

Minutes of Harpenden Arrows' A.G.M. – 10/02/2021

The meeting was held over zoom

Those who attended: Graham Harper (Chair), Colin Wareham, Chas Andrews, Alison Andrews, Lyndon Hearn, Lisa Munt, Simon Speirs, Rowland Hughes, Alex James, Aly Northedge, Stephen Mckee, Richard Moreton, Brian Yates, John Rowlands, June Rowlands, Hannah Turner, Claire Watts, Steve Green, Sharon Stanley, Peter Thornton, Philippa Busby, Julie Horrocks, Tara Huzar, Isabel Green, Jeremy Weightman, Jillian Russell, Sharon Neely, David White, Louise Crosby, Janice Nisbet, Nigel Marriott, George Hill, Susie Walton, Ben Cullis. David Salmon, Nacho Vincente, Liz Grover, Andy Jordan, Roger Montgomery, Scott Clarke, Djerk Geurts, Mark Woodcock, Audrey Zilliox, Christine Esson, Ruth Bennett, Rhona Mckee.

Chair's opening remarks

- Graham Harper welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the year focusing on the 'community' aspect of the club. He praised the way members have supported the club this year, whether by organizing events/challenges or participating in them. The communication on the Facebook page added to the enjoyment of all of our virtual events and has encouraged members to stay in touch.

Elections

- G.H. thanked Richard Moreton for his time on the committee – he has completed two full terms of three years each. He has decided to stand down from the committee due to work commitments but will still participate in run leadership when time allows.
- G.H. reminded members that Michael Hessey had stood down as Club Secretary (although he will remain on the committee) and that Lisa Munt had agreed to take on the role and that of Ladies' Captain. He asked that members vote to ratify her position and, for the first time, members voted virtually via response boards displayed on screen. L.M.'s position was ratified.
- L.M. conducted the voting for Stephen Mckee and Aly Northedge. S.M. was already serving as Social Secretary when he was coopted onto the committee last year and members voted to ratify his position.
- A. N. was coopted onto the committee last year as well and has been serving as the club's Welfare Officer, looking after the club in all matters relating to Covid, and ensuring that all official running groups adhere to E.A. and government guidelines. Members voted to ratify her position.

Both positions having been ratified, S.M. and A.N. were both welcomed, officially, onto the committee.

- There were no nominations for any members to join the committee so L.M. handed over to Lyndon Hearn to deliver the membership report.

Membership Report

- There are 169 members at present and, although this is down on last year's membership of 227, L.H. expects some members to return as lockdown restrictions ease.
- The membership includes nine new joiners and five who converted from a beginners' course earlier in the year.
- E.A. membership is also down from 169 to 128. We are confident that renewals will rise when races start up again and the more members we have as a club, the more London Marathon ballot places we may be offered in the future.
- We will do what we can to offer interesting and exciting things for our club members to participate in. It's important for us that we remain an inclusive club that offers all our members what they love and that's from the experiences we offer, through to feeling safe and happy when running with others at club activities. We continue to be mindful of government guidance, and will make sure the opportunities we offer support this too for those that would like to take part.
- In 2021 we aspire to deliver running and non-running activities for our members, the broader running club community, and then the wider public. Timing and event types are to be agreed but we are looking at a variety of events, within what will be reasonable at the time according to government guidelines.
- To support this approach, we will hold our membership fee at £25 for 2021.
- You'll soon see the renewal process start so please help us to complete the process promptly and encourage others to do so too. We fully appreciate that 2021 remains somewhat uncertain as to what the club can offer and when, but the more members we have the more interesting and inclusive we can be for all.
- L.H. encouraged all members to double-check their ICE and allergy details when renewing their membership as accidents and illness can sometimes occur when out running.

L.H. handed over to Chas Andrews for the treasurers' report.

The Treasurers' Report

- Chas Andrews explained that at the beginning of the year, the Committee approved a budget for 2020 which would see the Club making a modest surplus of around £800. With 2020 being an unusual year, the club ended up making a surplus of nearly £2,700, slightly above the previous year's level.
- Covid has had an effect on the club's finances and overall, our income was 21% lower than the previous year at just over £4,200. There were a number of reasons for this:
 1. Our membership income was broadly unchanged year-on-year, as whilst the number of members decreased in 2020, the slight increase in subscription fees largely offset this.

