



**STILTON STRIDERS RUNNING CLUB
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday 24th April 2024 – 8.30pm
Club House Melton Town Football Club**

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Chris G, Alan B, Sandra B, Nikola D-R, Emma G, Rachel W, Kurt W, Neil J, Julie J, Suzie S, Sue G, Lee A, Tom W, Abi A, Andrew W, Michelle F, Michael M, Josh D, Emily H, Daniel K, David B, Daryl B, Jane M, John M, Andy N, Chris G, Mike B, Harvey H, Steve W, Duncan G, Ian B, David H, Katy H, Julie A, John R, James S, Ben H, Luke K, George W, Clive W, Mark P, Katie H, Helen P, Wayne H, Sue L, Nicola T and Chloe J **Quorate:** 47 senior members present therefore meeting declared quorate.

Apologies: Vicki L, Dan G, Mark T, Anne C, Matt W, Karen W, Rob M, Sharon M, James C, Kirsty B, Ian B, Mike W and Mark S

- **Minutes of previous AGM (26th April 2023)**

Accepted previous notes as true record. Proposer: Mark P, Seconded: John M

- **Matters Arising from 2023 AGM**

Review of club runs to incorporate new housing estates (Chris/Andy) In the last AGM, David Brook asked if the committee could review the Wednesday night routes to keep them varied and incorporate the new housing estates. Andy Nicholls and Chris Genes confirmed they had reviewed this, but found the new estates mainly had dead ends and that routes can't be made from them.

- **Chairs Report (Chris)**

As you all know I have given everyone notice of my intention to stand down as Chair at today's AGM. I have held this position for almost five years after I was asked to step up when the incumbent Chair unexpectedly resigned.

I have never regretted taking up the role and I have really enjoyed it.

To be truthful I'll probably miss the role and doing things that kept my mind active.

However, I feel the time is right for me to step down – Anne and I are both 70 this year and not getting any younger – we are moving house shortly and I'm heavily involved in caring for my 94 year old in-laws. I think in my role we've taken the club as far as we can and it's time to insert some new blood into the committee and with also Jane and Paul stepping down that time is now.

When I say we, by that I mean with the collective efforts and inputs of the current committee. At this point I must single out and thank one committee member especially and that's Andy. Andy does as much as I do and probably more – especially behind the scenes and without his fine eye for detail, understanding of club governance and his incredible memory my role would have been more challenging. Thank you, Andy, for your support and I'm sure you'll still offer this to a new chair.

During my tenure the club has gone through change – some will occur anyway, such as the natural change in the profile and makeup of members. That was more noticeable either side of the Covid pandemic.

I'm proud to see that participation in the Derby Runner XC races have significantly increased and teams sit well in the respective divisions.

Building on the enthusiasm and support members give each other in the XC races this has now spilled over to the LRRL races where we field larger numbers race than we probably have for many seasons and with finishes whooping and hollering support to later finishes, we have become known as being quite a noisy – but supportive club.

This feeling of support and togetherness has further transgressed to our winter club runs from MSV where in whatever the weather we've had an average of 28 runners turn up. Then there is the popular Outruns which again we have lots of runners turn up – perhaps that's because there is

the possibility of a beer and some chips afterwards. We'll talk a little more about Outruns later on the agenda.

I'm pleased that over the last couple of years we've reinvested club funds back into the club and its members by heavily subsidising club kit, donating to charities, paying for team entries, providing trophies, providing safe winter training facilities for our juniors and many more initiatives, whilst keeping our membership fees low. I'll leave it to Andy to share his financial details later and also lead a discussion on how we set our fees going forward.

The committee have moved well into the 21st century with our meetings taking place very regularly and remotely over Zoom. We have dispensed with cheques/cash and use on-line banking, WhatsApp for immediate discussion and actions, effective emails and Dropbox filing systems. May sound minimal but it's made such a difference.

There have been lots of other positives we have seen – parkrun takeovers, refresh of our website, Friday chatty runs, reinstatement of the Three Cub Challenge, participation in the Christmas Tree Festival, updated flyers and of course our continued success in hosting our ever popular Stilton 7 and a big thank you to everyone who either ran it and those who assisted in setting it up behind the scenes (John, Andy and Katie as RD) and those volunteers who acted as car park attendants, marshals or pre and postrace helpers, who without you the race wouldn't happen.

