

While not on the Avon Schools committee, Steve Bailey is a teacher of longstanding involvement in our sport. After attending the County Schools AGM in November, he wrote the following open email of general note about the future of schools' athletics in Avon:

### In General

"I attended the Avon Schools Athletics AGM yesterday. The committee consists of Ken Holmes Chairman and Jim Strudwick both of who are well into their retirement. There was representation from North Somerset and Bristol (Vix Dixon/myself). Jim is looking to step away from cross country and Ken will pick up some of this aspect.

There has been no new support for Avon Athletics in the 17 years that I have been in Bristol."

### Cross Country

"It is South Gloucestershire's turn to run the Avon Schools XC in January. There is no representative from S. Glos willing to do this. There is a chance that Avon Schools will run this year but it's now a very short turn around for the organisation and there is a good chance that we won't have an Avon championship.

N Somerset are prepared to run an Avon event next year if it can't be organised in time for this year although this could be the last Avon championships if Bristol/S. Glos. aren't prepared to organise when their turn (1/4 years). I organised the Avon Schools event last year at BGS but I won't be running another county event 2025.

Without an Avon Schools event it would be very challenging to select an Avon team for SW schools. This year hosted by Gloucestershire Schools at Blaise Castle 4th Feb. You can find athletes on power of 10 but it's not as straightforward as Track and Field. As we are running 4 district events, we could say that the top 2 from each district plus 2 wild cards would qualify for SW but this would eliminate a number of very good athletes where we have some districts that are much stronger than others. There also isn't currently a person to coordinate cross country for Avon so who would coordinate this and pick the wild cards? Avon will be asking N. Somerset Athletics Club and Westbury Harriers if there are club members who could support this.

Is there a future of Avon Schools cross country which will mean no pathway for Avon school athletes to run at SW or English Schools."

### Track and Field

"We didn't run a Bristol Schools Track and Field last year and I won't be organising another event this year. I coordinated nominations from Bristol schools who were considered by Avon Schools with the support of Power of 10 results to select an Avon Schools' team as there was no Avon Schools Track and Field. Ironically this was the most successful Avon Schools performance at SW schools with 23 golds and a strong team was taken to English schools with qualifying times/distances.

Jim at Avon schools is happy to coordinate as last year and I am happy to coordinate nominations from schools if this is the agreed process. This would mean no Bristol schools or Avon schools events and we'll only be nominating known club athletes.

To access Track and Field it is recommended that you enter the English Schools Cup competition run by Dave Turner."

### In Conclusion

"I know this is all very gloomy but without more support at county level the pathway that we have been used to won't continue for your students."