2. We saw a near £600 decrease in fees from the Beginners' Courses as we were only able to hold one of them last year, and that had to be held with restricted numbers.
 3. We saw a near £400 swing in the cost of the AGM and Awards Evening - last year the Club subsidised it by about £200, whereas the previous year the event had generated a surplus of a similar amount.
- Even though our total income was reduced last year, we saw an even bigger decrease in expenditure. Our costs were virtually 50% lower than the previous year at just over £1,500. There were a number of reasons for this:
 1. The hire of the room at St Georges cost us only £230 for the time we used it before the 1st lockdown, whereas we normally spend £1,000 a year on it.
 2. We didn't hold any track nights.
 3. We didn't host the Mid- Week Road Race League event.
 4. We didn't buy any equipment.
 5. We only had one speaker event, and as this was done remotely Mara charged us less.
 - The club still incurred some costs including club affiliation and race fees and cups and trophies were purchased in recognition of the different Club Standard levels members attained throughout the year. Also, £500 was spent on those which were awarded at the last year's AGM, which is in line with previous years.
 - The club's bank balance, at the year-end, stood at just over £9,000. The Club also holds stock (comprised of Club running kit) of £850. So overall, the club is in a strong financial position going forward.
 - C.A. thanked his wife Alison Andrews who shares the Treasurer role and does an incredible amount of work behind the scenes.

C.A. handed over to Simon Speirs for the Captains' report.

The Captains' Report

- S.S welcomed L.M. to the role of Ladies' Captain and told members that we now hope to issue the Captains' log at least quarterly, if not more, to keep people connected so that they are not missing out on all the Facebook chat and banter that we see happening so much on a day-to-day basis.
- S.S. reflected on the content of last year's AGM speech, when we said we had plans to host a race for the mid-week road race league, look at the potential to host a cross country for the Sunday League or even do our own commercial event. We were not even able to complete the 2020 Sunday league due to the events during the year and then subsequently the Mid-week and Sunday league competitions were also both cancelled.
- The response and enthusiasm of everyone in the Arrows community in terms of working within the ever changing and any prevailing restrictions at the time have been encouraging. S.S. thanked A.N. for her efforts in organising runs within the

lockdown / tier rules and also Peter Thornton for organising and coordinating the virtual 5k.

- There were also other notable mentions for David White's 5k garden challenge in various spectacular states of fancy dress, Steve Bowran's enthusiasm and promotion of the fly 5k, Alex James and Aly's Arrow's Bingo and now the weekly challenge. Everyone seems to be embracing these and the chat and banter is great to see in Facebook.
- There was one standout achievement - Andy Jordan's world record 100 miler for a Vet55 at 14hrs 24mins 03 seconds! S.S. speculated whether he'll try to beat it again by at least those 4 seconds.
- Future plans are still aspirational but will have to be put on the back burner for 2021. The Mid-Week Road Race league committee has just announced that it is not to take place in 2021 and running even the Sunday league would be questionable at this time.
- The planned away marathon in October is also likely to be impacted and is unlikely to go ahead. We might look to organise something local for us instead as a replacement event – within whatever prevailing restrictions we have at the time.
- Whilst these yearly events might not be possible, as a committee we're trying to look for other things for us to do – to keep us fresh in these weird times, to keep us all connected and supporting each other. We already have up to 4 people who have asked to be involved in the run leaders' training so we should be even more prepared for the eventual roll back on restrictions.
- S.S. asked that members continue to come forward with new ideas and to support each other, and that it's been great to see the community aspect of the club going from strength to strength.

Questions and Answers

Seven questions were received prior to the A.G.M. and were allocated to the appropriate person to consider before their response at the meeting.

1. Are we staying the same size or looking to expand following the increase in runners during lockdown? (Terry Atkinson)

Answer from Lyndon Hearn: Our focus is on being an inclusive club. This means understanding what our runners and potential members want, and then finding ways to meet that. This could be offering something of the right ability, right safety, training, support, social etc. Growing as a club means we will be achieving our goal, but it is a consequence and not our driver.

