# NORTHERN IRELAND MOUNTAIN RUNNING ASSOCIATION

**Annual General Meeting - Monday, 17th January 2022 by zoom 7:30 pm:**

Everyone was welcomed by *Ian T* on behalf of the chairman, *Ricky Cowan,* who was experiencing some temporary technical difficulties.

**Apologies:** Jackie Toal, Hazel McLaughlin, Ruth Aiken, Dale Mathers

By Zoom for second year in a row and seems to facilitate improved attendance with 22 in all.

***Present***- Ricky Cowan, Ian Taylor, Anne Sandford, Denise Mathers, Phil Hodge, Aine McNeill, Alan Magee, Carolyn Crawford, Pearse Brogan, David Glass, Sharon Dickenson, Zak Hanna, Aaron Shimmonds, Brian Ervine, Connor Duffy, Joanne McAuley, Mark Alexander, Ronan Davidson-Kernan, Ciaran McAleenan, Andrew Wallace, Richard Wilson,

Adam Cunningham,

**Minutes:** Previous AGM – 15 March 2021 (minutes emailed to members)

The minutes without correction were proposed by *Anne* and seconded *by Denise.*

**Brief reports**:

**Chairman:**  Ian T & Ricky C expressed thanks to all who contributed to Mountain running throughout the year. Special mention was made to the teams and those organising them, Phil H for a very successful home nations junior event and all the committee members especially Anne, Ricky and Denise for all their hard work.

Ricky gave a brief recap of the races that took place after much tentative waiting due to the prevailing Covid 19 pandemic. Huge thanks was expressed to race organisers. The season started on June 12th with the ***Cairncastle Classic***, run by the Maxwell brothers, and heralded a season where many events were held with careful planning reflecting Covid regulation compliance. There were some excellent results, great competition and events were enjoyed and appreciated by all involved.

Thanks was also expressed to **Spence jewellers** who generously sponsored the new NIMRA trophies. Huge congrats to the recipients; *Billy Reed – Ultra* and *Jim Brown – Inspirational award.*

**Secretary:** Anne referred to her report which provides detailed results, commentary and photos from all the NIMRA events of the year.

She advised that the Slieve Gullion race is going ahead this year on March 26th but the usual prize giving will NOT be held afterwards in the hall at Mullaghbawn under current covid restrictions.

**Treasurer 2021 accounts:**

The report of the annual accounts was screen-shared by Ian with brief guidance. A surplus of £2,000 was added this year and there is currently £15,335 in the NIMRA bank account. A Rough Budget for 2022 was outlined with assumption that we make £1,000 profit from the championship race on April 09.

Money was presented directly to Mourne Mountain rescue from the fund-raising trail race associated with prize-giving on November 20th 2021 and therefore not processed through the accounts.

Thanks to Ian for all his hard work organising the finances was expressed by Anne.

**Membership:** Denise shared the championship stats from the year and was applauded for a job well done, especially all the number crunching required for accurate championship results. In 2021/2022, there were 143 Members; 36 ladies and 107 men.

25 ladies took part in the championship with 17 completing it.

77 men took part in the championship with 35 completing it.

Thanks was expressed by Brian Ervine, a former Nimra champion and life-long member, to all the committee, race organisers and all competitors and supporters who turned out in difficult circumstances.

Phil H advised that an appropriate summary regarding the Juniors was already in Anne’s report and he expressed thanks to all involved in staging the junior event in September. No covid cases evolved at the event and, all in all, it was a great success. The “Icing on the cake” was the good results from our local junior athletes.

**Election of Office Bearers and Committee:**

**President** – *represent NIMRA at appropriate events, keep records of prizes & trophies*

**Ian Taylor** was proposed by Denise and seconded by Anne S

**Chairman** *– co-ordinate committee activities, ensure committee functions effectively*

Denise proposes **Ricky Cowan** and Aine seconds;

**Equipment Officer.** safety & timing equipment, first aid supplies, available to race organisers including radios, bibs, emergency supplies of pins & numbers

 **Ricky Cowan** agrees to continue in this role.

**Secretary** – *web news, results & updating, email & printed info to members, flyers, calendar production. Respond to general enquiries. Reports to AGM, Athletics NI.*

Andrew W proposes **Anne Sandford** and Aine seconds.

**Social Secretary** – dinner, prize giving.

**Teams** – follow up on team selection, **Anne S**

arrange travel and accommodation and equipment.

**Treasurer** – *keep financial records, report to committee & AGM, payment of bills*

**Ian Taylor** proposed by Ricky and Phil seconds.

**Administrative Secretary** – minutes, arrange meetings, agenda circulate

**Aine McNeill** proposed by Ian and seconded by Alan

**Results & Records** – Championship results compiled, race records

**Membership** **Secretary** – membership renewals, records, chase payments,

info to treasurer & secretary.

