

Almost Athletes Monthly Bulletin – December 2025

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Welcome to all Members

Welcome to all members whether running, walking, volunteering or just doing your own thing, quietly in the background. Club membership of Almost Athletes means so much more than just being part of a running club. We hope that the club brings you plenty of enjoyment throughout 2026 – If you have running friends who are interested why not bring them along to a Wednesday social run and let them find out what we are all about? New members very welcome.

The awards night and Christmas party on 13th December was a great occasion to celebrate with many awards available from our Club Road and Off-road race series. Around 90 members attended and a particular highlight was the montage put together by Steve Harvison. Check it out on YouTube – <http://youtu.be/tWRw4NptcVo> It certainly shows a range of happy runners and club events.

The Club enjoyed a festive December with three main events: the awards night, the Christmas Eve family walk/run and the Club Twixmas run. The latter was a particular challenge with a range of runs from 5 - to 15 miles or so along the beautiful Cotswold Way from Painswick to Cheltenham. The end of run refreshments were most welcome! The Committee would like to thank all members involved in supporting these events in any way. It really makes a difference.

Linda Franks Race & Other January Dates for Your Diary

Friday 2nd January 7am – Entries go live for the popular Bourton 10km race (9.30am - 22.2.26)

Monday 5th January – We restart all club sessions with a full week's diary. One change is that Michael Grant and Dave McGrath (CIRFs) will pick up the coaching for our Thursday speed sessions, assisted by some of our run leaders (LIRFs) and James Clay (CIRF), when available. Please be patient with us as we aim to fill the very big pair of running shoes left by Fi & Matt Barnes. Full details will be on Facebook and the club website, as usual.

For our Wednesday Club nights we stay at Cheltenham Town Football Club and move to Hillview Community Centre, Hatherley from **Wednesday 28th January**. This venue has a reputation for rain so expect the usual shelter afterwards in The Greatfield pub! The run route is a nice safe one though with wider pavements and fewer tree root problems that we tend to have in parts of the town centre.

Our run leaders are qualified through England Athletics as LIRFs which stands for Leader in Running Fitness. If you are a regular group runner and would be interested in leading do get in touch with one of the Committee members on a Wednesday night.

Congratulations to Patricia Dendy, Sarah Wood and Allan Green who have all won awards in the 2025 Gloucestershire AAA road race series. They have their awards presentation evening on **9th January at The Civic Centre, Gloucester**. Details of the 2026 race series can be found at athletics4u.co.uk. You automatically qualify for points when taking part in the nominated races.

Monday 12th January – The date of the next Committee Meeting with a review of 2025 and ideas session for 2026. It's also a club thank you to The Committee with pizza as the "sweetener" for the work ahead! If you have any suggestions for activities you would like to see included in the Club year, ideas for social events and so on, please feel free to email the committee at almostathletes@hotmail.com.

LINDA FRANKS RACE is on **18th January** and is a huge morning for the Club. Peter Mitchener is our Race Director, supported by Phil Jeyes and an army of AA volunteers. See the various posts on Facebook and please offer to help on the day, if you can. Your membership of AA has helped the club to donate many £000s to charity over the years. This year, funds from cake sales etc will go to The Gloucestershire Hospitals "Big Space Cancer Appeal". The charity was put forward by Club member, Cat Harker and agreed by members at our AGM in May. (The race is in AA race series for 2026 and is full. There is a waiting list in place).

Sunday 25th January Boddington 10 mile road race (in AA and Gloucestershire AAA race series – the race is full and with a waiting list in place).

Looking forward to 2026

At Almost Athletes, our Club running year is a mix of so many things: the weekly running diary, local races, community/charity support as well as individual endeavours either around and about Cheltenham or, indeed, across the globe.

We aim to keep those traditions and experiences high on our agenda through 2026.

We would also love to do some new things. Ideas have been raised around events such as a club presence at "PatsFest 2026" a local community festival at Patesians sports & social club on **13th June**. Perhaps a club coach trip to Weston Super Mare for the Weston Christmas Cracker 10km race on **13th December**? Maybe a summer picnic and BBQ? Plenty of ideas for events, old and new to explore. What do you think?

You may be aiming for your first 10km or trail event. Some members will already be on the way with their Spring marathon preparations. Whatever your plans for 2026 do get in touch if you need some help along the way. We have informal and formal training groups as well as EA qualified leaders and coaches. Above all, we have a full range of experienced members. If you have an event in mind the chances are someone has done it. Just ask.

Finally – we hope you have had an enjoyable festive break and wish you a very happy and healthy new year.

Let's go for a run!

Your Committee
Almost Athletes