

Carmarthen and District Harriers Committee meeting – Ivy Bush Hotel – Carmarthen Wednesday September 2nd 2015

Present: Hedydd Davies, Kevin Evans, Nathan Jones, Carol Jones, Delyth Brown, Mike Rees, Ralph Siggery, Simon Mansfield, Edward Morgan, Rhian Glynn, Steve Glynn, Hayley John, Rebecca Gatt (Development Officer)

Apologies: received from Joan Goldsmith, Ivor Hopkins, Neil Thomas, Jane Batten

Despite only 3 present at the last meeting, the minutes of meeting held on 8th June 2015 were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising from the minutes: 8th June

- *Athletics Weekly – Peta Bee is the new performance editor of the athletics weekly. She will hopefully be at the dinner in November.*
- *The club is glad to see Delyth Brown (middle distance coach) back at the track as she recovers from illness.*
- *The portacabins continue to be used well and kept tidy with equipment in safer places. The equipment room has seen problems with the roof where water has been let through, but Ralph has made sure that this issue has been dealt with quickly. There will be a need to clean out the room and field equipment once again.*
- *As well as the website, which includes information and results on the club, Dyfed and West Wales athletes, the club also have links with the Carmarthenshire Herald and Carmarthen Journal where they greatly receive our information for them to publish weekly.*
- *Membership – Over 250 membership forms. After letters were posted out of invitation, some new athletes did join over the summer, particularly athletes from the schools.*
- *It has been encouraging to see more Under 11 athletes training and then going on to enjoy competing for the club.*
- *The club throughout the summer has bought a new club tent/gazebo, purchased by Cressy Morgan.*
 - *It was well used at the meetings at Brecon and Haverfordwest with plenty of space for all.*
 - *The new Harriers flag has been delivered thanks to Edward. The flag is bilingual with the club colours. It will become very useful especially at cross country events such as the UK Inter-Counties & Gwent League where there will be several tents at venues. Also new is the sign that is up on the side of the main road promoting the club.*
- *We will try and get a PDF file of the club logo that it can be used on letters, web etc. instead of the vest. There is a printing company in Cross Hands that could help and this will be looked into further.*

- *As mentioned in the last meeting, sincere thanks to the hosts and everyone in the club who helped make the Australian athletes visit to Carmarthen an enjoyable experience. They have already been in touch to find out dates for next year.*

Financial Report –

Balance at 28 August 2015

46,494.41

Major items of income (1 January 2015 – 1 August 2015)

Sponsorship and Grants

McDonalds £4000
 West Wales Freemasons £1000
 Ffoshelig Coaches £1000
 Welsh Athletics grant £540
 Louise Arthur League £646
 Owen Griffiths £250
 Anonymous donor £200
 Water donated by Princess Gate

Other major sources of income

Membership fees £4815
 Training levies £6496
 Sale of refreshments £2343.56
 Sale of vests £1044
 Hire of PA £660

Major items of expenditure (1 January – 1 August 2015)

Track Hire £5108
 WA registration fees £2059
 Refurbishment of stand £12517
 Vests £1512
 Buses £2530
 Coaching grants £2720

Annual Dinner – Friday 6th November 2015

Confirmation details of this year's dinner. Everything has now been booked at the Ivy Bush Hotel for 6th November 7-7.30pm.

Special guests will be invited to our dinner.

Our guest speaker this year is Fred Bell, who was present last year.

- Member of Carmarthen Harriers during the period 1962-1968
- He gained junior and senior Welsh International vests whilst being coaches by Ernie Jones
- Represented Wales on the track on many occasions and was the Welsh junior mile record holder and 5k Senior record holder

As in previous years, the dinner will involve an award presentation, Plates to new champion/international, mugs to repeat performances. Award categories include

- Athlete Recognition medals
- Bursary Awards
- Repeat Awards (Welsh International / Champions)
- New Awards (Welsh International / Champions)
- Effort & Endeavour Award
- Wilf James Memorial Award
- Club Service Award
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Ernie Jones Memorial Award
- J Eirwyn Walters Memorial Award
- RB Evans Award
- This year, a further three special awards will be made

All athletes attending the dinner will receive an award as a thank you for all their hard work.

