

## **Chairman's report AGM 2023**

I wrote last year that we were on the verge of incorporation and now one year later we could be said to be in the same position. It has however taken us a year to get everyone's support for proceeding and agreement on the articles of association for the new company. You should now see the conclusion of this journey with agreement to go ahead at this year's AGM followed by an EGM in the New Year with the clubs to formalize the transition. We owe Ian Richards our great thanks for persisting with this work. Without his help, it would have taken even longer and probably cost us a lot to get external advice on what to do.

We have continued in 2023 to deliver all the major championships for track & field, road running and cross-country, thanks to the hard work of the heads of each of those disciplines supported by BMAF Services. The track and field championships in Sheffield, Lee Valley, Derby and Oxford have been very well supported, thanks to Kay Reynolds and her team, as well as all the technical officials who volunteer their time to run these events.

Road running under the continued leadership of Walter Hill has seen increased numbers in all the individual championships this year. The road relays are moving to Mallory Park, near Leicester, which is a motor racing circuit for most of the year, but we have managed to get a slot there at short notice on 19<sup>th</sup> November. It has much a better infrastructure than Sutton Park and by the time you read this report, we will have confirmed that this will be the new home for masters road relays for many years to come.

The cross-country events have mostly continued as usual; the exception being the relays which had to be cancelled last month because the course was under water! This year sees the retirement of Mel James as cross-country secretary after 14 years in the role and we thank him very much for all he has done. The year has culminated in the 34<sup>th</sup> British and Irish Masters Cross Country International, hosted this year by Scotland. This was strong evidence of how vibrant masters cross country is at present and it boosts our standing with England Athletics who have been having mixed success with their own masters international road events. We may be able to help them further to find a formula which works for all the home nations.

Race-walking has experienced a very difficult year in 2023 and we are also losing Ian Richards as the race-walking secretary. Our thanks to him for all that he done for masters race walking and as an ambassador for the sport and we hope we can find a successor who can find a way to address the decline in traditional race walking.

We have benefitted in the past from a few individuals devoting an enormous amount of the time and some of their own money to ensure success in each of the disciplines, but we have now reached the point where we can no longer depend solely on volunteers to make this happen. This year saw the start of paying the expenses of our international team managers, but this is intended to be funded by a small supplement all GB competitors have to pay when the entering EMA/WMA championships. It is fortunate that we pressed ahead with BMAF Services several years ago, without waiting for the BMAF incorporation to be completed, as this has given us the right structure to contract more of the work required to organise our events to third parties. We are in a strong financial position at present, but this will quickly change if we don't continue to largely break even on most of our events.

Peter Kennedy  
Chair, British Masters Athletics Federation

November 2023 AGM