



Association of UK Course Measurers

Chairman: Colin Tether

Secretary: Mike Burns

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Minutes of the meeting of the Course Measurement Working Party (Board of Directors)

held on Saturday 09 November 2024 at 11.00am
at the Somerstown Coffee House, 60 Chalton St, London, NW1 1HS

Present:	Colin Tether	Chairman
	Mike Burns	Secretary & ACMS Scotland
	Robin Houghton	Treasurer
	Dene Townend	ACMS North
	Jon Aston	ACMS Midlands
	Charmian Heaton	Measurer
	Brian Porter	Measurer
	Kevin Miller	Measurer
	Hugh Jones	Honorary President

Observers: Chris Sewell
Paul Wood
Doug Hyde
Tony King

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from, Graham Finlayson, Campbell Joss, Tim Cook, Steve Goss, Steve Crane, Chris Markel, Paul Hodgson and Phil Cook (ACMS Wales).

Minutes of the meeting of 25 November 2023:

The minutes had recently been amended to show that Paul Wood and Doug Hyde were present.

Matters arising:

It was noted that most issues are included on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

International matters: The Secretary pointed out that, although Paul Hodgson had been on CMWP as international representative, in neither the articles of association nor the old AUKCM constitution, was there any provision, or requirement, for an international measurer on CMWP. However we continue to have a representative, with Hugh Jones, the newly appointed Honorary President.

Honorary President: Hugh Jones

It was noted that the only thing that came up was last year was the World Athletics certification of races with all races having to be done with World Athletic Certification. It transpires that this was only for top level races and the growing body of races that are keen to qualify for the Run Through events or have ambitions to be races in which you can score points for overall rankings, and that has created a lot of pressure on measurers.

Hugh Jones added that, typically, you get a situation with a marathon that was on the verge of international recognition would be measured and that all the other associated races with it now have to be measured, and that might include a marathon, 1/2 marathon, a 10K and a 5K, and they all have to be certified separately.

The Secretary noted that one problem that has arisen is with the London Marathon, where anybody seeking championship qualification has to achieve it on a World Athletics certified course.

Some race directors have asked whether AUKCM measurers are also international measurers, because runners are looking to achieve a qualifying time.

Hugh Jones clarified that measurers have to go through a qualification procedure to go from AUKCM Grade 1 to World Athletics Grade B. It was likely that anybody who has been measuring for some time will have a bank of reports that they can submit to World Athletics for consideration for upgrading.

A list of UK qualified international measurers is on the AIMS website.

It was suggested that we return to this under item 7 on the upgrading of UK measurers.

Area Course Measurement Secretaries Reports:

Reports for Scotland, Wales, the North and the Midlands had been circulated. There were no reports from the South or Northern Ireland.

There continues to be a problem with Northern Ireland, where, technically, John Glover provides coverage. However, in practical terms there is no effective coverage. Dean Townsend reported that he'd had a couple of e-mail exchanges with John Glover but no physical engagement. He and John had been involved in training a couple of measurers, but nothing further has happened since then.

Discussion then moved on to the need for a report from the South. It was stressed that it was important for the measurers in that area to see what activity there has been.

It was also suggested that thought needed to be given to the boundaries for the South area and whether there was any that it could not be divided it into a couple of areas at least.

Linking into this, the discussion moved on to the England Athletics Regional boundaries. It was noted that there were 9 regional councils in England, compared with three AUKCM areas but nowhere were the boundaries coterminous. These regional council areas were established when Run Britain was originally set up.

It was considered that it would be useful to discuss the issue of the border for the South area with Ian Isaacs who might welcome a lighter workload ***[Chairman to have an initial discussion with Ian Isaacs]***.

The discussion then moved on to a recent online meeting between the athletics governing bodies. The Secretary reported that thought had been given as to how to improve measurement training, recruitment and practice. During that meeting England Athletics expressed an interest in bringing the whole measurement process in-house as they claim the current process is too slow. It was suggested that this was probably because the Run Events and new licencing system is flagging things earlier and England Athletics are looking to be more proactive to meet increasing demands from race organiser for a licence and a measurement certificate.

It was agreed that AUKCM needed to react to this and needed to be involved in any further meetings. **[Action: Secretary to liaise with Scottish Athletics about AUKCM involvement in future discussions.]**

Certificate Renewals:

Brian Porter said that the value of the current renewals system was questionable. Generally a request for a renewal is received, seen and a certificate is issued. But there is rarely a check on the validity of the application or on whether renewals have been sought in previous years. The whole process adds little, if any, value to the system. What, therefore, was the point in going through it?

