

Westport Athletics Club Constitution 2024



1.0 General

1.1 Name and Affiliation

- a) The name of the club is Westport Athletics Club (Westport AC).
- b) The club will affiliate each year to the Athletic Association of Ireland (AAI).
- c) All club members including committee members and coaches shall register annually with the Athletic Association of Ireland and will be subject to the rules and regulations of the AAI.
- d) Westport AC is affiliated with the Mayo County Board and Connacht Council of the Athletic Association of Ireland.

1.2 Club Colours

The club colours are emerald green singlet with red stripe.

1.3 Ethos

Westport Athletic Club caters for athletes of all abilities and ages. The club works to provide an environment where each member of the club can participate in club activities in a fun, pressure-free and safe manner and can develop to their potential, whether that is as an international athlete or involvement at local level only.

1.4 Ethics

Westport AC is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of all of its members, from juvenile athletes to coaches and parents. Every individual in the club should at all times (during training sessions and at times outside training sessions), show respect and understanding for members' rights, safety, professionalism and welfare. They shall conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of Athletics Ireland and the guidelines contained in Code of Conduct for Children and Young Athletes and AI's Coaches and Officials Code. The club shall ensure that no member is discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, class or creed.

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of Westport Athletic Club are:

- a) To promote the development of all disciplines of athletics in Westport and its surrounding areas through the dissemination of information, provision of training areas, provision of equipment, and coaching.

b) To develop its members to their potential, including those whom aspire to any or all of the following:

- elite international standards
- competitive at local or national level in athletic competitions
- an active lifestyle with occasional participation in races or competition
- keeping fit through athletics

c) To recruit and train coaches for all disciplines in conformity with the Athletics Ireland coach education programme.

d) To establish friendly relations between club members and other athletes and their clubs.

e) To ensure that all present and future members receive fair and equal treatment.

f) To participate across the range of competitions in athletics, including cross-country, indoor track and field, outdoor track and field.

g) To ensure a duty of care to all members of the club.

1.6 Dissolution

In the event of club dissolution:

a) All outstanding debts should be paid.

b) Provision should be made for any claims that may possibly be made.

c) Any surplus will be given to another club, or to the AAI or a charitable organisation.

d) If given to a club, that club should have a provision in its constitution regarding the non-payment of bonuses or profit to its members.

2.0 Membership

2.1 Club Membership

a) Membership is open to all who are deemed acceptable by the club committees irrespective of gender, race, religious beliefs, political views, etc. Further, specific membership guidelines for juvenile and senior club membership are set out below in sections 4 and 5.

b) Formal application for membership is necessary, signed by the applicant and, if under 18 years, by a parent or guardian also or submitted via the clubs online registration platform.

c) Application is to be accompanied by membership fee, and any other fee decided by the club committees.

d) The membership year will run for 12 months beginning on January 1st and ending on December 31st.

2.2 Responsibilities of Members

a) All applicants will agree to abide by club rules and the club code of conduct and will undertake not to engage in activity that would bring the club into disrepute.

b) All members of the club, and guardians in the case of those under 18, are required to make themselves aware of the principles of the AAI and its Code of Conduct for Children and Young Athletes and Westport AC club policies.

c) Members likely to be dealing with children or vulnerable adults must be vetted per AAI policies.

d) All members are subject to the rule and disciplinary policies of the club.

e) Coaches will work with parents or guardians to ensure that junior members are coached and have an opportunity to partake in events of their choice.

3.0 Club Structure and Governance

3.1 Structure

- a) The club comprises 2 distinct sections:
 - Juveniles (i.e. under 19s) and juniors (under 20)
 - Senior, which encompasses seniors (over 20, under 35) and masters (over 35)
- b) The affairs of each section will be run independently with separate committees and finances.
- c) With regard to finances, there will be defined agreement between each club section in advance of the coming year on the breakdown due to each club from family members when the children compete with the juvenile club and the parent(s) compete with the senior club.
- d) Both sections of the club will be governed by this Constitution.

3.2 Committees

- a) There will be one chairperson or overall head of both the juvenile and senior sections.
- b) There will be two Executive Committees - one for the juvenile section and one for the senior section.
- c) Each section will have its own meetings and will keep its finances separate. Agreement will be made in advance of each year on the appropriate breakdown of "family" membership fees to each club.
- d) Committees will meet at least 6 times a year, preferably on a regular monthly basis.
- e) Each section will hold its own AGM and the outgoing Executive Committees will continue to function until a new committee is elected at each AGM. Each AGM will be held each year during the months of October or November.
- f) At each AGM, a financial statement of account shall be given by the Treasurer. This account shall include a full record of that section of the club's income and expenditure, together with a list of its assets and their end-of-year valuation, if appropriate.
- g) Each section will define its own set of rules for the running of their section of the club, by which all members will be bound.
- h) Any breaches of the rules will be considered by the appropriate committee and a disciplinary sub-committee where appropriate.

3.3 Election and Operation of Committees

The terms of this section apply to both the juvenile and senior Executive Committees.

