SOMERSET SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report to the AGM 2026

It is a pleasure to present my Chairman's Report following another successful year for Somerset Schools' athletics.

I would like to begin by thanking our committee, officials, team managers, area secretaries, teachers, schools, volunteers and parents. The opportunities we provide would not be possible without your commitment and support, and countless young people across Somerset benefit from your efforts each year.

Cross-Country

The Cross-Country season provided several highlights.

The South West Championships in Exeter tested athletes with exceptionally wet and muddy conditions, while the English Schools' Cross-Country Championships in Liverpool showcased the pride and team spirit that exists throughout our county squads.

We also celebrated some outstanding performances, including a Junior Boy achieving a top-ten finish and earning selection for an English Schools vest, a fantastic achievement and a reflection of the talent within Somerset athletics.

Track & Field

Our County Championships were once again a great success, supported by an excellent team of officials and volunteers. Given that many counties held their championships on the same weekend, the level of support we received was particularly appreciated.

At the English Schools' Track & Field Championships in Birmingham, the pride shown by our athletes in representing Somerset stood out as much as the performances themselves.

One of the highlights was our Senior Mixed Relay team. Following withdrawals, the team consisted entirely of athletes who had not originally qualified individually. Rather than simply taking part, they produced an outstanding performance to reach the final.

Their achievement perfectly demonstrated the value of schools' athletics. Success is not measured solely by medals and qualifying standards; it is also about opportunity, confidence and helping young people achieve more than they thought possible.

Combined Events

Combined Events remains an important area for the Association. While participation levels and forthcoming competition changes continue to present challenges, we remain committed to providing strong development opportunities and pathways for Somerset athletes.

Changes for 2027

The introduction of even age groups will bring one of the biggest changes to schools' athletics in recent years. The move to Under 14, Under 16, Under 18 and Under 19 competition will align schools' athletics more closely with the wider sport.

While national progression opportunities may change, our focus remains the same: providing meaningful and accessible opportunities for young people across Somerset, particularly those in Years 7 and 8 for whom these early experiences can be so important.

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Moving SSAA Forward

As we look ahead, we will continue to review our processes to ensure the Association remains effective and sustainable.

There will also be changes to our management team. Jo Pike will take over as Senior Cross-Country and Track And Field Team Manager, and I thank her for taking on this important role.

I would also like to recognise Richard Bowden, who has stepped down as Senior Cross-Country and Senior Track & Field Team Manager. Richard has made an outstanding contribution to Somerset Schools' athletics over many years, providing opportunities for generations of young athletes. We are delighted that he will continue to lead our Combined Events programme as we transition to the new age-group structure.

Looking Ahead

Schools' athletics is entering a period of change, but our purpose remains unchanged. We are here to provide young people with opportunities to participate, compete, develop and experience the pride of representing their school and county.

This year has again shown that success is about far more than results. It is about friendship, confidence, resilience, belonging and creating experiences that young people will remember for years to come.

Closing Remarks

As I conclude, I would like to say how proud I have been to serve as Chair for three years and to work alongside so many dedicated people who give their time to support young athletes across Somerset.

The achievements of our athletes this year, particularly those who embraced unexpected opportunities and exceeded expectations, remind us why our work matters.

I am confident that Somerset Schools' Athletic Association will continue to thrive because of the commitment, passion and support of everyone involved. I look forward to continuing to contribute — in whatever capacity that may be — as we move into the next exciting chapter for Somerset Schools Athletics.

Thank you for everything you do for schools' athletics in Somerset and for the difference you make to the lives of young people across our county.

Thank you.

Luke Scott
Chairman (2023 – 2026)
Somerset Schools' Athletic Association