

YOUNG EQUESTRIAN LEADER AWARD (YELA)

- GOLD LEVEL
- EMILY MANEELY

AREA 17 – TULLYLAGAN

YELA GOLD PROJECT: AREA 17 TETRATHLON 2024

My name is Emily Maneely and I am a member of Tullylagaan Pony Club (since 2014).

I take part in all club activities and have competed in Dressage, Games, Show Jumping, Eventing, Tetrathlon, Quiz and Horse & Pony Care over the years.

I have qualified and attended the PCUK National Championships for dressage, tetrathlon, show jumping, quiz and horse & pony care.

Each year in Area 17 a club takes it turn to organises an Area competition and in 2024 our club ran Area Tetrathlon. My Mum is our clubs Tetrathlon Rep so we played a major part in planning, organising and running the event.

I had been competing in Tetrathlon for a number of years and was able to use my knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to help plan and prepare for the event.

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- This was a mammoth task for our small club and our clubs committee was somewhat daunted by the thought of organising Area 17 Tetrathlon .
- My family and I regularly volunteer and compete at the Triathlon and Tethralons throughout the year. My parents organise training for the different phases on a weekly basis and encourage new members to give it a go.
- My sister (non-riding member) and I support young/new members to come along to training and attend local training tri/tets. I often have to help explain the various phases, rules, what equipment is required and most importantly tell them how much fun it is.
- The knowledge level of our club with regards to tetrathlon was somewhat limited so a great deal of researching, reading rule books, shadowing tetrathlons ran by other clubs and learning from other experienced clubs was required.

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- When the Area Tetrathlon date had been agreed with Area 17, the planning stages began. Our club has no local cross country (xc) venue or leisure centres that would allow all phases to take place on their premises. I spent long hours with our DC and my family visiting venues and checking availability on our date.
- It was vitally important that the xc venue was not too far away from the shooting/swimming/running venue. Some leisure centres would not allow the shooting phase and others could not facilitate the agreed date. Thankfully one venue offered us use of their facilities for swimming and shooting with excellent parking and a café on-site (and at a reasonable cost).
- All these factors were important to consider in the planning phase and if I am honest this is not something I had given much thought to when competing at tetrathlons. Now our club was running this event 'cost' was at the forefront of many of our discussions.

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- Once the venue for shooting and swimming was agreed our focus was now on a xc venue that could host on our agreed date and provide us with a range of fences suitable for a tetrathlon xc courses at all levels (with the addition of a slip rail and gate).
- The xc venue was sourced, costed and agreed by the committee. I along with others visited the venues a number of times and met with the owners to discuss numbers attending, health and safety, cost, parking, toilets, running tracks, fences, stabling and provision of food.
- Once we had an idea of what numbers we could facilitate, details of our venues was shared with the other DC,s and publicised. Thankfully there were no complaints about distance between the two venues but some grundlings in our own club as the two venues were some distance away from our base.
- This was something we had to compromise on and explain to our members.

OUR 'GO TO'
RULEBOOK
TO HELP
ANSWER ANY
QUESTIONS
AND QUERIES
(2024)

PONY
CLUB



RULEBOOK 2025



TETRATHLON

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- After initial costs were known for venues, other hired in facilities such as toilets/first aid/radios/catering had to be explored. I was able to use my contacts within pony club to ask about previously used services in the area. This was not a geographical area I was familiar with as it was quite a distance from my home so I had to use my communication and probing skills to make enquiries.
- I found that other members, parents and coaches were very helpful and gave me many contacts which my mother and I linked in with.
- Keeping costs to a minimum yet adhering to health and safety was a priority. I had to familiarise myself with rule books and health and safety within the pony club. I also became aware of the Safeguarding policy as a number of members had asked about stabling and staying on-site. This also had to be taken into consideration as we needed a significant number of volunteers to help (my mother is the Area 17 Safeguarding Lead so I was able to utilise her knowledge to ensure we did not deviate from the Safeguarding policy).
- Myself and other pony club members sourced some sponsorship which helped with the expense of running the event. We approached local businesses and some prizes were also sponsored. We had a photographer booked for the competition and he kindly sponsored free prints for the winners of each class which I made into vouchers.

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- Communication was key in the planning phases, meetings took place to share information and information also had to be shared with the Area Tet Rep and Area Representative.
- I always felt in the loop others took on board my experience and opinions. I was in a lucky position as my parents were involved in the planning phase so no information was lost.
- Information being shared also had to be accurate, correct and shared in a timely manner. This was crucial to ensure others were up-to-date with the plans and most importantly kept the date free to help in the run up to, the event itself and after the event.

SWIMMING PHASE

- Having taken part in many tetrathlons I was aware of the need to have experienced volunteers carrying out various roles within each phase. This was very important for the swimming phase (this is often the phase my Mum and I volunteer in).
- Other clubs were asked to put forward experienced lane judges and the relevant chief stewards, starters were all willing to help out which meant the volunteer sheet for the swimming section was completed quite quickly. I also put myself down on the volunteer rota to help in this section.
- Everyone familiarised themselves with the 2024 rule book and once entries in and times allocated this was shared on a swim volunteer whats app group. Other volunteers were also added in to ensure volunteers had water, breaks, refreshments, relevant paperwork and runners to take to scores to the scoring room.

