

Erme Valley Harriers Annual Survey 2015 - Responses

Overview

The purpose of this document is to review the responses from Erme Valley Harriers members received as part of the 2015 club survey.

Of the 42 recorded responses received 40 stated they were either happy or happy but could do better

This document collates those suggestions about how we can improve in terms of what we can offer as a club

Coaching

A number of responses received asked about more coaching at different levels and personal coaching plans. This could include advice/ training programmes from either the club coaches or other club members, not just for juniors, with the information displayed on the notice board, or a forum on the website rather than just Facebook.

Periods set aside for general coaching or discussions on technique to support all members regularly attending events pushing to achieve PBs.

Personal training programmes for more serious athletes, strength and conditioning to be slightly more challenging and overall fitness testing. This could also include more specific training programmes to fit the different abilities of the athletes and more focus on fitness and stamina for those who need it.

Consider speakers to come and talk about nutrition, positive mental attitude etc.

Club Training runs

The majority of the responses were concerning increased organisation of training runs on a Tuesday evening. For example runs and routes to cater for all abilities and new runners and routes of different lengths planned before sessions. Training organised by groups' i.e. different paces working together so that no-one is running alone or gets lost. These could to be publicised in advance.

By running in groups of different speeds e.g. fastest group go off first, then 2nd fastest etc. would avoid overtaking and if you are in too quick a group, you can drop back. If you're feeling in good nick, you can try to catch up the faster group ahead.

It was also suggested that a greater range of races could be promoted especially the many trail races and park runs. On the training nights there needs to be a clear 2-3 differentiated routes so as to offer all levels of runner opportunity. Structured training including things such as bleep tests, speed training and warm up or injury prevention exercises could be incorporated.

This would reduce the feeling that athletes of all abilities are not catered for, especially on a Tuesday eve, where the runners who are new or slightly slower find it

difficult to keep up with the more elite runners. This would provide progression for runners through groups as they improve, along with opportunities to train in development groups

Whilst we now have a process for ensuring runners have returned on an evening, we should have a designated back marker runner-for safety on runs. To be more inclusive for slower runners of 10+min mile pace. The long club runs fragment and you can get isolated. Perhaps pace groups with a bibbed runner if required, so that people can stick together.

There was also a view that it would be good if there was an organised training session on Thursdays, e.g. Speed work on / around the rugby pitch and more cross country training.

Plan smaller, informal club runs where people don't always have time to go out on the evening, could there be an improved process / medium to mention runs so others can join in

Beginners / New Members

Can we have people running in groups according to pace with a group leader and regrouping if need be, not just leaving people to run on their own. This is especially important for new members who do not know where they are going, and for the safety of existing members.

New members should be welcomed with enthusiasm and possibly some sort of welcome pack or procedure that included an outline of the competitions etc. and a calendar of events?

A better link between the beginners group and the club as well as more variation in terms of training e.g. strength sessions and different approaches to training

Can we have more information / involvement for new members, it is always difficult to learn routes.

Could we have a fact sheet on how the leagues and competitions work? We also people need to know about having to wear the club vest at certain competitions e.g. Exeter Track & Field in May.

More varied training sessions and group runs Club could be more encouraging to new runners plan safe routes limiting road crossings

More effort to recruit new members, many people think clubs are only for fast runners so need to appeal to joggers etc to increase numbers

Finally we should make it easier to identify run leaders and coaches, perhaps by giving them special vests? As a newbie I don't know who any of them are and it doesn't seem obvious. Give the evening runs more structure so the groups aren't quite such a hazard to other road/path users (see my previous emails) and make it easier for folks that like to run in smaller groups at irregular times to get together and

do something. The club is quite hard to penetrate as a newbie (newbie to the club, not to running).

In terms of the website - as a newbie to the club it can be hard to find specific information on occasion. More basic information on club competitions, key events etc. Guides for newbies to track and field events would also be great. Including how to get involved and who to talk to.

Juniors

An extra training night for the more serious junior athletes

Occasional specialist coaching on high-jump or throws? See coaching requests that could also apply to juniors

A competition kit that fits juniors - the current vest top, even in the smallest size, is too big for the majority of primary aged Juniors. I did e-mail the club with regard to this and received no reply.

As a parent I would have found it very useful to have a leaflet that explains athletics. I had never heard of Power of 10, Sportshall etc. I think sometimes knowledge is assumed. Every year a basic leaflet detailing what events young people can take part in would be good. For example what is Last Ditch Throws? What is the standard for Power of 10 for each age group?

If children were more motivated by seeing these things more might take part. Also, guidance on shoes (we have no idea) and clothing – when to wear kit etc

To consider a parent liaison desk at junior sessions,

More sportshall training in the winter

Physio Access

It was suggested we consider discounted Physio access for members

Athletics Facilities

An athletics track we can use, has this been discussed with the School?

Less on road running, Erme Valley is an athletic club and not just a running club

It would be great to see the seniors competing on the track alongside the juniors as this is the only time we can actually compete as a club!!