Dinner applications forms are now being given out to club members and to be advertised online by mid-September

Price - £18 (£15 for under 15)

Forms to be returned directly to the organizer Rhian Glynn as soon as possible and no later than Wednesday 28 October 2015

Committee approved the list of Awards to be presented at the Annual Dinner

Chairman's Report –

Many thanks to all the Club volunteers (coaches, team managers, officers, committee members, refreshment cabin helpers) for their hard work during the last three months. I am sure all the parents and the athletes appreciate the amount of effort put in by a few dedicated volunteers

This summer there has been a fine team spirit as shown by the numbers who have travelled to compete in the Louise Arthur League, Gerald Codd Trophy in Haverfordwest and the Welsh Cup Final in Newport. Many thanks to the four team managers

Many thanks to Nathan Jones for his superb work with the Carmarthen Harriers website and with the press

Team results were better this year than in 2014 but still way down on the glory years of 1994 to 2009 when in that period Carmarthen were winners of the Welsh Junior (11-20) Cup Final

- Club is very short of qualified coaches and officials. We are not able to provide specialist coaches in many events and qualified officials at Welsh league meetings
- We must if we are to improve enrol more volunteers and coaches and officials (Club will pay for coach course fees)
- Numbers travelling on the team coaches again this year has very disappointing.
- We need to review our financial situation. We rely too much on income from grants and sponsorship
- Since the all-weather track opened in 1988 we have hosted many Welsh championships and also four Celtic Games (1989, 1993, 2005 and 2009). Should we consider applying to host a Welsh junior athletics championship in Carmarthen in 2016?
- We have hosted young Australian athletes every year since 2002. Do we do so again in 2016?
- We need more volunteers to help with the catering at the Track

Hedydd welcomed Rebecca Gatt to the meeting, the new part-time Dyfed Club Network Officer. Rebecca is here to help all Dyfed clubs and there are courses available to qualify as officials and coaches.

The Leading athletics coach course was recently held in Swansea where Nikita Neary attended. She has information and business cards available.

E-mail contact: rebecca.gatt@welshathletics.org

Report on events held during June/July/August

Ralph Siggery was thanked for his excellent work once again in organizing the 4 Carmarthen Open Throws Competition during the summer months. On average, we saw around 30 throwers at each meeting and saw athletes travel from Swansea, Pembrokeshire and East Wales. Messages of thanks have been sent from competitors thanking the club and Ralph for the opportunity to take part in the throws.

June/July/August highlights since 8 June

- Boys & Girls Club – Cardiff: All our athletes collected a large tally of medals, but overall the numbers that competed in general was not that good.
- Successful Dyfed primary and secondary school competitions.
- The annual McDonalds Inter store competition was once again held at Carmarthen. 16 stores were involved where there was good bonding and serious competition including track and sports day events/parade. The Harriers provided refreshments on the day.
- Carmarthen Harriers members who competed did well and contributed to the success of the teams. Dyfed schools won the Welsh schools athletics championships and two team trophies at the Welsh schools combined events championships. Also had representatives in the SIAB International and Celtic Games.
- After promotion to the premier division this year, the West Wales composite team U17/20 did brilliant to retain their place in the top division. The final match in Swansea saw a brilliant team performance for a third place finish.
- West Wales again won the Welsh Inter-regional championships at Colwyn Bay (6 out of 7 trophies won) winning by 145 points. 95 athletes made the long journey to North Wales and thanks to all those who supported the team.

