

# Almost Athletes AGM

**May 15<sup>th</sup> 2024**

There were 74 members present.

Apologies were received from Fiona and Matt Barnes, Michelle Balchin, Chris Benjamin, Jane Russell, Rob Hume and Issy Ravenhill.

Minutes of 2023 AGM were agreed by members, proposed by Alison Hume and seconded by Janine Bennett, following a wording correction.

## **Chairman's report and annual review**

This year the club celebrated its 35th anniversary and it was another successful year for the club. I've now been chair for 2 and a half years and I've really enjoyed being chair of this wonderful running club. It really is such a privilege to do it.

We have had a very good year with increasing membership which currently stands at a whopping 444. In the last year we have had 72 new members join us with 26 of these since January. Over 300 members are between the ages 40 and 70 but we have been seeing our membership getting more diverse with a significant number of new members being born in the 80s and 90s and even quite a few born this century!! There are now over 100 members under the age of 40.

We have also been more conscious this year about sustainability and doing our bit to do the right thing our planet. This has been with the help of Katie Coleman, Duncan Mounson and Hamish Adamson who are all passionate about this. Hence no paper agenda or accounts tonight on chairs as you've all been sent them by email. The most impactful thing we can do is to reduce the carbon emissions from all of us travelling to club runs, events and races. And after some encouragement from us it's really pleasing to see members now proactively asking for and offering lifts to others to races. This is fabulous so please keep it up!

Shortly after the last AGM I had the pleasure of presenting the donations to our agreed charities at the last AGM. Firstly, Michelle and I presented a £750 cheque to the charity Emily's Gift outside the entrance of the Emily Kent oncology unit at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. This is a new children's cancer charity founded under the umbrella of The Pied Piper Trust to raise £500k by March 2024 to finance the employment for 10 years of a specialist psychologist with expertise in the care of children and young people with cancer at the Emily Kent Unit to support the children, siblings and parents. We met Julie Kent, the inspirational founder of the charity, and it was also a delight to meet Dr Chrissie Parfitt the consultant paediatrician at the Unit.

Secondly Ben Stone, myself, Marty Ward's mum and Marty's wife presented a £750 cheque to Sue Ryder at their property in Leckhampton. As I'm sure you all know Sue Ryder support people who are dealing with a terminal illness, a neurological condition or who have lost someone. This was a charity that Marty Ward supported. Marty was an Almost who tragically passed away in late 2022.

And finally, we made a £750 donation to Prostate Cancer UK to help them in the fight about the disease. We weren't able to present this to anyone locally which was a real shame so in future we would like to only support local charities where we can meet the charity.

It's been great to have given out 24 runner of the month awards this year as we continue to recognise the achievements of our runners on an ongoing basis. As usual it's often been quite difficult for the committee to decide who the winners are each month as so many of you are doing such phenomenal things with your running which is truly inspirational to me and other members of the club. And this evening will culminate in the runner of the year awards later, for which you have been voting online. We had 83 people voting

this year, which was considerably more than last year and it was very close again, especially for the females. And wasn't it difficult choosing who to vote for?

The many achievements of our members have also kept our race report writers busy as they call out these achievements on a weekly basis and get you in the echo. I would really like to thank the wonderful team of regular race report writers of Claire Hawes, Alison Hume, Dave Nelson, Josh Hand, Nicole Hope, Natalie Wizard, Clemens Orth and Andrew Lloyd. I know we all really enjoy reading their fabulous race reports.

The Cross-country season was very well supported last year by our members and a massive thank you to Dave McGrath, Patricia Dendy and Mike Kennedy for organising us all and drumming up the support. This year we put 2 cross country races into our off-road race series which helped encourage many more Almosts to do cross country which was great to see. Last year at the AGM I said the race in Pittville was disappointingly not muddy. I really shouldn't have said that as this year it was a complete mudfest and even with spikes on I slipped getting out the stream on one of 3 laps, which one of our supporters very helpfully captured perfectly on video while she was standing in the stream! Over the season Patricia Dendy and Victoria Willoughby came 3rd overall in their age category and the Ladies were the 4th Open team and 4th Masters team. Well done ladies. Cross country is fabulous fun....if you haven't tried it give it a go next season.

