

ERME VALLEY HARRIERS

Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting held at IRFC on Tuesday 14th November 2023

1. Apologies

A full attendance and apologies are shown at the end of these notes.

2. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes were adopted as a true record. Proposed by Richard Lane and seconded by Shirley Watson

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Officers Reports

Chair's Report: (Tom Davies)

Hello Erme Valley Harrier members. Thank you for taking the time to read my second Chair's annual report.

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Committee for all of their efforts over the last year, a lot of work goes on unseen by every member of the committee which allows the club to run smoothly. If anybody else would like to join the committee please do get in touch we would welcome input from the full spectrum of club members.

Secondly, I'd like to thank all of you for coming along on a club night, it's great to see so many people turning up regularly on a Tuesday night. We're trying to keep the planned training sessions following a similar format each month including regular speed sessions along with hill reps which always seem to be popular. If anyone has suggestions for routes or speed sessions etc then please let me know.

Looking back on my aims for 2023 we had three targets:

1. Recruit more run leaders to assist on club nights
2. Increase senior membership level to greater than 150
3. Increased engagement with club members and organisation of regular club trips to races etc

We have a few more people leading / helping lead club runs now but we could still do with more volunteers. We have increased our senior membership compared to 2022 but we haven't achieved our stretch target of 150, we still have ambitions to reach this number and we are keen to develop strategies for increasing both our senior and junior membership numbers. We have had a successful year with club trips to local and regional relays races. The planned club trip to the Tavy 7 had to be cancelled due to a mix up with the minibus firm unfortunately. I'd be very keen to get a club trip organised for the spring so if anyone has suggestions for a race we could travel to together then please let me know.

Looking back at the last year, a few things stand out as highlight for me:

Firstly, our continued success at hosting races that are popular with running clubs and social running groups alike. The 10k continues to be a very successful local race and we are praised for how well organised it is. The relays are always great fun and once again there was a great atmosphere (despite the pouring rain and obliterated race numbers). Finally, our fell race in its second year attracted even more runners than the first year and the feedback is always positive despite the challenge the route presents.

It simply wouldn't be possible for us to host these events without the support of our members, can I say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped out in any way at these races. Your efforts are very much appreciated, we are very grateful to you supporting us when we host these events.

Secondly, it was lovely to see so many people at the Tavistock and Torbay relays in the summer, I was especially pleased to see a good number of our juniors representing the club at Tavistock. Torbay relays will be remembered for the for our men's team winning the race outright and in a record time; especially pleasing was that Luke, Charlie and Jamie are juniors who have been part of the junior set-up at the club. We followed this up with a trip to Sutton Coldfield to take part in the Midland Road Relays for the first time in the clubs history, the team performed extremely well against a very high standard field.

My third highlight was the 40th anniversary celebration including the relay round Filham Park, many thanks to Keith and Jayne for all their efforts in organising both the running and social aspects of the event. It was great to see lots of current and former members reminiscing and sharing stories of hard cross country races and club trips. Many thanks also to Dave Fox for putting together the bumper addition of The Harrier (along with the regular monthly editions) with some great race reports and photos.

On the subject of cross-country, I'd like to thank Becky Lee for her continued management of the cross-country teams last season and continuing to do so this year. We had a fantastic turnout at the recent Newnham cross-country and it would be great if we could have a similar showing at the next race at Newquay.

Parkrun continues to be very popular with a lot of our members, I think it demonstrates the spirit of our club that you can turn up at any of the local parkruns and your almost certain to bump in to a club member and often share a coffee with them after the run. The weekly reports put together by Andy Trigg are always fascinating and it's great to see so many people reaching run and volunteering milestones.

The couch to 5K and beyond group continues to be a success with thanks to Sharon, Ruth, Steve and Phil for their commitment and efforts with this. Thanks also to Phil for his organisation of the regular away day runs on a Friday evening and the occasional breakfast run.

Chris has covered the finances so I won't go in to detail but we have essentially broken even this year which given the increased number of events we have paid for members to enter, the 40th anniversary celebrations, social occasions alongside general inflationary costs I think is a good outcome. Our 10k remains the bedrock of our finances and helps us to keep our membership fees down but we aren't able to absorb all of the additional costs we are faced with and as such there will be a modest increase in annual membership fees this year.

My aims for the club next year are as follows:

1. Increase senior membership level to greater than 150
2. Encourage even more club members to participate at some of the races available to them as part of their membership
3. Increase entry numbers to the 10k, our relays and our fell race.

Thank you again for reading and I look forward to seeing you at club or a race soon.

Tom Davies

Secretary's Report: (Keith Reed)

Overall it has been a very good year for the club and we were pleased to celebrate the 40th Anniversary with the celebration event in September. It was really good to see some old members who all fondly remembered their time with the club and wished us well for the future. We are now looking forward to the 50th in 2033.

The senior training sessions have been well attended, and the junior numbers at sessions have increased steadily.

We have continued with using the Rugby Club as our training base which has been largely successful although the use of changing room is still an issue. There are no immediate plans to develop the clubhouse despite our continual discussions with them. We hope there can be some resolution to this in 2024.