22 Carmarthen Harriers competed and won a total of 21 medals (9 gold, 7 silver and 5 bronze)

Welsh U17/20/Senior League:

Three league matches (at Cardiff, Newport and Brecon) and the cup final at Swansea on Sunday 9 August. An average of only 12 athletes competed in the league matches even though over 30 had been invited by letter. Carmarthen qualified for the cup final in 7th. However, 23 members supported the club in the final and with more events filled, did excellently to finish 3rd (behind Brecon and Swansea but ahead of Cardiff and Pembrokeshire)

Louise Arthur League U15

Cressy Morgan and Nathan Jones produced LA reports for the committee. The club has had a successful season the U15 league. Numbers have been higher and performances have been better thanks to all the volunteers. In all four league matches, Carmarthen finished third behind Swansea and Pembrokeshire scoring high score points. With coaching planned better, athletes have been able to practice more and improve on their times/distances. The middle distance group has been going from strength to strength.

The under 11's in particular have seen more athletes training enjoying competition. The vast majority had never competed before and it was great to see their confidence and sense of team camaraderie grow through the summer. The boys won their age group at the Brecon meet, and finished 2nd in the cup final.

In general, the team has been consistently well represented in most of the events. Our weaknesses throughout the season have been in hurdles, high jump, walk and throws.

A new award scheme was introduced for 2015, suggested by Jake Morgan – “athlete of the match award”. For this group of boys and girls, many who are new to athletics, we have been recognizing those who make a significant contribution to the team and those who gave exceptional performances. These are just not for those who win races but those who score vital points in a number of events.

Thanks to the dedication of athletes, parents, coaches and team managers, the club once again qualified from the LA to the Welsh Junior League Cup final in Newport at the end of August, where the club finished 5th the same as in 2014.

The Gerald Codd in July only saw five clubs compete – Swansea, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthen, Bridgend and Llanelli. Carmarthen finished third with a good team performance.

Development areas and aims for going forward include: Ensuring that those who competed in the LAL continue to attend training and take part in cross country events, Increase the number of throwers and number of athletes attended the majority of matches.

2015 Welsh Championships and International matches

Welsh championships (U13/15/17/20 and senior)

Carmarthen Harriers members won 38 gold medals in Welsh championships

10 2015 Welsh champions and internationals

11 2015 Welsh champions

2 2015 Welsh internationals

In 2015, there has been a slight improvement in the number of athletes that have entered Welsh championships and other events such as the Swansea Junior Games and the West Wales indoor and outdoor championships.. More members, however could have competed, this provides athletes with competition featuring the best in Wales. Those that do enter do very well.

Aim: Coaches to do more to encourage members to enter in club events and other events in West Wales.

There were 45 members in Neath for the West Wales outdoor championship, collecting 43 medals.

Swansea Junior Games 2015

The games were re launched 2012 as Swansea was celebrating their anniversary, and hoped that it would be become a standard fixture on the calendar.

Over 300 athletes from all Welsh clubs entered this year's end of the summer season Games on bank holiday Monday and amongst them were 14 Harriers members winning a number of medals in the process, 14 in total.

Upcoming Events

Mountain / Road Running

Congratulations to three Carmarthen Harriers members – Ryan Jenkins, Thomas Jones and Ellie Kiff – who will receive a Welsh vest and been selected to run at the World Mountain Running Championship to be held at Betws Y Coed on Saturday 19 September Attracting the world's best mountain runners, the enthralling and hugely challenging event is highly prized throughout the rapidly growing sport of mountain running.

Sunday 20 Sept – Swansea Bay 10K and Junior Races (Swansea Bay)

Cross Country XC

The next and first local big Cross Country event is the **Carmarthenshire Primary schools cross country championships at the Showground on Thursday 24 September**. Part of the showground has been sold meaning a new course is in place for this year – a new course of the map will be produced by Nathan soon. As usual, volunteers are asked to help with the event including marshalling and refreshments. We will hopefully get athletes to support as front runners.

Event start at 4.30pm – Year 3-6 (Boys and Girls)

The first Gwent League Cross Country league is at Bridgend on 11th October and this will include the West Wales championships. Carmarthen did well last year and will hope to carry on with this form.