SWIMMING PHASE

- Health and Safety was paramount in this phase and the leisure centres own rules about pool safety had to be distributed to all participants, eg no spectators were allowed pool side and only in the allocated viewing section. Volunteers were in position to ensure this rule was adhered to as parents often wanted to come poolside to cheer on their child.
- The Area 17 Tet committee have all relevant swim equipment (markers, bibs, timers, etc) that we borrowed and I had to ensure it was cleared away correctly after the event and returned to the correct person.
- Thankfully there were no confrontations as this was something I worried about. I have witnessed this before in competitions and see the upset it causes to members, parents and organisers. We carefully selected volunteers who were confident in their roles at the pool, engaged well with the members and adhered to the running order.

SHOOTING PHASE

- If I am honest this is always my favourite phase of tetrathlon and a phase I often help out at along with my Dad. The Area 17 Tet Committee also have a team of experts who volunteer at each of our competitions and did not have to be asked twice to help out at our Area competition.
- The Health and Safety in this phase is paramount and having expert volunteers with the relevant qualifications made this phase run smoothly. A risk assessment had to be completed and submitted to the venue. We spent long hours ensuring shooting cards were named, numbered and available in an orderly fashion for the competitors when they registered on the morning of the competition. Again we utilised the expertise of the key shooting volunteers to allocate details/heats appropriate time slots.
- Linking in with local shooting supplies also enabled us to source pellets, spare safety glasses etc .
- Two parents (teachers) volunteered to score the cards before being sent to the score HQ room, this worked well and was a learning experience for them both.

SHOOTING PHASE

- I helped set up all the shooting equipment the night before the event with the key volunteers from the shooting phase. This enabled us to have a less stressful morning before the competition began.
- Other issues arose when members needed to change classes and move details or share pistols, but were all dealt with effectively and the competition ran smoothly and on time.
- Having 'spare' of everything was crucial as some members forgot their safety glasses, left their cards sitting somewhere not to be found or the pistol did not have enough air (even though instructions were sent out advising members to ensure they had enough pellets, safety lines in, safety glasses, air in pistols and adhered to the volunteers at all times).

RUNNING PHASE

- This phase was based at the xc venue and I helped measure out the course a number of times (late at night and very early on the morning of the competition) as there was confusion over the course and distances. I presumed this would have been an easier phase to assist with but I was wrong. The measurements had to be correct and it was more difficult than I thought measuring out running tracks of certain distances over a number of fields.
- Again Area 17 supplied us with the equipment and I assisted in making up running scoring sheets for the volunteers. This proved very helpful and worked well, the scorers in HQ found them easy to score from. I had to use my IT skills a number of times throughout the project to devise easy to read paperwork for our scorers.
- A number of volunteers were used in the running phase (including myself) and learning from other events made me recruit many volunteers for this phase as often competitors can get confused or lost on the course.

XC PHASE

- This phase was dealt with mainly by the owners of the venue and we stayed on-site to help out when needed. Having their expertise and experience was vital to the smooth running of the event.
- Maps had to be devised and shared in advance and time to walk the course filtered into the planning.
- The course looked amazing and the venue proved a real success.
- Competent scorers, starters, finishers, car parking, lane crossers, score runners and fence judges were all required and all clubs came together to fill this rota.
- Critical to this phase was communication, quick turn around of scores and inputting this live to the system.
- This was an area with most complaints as not everyone was familiar with the rules of the xc phase. Complaints were dealt with quickly and in a timely manner to ensure the results were not held up.

XC PHASE

- Central to this phase was the welfare not only of the riders but also the horses/ponies competing. A vet and first aid was on-site for any emergencies.
- Passports of all equines had to be onsite and vaccines checked by the DC,s. Most equines travelled to and from the event on the day however some were stabled on-site and near by.
- Location maps/schedule info/course maps etc were all published online and via whats app.

ADMIN & ENTRIES

- The amount of paperwork required for each of the phases was vast and we had to streamline some forms, score sheets etc for our volunteers. I spent long hours ensuring all details that were required fitted onto various documents and were user friendly for volunteers who were not familiar with Tet.
- Ensuring all the correct entries were in on time also proved a challenge as some members had entered the wrong class, pulled out or had not put in an entry to start with. This lead to many start sheets being re-printed and our DC had to reiterate the deadline date and that we could not make any further amendments.
- My IT skills were definitely utilised and this was a side of tetrathlon I was not aware of when taking part. Having easy to read scores for our input scorers was vital. This in turn lead to quick turn around of scores being inputted onto Pony Club Results with minimal inaccuracies.
- Two ladies in our pony club assisted with the live scoring and it ran very smoothly due to the volume of volunteers returning the score cards in a timely manner.

