

FRA AGM 2009 - Notes from General Discussion on Fellrunning Topics.

Wendy Dodds stated that the organisers of the 2009 British Relay at Ennerdale should be congratulated on the excellent event. She further commented that the provision of two maps for the navigation leg was a good idea, and it was generally felt that this should be the format in future.

Wendy Dodds proposed a vote of thanks to Britta Sendlhofer for the work and effort put into the year's issues of The Fellrunner.

Michael McLoughlin asked if it would be possible for a junior (over 16, under 18) to run as part of a pair in the British Relay Championship. A discussion followed, and the consensus was that this would be possible, so long as the Rule 10 (Rules for Competition) limits were complied with. Normally, however, the paired legs exceed the distance allowed. It would technically be possible for a junior to run on a short solo leg but this would be at the discretion of the event organiser and, as the Welfare Officer reminded the meeting, there is an enhanced duty of care regarding juniors.

Nick Harris asked if funding could be made available for SI dibbers, stations and training so that the equipment could be borrowed for events. The pros and cons of this type of equipment were discussed, and it was thought that such a scheme would be better managed for events in a specific area of the country by one of the local clubs - there is such a plan in Calder Valley. It was agreed that funding from the FRA to assist with such schemes could be requested, subject to approval of the overall financial plan.

Joe Faulkner asked about the recent Commonwealth Championship, held in Keswick. This was discussed, and it was generally agreed that the event was successful, largely due the immense amount of effort put in by members of the local organising committee - in particular Steve Harwood. Although publicity for the event (outside of fell running circles) was poor, the championship was well supported by spectators, and the good weather certainly helped.

Denis Wood raised two issues concerning national championship races:-

- They should not be allowed to take place at venues which cannot handle large numbers
- Timeouts on long championship races should not be imposed.

Regarding the first issue, Graham Breeze stated that the Championships subcommittee is aware of the concerns in this area, and they are keen to address these issues next year. It was agreed that long pre-entry periods were a particular problem leading to races being filled quickly, and it was noted that this specific problem was being addressed for 2010. Tony Varley stated that the large numbers involved may ultimately mean that we will lose the totally open format of championship races. Margaret Chippendale pointed out that the problem of catering for all true contenders was made even more difficult by the many 5-year categories now in the English Championship.

It was generally thought that cut-offs were a safety issue, and should not be relaxed or extended. Regarding the specific problem of cut-offs and older classes, it was thought that some races might use earlier start times for V65 and V70 runners - it was thought that this would only affect the earlier checkpoints in a long race.