Our 3 races the Bugatti 10k, Linda Franks 5 mile and the Meteor Mile (which returned last year) were all a big success again this year and with no extreme temperatures this time. A huge thank you goes to Phil Jeys, whose hard work again as race director ensured they were successful. Although the trend is continuing of him delegating more to me on the day! He keeps saying he's busy which of course he is. This year I got to start the Meteor Mile and then jumped into the airport truck with one of the timers to beat the runners to the finish - it was all very exciting and my time was 2 mins 21 seconds, a massive PB for the mile! Phil has been Race Director for many years and we are truly grateful for that particularly as he does it so well. I would also like to thank all of our volunteers at all 3 events who help make it happen as you are all amazing too! And as we do every year I received lots of fabulous feedback from runners at other clubs.

Our road and off-road race series were very well attended last year with some great competition in some of the age categories. This is continuing this year as we continue to support some lovely local races. Last Sunday we were easily the club with the most runners at the Sherborne 5 miler which was raising money for their village school and with our help they raised over £4,500!! How amazing is that! A big thank you again to Steven Adams who has organised the 2 series so well for many years selecting the races and updating the points so quickly after each race. Congratulations must go to Jo Johnson for being first female in both series and John Johnson and Steve Axford for being first male in the off road and road series respectively. I really recommend getting involved if you haven't done so in the past. It's great fun competing against others in your age category and there are always lots of familiar faces at the events. I enjoyed taking part last year as I got to run lots of races that I had never done before. And I'm looking forward to Dave McGrath no longer being in my age category next year. Although anyone who has club records in the MV60 category needs to look out as Dave has his eyes on quite a few of them!

In the Gloucestershire AAA County Road Race Series 22 of our club members won medals and we took away 2 shields at the awards evening, one for Allan Green as Men's Vet 70 Road Race Champion and one for the club as Ladies Open Team Road Race Champions. In addition, Alison Hume and Katie Coleman were 2nd in their age category and Victoria Kennedy and Claire Hawes were 3rd in theirs. And Phil Jeys was rightly recognised for his many years' service with the Glos AAA Athletic Achievement Award.

I thoroughly enjoyed organising the handicap race series again last year which as always was closely fought with Prash winning the series as he managed to improve throughout the races, which is exactly the way to win! This year's series has already started this week with a great turnout of 41 runners in the rain for the

first race 2 days ago. Come and talk to me later if you haven't entered yet and want to. It's such a great concept where you are chasing all the runners slower than you and wondering if the faster runners will get you! It's even more fun watching it as the handicap unwinds each lap. And literally anyone can win a race and the series!

I'd really like to thank all our coaches (James Clay, Michael Grant, Dave McGrath, Fi Barnes and Matt Barnes) who regularly deliver the club sessions each week for you to help you improve your running. And those who have stepped in occasionally to run a session when the coach isn't available, and I'd particularly like to thank Dominic Lyes, who once again has been there every week to help James run Monday track sessions and deliver the session when James has been unavailable.

I'd also like to thank our growing population of Lirfs who ensure that we can offer a pace and distance to suit everyone on the social Wednesday club runs. I'd particularly like to thank Dave McGrath for managing those evenings. And also, our mental health champions (Kevin Beamish, Sam McGrath and Katie Coleman) who continue to arrange some run and talk sessions where we have had a suitable venue on a Wednesday evening to do that.

Finally, I'd like to thank the hard-working committee. Some of what the committee does isn't visible to you but the club continues to be recognised as meeting England Athletics club standards, this year we improved our website and we have reached out to the other Cheltenham running clubs to benefit from greater collaboration between us. There may well be a fun running and social event with these other clubs later in the year. I'd particularly like to recognise the work of 3 committee members who are standing down this year. Fi Barnes has been one of our welfare officers for many years, which is a crucial role for the club and Fi brought significant experience into the role. Steven Adams has been running the road series for many years which has been hugely popular over the years. And Ela Antosiewicz has been on the committee for a number of years and been our Treasurer for a couple of years. All of them will be missed and I would like thank all 3 of them on behalf of the committee. We do have gifts for all of them but only Steven is here so please can you come up to receive your gift.

So, to conclude we have clearly remained a strong, enthusiastic, hugely supportive and inclusive club and we can be proud of that. And we all play a part in that not just the committee! So thank you to all of you for making this such a great running club!