Our membership currently stands at 223 which is up from 2022. The breakdown is 135 seniors (of which 8 are volunteers) and 88 juniors of which 38 are under 11. The lack of primary school athletics is a factor in the recruitment of new juniors as well as the diverse range of other sports on offer for juniors.

Tom has continued to do a great job as Chair, taking on the Handicap as well which has gone well. Chris Prall has continued as treasurer keeping us on a sound financial footing, which he will share with us at the AGM.

The 10K went very well although numbers have still not returned to pre COVID levels. There were a few challenges with the route but hopefully they are now overcome and we look forward to another good race when it returns to its more traditional date in 2024. We also staged the ever popular relays again (in the rain) which also went well. We also put on the 3 Tops Fell Race again with slightly increased numbers. As I said before these events require a lot of help from our members who do a fantastic job. We are very fortunate indeed to have such a great bunch of experienced volunteers. I would like to thank all of the committee for all their hard work again in this year. Particular thanks to Sharon for all she does for the club. I would also like to thank the coaches who have again done a great job. We have lost a few but also gained two. Also a huge thank you to Dave Fox for producing more fantastic Harrier magazines including the 40th Anniversary edition. Ken has also done an excellent job with the kit. We continue to try and keep in contact via Facebook, Twitter, emails and the website as well as meeting up face to face on a more regular basis.

Looking ahead to 2024 we face challenges as always but I'm sure if we all work together we can overcome.

The main ones are as follows:-

- Facilities as both the Rugby Club and Ivybridge College are not ideal and we do need a plan going forward.
We need to offer our members a good experience in every way.
- Encouraging the juniors to take part in club competitions particularly track and field.
Improve communication and understanding of parents.
- Recruit new juniors, re-establish relationship with primary schools and ICC.
- Recruit and train more coaches and volunteers in general. We need to have a succession plan to replace our older volunteers whilst maintaining continuity.

I hope you all enjoy the AGM and that you gain a lot of understanding of how the club works. It is an opportunity for you to put your views forward. The club will continue to go forward in a safe, sustainable way in line with the requirements of the governing bodies and our members.

Treasurers Report: (Chris Prall)

This year we have achieved a relatively even balance financially after the 2 COVID years and last year's profitable year when we made over £5k. We made £1.5k profit this year, although we are aware of upcoming late invoices that would have resulted in us effectively breaking-even this year.

The major contributing incomes in the year were Senior Membership, Junior Membership, Junior Training, 10k Race Entries and Sponsorship, to a lesser extent the Relays, and this year: Reserve Bank Account Interest. Overall income at £22.6k was down by £1.1k since last year, largely due to a fall in 10k Race entries, possibly because of a date change from our preferred day.

The major outgoings were for England Athletics Fees, Rugby Club Hire (for senior training), ICC Hire (for juniors training), EVH Race Costs, Entry Fees for members, the Anniversary Event and the Juniors Awards evening. Overall outgoings at £21.1k were up by £2.5k since last year, due to the combination of the one-off Anniversary Event, the Junior Awards evening (which was not held last year), an increase in contribution to Race Entries for members, and an increase in Charitable Donations.

When broken out separately, the 10k Race made approximately £4.6k profit, whilst the Relays made around £600 and the Fell Race around £100. Without the races, the remaining club activities would have made a loss of approximately £3.6k. The seniors and to a lesser extent the juniors are subsidised by the profits from the races, in particular the 10k.

These subsidies allow us to offer many benefits to club members. The more that our members get involved, the more they will get back from the club. These include free entry into Sportshall and Track & Field events for juniors, free entry into Cross Country and Relay events for juniors & seniors, fully paid-for Anniversary and Junior Awards events, a subsidised Christmas Party, LiRF (Leadership in Running Fitness) and Coaching courses fully paid for, subsidised Kit, Sports Equipment purchased when required and an increase in Charitable Donations this year including £500 to Devon Wildlife Trust (from 10k Race profits) and £180 to the Dartmoor National Park (from Fell Race profits). Plus, buffet food for the AGM.

To keep the accounts in balance, it is proposed to increase membership costs for seniors and older juniors (who pay EA fees) by £4 each, to cover the £3 rise in individual EA fees since last time we increased prices, plus the rise in club EA affiliation costs from £150 to £200. Inflation has also increased costs generally. Whilst we could hold back increases again, we want to make the same offerings as a club without overly drawing from our cash reserves.

The club has good cash reserves, with an overall cash balance of £39.5k, which approximately equates to 1.9 years of current outgoings.

An independent check of last year's accounts was carried out in December 2022, with no major findings but some recommendations. The plan is to do the same again with an independent (non-committee) member.

Chris Prall

The accounts were accepted by the meeting

Proposed by Shirley Watson

Seconded by Brian Short

5. Newsletter

Most members are aware of the club newsletter known as 'The Harrier' but for the benefit of any new members present the newsletter puts in place what is happening in the club from race reports, training information, photos etc. and is a good reference guide. The Harrier is issued once a month and is sent out by email to members on my distribution list and also appears on the club website.

