

Chairman's Report-AGM 2023

Tony Watts

Tony who had been our President sadly passed away in May 2022 at the age of 94.

He had joined the Club in 1978 the year the Club was formed. He became heavily involved and was appointed Chairman in March 1986 and Joint President and Chairman in 1998 and subsequently sole President in 2006. In his prime he was an international 440 yards specialist.

In his memory we will be presenting annually a trophy to the first male Chiltern Harrier at Shardeloes 10K (a race Tony always supported). We already have a trophy for the first female Chiltern Harrier.

Facilities

Woodside School

I visited the school in July 2021 as they were keen to install a running track, there was not much space, but I agreed to meet the Head teacher, and others, to see if we could help. The track would be less than 400m. We tried to involve England Athletics at an early stage, but contact was difficult and not helped by the pandemic. Eventually, there was a suggestion from them that a "running loop" around the perimeter of the playing field might be a better option and had been successfully installed at a school in Cumbria, and this information was passed on to the school.

The Headteacher was pretty determined that she wanted a track and we had several meetings at the school led by Andy Wiseall who put in a huge amount of work on behalf of the club. We had agreed that if the venture went ahead we would make a contribution of £20,000 towards the cost, which would have benefited many of our athletes, as well as the school.

Sadly, Sport England objected to the proposed track on the basis that there would be less area available for other sports, including football. This brought the project to an abrupt halt, I am pleased to report however that the school were not deterred and have now installed a running loop.

I would like to thank Tom Dixon, Mike Shrive and Steve Perkin who helped to mark out a 200 metre track which really looked fantastic. Andy Wiseall is taking up a new job so we would like to find a volunteer who would take over and lead in our search for improved facilities.

Beacon School

I also visited the Beacon School in Amersham and met the new Headteacher. They have plenty of facilities which could interest us, as well as a recently enlarged carpark. There is just a chance the school would make a good race venue if we could get permission from the local farmer to use his land.

Training

The Seniors are now meeting on a Tuesday evening in the Rear Hall at Broadway Baptist Church in Chesham, having moved from Chiltern Hills Academy. It is a better location, with access to many training routes.

During the summer months, the group have successfully met at many locations within 10 miles of Chesham and this will continue in 2023. We now have several groups of Young Athletes and Seniors at Merchant Taylor's School, and this is proving an excellent venue.

In the winter, the Thursday group have combined with Steve Perkin's Young Athletes, meeting at Amersham and Chiltern Rugby Club and this has been very beneficial to both groups.

Athlete Numbers

Our sport is suffering from a reduction in active adult members. Many people are now working from home and have more choice of when they take exercise. Hopefully, with our three club races taking place this year we can encourage more runners to join our club.

We have also designed a small card which can be carried in a pocket which we can all carry and hand to other runners we see. I have been doing this for some time and good to report that several runners have joined the club as a direct result. These small cards are available at our Tuesday and Thursday sessions and our Sunday social runs.

Our Events

Pednor 5 was held in May and was well supported.

Shardeloes 10k did not go ahead on the 18th September mainly due to the lack of parking. The recently introduced and successful Artisan's Market in Old Amersham is held on the third Sunday each month so we would be competing with that event for parking places. In 2023 we plan holding our race on the 4th Sunday – 24th September, there will still be a 20 minute walk to the start for most athletes, but we think this can just be part of the warm up.

We have had problems with the route for Herbert's Hole 10k, particularly the slippery path after exiting Lowndes Park but we plan to move the event from November to a drier month, probably June.

All the above events need volunteers on the day, including marshals etc. but more importantly, members to organise the races, including Race Directors and Assistants. If you feel able to make a significant contribution to our sport, can I tempt you to come and help us? Each race needs a Race Director and a small working party. You could just be a member of the working party and do not need to volunteer for anything else.

Financial

Our financial position is strong. Subs are likely to continue at the present level, subject to being ratified at the AGM. In the light of the present financial crisis in the UK and if you have a problem in finding the funds to pay your subs, please have a quiet word with Tamsin Finch, our Membership Secretary.

Bearing in mind the difficult financial situation of many, we intend paying for "track fees" this year which normally athletes have to pay themselves. This will cost the club some 4k but should be covered by our race income. We will review the situation again next year.

Club Championship

With the pandemic causing much chaos in trying to hold our usual Club Championship each year we can at last look to reintroduce the Championship this year. Watch for more news about this on our club website!

Highlights of the Year

Steve Perkin has produced his usual excellent report on the year's athletic activities. The highlight for me was our extraordinary performance in the Chiltern Cross Country League. We gained first place in all 5 meetings.

A social event to celebrate this performance was hastily arranged at Chesham Cricket Club and supported by over 100 members.

Club Heroes

Graham Palser – Graham organises a number of "social runs" for Seniors every month. In addition, he took on the unenviable task of putting together and implementing many of the procedures we have in place, including Governance, Safeguarding and Inclusion Policies. The full set can be viewed on our website under "About" sections headed "Codes of Practice- Forms" and "Inclusion Policy". When you view, you will appreciate the amount of effort he has put in.

Ellie Bates – I am sure we have all read Ellie's "Race report" which usually appears on our website on a Sunday evening and highlights all the outstanding performances of the week/ weekend, some locally in the Chilterns, but many in other parts of the UK and the World where members have been

busy sprinting, pounding the streets or hillsides from 100 metres to 100+ miles. Thank you, Ellie, for your regular and often amusing contribution which raises our spirits every week!

Volunteers

We always need more help. If you are interested in coaching either adults or young athletes, then we are very happy to pay the fees of any athlete or parent who wants to qualify in order to help at the club.

In addition, if you are interested in seeing how the club is run, then why not come and sit in at one of our management meetings. You may well be able to help all the volunteers who put in a huge amount of work in ensuring the club provides enjoyment and a safe environment. We are also looking to beef up the committee to ensure we have cover for some of the Senior Positions.

Finally, thank you to everyone who gives their time and effort to help the club and our athletes. There are too many to name but the members of the Management Committee, marshals at all our events, coaches, time-keepers, team managers, race directors, and those unseen; pitching tents, clearing courses and ferrying youngsters – thank you!

Trevor Davies

Chairman