It was acknowledged that it is a process to ensure that the race organiser has gone through some steps to confirm that the race route has not changed and that a new certificate can be issued. ACMS involvement is minimal.

There is some concern at delays in issuing certificates, with some race directors waiting two or three weeks. *(Note: The Course Measurement website states that a "renewal certificate will be emailed to you within 14 days.")*

It was pointed out that RunEvents are now starting to check for renewals, whereas, in the past, some events were licensed for the whole 10 years of a measurement's validity on the basis of the first year's certificate. As a result they are putting more demands on race directors and more demands on AUKCM. We are now receiving renewal requests from race directors who wrongly assumed that the initial certificate was valid for 10 years.

Mike Burns explained that in Scotland Scottish Athletics will not issue a licence unless there is a valid course certificate, and they always contact him if they do not know if a race director has a valid certificate.

It was questioned as to why we actually needed a renewal certificate, when the course measurement is valid for 10 years.

It was suggested that if the system was automated pressures on the system would be eased. It might be possible that when a race director enters the renewal code into the system it could automatically generate a renewal certificate.

It was pointed out that a World Athletics certificate is valid for five years, and it doesn't need to be renewed during that period. With our system the measurement is valid for 10 years, but the certificate still has to be renewed every year. So why can't we just change it, so the certificate is valid for 10 years?

What some measurers have found is that, where a remeasurement has taken place after the 10 years have elapsed, the previous measurement is no longer correct. Things have changed; they may have straightened a stretch of road and although the race director can rightly claim that they are using the original measured course, the fact remains that the original measurement is no longer valid.

It was pointed out that it was down to the race adjudicator to make sure that the race director uses the correct course and also needs to check that a valid certificate is in place.

There was a general feeling that we should look at the system to see if it could be automated.

The process would be:

- A director organises a race, gets it measured and receives a certificate;
- They then go RunEvents and submit the certificate which might be 24/172;
- The certificate remains valid 2034.

The certificate will only remain valid if the measured course is run.

It was suggested that this needed to be a process within RunEvents, and they need to say what specific wording they need on a certificate and that's a conversation that the Association needs to have with Barry Hopkins and is a firm driver for RunEvents to have a renewal certificate process in place.

The Secretary pointed out that this was very much a problem for England, because in Scotland the processing of renewals goes through a process agreed with Scottish Athletics.

Brian Porter agreed that it was not a massive time-consuming exercise for each renewal but, for him, he thought the process was of little value.

Robin Houghton added that the race director has to submit the renewal application and then has to send a confirmatory e-mail and the whole process may be further delayed if someone is on holiday. All this can place extra stress on the race director.

It was suggested that Paul Wood, who has a good knowledge of the operations side of England Athletics might help with this. He agreed to have a conversation with Barry Hopkins.

[Action: progress reports to CMWP.]

Review of Training:

The Secretary had circulated copies of the revised training material. When the review was initiated, it was agreed that the existing material was too long covered, far too much ground and needed simplifying. The original material was approximately 90 pages long but has now been slimmed down to about 30 pages.

Introductory Lesson:

The redraft of the online introductory seminar hasn't changed much.

Robin Houghton pointed out that the material made reference to both "wheel revolutions" and "counts" and suggested that it would be simpler just to refer to "counts".

There was general agreement to this.

Brian Porter questioned the use of examples of unusual calibration course lengths quoted and said it was more common practice to have courses of 300, 400 or 500 metres. There was general agreement that most measurers would aim for a calibration course in multiples of 100 metres, but it was also acknowledged that this was not always possible.

Paul Wood referred to the importance of laying out calibration courses correctly and problems that have arisen in the past with calibration courses being wrong. He recommended that 2 measurers should be involved in laying out calibration courses.

As an alternative, it was suggested that you could get another measurer who has calibrated their bike on their own calibration course to come over and cycle the new calibration course to provide a comparison and, hopefully, a verification of the accuracy of the course-

Brian Porter expressed the view that, instead of having all of this stuff online, if a trainee shows any interest, they should be directed to their area secretary, thus giving initial one to one engagement. The area secretary sends out the required information to progress the training, and, on getting the trainee's feedback, determines whether further one to one contact is required, including setting out a calibration course and the measurement of a pre-determined course.

The trainee produces a report and, if it relates to a previously measured course, it is compared to the previous measurement report. You can then determine whether the trainee is good to go.

Brian Porter agreed that one to one working with a trainee, where possible, is the way we should be going.

It was generally agreed that we were more likely to keep a trainee involved where one to one relationships are involved.

Doug Hyde said that a list of local calibration courses could be useful, but it may be that there's a calibration course near to where you might want to measure a race and it might be more convenient to use that rather than to go to your own course.

