

AA Member Monthly News Bulletin - August/Early September 2026

- Almost Athletes shortlisted for England Athletics Regional Award
- #RunAndTalk turns 10!
- Parkrun “headliner” at KGV on 22nd August, Meteor Mile 28th August
- Race news – Highnam refunds available
- Important winter change to Thursday evening club run sessions
- Supporting Cheltenham half/10km/mile
- Other key events and dates
- Amazing members

England Athletics “Unsung Project of the Year” Award

As you might recall, the club has been shortlisted at an awards evening at the Devon Hotel, Exeter on 19th September. Our project paper - copy shared with all members in July - celebrates the community and charity support work which AA does. As part of the awards night preparation, we had an EA visit to our Monday night track session on 24th August. They carried out several video interviews with members and took some footage of the session being coached by Ivana Wilson. There are some very strong nominations in the category and it is wonderful to be recognised in this way.

#RunAndTalk turns 10!

Our Mental Health Champions advise that 5th – 11th October is the week that England Athletics is marking a decade of #RunAndTalk, bringing running communities together to support mental health and well-being. Watch out for our own AA focus at our run/social events that week. Your mental health champion team includes Kevin Beamish, James Clay, Zakhia Hussain, Sam McGrath and Rachel Nolan.

Almost Athletes Volunteering at KGV parkrun

We had a fun morning at the Almost Athletes “headliner” at King George V Playing Field parkrun on 22nd August. The Club gazebo was a focal point for all and around 35 members were involved.

Race News

Good luck to those running Alderton 5km, Cranham Boundary Chase and/or the Coln Valley this weekend – 5th/6th September. Go Almosts!!!

The Meteor Mile took place at Gloucestershire Airport on Friday 28th August. The weather was kind and a fabulous evening was had by all. Our thanks to all members who helped in any way. To those of you who ran – well done. A mile might be short in running terms but it is very tough and the performances were fantastic to see.

Due to the cancellation of Standish and Highnam we have had to review our 2026 offroad race series. We have been unable to find suitable replacements, which means that the best 5 from 8 races will now count towards the competition. More details can be found on the website and from series co-ordinator Paul Jones. Three events remain: Coln Valley on 6th September, Apperley Quarter Marathon on 3rd October and Croome Capability on 22nd November (club tops required – see note below re spares).

Dates have been announced for the cross-country season: Sunday 18th October at Tinkley Gate, Stroud; Saturday 31st October at Cirencester Park; Sunday 13th December in Bath (see date clash below); and Saturday 27th February at Pittville Park.

The Bath date clashes with our club trip to Weston Christmas Cracker 10km. See booking details for that on Facebook and the club website. We have a coach booked for the day which is filling up fast.

One final thing on races – please wear club colours. If you are waiting on an order or don't have a purple top, we do have spares for race use. Speak to Alison Hume in the first instance.

Cancelled Offroad Series Race – Highnam – did you enter?

Highnam are generously offering a refund to anyone who entered the original September race. As we cannot guarantee that the 2027 race will be in our race series you may wish to take up this offer.

Club Run Sessions – Winter Rest for Thursday 6.45pm Sessions from end September

Michael Grant ran the final CLC track session on Thursday 27th August. Our thanks to Michael for organising this summer grass facility for members. For the coming autumn and winter we will take a break from our Thursday 6.45pm sessions and review member demand next year. We expect the final session to be on 24th September.

Michael's very popular, weekly Tuesday night, effort sessions will continue as usual. Many members will swear by these sessions as a catalyst for their run fitness. Why not give it a try – hard work but again, open to all and routines adjusted to suit. Hi viz/lighting essential with the change of season.

After member feedback at the February open evening, we introduced a less intensive track session for all. This is on the first Thursday of the month, 5pm – 6pm. This has been well supported, with, for example 16 athletes taking part in the September set. We are pleased to confirm this will continue over the Autumn/winter months. James Clay will be running the next session on 1st October. Dave McGrath will return for the November set. You might also recall that we have recently added to our coaching support with 3 newly qualified coaches in Michelle Balchin, Graeme Stopp and Ivana Wilson. We know them well as active club members and run leaders - our thanks to them for their enthusiasm and commitment.

We plan to offer a “couch to 5k” group as part of our regular Wednesday evening runs from Wednesday 7th October. Graeme is working on this now, with details to be confirmed in the coming weeks. If any friends or family would like to give this an initial try as non-members we would be delighted to include them. All we are likely to ask is a nominal donation towards club funds.

Remember, we really do have something for everyone, whether you are a parkrun front runner or a tail walker. Almost Athletes is for us all. It is important that sessions reflect what we can do as volunteers and what members want to attend. Check the website, get in touch, talk to the leaders and coaches and come along.

Supporting Cheltenham Half/10km/Mile on 20th September - Good luck to all members running, supporting or getting involved. In the July bulletin we mentioned the availability of the club cross country gazebo as a club presence, on the day. You may have noticed it, in use by the entries team at The Meteor Mile or at KGV parkrun. We still hope to have a presence – Neil and Lou Tring are looking into options. Kevin Beamish, Club Secretary, is coordinating - more details will follow.

Have you heard of “Run Angels”? This has been seen at a few races, where a club runner joins a runner to help them along the way, perhaps for a final stretch as a “cheer leader/encouragement runner”. If you fancy donning a club vest and supporting a runner in this way, maybe give it a go. It’s completely impromptu, random and unofficial but can give others a real boost when they are struggling.

Some Other Key Events and Dates

19th September – England Athletics Award Evening – Exeter.

13th November – Provisional date for London marathon ballot/skittles evening.

15th November – Roly’s Run – 15/20/40 mile options.

5th December – Christmas Party night – new central venue of the United Services Club, North Place, Cheltenham GL50 4DW.

13th December – Club trip to Weston Super Mare and the Weston Christmas Cracker 10km – booking details now announced. Upfront commitment of £15 per head for coach transport. For those who are running you enter individually, in the usual way.

15th January 2027 – Provisional night for 2026 Almost Athletes Race Series awards.

17th January 2027 – Linda Franks 5 mile Road Race.

Amazing Members

Thank you to every single member who has supported the club. You might have volunteered at a club race, coached a session, led a run, drank tea, eaten cake and chatted to other members, you might have battled through a tough week and still made it to a club session. You might have quietly done your own run or walk and reflected on that simple pleasure. Whoever you are, whatever your involvement, big or small, it is appreciated. The club is about you, our membership. As the summer comes to an end we have a fantastic few months of running and social activities ahead. For now,

we need to dig out and check our hi viz, head lamps, batteries, bulbs, hats, gloves and raincoats!!

Let's go for a run!

Your Committee, Almost Athletes
September 2026

Want to know more?

Linktree – [https://linktr.ee/Almost Athletes Cheltenham](https://linktr.ee/Almost_Athletes_Cheltenham)

More details about all of our regular training sessions and social runs can be found on the [“where we meet” section of our club website](#) and on our Facebook page.

Club Merchandise – see [“merchandise” section of the club website](#)