PRIZES

- Again this was a mammoth task and had to be left until all entries were in so volume of prizes, rosettes etc could be established. Numerous sums were done to ensure we had enough ordered and spare also in place to accommodate any errors.
- We brainstormed as to what made good prizes for each of the classes, ensured equity among the classes and took into account cost.
- Numerous boxes of rosettes and prizes arrived at my house and took over our gym. All was packed into our lorry and taken to the venue.
- Long hours were spent sorting prizes into the various classes along with the correct allocation of rosettes (not to mention the special rosettes/prizes for top shoot, run and swim to name a few).
- Such organisation of the prizes definitely assisted with the smooth running of the prize giving.

VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers all came together and made the event run smoothly. Everyone in the club played a part and we all learnt something new about tetrathlon.
- Skilled and experienced volunteers from other clubs were invaluable and contributed to the ease in which each phase ran.
- Ensuring volunteers were familiar with the rule book was crucial and this was an important factor in the xc phase especially.
- I never before took into account the number of volunteers required to run an event of this size. Running the event over two days meant many miles travelled for those who did not stay on-site. Our family stayed in the horse lorry (which we also used for scoring) and this was much needed as we had very early starts and late nights.
- Some ladies in our club took on board the catering and provided all our volunteers with lunch packs, water and snacks which was a hit. We did this for all our volunteers in all the phases.

EVALUATION AREA 17 TETRATHLON

- Over the planning phase, preparation and the event itself I learnt many things and developed many skills.
- The event was a success with large entries and the club did not lose any money. I came to realise the vast effort from numerous people to make events like this run smoothly. I never again will take this for granted.
- The expertise and skills of volunteers in their niche area was invaluable. This lessened the likelihood of inaccuracies and there were little complaints in the shooting, running and swimming phases.
- More knowledge needs to be gained by everyone in the xc phase as this was the area with most complaints coming through before results could be published.
- Good leadership is key in dealing with complaints and having them resolved.

KEY LEARNING

- At the previous years Area Tetrathlon my Mum and I made a list of things we need to be mindful of when planning the event in our club, eg a loud speaker for timely communication, quick processing of results, etc. I also came away from our event with a list and how things could be improved.
- I felt our planning and preparation stages went smoothly and we as a club were well organised and had all items in place for the event. Issues arose when members started changing entries/moving classes or withdrawing from classes. The impact this had on the scheduling of times was huge and had a ripple effect on all the heats/timings.
- I do believe my sustainability efforts were tested as many reams of paper was used to reprint heats/classes/times when entries were changed. We did ensure that everyone cleared up their own litter and used re-usable cups but more effort would be required with regards to the use of paper.

KEY LEARNING

- A Whats App group was set up for communication with all the competitors and another for scorers and volunteers. This method of communication was invaluable and proved successful, this may have been problematic if there had been no wifi or signal in the area.
- Having good leadership from Area 17 was key and meant complaints were dealt with efficiently. All issues were resolved on the day and results amended promptly for prize giving.
- Allowing extra time for amending results, dealing with complaints etc is key. Our xc phase was held up as a volunteers car alarm was going off when she was about to fence judge! Thankfully someone was able to disable the alarm, it did cause a delay and some members were delayed in their start time. Always expect the unexpected and allow for extra time in the schedule.

KEY LEARNING

- Key to the success of the event was good sponsorship from local companies which helped keep our costs down. In turn I ensured their logos was on our publicity at the event and also on social media platforms to publicly thank them.
- Ensuring our volunteers were fed and watered also meant happy volunteers. This was key learning from another event and this was a focus area in our club with key volunteers who took on this role over the two days.
- Volunteers with a sound knowledge of the scoring system for Pony Club results was also key to the smooth running of the event. They swiftly kept on top of the scoring live and amended any scores after complaints.
- A working PA system also proved very effective, especially at prize giving. Many times I have attended prize giving and not known when it was taking place or who won what prizes. We had a new mobile PA system purchased by the club which worked well.

KEY LEARNING

- Being open and honest when issues arose was key. This led to members being informed of delays in start times and prize giving (the PA system and WhatsApp groups allowed us to share this info in a timely manner).
- If I had to help run a similar event again I would ensure the running courses were set up the previous day or had a team of volunteers to set it up. This was time consuming and more difficult than initially thought.
- Volunteers cannot be thanked enough for assisting with the running of such events and this was again done verbally, via WhatsApp groups and on social media. I am also a competitor in Pony Club and this event made me realise the amount of hard work done by volunteers so we can compete at this level throughout the year.

CONCLUSION

This was a great learning experience not only for me but for my club. I have come to appreciate the amount of work that goes into planning and running such an event.

Seeing the pictures after the event of volunteers, members and competitors I could see how much fun everyone had (I was too busy at the event to really notice).

I had many opportunities to network and meet new people which has increased my confidence. I developed new skills in communication, information technology and time management.

The YELA award has been a great opportunity to give back to the Pony Club community and gain valuable experience.

Please check out our Pony Club Facebook page for pictures from the event.