2. How do you motivate different groups within the club e.g. more competitive runners? (Terry Atkinson)

Answer from Aly Northedge/Simon Speirs: We could explore other competition routes – although I suspect most of these are virtual currently. As for motivating different groups, when training together we try to offer a diverse set of training activities but, with such a

range of abilities to cater for, we can't please everyone with limited training options currently. For those that are chasing PBs we continue to offer some virtual self-motivating events such as the V5K, and of course there is the Fly5K inter-club competition. Longer distance PB work however is harder to cater for, but we are looking to re-introduce structured training sessions, albeit virtually for now.

3. Can we offer coaching in some group sessions - such as drills, form, strength work, etc, utilising some of our experienced runners? (Terry Atkinson)

Answer from Aly Northedge: Yes we can, but we need suitably qualified instructors to lead more targeted sessions. Using experienced runners is fine – so long as they are willing, and are competent teachers, and it is suitable for those participating. In response to this, we may canvas the Arrows community for suitable candidates to lead some of these types of activities – virtually or otherwise; this is in discussion currently.

4. When training gets back to at least groups of 6 could some longer (10-20) mile club runs be organised at the weekends, especially in the lead up to London/arrows-away marathons and for those working towards their first marathon? (Isabel Green)

Answer from Aly Northedge: Again it is dependent on availability of suitable leaders. If we continue to have to run our groups with LiRF qualified leaders, we may find longer 10-20 mile training runs need a bit of planning to organise. There also needs to be enough participants to make it worth it. Whilst we are still training virtually or in a maximum of pairs, self-organised runs are probably the best option for these longer distances. Any Arrows looking for training partners can of course reach out to members using our social channels.

5. With more people running ultra-distances, should club standards be revised (or have something else) to cover these distances? (Terry Atkinson)
6. Should we have some total annual distance-based awards in a year when race cancellations are looking likely once again? (Peter Thornton)
7. At present for the Club standards the full house requirements are a 5k and Marathon distance with three intermediate distances totalling five races of different lengths. In order to be more inclusive for both runners who prefer shorter races or ultra-runners, could this be amended to just 'Five races of different distances'? (David White)

Answer from Graham Harper: And the final group of questions relate to Awards etc so I will cover these, before handing over to Colin, our club President and founder member who will be presenting the 2020 awards.

There were a couple of questions which related to the Full House Award and if it could be adjusted to be more suitable for longer distance runners but equally importantly there was some feedback about making Awards more accessible. What Colin and I have done is to

review what we currently have and revised the scheme to hopefully achieve both objectives.

Firstly, just for fun, we are introducing a distance-based challenge which we hope everyone will be able to claim at some point in the year. This one will be a “virtual award” which you will be able to claim as soon as you have completed 500 total running miles in 2021. – The Fun 500 award.

Secondly – for the speedy ones, we are going to run the Rocket Award again this year, subject to there being sufficient events for the 5k and 5m. But to make it more likely that you could potentially claim this we are going to allow virtual events too. – And the WAVA requirement has been lowered just a little...

Next the Club Standards will once again be running in the form of ‘Lockdown Levels’ – pretty much as they were in 2020, just a couple of minor adjustments to qualifying events. Now these are event based and they will remain so in 2021. Obviously and by design these are more demanding both in terms of WAVA scores and required event distances as you move up through the levels. Note that the Level 1 award needs just 3 events over 2 distances and only 1 WAVA requirement. So, it could be something like a (not) Parkrun, a Fly 5k and a virtual 5 mile for example, which makes it very accessible.

Now The Rocket and the Lockdown levels are event based awards and we take on board the fact that not only are ‘events’ likely to be a bit thin on the ground again this year (although virtual events with published results are accepted) but also not everyone wants to do events – particularly at the moment. So, as an alternative to the ‘Full House’ we are introducing new annual distance-based awards which you can aim for throughout the course of the year, in a range of total distances from 1000 miles upwards, to include all your running miles, events or otherwise.

