

## Election Address - Jon Clarke

Firstly I would like to thank the many clubs for the overwhelming support they have given me to nominate me for the Board role. Now I need the rest of England to please give me their support!

For those that do not know me, I am Chairman of West Cheshire AC, and Chairman of the EA North West Regional Council, and thus also sit on the EA National Council. In that capacity I have recently been assisting with EA's development of T&F training guidelines, and return to T&F competition guidelines. I am also regional approver for any T&F competition licenses for the North West. I am a qualified Coaching Assistant, and Masters athlete competing in Open and Masters events across the country, and for GB at a couple of recent World Masters Athletics Championships.

In my teens I was a 10.6s 100m sprinter but a knee injury when 19 forced me to give up athletics. 40 years later a serious heart attack lead to the need to improve my fitness, and I discovered Masters Athletics. I have never looked back, and athletics has literally given me my life back.

Since then I have also become increasingly involved with athletics management, utilising my extensive 30+ years career experience in senior roles and directorships in strategy development and business change, and management.

With your support, I want to take this opportunity to extend the work I am doing for the North West region, and for EA. In particular, I want to push for change and improvements in the strategy, structure, and management of athletics. I am not alone in this, and many that I have spoken to see it as mandatory for the future health of the sport.

Covid-19 has enforced a change on EA, but this is mainly just a staff reduction, although new online content and webinars have shown how new ideas can be beneficial. EA and athletics in general, needs to move away from the traditional views of it being run by amateurs and by elite athletes, all with little or no real business experience. With only 45 staff now left at EA, it is essential that the Board take on experienced business professionals like myself, ones who are not afraid to make change happen, and have the experience to do it.

Changes I would like to see and support will come from the needs of grass roots athletics, but in particular I would like to see:

- setting up a number of new support bodies to the board, similar to the National Council;
- an improved structure for the organization of competitions, one which progresses athletes development during the season;
- the setting up a new school and club "gifted and talented" scheme for young athletes with the best prospects;
- establishing regional centres of excellence;
- more accountability and openness from EA;
- the development of new T&F competition formats geared at reducing meeting times, perhaps linked with a new midweek league.

If you are wanting change, then please vote for me.