Training Facilities at Ivybridge Rugby Club and Ivybridge Community College

There were 40 separate comments made by members as part of the survey relating to the Rugby club of which 25 were positive / happy with the facilities. However it is

important to understand the comments to help us improve the facilities both at the rugby club and the community college

Ivybridge Community College

The key feedback was around having access / use to a proper track / throwing cages to train on/in which would enhance the club as a whole to attract more members. Could we consider more equipment to enable members to try out different sports? Specifically for primary juniors could we consider more hurdle practise with hurdles spaced correctly for competition.

Feedback included - The College on a Thursday suits the training for the track athletes but feel other than offering the children/adults a few different activities alongside normal sessions like perhaps strength and conditioning sessions would make a change. Just a suggestion, outside agencies could benefit the children by having someone different with a specialism in that area i.e. I know Jess Harvey is doing her masters in strength and conditioning. Perhaps a few sessions at a negotiated cost would enhance the children's skills and move the training sessions forward!?

Ivybridge Rugby Club

The overwhelming issue fed back by members was the standard of cleanliness in terms of showers / changing areas and specifically the lack of female changing facilities where it is felt a priority has to be to improve the ladies changing as it is not inclusive or attractive to current or new runners

Feedback included:

Overall I think we were better at the Leisure Centre. There were better facilities including ladies changing, the location and environment were much more akin to our profile as a running and fitness group and the community liaison opportunities were greater.

The opportunities to use and be seen in the local pubs were all there and we should have made more of them. However we are where we are now and cannot return. The Rugby Club will always be the Rugby Club and not the Harriers Club. I am not convinced that the Rugby Clubbers are doing more than just tolerating us and it is not value for money.

The atmosphere at the Rugby Club often makes it feel like the running club are not welcome and the changing facilities are not ideal but it is easy to access – but it is nice to have a place that the club can use as a meeting point and for events.

I feel the only plus side for me using the rugby facilities is it's closer to the moor and the country lanes in the summer months for training!

I tend to leave my bag now in the car as it's a pain getting keys off of other members and I certainly wouldn't use the shower there - mainly because of where it is and there's only one. Also as I'm not really a drinker the bar isn't a plus for me but a few

others tend to use it but I have found on occasions the bar area when r/club have matches etc can get extremely busy.

Club Website

The feedback regarding the website was extremely positive with a high level of awareness of the site and people use it regularly

The main areas to focus on improvements were around more information about the performances of fellow athletes, updated in month training information and more information for newbies our juniors.

Improved navigation

Dates for events including sportshall / cross country

More information around training plans e.g. speed work

Information regarding PBs current and historical

Consideration for an open forum for members to log in, to promote discussions, exchange ideas, car share to races

Can we ensure email lists are maintained

Online membership renewal, may save a lot of headaches and makes it easier for the members, as in they can renew when and where they want, within the time scale and not have to remember a cheque book (which most rarely use these days)

Club Facebook / Twitter

The feedback was based on whether people used Facebook or not!

Where people used it they said they liked it – but because it was updated by a small number of people it focussed on a limited number of people and personal performances rather than more generic club information

It was suggested that we could we link Facebook to specific race events e.g. you could click on something to say you are running in an event. This would help with potential car sharing & may generate more interest in events.

Consider an increased number of pictures including use of Instagram

Use Facebook to encourage members to organise informal runs if they cannot make it to the club organised events on a regular basis.

For younger members Twitter was thought to be a good idea

Could the club consider use of Strava It is a great way to encourage healthy competition and see what everyone is up to, at present there are only about 6 people who have joined Erme Valley on Strava. Let's get more club members on iTunes!

The clubs Facebook account has been wrongly setup. The account has been setup as a user. Instead the account should be setup as a club and an invite sent to all

club members. There are a number of benefits to this approach including the club being able to nominate more than 1 person to moderate the account. The club can be setup with open access so that non club members can see what is going on (good advertising for new members).

The Facebook page is under used as people tend to look at that more than visit websites. The Facebook page is getting better and is starting to contain information rather than just senior results!! More junior info on please!!

Social Events

The general view was could we have more social events and family events to bring the club together as one unit? It was good to have some fun events this year.

Feedback included - The occasional group away weekend would be brilliant and bring us all together. The club is small and sometimes we take ourselves too seriously. Other clubs still do the races but often seem to be light hearted and more inclusive of all abilities in a more relaxed way. We can take great credit for some good athletes originating from the club but we must face the fact that it is a small club and cannot expect to retain runners who want more.

Overall, as a club the size the Erme Valley Harriers is, members think we have done brilliantly as we encourage the slow but enhance the fast and have international athletes and officials.

General Comments

I feel that we should praise and embrace all our athletes, who have competed at the race round up session on the training nights. New comers and slower runners are still working as hard and I feel we should embrace them just as much as the people who win.

In my opinion the club is a bit top heavy! Basically all we ever hear about is the top end of the club! We have runners who have stories and have hit their own personal goals but because they are not doing half marathons in 1 hr 20 they don't get mentioned in local mags, fb page, before s meeting etc for example If a members general half marathon pace is 1hr 50min and then they achieve 1hr 45mins this will not be mentioned, knocking 5 mins off a half marathon is fantastic and should be applauded!

As a footnote I believe we should be fair across the board in giving praise, I am not being funny but want the club to evolve and move forward in a positive way.