### **Treasurer's report**

Sadly, our treasurer is unable to attend tonight, so Peter Mitchener presented the following on her behalf.

Overall our income was about £4,500 higher this year compared to last year but expenses were almost £7,000 higher so our reserves reduced by £4,613 to £6,478.

We received a net income on membership fees of £4,175 and continued to make a profit on our races of £2,235.

And on the expense side the club subsidised a special celebratory Christmas party for our 35th anniversary by £3,564, made charity donations of £3,000, made other subsidies for kit of £1,019, incurred costs of £995 for trophies for the race series. The club also incurred about £1,500 combined on other items such as this AGM and social events, run leader and coach training, gifts, new website costs, fees and subscriptions.

As part of this section we wish to agree this year's subscription fees. Last year the fee for first claim membership was £30 and £14 for second claim membership. This year our fee to England Athletics has risen again by £2 on top of the £1 rise last year. So, over the last 2 years the England Athletics fee has increased from £16 to £19. In addition, this year our club affiliation fee has increased too. Last year we didn't pass on the England Athletics £1 fee increase and held the subscription fees at the current level

given our current favourable financial position and other cost of living pressures on our members at the time. Given our reduced reserves this year we now feel that we need to pass on the £3 increase in EA fees over the last 2 years and we would also like to increase by £2 more so we can nudge our reserves back up towards previous levels and so that we can continue to make charitable donations to our local community. So, we would like to increase the fees from £30 to £35 for first claim membership and from £14 to £16 for second claim membership. But we expect to hold these fees for at least 2 years and it won't be our intention to pass another EA fee increase next year. This level of £35 is consistent with other local clubs and in the committee's view is still a bargain considering you get £2 off every race entry, you get access to free coaching 3 times a week, you get a 10% discount at Up & Running on your running shoe purchases and you are part of the fabulous community that is our club. For less than £3 a month that is in my view an absolute bargain!

The acceptance of the fees rise was proposed by Wendy Horne and seconded by Lorraine Taylor and accepted.

Amy will trigger renewal and members will have to pay by end of June.

**The election of the new committee** – Current members to continue are Peter Mitchener, Kev Beamish, Amy Broomhall, Michelle Balchin, Dave McGrath, Penny Lewis, Steve Taylor and Zakia Hussain. New to join are Cheryl Rodham as a new welfare officer and Paul Jones as road and off-road race series organiser.

All were proposed by Sam McGrath and seconded by James Clay and accepted by those members present.

#### **Charity nominations for next year:**

These are

Scoo-B-Doo – special care baby unit for premature babies – proposed by Phil Jeyes and Peter Mitchener

Glos Feed the Hungry – proposed by Zakia Hussain and Steve Taylor

Proposed acceptance of these by Claire Hawes and Graham Stopp

#### **Any Other Business**

Ingrid Harris requested confirmation of race dates.

The Bugatti Race is set for Aug 7th 2024 and the Meteor Mile is set for August 30th 2024.

Alison Hume said please can we confirm the Linda Franks date soon as we need to book the hall asap.

Claire Hawes praised the committee for updating the website. However, please can you check the colour of the purple font to make it more legible. Kevin Beamish is to look into this.

Dave Garnett had a Cross Country query. Being over 65 recently, he now has the option of running a shorter race, for which he can score. However, he prefers to run a longer race but then does not score points. Please can committee look into this and advise. How does scoring for the senior team work?

The main business of the meeting was then concluded.

Amazing Almost Athletes - Q and A reflection with some members was then held.

This was led by Dave McGrath and the guest speakers were Kate Bestwick, Dave Rogers and Kim Lewington.

Congratulations were given to the Ladies open team, who won a shield at the Glos AAA awards

Then there were our club trophy presentations. There were presented to the following.

Female runner of the year – Katie Coleman

Male Runner of the year – Graeme Stopp

Cross country cup – Victoria Willoughby

Doug Waymark trophy - volunteering for club – Phil Jeyes

Rich Walklate trophy - commitment to club and own running – Dave McGrath

Dedicated Runner - perseverance – Ceinwen Davies

Life memberships were also given to Fiona and Matt Barnes and Michael Grant for their services to the club.