There is however, one item that I feel we have not developed to its full potential and that's the ability and support our Thursday 'sessions'. I must say now that that is not due to any lack of preparation and support from our two Run Leaders John and Paul. What I'd like to see now is that we increase our pool of active Run Leaders – which will be only John going forward as Paul is retiring from his role – and we don't have to rely on just John – who does have a life outside of Striders and likes to enjoy his time with Jane in the motorhome. I shall not say any more on the subject now and leave it to a further discussion later this evening.

That's it – I've said enough and my closing statement is I've enjoyed every moment. With regards to a new chair – which will come up later – I'll not be leaving the club and I will be available to offer support and advice if required. I'll be happy to still arrange the No Watch Race, Handicap Race, or anything else – but that's up to the new committee to determine. Unfortunately, that offer of help doesn't extend to Mrs G's Derby Runner cake baking.

Thank you - Chris

- **Treasurers Report (2023/2024 Year End Accounts) (Andy)**

The Income and Expenditure report for the year to 31st March 2024 was distributed via email to all members prior to this meeting. A few hard copies are available here too.

The report was audited by David Hall – a big thank you from me for taking over this role from Tom Boden.

Some highlights of the report include:

- Membership subs income was virtually unchanged year-on-year
- Membership fees payable to England Athletics were higher due to the £1 a member increase from £16 to £17 plus 6 more members (income last year, cost this year)
- The Juniors have been using the astroturf at MSV to train during the darker months and while the playing fields were too wet – costing £432. As a result of this we have decided to ask the juniors to pay more in the way of membership fees to contribute towards this cost – will discuss that more later on.
- Clothing sales made just under £900 loss in the year – some down to timing of purchases – but we made a conscious decision to subsidise club kit – giving a free t-shirt to juniors who join and subsidising all kit items by a couple of pounds (including the lovely new better quality but higher price hoodies and race vests).
- Training courses – £205 for an Assistant Coach course for Suzie Skelton (for the juniors section) plus a small amount for compulsory safeguarding courses too.
- Stilton 7 – for this year's race, we raised the entry fee by £1 to £8 for affiliated runners, increasing the income. However, due to the timing of the race, most of the costs will only be paid for in April/May 2024 after the race took place and after the end of the period of these accounts. The costs included in this year's accounts include over £500 of charity donations to give half of the surplus from the 2023 race to our nominated charities – Re-engage and Rainbows.
- Overall a surplus for the year of just over £1,500 and a bank balance of approximately £6,500 – but this is before around £2,500 of costs for this year's Stilton 7 race, due to the race being later this

year, plus we have in recent years donated half of the race profits to charity. So this is an artificially healthy position.

Rachel Wade questioned the Stilton 7 charity donations but it was confirmed by Andy Nicholls that these were from last year's Stilton 7 (2023)

Steve asked if the club kept a reasonable contingency fund as a reserve. Andy Nicholls confirmed that we have increased our reserve over the years, it was too high last year but we invested this back into club (kit subsidies and training etc), and it has now dropped steadily. Andy also said the threat of Stilton 7 not taking place in future years is something we need to review as it's a good income driver. Chris Genes clarified the mention of the potential closure of the Stilton 7 and clarified it's due to parking at Holwell Works as it's set to close down. He confirmed there will be a presence onsite for the next 15 months and that it will be a phased closure, so the race should be able to go ahead next year. The committee are looking at other options/ venues, and will review for future years, but we do have ideas for how to manage it.

Rachel Wade proposed and John Houghton seconded proposal to agree that the income and expenditure report is an accurate representation of the facts. Agreed by all present.

- **Secretaries Report (Jane)**

Jane Martin updated the club that there are currently 124 members of the Stilton Striders, and talked about stepping down from her role as Secretary for the 2024-2025 season.

