

ACU EASTERN
(AFFILIATED TO THE Auto Cycle Union)
Minutes of the Special General Meeting of the centre held Sunday 12th November 2023
Great Blakenham Village Hall

President	Mr A Penny (AP)
Chairman	Mr C Keeble (CK)
Vice Chairman	Mr A Foskew (AF)
Treasurer	Mr A Hay (AH)
Minutes Secretary	Mrs B Fenn (BF)

Also in attendance were:-

P Fenn (PF)	Essex & Suffolk Border	R Booty (RB)	West Essex
R Chaplin (RC)	Sudbury	D Blyth (DB)	Woodbridge
C Cook (CC)	Braintree	J Blyth (JB)	Woodbridge
M Beadle (MB)	Halstead	P Sewter (PS)	Norwich Vikings
K Weavers (KW)	Halstead	G Brace (GB)	Vice President
K Doherty (KD)	Eastern Marshals	B Coles (BC)	Woodbridge
A Wright (AW)	Halstead	V Hearn (VH)	Stowmarket
C Dopson (CD)	Wymondham	J Hearn (JH)	Stowmarket
A Waters (AW)	Diss	P Nash (PN)	Southend
S Kenny (SK)	Harwich	J Nash (JN)	Southend
M Wear (MW)	General Secretary for ACU	R Snowden (RS)	Diss

Following the numbering of the agenda:-

1. The Chairman, CK, opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

Apologies were accepted from Mr R Greengrass, Mr E Hood, Mr C Ralph and Mr J and Mrs B Douglas

Two minutes silence was observed for Remembrance Sunday.

2. Introduction

CK explained that the purpose of the Special General Meeting was to discuss and hopefully approve the proposed updated Bye-Laws for the Eastern Centre. There is a need to review the way the Centre operates. The Board has consulted extensively with its members and had given them a chance to offer their thoughts and any suggested amendments to the proposals.

The main points are that the basic structure of the Centre is suitable for its needs at present. The Board does not need to meet more often and the four devolved committees are strong, with keen members.

The current Bye-Laws for the Eastern Centre do not appear to clearly explain who is responsible for what. The aim of the update is to make things clearer. Current times make things more complicated and, in properly setting out the constitution of the Centre, this helps with some of the issues faced such as complications with the bank.

The updates to the Bye-Laws were discussed at the July Board meeting. The biggest discussion point seemed to be the issue of whether or not we need the Competitions Committee alongside the four devolved committees. At present, it has been decided that it is important to keep the Competitions Committee to ensure that anything not done by the various sports committees is picked up. In time it is hoped that the need for the Competitions Committee will diminish particularly as the sports committees develop and grow stronger.

The updates are intended as a tidying up exercise to strengthen what is already being done. The main change is the introduction of a Management Committee which will consist of CK, AH, AP and AH. These members of the Board are already meeting on a regular basis but the updated Bye-Laws will formalise this.

The updated Bye-Laws will also help to support the status of the Eastern Centre Gazette. This is owned by the Centre but is a separate entity with its own bank account etc. The Bye-Laws would make the Gazette a Committee of the Board. This would help to demonstrate the status of the Gazette to other and safeguard the funds in the bank account.

CK confirmed that he intends to put the approval of the updated Bye-Laws to the vote today. The matter was then opened up for discussion.

AW indicated that the concerns which had been raised about the updated Bye-Laws in the July meeting did not just relate to the Competitions Committee. He asked why we needed to make things so complex, and have in excess of 20 meetings per year to deal with matters, when things could be simplified.

CK confirmed that no authority would be removed from the sports committees. Following on from the July meeting, there had been lots of discussion as to how to alleviate the concerns raised.

AW made the point that the Bye-Laws had not changed much at all since the July meeting. The effect of these was not to modernise the Centre. The four sports committees are keen to be promoted and brought to the same level as each other. The other parts of the structure can then start to be removed. Clearly, the Board cannot be removed but it is hoped that the Competitions Committee could be removed.

CK confirmed that the Chairman and Secretary of the Centre needs someone to consult about matters/queries as they arise. PN said that the Executive Committee had been removed 10 years ago and the suggestion of the Management Committee was just a re-write of that idea. CK indicated that this was not the case and that the Management Committee will be looking forwards and not backwards, as in the past.

The key proposal is that there will be a plan for the development of the four sports committees during the next year. The Management Committee will follow this plan and any matters for approval would come back to the Board.

SK raised the point that, before the Executive Committee existed, the then Chairman was accused of talking behind closed doors about various issues. The whole point of the Executive Committee was to bring transparency. SK confirmed that he supported the Chairman of the Board and that we need to look at matters in advance, rather than as they occur/after the event.

CD said he did not believe that the Competitions Committee was still needed. CK confirmed that this would be under constant review but could not give a timescale as to when it would be removed.

CD also said that he had asked several times why the Bye-Laws only referred to 10 members on the Trials Committee – he had asked for this to be amended to 12. CK confirmed that there could only be 10 members on the Committee with two ex-officio members. CD disagreed with the proposal to reduce the number of members.

DB asked why, as all the sports now have devolved committees, can we not cut out the Competitions Committee and go straight to the Management Committee. There have not been any minutes produced for the last meeting of the Competitions Committee. CK accepted this and apologised that the minutes had not been circulated as yet. DB mentioned an ongoing issue which the Motocross Committee is having with a rider who has had his licence withdrawn. This has been brought up with the Competitions Committee but no response has been forthcoming. JB then asked why the Motocross Committee could not deal with this issue themselves without having to refer to the Competitions Committee.

CK again made the point that not all committees are able to cover the required functions to the same level. It will be the remit of the Competitions Committee to assist those four committees in the updated Bye-Laws.

Further discussions were then had about which Committees needed more help than others. CK confirmed that some had matured at different levels and it is still useful to get all four chairmen of those committees together at the Competitions Committee meetings. CD asked whether the Competitions Committee actually have anything to talk about and have we not now arrived at the point where we could remove this Committee?

PF asked what would be the problem in keeping the Competitions Committee. It was stated that the sports committees want to be devolved and do not want to keep going back to the Competitions Committee for answers every time something out of the ordinary crops up.

Some discussion was then had about the dates for the year always going to the Competitions Committee. CK stated that the fixture list was traditionally finalised in the November meeting but it was agreed last year that this was no longer practical. The Competitions Committee decide the process and the dates should be published before Christmas.

CK summarised by indicating that the Centre processes need to be streamlined. The eventual intention is to have fewer meetings per year. There is a need for the updated Bye-Laws to strengthen the records for outside bodies. The other option would be to get rid of the Competitions Committee and the four sports committees entirely and run everything through the Board. This would then mean the Board would have to meet once a month.

3. Updated Bye-Laws

CK put the motion of updating the Bye-Laws to the vote. Twenty votes were cast with ten voting in favour and ten voting against. Therefore, the motion was lost and the Centre will carry on operating under the existing Bye-Laws.