Mike Burns said that he tends to set out a calibration course with most measurements that he does as he cannot rely on using his calibration course in Shetland.

Hugh Jones observed that this is typically what happens with international races.

Theory Training Seminar:

In the light of the reduction in the size of the training material, it was asked what had been left out. There was a nervousness that what's omitted might have been useful.

Charmian Heaton said that she did the online course while in hospital. She felt that she had benefited from Mike Sandford's experience and so felt that she was learning a lot while in hospital.

Chris Sewell mentioned that he did practical training in 2021 with Brian. He also found the online course useful, but what was frustrating was the time it took to get feedback.

It was considered that feedback was relatively prompt and quite detailed, although it sometimes felt as if submissions were being sent into the ether and you sometimes had to chase for feedback to be able to progress to the next level.

Brian Porter referred to past years when we used to wait until we had enough individuals to run a practical training session. He thought that it was working better now where trainees get the experience of a qualified measurer and spend some time to go through measuring practice.

The Chairman asked everyone to feed through comments within two weeks.

The Secretary agreed to circulate copies of the material to everyone.

The Chairman suggested that when comments had been received we should get together and agree what changes should be made.

Charmian Heaton thought it would be useful to know what has been taken out because it's sometimes hard to look at a document and remember what was in the original.

The Secretary agreed to email the original text as well as the revised versions to everyone.

Dene Townend said that as an area secretary he would be more than happy to have an initial engagement with the trainee to avoid the current problem of things getting lost in the ether.

The Chairman acknowledged that Dene, as an active area secretary, was well placed to do this. But not everywhere was in a position to follow suit and, therefore, the existing system will need to continue as modified.

The Secretary explained that, at the moment, when somebody submits answers to the introductory paper he has to try and identify where they are and then refer it to the appropriate area secretary, which in the last couple of years has worked fairly well, but it's resource heavy.

There was a general feeling that the website needed amending so that potential trainees are asked to identify which region they live in and to send any submission to the appropriate area secretary. It was then questioned whether training would be through mentoring or do they still complete the introductory lesson.

The Secretary said that the last measurers to qualify in Scotland completed the introductory lesson and this was followed up with mentoring.

The discussion then centred on how the training regime might be improved, including:

- providing mentors with a checklist of items of key learning points that must be demonstrated and evidenced.
- mentors going out and doing some basic training before moving on to the theory and then marrying the two together.
- on the website, where someone expresses interest in an introductory course, we could sequence it in such a way that:
 - if you're interested, we'll put you in touch with a local person who's a measurer,

- you get some information about what's involved,
- someone accompanies you so that you get some practical experience,
- if you're still interested you can then move on to the introductory tutorial,
- this enables them to get some pre learning and understanding prior to doing the tutorial and then they are prepared for doing the practical assessment, and
- this also enables us to keep track of and register those who are interested.
- the final stage could be to say that, in essence, you are registered as a Grade 2 measurer, but probably within three months that you actually go through more detailed training.
- starting the training process with some mentoring from a certified measurer, and have the trainee accompany them on a ride if it's convenient to do so and they then take that forward through the formal process of either the online training and/or mentoring.
- have the individual list the areas in which they would wish to consider themselves as being available to measure, which will help to identify who would be the most appropriate area secretary.

The Secretary said that when he was doing the training with the measurers in Scotland, he spent 5 days actually taking them round on courses he was there to measure so that they were actually involved in the process. The practical sessions were backed up with sessions in the evening on the more theoretical side of things and finally they were given a measuring exercise to complete with each of them sending him a report.

When asked if they did the 10 lessons from the initial on-line training, he replied that they did those before the mentoring and practical training.

Kevin Miller, referring to the ten lessons in the introductory lesson, referred to a situation where you have a course that has been measured but, for some reason, perhaps road works or a diversion, it needs to change. The question that he raised was, "how do you potentially change, say a 200-metre section"? Do you have to do the whole route again or is there something else you can do: it's not covered in the training material.

There was some debate on his, but the general feeling was that it's a matter of judgement and user experience. A measurer might need to adjust the start or the finish or some other aspect to get the certified length.

A discussion then took place on the payment of invoices where a measurer has submitted one to the race director but it has not been paid, and, for example, the race is in two weeks' time and he's already been issued with a certificate, so would that mean that any future certificate would not be issued?

Suggested responses were:

- yes, if you tell the area secretary not to issue them,
- you can rescind a previously issued certificate,
- just send the certificate to the measurer rather than to the race director.