- **Juniors Report (John Robinson)**

It's been a big year for the junior section, with John Robinson completing his Athletics Coach qualification in May to take the juniors forward into the 2023/24 season. Ian Johnson continued his invaluable role as a coaching assistant, with Suzie Skelton joining the team firstly as welfare officer and later as a qualified coaching assistant (congratulations Suzie!). A number of long-standing junior members progressed to the end of their journey with the club at the start of the year, and renewed focus was placed on ensuring the club could continue to offer a fun and rewarding provision for our junior members. Efforts were directed to weekly sessions that could safely accommodate a range of age and ability, with a number of new activities devised and trialled by the coaching team. A key change this year has been the move to the astroturf pitches over the winter, instead of the previous 'home' that was the market place and town centre. The move was supported financially by the club and has been a huge success, with a large increase in retention and in new members over the winter period. Our runners have competed for club, school and county at numerous track and cross country events throughout the year, and maintained a solid presence at local parkruns in their Striders vests! Efforts have been made to better align junior and senior sections of the club, which saw a combined awards evening held in January and the revitalisation of awards and recognition for junior athletes. Entering the 2024 season we now have 30+ juniors attending training sessions every week and more parents offering to support us, and the future looks very bright for the coming years.

- **Election of Officers (Chris)**

- a. Chair** – Chris Genes stood down but chaired the rest of the meeting. **Katie Houghton** put her name forward as the new chair. Proposed by John Martin, seconded by Abi Arnott, agreed by all present
- b. Treasurer** – **Andy Nicholls** - proposed by Chris Genes, seconded by John Houghton

- c. **Secretary – Emily Howett** – Proposed by Andy Nicholls, seconded by Suzie Skelton
- d. **Existing committee – Josh Dadd, John Robinson, Zoe Wyrko & John Martin** – Proposed by Chris Genes, Seconded by Mark Preston
- e. **Additional committee members – Kurt Wilson**, Proposed by John Martin, seconded by Julie Ashby, **John Houghton** to join, proposed by Michael Cooke, seconded by Jane Martin
- f. **Team/Club Captains** – all agreed it's a good idea and voted the following:
 - Men's Captain - Kurt Wilson, proposed by Mark Preston, Seconded by Luke Knowles – Summer and Winter
 - Women's Captain – Nicola Taylor (Summer), Nikola Dolphin-Rowland (Winter)

- **Membership Fees. Proposal for consideration and approval. (Andy)**

As highlighted before, we've had a period of many years with no increase in the fees most members pay to join Striders and the club has absorbed the impact of this while we had surplus cash in the bank.

However, given our reserves have decreased and England Athletics has increased their membership fees for athletes from £17 to £19 (for 1st claim, age 11+) and the club's affiliation fee from £150 to £200, we now need to increase fees across the board.

- Proposed fees are as follows:
- | Old | New | |
|----------------------------------|------------|--|
| • Senior (1 st claim) | £30 | £33 - no couples discount anymore |
| • Senior (2 nd claim) | £15 | £15 |
| • Junior (11+) | £17 | £27 |
| • Junior (<11) | £0 | £10 |
| • Pensioners | £20 | £25 - now over state pension age (rather than over 60) |
| • Students/unwaged | £17 | £20 |
| • Life members | Free | Free |

For late joiners between 1st Jan 2025 and 31st Mar 2025, there will be discounts given too – similar to last year:

- Those who have been EA affiliated in the past:
 - a. £25 for up to 3 months **or** £50 for up to 15 months
- Those who have never been EA affiliated:
 - a. £25 for up to 3 months **or** £33 for up to 15 months
 - b. We believe these fees are very competitive compared to many other Leicestershire running clubs and a lot cheaper than many other sports charge.

Ian Bickle questioned if the steep rise for the junior members was a concern. Andy Nicholls confirmed the fee increase information has been drip fed so they knew that this would happen and some have already paid. Suzie Skelton added as a parent it's cheaper than most extracurricular activities, Josh Dadd said we're the cheapest club in the area. John Robinson confirmed it hadn't been a problem when announced to the club.

Anthony Ison asked if the club had planned to give discounted membership to families at any point. Chris Genes confirmed there were no plans to do this at present.

Proposed by Josh Dadd, Mark Preston seconded, all attendees agreed

- **Club kit and subsidies (Andy)**

Anthony Ison asked if long sleeve tops could be considered. Andy Nicholls said we could put out a poll to members so we can get a feel for interest and if people agree they want this we can do a bulk order upfront like we did for the hoodies.