**Denise Mathers** proposed by Aine and seconded by Andrew.

plus **individual members** up to a maximum of 15.

**Junior Development Officer –** organising training events, races,

team selection and funding

**Phil Hodge** proposed by Denise and seconded by Alan.

**Web/Social media Editor/Administrator (**possible sub-committee with 2/3 members**)**

New role FlickR for each race and chase reports to share with the newspapers.

**Pearse Brogan** proposed by Brian Ervine and seconded by Ian.

**Safety Officer**: Risk assessment and appropriate Health and safety at races.

**Ciaran McAleenan** was proposed by Phil and seconded by everyone!

Stephen O’Neill has advised that he is stepping down from the committee due to other commitments. Many thanks to Stephen for help to date.

**Alan Magee, Sharon Dickenson and Ronan Davidson-Kernan** are also joining the committee.

**No resolutions for AGM.**

**General discussion –**

The use of poles in NIMRA Championship and other races was discussed.

Sharon suggested they should be used in long races only. Ronan added that if one starts with them they should have to finish with them and carry all the way. Pearse advised that policing the “carrying all the way” could pose challenges. Aine –also raised safety concerns for nearby runners. Poles were allowed in the skyline race but were not used by the winners. Brian suggested that, if used, a protocol for use addressing safety issues would be required and that it is unlikely they confer unfair advantage. Ciaran was not keen to allow in the races we are running as they are not long enough and can be hazardous, He also raised the issue of negative environmental impact caused by pole use. The FRA and Scottish groups have banned their use. Zak H also advised that he is not keen for use as they are not in the tradition of fell running with emphasis on avoiding use of technology/aids. This view was echoed by Joanne. Denise suggested introducing will require another layer of kit checks to facilitate fair use.

Brian suggests there is no large demand for being allowed to use but Ricky encountered at least 10 racers with poles in 7 7s this year. Mark A also agrees not to use but could keep silent on it as it may be difficult to police and there are more serious “kit misdemeanours’”. Joanne, Aine and Ciaran all agree use of poles in a race is less safe.

**Conclusion:** consensus at AGM – not to use poles in NIMRA races and if anyone feels strongly about this, they are welcome to approach the committee and argue the case.

Unanimous vote – No poles.

**Any other topics NIMRA members wish to discuss at AGM:**

Ronanraised the issue of safety training for a lot of “new to mountain running participants”. BARF are in a good position to train people but perhaps NIMRA would support training clubs to train. Mark Alexander, Ballymena Runners, shared info re training days run throughout the year “*have a go days*” where other club members are invited but these are run on a very informal basis, peer led and peer organised.

Ricky advised that the committee is working on information to populate on the website re safety. Denis highlighted that advice re appropriate kit is often learnt on race day!

Joanne informed of a lot of peer to peer training from the orienteering world.

NI Athletics are also running video training courses for Junior coaches – including off road training. “Extending the reach”. Newcastle AC have sponsored such events hosted at Tolymore Outreach centre with Zak and Jackie Newton although she has since moved her base to England to undertake a different role.

John Rogan from Finn Valley club is also mentoring in “ how to support and encourage young Athletes in mountain running” launching 18/03.

Ciaran highlights the need for training and suggests developing a programme similar to the very successful “*couch to 5k*” developing skills required to run up and down a mountain. Brian suggests hosting a teaching webinair – 30minutes – 1 hour, covering such issues as: “*What you need to do if you want to take up mountain running*.” This could be recorded and made accessible through the website. David shared that he is a “late-comer” to mountain running and self-taught navigation skills and use of GPS and is now nervous of navigation without GPS especially when the weather is poor. Denise advises that there is a lot of guidance already available on-line to teach skills.

Ian advises that the NIMRA Membership fee is staying the same.

He also shared the committee’s decision that completing one race in each category; short, medium, and long is required to complete the championship.

Brian raised the question of need for an U23 championship to bridge the gap from Juniors to seniors and encourage Juniors to keep at the sport as they age. Alan M fed back that many in that age group are away at university and would struggle to get to enough races to complete the championship. Perhaps a “one- off “race over the Summer could be nominated as an U23 event. This could be a longer race as it would be a good tests and they would cope very well with this distance.

**Conclusion:**

Ricky expressed thanks for lots of good ideas shared and these will be taken to the committee for further discussion.

New members are advised that the date of the **next committee meeting by zoom**

**is Feb 07 at 7.30pm.** They will be emailed with minutes of the last meeting on Jan 10th, the meeting agenda and the zoom link to connect before then.

Good wishes to all for the year ahead!