Returning to the issue of training it was agreed that the order of progression is all that critical. Different people have different learning styles, so it is best to adopt a training pathway that suits that individual, but it should always end with a practical assessment, which is the most important part of the of the whole thing.

Managing marking and processing of test papers:

The Secretary said that in the last year there have only been about 3 or 4 submissions.

It was considered whether we should have a separate person coordinating training and Brian Porter volunteered to take the task on

At present all submissions are sent to <training@AUKCM>.and are then allocated to the appropriate area. **Brian** will now amend the system so that future submissions will come to him. He'll make the initial contact and direct them to their area secretary although he said that he was happy to take on the marking of the work.

There followed a short discussion on the need for a marketing campaign. Suggestions were:

- a Facebook page or similar on social media to generate interest.
- promoting measuring at the forthcoming running show in Birmingham at the end of January, where England Athletics have a stand.
- promotion at Park Runs and through running clubs.
- Placing a recruiting message on the bottom of each of our certificates.

10-year validity of measurement reports:

At the last meeting it was agreed to keep the existing system, which is that you remeasure after 10 years. It has been placed on agenda again because a race director has queried why does a course have to be completely re measured when it hasn't changed. The rationale given was that race directors change, measurers change, and roads do actually change in a 10-year period, but it was suggested that we put something on our website, or through RunEvents, as to why courses need to be remeasured.

The Chairman referred to problems with race directors who don't follow the measurement report. They've been given clear instructions on course setup, and it ends up being set out differently. This raises doubts about whether you can believe them when they say that there has been no change in 10 years.

He pointed out that on the public page of the website it says that, for certificates more than 10 years old, either a remeasurement should be arranged or a measurer with current knowledge of the course should inspect the original measurement report, and if they can confirm to the area measurement secretary that no change had taken place, then a new certificate will be issued.

It was felt to be highly unlikely that a measurer could recall a measurement of 10 years ago and being certain that the Kerbs hadn't changed, or street furniture hadn't moved.

It was agreed that a website update was needed.

[Action: Secretary to raise with Sandford Arts]

Upgrades from Grade 2 to Grade 1:

It was agreed that the following measurers would be upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1:

- Jon Aston

- Doug Hyde
- Paul Dodd.

There followed a discussion on how to proceed with future upgrading decisions. Comments included:

- we've upgraded people, with no more evidence than the area secretary making a recommendation.
- it can take 12 months for that to happen - are we introducing a timeline that's unnecessary.
- could it go down to the area secretary's recommendation with that circulated at the time?
- can we delegate authority from this committee to area secretaries to be able to grade trainees, because that recommendation will only come from the successful completion of a practical assessment.
- the way we judge it at the moment is on the quality of the reports which have all the information you want.
- another thing to take into account is the ability of the measurer to have a good working rapport with race directors.

It was agreed that area secretaries would circulate upgrading recommendations in his or her area to say that particular measurers could be upgraded.

Any other business:

World Athletics qualified measurers:

Hugh Jones said that by most country standards, we have quite a few WA qualified measurers. But there's an increasing demand for measuring races which were previously not thought worthwhile to measure. If there were applications for being listed as an international measurer, he would certainly look at all those and recommend as appropriate. He was convinced that, if somebody's got what it takes to be a measurer and he's got the observation right, then his recommendation will almost certainly go ahead.

It was agreed that Grade 1 measurers should be advised of this, and Hugh was asked if he could put something in writing that could be circulated.

Uncertified Races:

A case was reported of a running club that had identified a race that claimed to be officially measured course, but it transpires that it hasn't got any certification nor is there any record of it being measured. It was agreed that such cases should be referred to the licensing body.

ID for Measurers:

Dene Townend said that he will circulate information on creating an ID card for measurers. it. He got it off eBay four or five years ago and, basically, you create a PDF, send it off and they send the completed card back.

Measurement training for visitors from Singapore:

Chris Sewell said that he had a request from a person from Singapore who wants to be able to measure courses in Singapore and is over in the UK. They're quite willing to go through all the course material and he was wondering whether anybody who would like to volunteer to take this forward. There was no intention of grading them, they just wanted experience to aid them to measure courses properly in Singapore.

Standard paragraphs for certificate renewals:

Dene Townend referred to previous discussions about developing standard paragraphs for certificate renewals and new certifications. He is finalising draft wording and will circulate them for consideration. He considers that it is important for area secretaries to use the same form of words.

The Chairman asked if there was an Area Secretaries private area on the website on which a template could be published for others to use, rather than relying on e-mail exchanges. Such an area could be used for sharing other material, including nominations for two to one grades.

It was agreed to raise this with Sandford Arts.

The meeting closed at 1255.