

STRATHEARN HARRIERS

The club for runners in the Crieff and Comrie area of Perthshire

President's Report 2022-23

Presented to the Annual General Meeting, 24 March 2023, by Jason Miles-Campbell

Foreword

A year ago, I looked forward to 2022-23 being the return to full, post-pandemic, club activities. Thanks to the hard work of many, I feel we've moved on positively, and it's always a pleasure to bring together all the club's activity for each week's club bulletin. There's been discussion over the years as to whether the bulletin needs to be weekly, but what's sure is that there's never a shortage of material. I'd like to give particular mention to Nicola Watson for leading on the club's Senior running, and Phil Mestecky leading on the club's Junior running – in both cases, leading the club strongly back from the challenges faced in 2020 and 2021.

Last year, I noted three areas I thought the committee should address:

1. The frustrations involved for some in using LoveAdmin, our membership system. Jon Williams, as club secretary, sought to both explore alternatives and review how we were using LoveAdmin. The decision was taken to continue with LoveAdmin, with some tweaks to system and process, and it seems that renewal has been largely straightforward for this year's membership.
2. Working to balance support for performance alongside wider participation in running continues to merit discussion. The successes within our Junior ranks should give us particular pride this year, and within the Seniors we've seen hill race wins, and good age-category results across all types of running.
3. Getting more members involved in the club's organisation. I'm pleased to see we have some new nominations for this year's committee, and some new members of our race organising committees.

Governance

I am satisfied that the club has been run in keeping with its constitution. The Strathearn Harriers Committee has met 7 times this past year, some in-person and some online (in addition to *ad hoc*/sub-group meetings). I can't thank enough all who have contributed to the committee, making my role as president straightforward, and subject to my re-election, I look forward to working with re-elected and new committee members as I serve my fifth year on the committee (and the last consecutive year I'm permitted).

I'd like to give particular thanks to Nicola Watson, who (despite not being a committee member) committed to lead Senior running and assist the committee across the year. I was very happy for her beyond-the-call support for the club to be again recognised through the President's Trophy. Whilst it's good to get others involved in the organisation of training and racing, Nicola's organisation and encouragement have to be recognised as outstanding.

Likewise, I must also acknowledge the unwavering support that Phil Mestecky has given in leading the success of the Juniors this past year. Whilst he'd be the first to acknowledge the help of others, his dedication to seeing our Juniors progress and prosper has been second to none.

Club Activity

Training

The committee has continued to stress the importance of club training – both in terms of performance, but also inclusion. The social and support aspects of training together can't be undervalued. As a club, we'll always face the challenge of the practicalities of bringing together different types and abilities of runner, and from a fairly large catchment area. But our training numbers are generally good, and continue to grow.

Club Championship

Recognising the diversity of running within the club, the design of the Senior Club Championship has been an ongoing discussion. The 2022 edition sought to bring in a degree of flexibility to accommodate. Whilst the overall number of finishers was lower than we'd like, there were good numbers taking part in at least one championship race (22 women and 15 men).

Club Races

Despite Strathearn Harriers being a relatively small club, our trinity of races once again took place in 2022 with strongly positive feedback overall.

Race Participation

Once again, despite its relatively small size, the club is represented at a broad range of competition. In both the Juniors and Seniors, we continue to encourage participation in racing, and look forward to the 2023 Club Championship and the Summer Race Series providing an incentive for us to line up, en masse, in Strathearn Harriers colours and to test ourselves against others and the clock.

Media and Communications

The weekly email bulletin continues, covering general club matters, Seniors News and Juniors News sections. As before, we know from analytics that the email is opened (and hopefully read) by a decent proportion of our membership. We continue to use our members-only Facebook groups 'Strathearn Harriers Members' and 'Strathearn Harriers Juniors' Facebook group to coordinate activity. We maintain a public Facebook page, 'Strathearn Harriers' which is used to highlight to a broader community our activity, and entice new membership, with some success.

This year, the club has had issues with its website hosting and email service. Thanks are due to Al Nicholl for persevering in the face of less-than-perfect customer service sometimes, and restoring both services.

Social Activity

In addition to race-related social gatherings (such as the 5k finale to the Club Championship and the Juniors' Intraclub Cross Country event), Liz Mestecky led on getting us back to the ways of an annual prizegiving and ceilidh in January. The club's members responded, and ticket sales were healthy; and the feedback was that a great night was had, bring the club closer together. And I've never seen a more athletic session of ceilidh dancing! Whilst recognition must be given for the substantial work that goes into organising such events, their value is clear, and the committee is keen to continue to provide such opportunities.