Event is for Novice athletes (U11) to seniors. Further details will be published soon and athletes will be made aware.

At the time of writing, no dates have been set for the Brianne XC Schools league.

Sports hall indoor competition at Carmarthen Leisure Centre

Thursday 22 October – Carmarthenshire Primary Schools (9-12)

Tuesday 3 November – Carmarthenshire Secondary Y7/8 Schools (9-12)

Coaching Report – by Jane Batten

The new structure of U11 dedicated coaching remained more or less in place for the summer. The structure seems to have worked fairly well with a good rotation of U11's competing for the club rather than relying on the same faces every time. It was also obvious that the athletes felt more confident towards the end of the season with all the events being filled and more athletes competing in a run, jump and throwing event.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to Nikita who has helped at just about every Tuesday night session which has eased the numbers in the groups leading to more consistent coaching. The younger athletes like to be coached by a competing older athlete and the results have shown that this continuation of enthusiastic coaching has a positive impact.

We lost Ivor half way through the summer. We wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to having him back as part of the team.

The U13's and U15's not in specific groups received more individual coaching under the revised structure. While this has worked to a certain extent, it still needs fine tuning

Ossie continues to coach hurdles, but because it is such a technical event, he can only take a few athletes and consequently, we have very few hurdlers which impacts on numbers of athletes taking part in combined events competitions.

Delyth and Carol have a large group on a Tuesday night, with more joining regularly, as they have also taken on some of the sprinters. This is the comment from Neil which was confirmed by Steve – “The middle distance group is getting too large and needs to be split into smaller more manageable groups. I am happy to take one group and perhaps Steve could take the other. This will need to be planned correctly as does Thursday night sessions. I would further suggest a planning session is held with all middle distance coaches to gain all opinions prior to the XC season. For example I had no idea what was planned tonight so just used experience to take the session.”

I have not managed to talk to all the coaches, but these, in my opinion are the issues that we need to address:

1. Tuesday night 7pm running group is too big
2. U13 and U15 jump coaching
3. Hurdles coaching
4. Transition of athletes to specialist coaching
5. Continuation of U11 dedicated coaching

Actions

1. As suggested, a meeting of all distance coaches would be helpful so that everyone involved knows the aims and goals and their role. Neil and Steve have offered their services within the 7pm Tuesday group to help with the numbers training
2. We need another general coach to help with the U13 and U15 training, so that these athletes get the training they need and deserve. They need to be in smaller groups with more individual training not only for their progression but for their enthusiasm and encouragement as well. **WHO AND HOW?**
3. We need to encourage and train more hurdlers, which would help with numbers competing in combined events. I have spoken with Glen and hope that he will take a small group of hurdlers to train, overseen by Ossie. We can also send individual athletes to Ossie over the winter, providing they are committed to train with him.
4. The transition of athletes to specialist coaching is vague. There seems to be little structure on when and why athletes move from novice to more advanced groups or specialist training groups. Following the UK Athletics coaching structure, as other clubs do, could be helpful, as well as discussions within the coaching team.
5. U11 dedicated coaches. Currently Nikita, Jake, Steve and myself do this on Tuesday evenings from 6-7pm. Hopefully Nikita will continue to help out. I am also hopeful that a couple of parents will join in next season

Finally, I would like to thank the coaching team for all their hard work and commitment over the summer season and to the team managers for all the hours they have put in; talking to athletes and parents, analysing results and putting teams together. I am in the process of trying to arrange a meeting to discuss the winter season and training.