Finally, we are also introducing an Ultra Level which requires you to run a variety of Ultra distances to achieve the Award.

Members will be able to opt to work towards a traditional Full House award (which will stay as it is), OR an annual total distance award OR an Ultra Level Award.

So that’s a lot of awards and there is a new section on the website which describes the awards in more detail and we hope there is now something for everyone!

That completed the Q and A section and G.H. handed over to Club President C.W. to announce the 2020 Award winners.

Lockdown Awards 2020

- Colin Wareham announced the lockdown awards and what members had achieved at various levels.

Level 1

Ruth Bennett, Sharon Neely

Level 2

Andrew Bracey, Geraldine Carrie, Alison Andrews

Level 3

Emma Hobbs, Mark Woodcock, Lyndon Hearn, David White, Brian Yates, Janice Nisbet, Neil Hewitt, Anita White, Jillian Russell, Graham Harper, Julie Horrocks, Audrey Zilliox

Level 4

Louise Crosby, Chas Andrews, Isabel Green, Steve Green, Hannah Turner

Level 5

Andy Jordan

Full House

Ruth Bennett, Sharon Neely, Geraldine Carrie, Alison Andrews, Lyndon Hearn, David White, Brian Yates, Graham Harper, Julie Horrocks, Louise Crosby, Chas Andrews, Hannah Turner, Andy Jordan

Could all those receiving an award ensure that Lyndon Hearn has their correct home address and update him with new details if necessary.

Special Awards

Colin Wareham explained that the committee had chosen a small number of special awards this year to recognise the efforts of four members during 2020. These four people have made an extra effort to help us all get through the COVID crisis and keep us active and motivated.

1. The first award was for someone who has inspired us to keep running even in the tightest lockdown. He has kept us entertained with his garden series runs which he recorded on video and shared with his fellow runners. Never one to back down from a challenge, his range of running outfits has been 'extensive' to say the least. As Simon said, once seen, never forgotten. The best dressed Arrow award went to David White.
2. The second award winner was Peter Thornton who has helped many members – and a few non-members too – fill the gap left on a Saturday morning caused by the suspension of Parkruns. As we've not been able to run our traditional monthly club handicap Peter has run a virtual 5k event every week. The amount of work involved in calculating handicap times every week for an ever-increasing number of participants, collecting times from everyone's runs and producing the results was recognised.
3. The third award went to Jillian Russell who has been an Arrow since the very early days. She is a key member for the club in many ways. This year has brought extra challenges for many but she is always the first person in the club to offer to help and

support which is invaluable. Not only is she there for all, but even with the restrictions in place she has still managed to find a way to deliver a beginners' course too. Jillian is also a run leader and the mental health champion for the club.

4. Our fourth award went to Aly Northedge who has been instrumental in guiding the club through the Covid 19 restrictions to a point where structured training sessions could resume. There has been a huge amount of research and planning going on in the background to get the club to a position where training could restart in a safe, legal and 'enjoyable' way, and she personally has delivered 12 sessions – as many as any of the run leaders in the club.

Graham Harper's Lifetime Award

A special surprise lifetime award was given to Graham Harper for all that he has given to the club since he joined in 2009. He works tirelessly for the committee and gives up a lot of his own time in order to fulfil his role as Chairman, even though he has indicated that he would like to stand down from this role. He also carries out many practical activities for the club, often opening up on training nights and leading runs most weeks. (Pre-Covid) He was awarded a very large (and impressive looking) trophy by his wife and speculated that he may display it in the downstairs cloakroom!

Chair's closing remarks

G.H. thanked members for attending the meeting and for all their support for the club during what has been a difficult year. He expressed regret that there had not been any nominations for members to join the committee and expressed his hope that someone might be prepared to take over the role of Chairman by the next A.G.M.

Members were encouraged to stay connected and to look out for notification of when we may be able to restart structured training sessions including track nights. In the meantime members were encouraged to submit new activities to the committee for consideration and to continue to get involved in the challenges and activities that are running currently.

Members were reminded to consider government restrictions when planning routes and heading out for runs and to stay safe, stay well and carrying on running.

G.H. then officially closed the meeting.