- a) Each committee will have at least three officer positions - chairperson, treasurer and secretary and a minimum of 3 other members all of whom are elected at the corresponding AGM. Each committee will have a maximum of 12 members including the three Officers.
- b) The Juvenile Executive Committee will also have a registrar and child officer.

- c) Coaches will be represented on the appropriate Executive Committee by a designated coaching co-ordinator.
- d) All Juvenile Club Officers and Committee members shall familiarise themselves with the AI's Code of Conduct for Children and Young Athletes and AI's Coaches and Officials Code.
- e) The term of office of each committee is 1 year and the full committee is automatically deemed to have resigned at the following AGM.
- f) The same person may hold the same or different positions on either the Juvenile or Senior Executive Committees.
- g) Each committee may identify other positions on the committee to be filled at the AGM or at later committee meetings. For example, committees may require assistants to the officer positions or a dedicated PRO.
- h) In the event that a member of the committee resigns during the year, the committee may appoint another person to that role without that person having been elected at the AGM.
- i) The committee may appoint subcommittees to follow-up on different matters for the club, for example, fundraising, facilities or complaints. These subcommittees may comprise members from the committee, other members of the club or people from outside the club with appropriate expertise or experience.
- j) Meetings will require a quorum of 5 of its members. Guests may attend committee meetings but cannot vote.

3.4 Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

- a) An EGM can be convened for either the Juvenile Club or the Senior Club at the request of any of the following:
 - the appropriate Executive Committee
 - 20 people who are entitled to vote at the AGM of either section of the club as defined in later sections.
- b) An EGM must have a quorum of 10 of the above people.
- c) Due care should be taken to give all members at least 10 days notice of an EGM. This can be done via email, text or the appropriate social media group.
- d) All people who are entitled to vote at either AGM are entitled to vote at an EGM but each person will only have 1 vote.
- e) All votes are decided on a majority. The chairperson of the appropriate Executive Committee will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.

3.5 Financial Regulation

- a) There shall be a maximum of four signatories per club account, that of the Treasurer and up to three signees designated by the respective Executive Committee. A minimum of two signatories are required for each cheque and electronic payment.
- b) No blank cheques will ever be issued.
- c) All invoices and receipts are to be retained and recorded by the Treasurer.
- d) All payments, are to be approved by the appropriate Executive Committee.
- d) The treasurer of each club section is to give a summary of the current financial position at all committee meetings.
- e) A full account is to be prepared by the treasurer with the assistance of the chairman for the AGMs.
- f) No money is to be paid to any member as a bonus or by way of profit.

g) Reasonable expenses may be paid to members with the appropriate committee's approval.

4.0 Juvenile Section

4.1 Membership

- a) Membership is open to
 - juveniles, i.e. aged between 6 and 18 in the year of membership
 - juniors, i.e. aged 19 in year of membership
 - coaches and parents of these athletes
- b) Registration of annual membership follows the online registration process for Athletics Ireland. For juvenile and junior members joining during September to December period a term membership must be offered to ensure the athlete is insured for autumn term.
- c) Membership for individuals can also be applied for, with approval by the club committees, at other times of the year.
- d) The membership fee and other fees payable will be set by the Executive Committee each year with due regard to the issue of family membership, as outlined in Section 3.1(c) above.

4.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- a) The juvenile AGM must have a quorum of 10 people who are
 - parents of juvenile members of the club in the year just gone or in the forthcoming year
 - coaches of these juvenile athletes who are also members of the club
 - members of the outgoing Juvenile Executive Committee
 - junior members (ie. aged 19)
 - juvenile members aged 16 or older each of whom is entitled to 1 vote at the AGM (i.e. both parents have a vote each).
- b) Juvenile members younger than 16 do not have a vote - instead they can be represented by one or both of their parents who have the right to vote as per 4.2(a) above.
- c) Each person is entitled to only 1 vote, even if they have more than 1 child in the club.
- d) All votes are decided on a majority. The Chairperson of the Juvenile Executive Committee will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.
- e) All voting on the election of the Juvenile Executive Committee will be conducted by secret ballot at the AGM if two or more candidates contest a post.

5.0 Senior Section

5.1 Membership

- a) Membership is open to
 - Seniors i.e. age 20 or over in year of membership and registration
 - Masters i.e. age 35 or over in year of membership and registration

Membership fees and other fees are set by the Senior Executive Committee with regard to family membership as set out in Section 3.1 (c) above.

5.2 Annual General Meeting

- a) The Senior Section AGM must have a quorum of 10 people who are:
 - Senior or master members of the club in the forthcoming or preceding year.
 - Coaches of these athletes.
 - Members of the outgoing Senior Executive Committee each of whom is entitled to 1 vote at the AGM.
- b) The Chairperson of the Senior Executive Committee will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.
- f) All voting on the election of the Senior Executive Committee will be conducted by secret ballot if two or more candidates contest a post.

6.0 Changes to the Constitution

- a) Changes to this Constitution may only be made at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
- b) Any proposed changes (amendments) must be provided in writing to each Secretary at least one week in advance of the meeting or must be recorded in the minutes of an Executive committee meeting.
- c) All changes or amendments must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote at an AGM or EGM.

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