track and Field League included some Disability Events and the athletes competing were part of the scoring team

4th October is the proposed Date of the 2026 AGM

The Meeting closed at 1.02pm