Winter term events *Early Provisional Fixture List is available*

September 2015

Sat	6	Cardiff 10K	Cardiff
Sun	20	Swansea Bay 10K/5K/3K/1K	Swansea
Thurs	24	Carmarthenshire Primary CC Brienne Sec Schools CC league	Showground (4.30) Dyffryn Taf (1pm)

October 2015

Sat	3	Welsh 1 mile road championship	Cardiff
Sun	11	Gwent Cross country (including West Wales Champs) Brienne Secondary CC league	Bridgend
Thurs	22	Carmarthenshire Primary sportshall	Carmarthen LC (prov)
Sat	31	Welsh Athletics AGM	Metropole Llandrindod

November 2015

Tues	3	Carms Secondary 7/8 Sportshall	Carmarthen LC(prov)
Fri	6	Carmarthen Harriers Dinner	Ivy Bush Royal Hotel
Sun	8	Gwent CC League	Llandaff Fields Cardiff
Sat	14	Welsh inter school CC champs	Brecon
		Brianne Sec schools CC league	
Wed	25	Dyfed Schools AGM	Ivy Bush Hotel (prov)

December 2015

Sat	5	Gwent Cross Country	Bristol
Sat	12	Welsh inter regional cross country	Builth Wells

Fund Raising

There has not been a tesco bag packing activity booked for the last 2 years due to time on the athletics calendar. This year we might hold a raffle stand with volunteers needed to come forward with no decision yet.

Social Events

Rhian Glynn continues to do an excellent job in organizing social events for the club as well as helping with the clothing. On 5th September, a harriers end of the summer season fun day has been booked at the Assault Course in Cynnwyl Elfed. Despite not much time to advertise because of details from the venue, around 25 athletes will be attending.

An annual Christmas Party will be planned once again for the end of 2015 around the start of December, with it probably being held again at Xcel Bowling in Johnstown. Once confirmed, Nathan will hopefully create posters/information slips that more can be aware of the event.

Any Other Business

- 4 nominations have been put forward for this year's Welsh Athletics Awards which will recognize coaches, athletes and volunteers in the sport. The Carmarthen Town and Personality Sports of the Year will be coming up at the end of the year.
- Kevin mentioned about a new event discussed at the Cross Country Committee Meeting – the Welsh Cross Country Relays (20 December?) It is likely to be held in East Wales.

- As the winter months arrive, the club has once again booked the Sports hall inside the leisure Centre for use. If the weather is not great on a Tuesday, then athletes will be able to train indoors where they will do more circuit and short running and exercises. The cross country group will hopefully continue to come outdoors for competition training.
- Picton sports, where we get our team wear from, now have an online page where Carmarthen Harriers members can order and buy clothing when they want instead of the three times a year order that Rhian did up to now. This will be an easier way to purchase and an easier way for Rhian. The new page on the Picton sports website is :
[http://www.pictonsports.co.uk/?estore&cat=ClubShops|Athletics|Carmarthen Harriers](http://www.pictonsports.co.uk/?estore&cat=ClubShops|Athletics|Carmarthen%20Harriers)
- Track safety is still a problem, especially when athletes finish/change on a Tuesday. This is difficult with the number of athletes that are at the club on a regular basis. It is important to look around when crossing the track at all times.
Child welfare is also vital. All athletes and parents need to be aware that we take child welfare at the club very seriously. If an athlete does need to leave or finish training, because of an injury etc, then they must tell a member of the coaching team to make sure that they are safe.
- Carol Jones brought up an issue with entry fees during the Welsh Athletics Championships held over the summer over a two day competition. Athletes already had to pay up to £10 to enter the championships, but then when athletes turned up on other days when they were not competing but to support other teammates, Welsh Athletics said that they had to pay the £3 entry fee to be able to enter the arena. At the British Athletics, all competitors have a pass that they can wear around their neck stating name, day and competition event where they have free entry throughout the weekend. Rebecca is going to report this to WA and we wait for their response.
- Carmarthen Harriers have submitted a proposal to Welsh Athletics to consider allocating a Welsh junior athletics championship to Carmarthen in 2016. Carmarthen has a long history of hosting events since the all-weather track opened in 1988. Dyfed has had a lot of travelling to do during the year, including travelling to Cardiff and Newport for the two day championships, the cup final in Newport and the inter regional athletics in Colwyn Bay.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday November 25, 7.30pm at the Ivy Bush Hotel

www.carmarthenharriers.co.uk