I did have some computer problems at the beginning of the year and had to purchase a new laptop. This meant the January Newsletter went out very late and I therefore decided not to issue a February edition so I could get back to some form of normality. I probably made up for the missing Harrier by issuing the bumper edition of the 40th Anniversary Harrier, which I will talk about later.

I would like to thank in particular your Chairman Tom Davies and Secretary Keith Reed for their regular reports, which are always important to read if members can't make club nights and as a reference guide. Also many thanks to anyone who has sent me various photographs and reports. I was very impressed with photos taken at the Giants Head and the Grizzly. Will Battershill also submitted several great photos of his success at winning the British Steeplechase Championship. Hopefully Will can get to the Olympics next year and become the first athlete from Erme Valley Harriers to do so. I also took photographs at various venues and was pleased to make the Looe 10 for the first time.

Charlie Milward recently submitted a great report on his trip to Bilbao. I would encourage any of you to send me reports of any different races you run in as they make good reading and perhaps encourage you to try something different. I am aware that Craig MacAlpine is running a 100km ultra marathon in Thailand in December and I have already asked him for a report and some photos. I also believe that Tim Steere will be going to the Tokyo Marathon in March to continue on his journey to complete the Abbott World Six Major Marathon series. Hopefully I can persuade Tim to write about the trip.

Turning now to the 40th Anniversary Harrier. This was a monumental task to take on and something which I probably won't do again. I had to decide what to put in the Harrier relating to 40 years of Erme Valley and pick out some important moments and events, apart from trying to get the Newsletter in some form of order. Hopefully you enjoyed what I put together as it took me around 4 weeks to sort out. I decided that there had to be a limit and due to this also issued a separate photo compendium. The Harrier is also an important historical document for the club and is probably worth saving to look back on years down the road.

I am often unaware as to how the Harrier is received and to what extent it is read but hopefully you find time to read it and enjoy its contents.

The meeting universally thanked Dave for all his hard work and dedication. Everyone is truly grateful for this valuable club asset, long may it continue.

5. Election of Officers

Monica Bristow in her role of President took the chair for this part of the meeting

Chairman - The committee had proposed Tom Davies as Chair. This was nominated by Ken Summers and seconded by Shirley Watson.

Secretary – The committee had proposed Keith Reed. This was nominated by Shirley Watson and seconded by Andy Trigg.

Treasurer – The committee had proposed Chris Prall. This was nominated by Nick Baker and seconded by Steve Watson.

Volunteer Co-ordinator - The committee had proposed Sharon Terry. This was nominated by Nick Baker and seconded by Shirley Watson.

All posts unanimously elected.

Sharon and Ruth Terry will continue as the elected Welfare Officers

6. Adoption of the Committee

Phil Adderley and Paul Ross are standing down but, Phil Warren, Dave Rayfield, Chris Rickard and Charlie Milward plus the officers and Welfare officers will continue. Emma Lake was accepted on to the committee as a new member. The committee was elected en bloc. This was agreed with no exceptions.

7. Adoption of Revised Constitution

The EVH constitution was revised in lines with EA guidelines and to clarify various areas that were ambiguous. It had been circulated and was also published on the website.

An acceptance was proposed by Phil Warren and seconded by Steve Watson.

The constitution was accepted unanimously.

8. Subscriptions 2024

Because of the increase in EA fees (as outlined in the Treasures report) it was proposed that the membership rates need to be increased. That is Senior is £35, 12-18 Years £20 and Under 11's £10.

An acceptance of the new fees was proposed by Andy Trigg and seconded by Brian Short.

The new fees were accepted unanimously.

9. Open Forum

Nick Mc Mahon asked about the future plans for the Rugby Club and Tom and Keith explained that we had held meeting with the outgoing Chair and are trying to set up a meeting with the new one. The grand redevelopment plans look to be financially difficult because of the lack of development by the house builders. It is hoped that less ambitious plans can be undertaken to allow improved changing facilities for our members.

We should look at other club trips (Richmond or Cardiff?). We are also looking into teams for the 12 Stage in April. Peter Allen asked about private Facebook and WhatsApp. It was explained that these do exist. Peter agreed to take on a weekly news info sheet sent electronically

Tom thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

Attendees (44)

Monica Bristow
Tom Davies
Keith Reed
Chris Prall
Paul Ross
Sharon Terry
Ruth Terry
Phil Warren
Dave Fox
Lindsay Lane
Richard Lane
Dave Engledew
Alison Engledew
Bryan Short
Louise Creber
Barry Neal
Becky Lee
Dave Rayfield
Lynne Whitfield
Ed Hill
Nick Baker
Steve Watson
Shirley Watson
Nick Bristow
Ken Summers
Val Wookey
Kate Medlicott
Chrissie Milward
Charlie Milward
Kay McDowell
Chris Rickard
Andy Trigg
Emma Lake
Nick Bristow
Andrea Mitchell
Andrew Mitchell
Peter Allen
Andy Trigg
Jenny Hayes
Luke Hayes
Allister Bristow
Liz Bristow
Tim Steere
Ross Busby
Jayne Reed

Apologies – Dan Francis, David Lloyd, Carol & Mike Hansen:, Russ & Katie Mogridge, Stafford Williams, Jeremy Westmore, Phil Adderley