Andy Nicholls confirmed that the club would only be subsidising essential kit for members from now on. This includes the club race vests and t-shirts (white and blue with Striders logo), everything else will be sold at cost. He also confirmed we are drawing back from selling the old vests to go to the new ones, as people are much happier with these.

Agree - Proposer Luke Knowles, seconder Lee Allen, all attendees in agreement

- **Stilton 7 charity donation. (Chris)**

Each year we donate some of the Stilton 7 profits to local charities and Chris Genes made a call out to suggestions. He also confirmed it is a £150 donation that will be made rather than half of the profits from the race.

Rachel W suggested Pepper's - A Safe Place, proposed by Anthony Ison, seconded by Luke Knowles - <https://peppersasafeplace.co.uk/>

Nikola Dolphin-Rowland suggested supporting a charity called Maggie's which is helping local Melton man with cancer, proposed by Mark Preston, seconded by Abi Arnott - <https://www.maggies.org/>

- **LRRL and Derby Runner Leagues. (Chris)**

Chris Genes confirmed the season was off to a great start already and encouraged people to keep the entries coming. Great teams for the races we've had so far.

- **Summer Outruns (Chris)**

Proposed schedule, great to get away from the roads, always successful, beer and chips etc, should we run in parallel to road runs or instead of? Starting next Wednesday 1st May at The Grange, hosted by Katie and John Houghton.

A full schedule will be circulated to the club, but a couple of other sessions were mentioned:

- 8th May – Burrough Hill
- 24th July – Sandy and Nikola Dolphin-Rowland

Handed over to new chair Katie Houghton, who offered to put routes together for those that want to lead an outrun but don't know where to start

- **Run Leaders (Chris / John M)**

Chris Genes made a call out for more volunteers to be Run Leaders as the club rely so heavily on John Martin and Paul Jacobs to do the sessions. Paul is now retiring from his commitments to the club meaning John is on his own.

John Martin encouraged people to talk to him if they're interested in finding out more about the training. He said he found the course very interesting and learnt a lot about techniques and how people run from doing the courses.

Wayne Hackett & John Houghton put their names forward

Katie Houghton – said the more people volunteer the less you'll need to commit

- **General Discussion “How is the club doing – what do members want?” (Chris)**
 - a. Mark Tyler – suggests in winter could we consider we start at 6.30pm instead of 7pm so we're not hanging around for so long in the dark/ cold – Mark Preston proposer, Rachel Wade seconded – ONLY in the winter
 - b. Chris Genes - Melton Town Football Club are offering their clubhouse as a base on a Wednesday evening, so the club can meet there for the run briefings and use it afterwards for a post-run drink – Chris is leaving this with the committee to decide
 - c. Ian Bickle – asked if we considered hiring Ratcliffe School's running track in block sessions for short periods of time – lots of agreement for this – committee to review the options around this – John Robinson mentioned he's also looking at getting a grass track marked out at Melton Sports Village for the Juniors which could be used
 - d. Chris Genes – asked if Thursdays are still good for the training sessions, or would Tuesdays work better? Some people said they would do more training sessions on a Tuesday, but it was agreed that this needs to be put to a vote to the wider club members
 - John Robinson – mentioned he trains the Juniors on astroturf on Tuesdays which works really well and asked if the club would consider extending the bookings so the seniors could use the facility too? Committee to review this/ look at doing a poll to see what members think
 - Steve West – said he would prefer to space out the training sessions to allow for rest days/ breaks
 - e. Ian Bickle – asked if we can we do a run on the new bypass before it opens?
- **Any other business. (Chris)**
 - a. Kurt Wilson - Livingstone Relays – Kurt asked if the club are still supporting/ would like to participate, 3 mile run around Mallory Park Racetrack – 6th May (Bank Holiday weekend) has been successful in previous years
 - b. Chris Genes - Three Club Challenge - between Wreake, Barrow and the Striders – we hosted at The Grange, Wreake are hosting the next race at Syston Rugby Club on Wednesday 12th June – Hog roast at the end so need to know rough numbers

Meeting closed at 9.32pm