

Saffron Striders AGM

Wednesday 9th December 2020, 8pm

(Held Virtually due to Coronavirus)

Present:

Alistair Cooke	Nick Wilkinson	Charlotte Diggins
Fiona Halls	Chloe Brown	Alan Jones
Graeme Loudain	Arnold Sienerth	Tony Lumsden
Martin Green	Nigel Coates	Guy Tremayne
Tony Kelly	Lucie Heanley	Ian MacDougall
Mark Frow	Keith Savill	Marco Arcidiacono
John James	Mark Fitzhenry	Shani Lewis
Iain Rogers	Simon Ede	Stuart Gibson
Alan Gleaves	Kate Holden	Lisa Plumb
Tony Kelly	Jo Dallas	Paula Thurston
John James		

1. Apologies for absence:

Neil Halls	Wendy MacDougall	
Chris Dodge	Trish Cooke	
Nick White	Margit Wendelberger-James	
Rebecca White		

Alistair opened the AGM and thanked everyone for attending what was the first ever Saffron Striders AGM to be held *Virtually* due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alistair thanked the Committee for all of their support in what has been a very challenging and disruptive year to our usual programme of club activities. Specifically he thanked Graeme Loudain for his hard work to ensure we could continue to meet on Tuesdays in a Covid secure environment, Alan Jones for being ever-present on Thursday nights with his Virtual Core & Circuit training sessions and Kate Holden for her work on the Monthly Newsletters in that it had been of great importance to see the Club communicating regularly with members throughout the March and November lockdowns.

Alistair also took a moment to recognise the sad loss of former member Steve White in May this year and that the Club through a kind bequest of his wife Carol and sons Dale and Eric would be memorialising Steve's involvement with the club via a Perpetual trophy for the Strider who has the best off-road performance of the year as selected by the Committee each year.

Finally Alistair also thanked all the Striders who have renewed their memberships this year and to those were ever so kind as to top-up their membership to the usual fee annual fee which allowed us to boost not only the club account but also the club bursary fund.

2. Minutes of the 2019 meeting for approval

Minutes of the 2019 meeting were reviewed and no comments or updates were made so they were then signed off

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Treasurer's report on balance sheet and statement of accounts

Ian had circulated detailed Club and Race Accounts prior to the AGM and had the following comments to be added at the meeting.

The Club currently had £8,277.90 in its account. Last year it had £10,138.70.

An unexpected boost to our finances was that we incurred fewer race expenses this year as we were unfortunately unable to hold either the Fast 5 race or the Kevin Henry 5K series.

We did however take the chance this year to invest in new exercise equipment for outdoor gym sessions, lighting and signage to allow us to hold socially distanced training nights at Carver Barracks, and in First Aid equipment to ensure the safety of Club members.

Hopefully once Covid-19 has gone, we can take advantage of the increased subscriptions expected from our enlarged membership to put our finances on a better footing next year and also put on another beginners course in 2021 if we can, that will also help to boost the finances!

Alistair also added that the club now also pays a fee to Carver Barracks and had also invested in getting some lights to be used for training up there as well as First Aid kits for the Guide Runners to carry around with them on a Tuesday evening.

Alistair finished by saying that the club charged a reduced fee to members of £20 for the year and of this amount £16.50 went to England Athletics and just £3.50 went to the club for each individual member.

Alistair thanked Ian for doing a great job of keeping the Accounts up to date

5. Committee Member reports

a. Membership Officer

Graeme Loudain gave his report:

	Paid up Members	Change on LY	Beginners (included in members)	2 nd Claim
Dec 2020	201	-42	0	5
Dec 2019	242	+84	71	4
Dec 2018	158	+32	53	
Dec 2017	126		24	

There has been a significant decrease in members since a year ago. After the 2020 renewals had been issued in April 2020, membership fell from 254 in March to 169 in April because of those who did not wish to renew. I understand from Simon (Previous membership officer) that this sort of reduction, about 33%, is fairly typical of past renewals.

Of the 84 beginners who took part in the 2019 course, 31 renewed their memberships.

Between April and now, membership has increased again to 201, which is still higher than two years ago in 2018. In particular we had 25 joiners since we started running at Carver in August.

As we had no Beginners course this year, none of the new members were beginners. If we had held a beginners course and come close to recruiting the 84 beginners we had last year, then our total membership would be much higher than last year, potentially 284 versus 242 last year. There are no unpaid membership fees.

Gender

	2020	2019
Female	86 (43%)	127 (53%)
Male	115 (57%)	115 (47%)
	201	242

There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of female members. It is thought that this largely due to the high proportion of females who made up the 84 beginners in 2019, who did not then renew memberships in 2020

Graeme also mentioned that the introduction of using Pay zip to process memberships had also made life a lot easier.

COVID-19 Coordinator

As the club's coordinator Graeme would like to thank all of those Striders who have maintained safe procedures while we have been running at Carver airfield.

For reference of all members, a copy of the requirements we have to follow are below if we are to maintain a Covid Secure Environment which allows us to run as a group.

We have invested in lighting and other equipment that allows us to continue running at Carver as a group even in darkness.

- Liaising with the facility manager/landowner in relation to all matters concerning COVID-19
- Producing site-based risk assessments ensuring that the club is compliant with government guidelines. These will need to be updated when guidance or club activity changes or evolves.
- Ensuring all necessary levels of risk mitigation are in place prior to training
- Clubs should ensure they are prepared and have planned for circumstances where injuries or other accidents occur, and they have mitigating procedures and plans in place to resolve the issue while maintaining all government guidance ensuring compliance of social distancing measures during training sessions
- Ensuring that volunteers, coaches/leaders, athletes, and parents/guardians are adhering to this guidance
- Ensuring that the club complies with the facility restrictions and guidance
- Ensuring the club has a process in place for capturing details of all members / participants who take part in EVERY club session to ensure they are able to support the UK government track and trace programme
- The Barracks only allow people to run up there who live in a Tier 1 or 2 area, if you have been in a Tier 3 area then you are not allowed to run at the Barracks

Alistair gave a huge thanks to Graeme Loudain for all the hard work he had put in with regards to Membership and the Tuesday night training sessions.

b. Coaching Officer

Mike Bradley had submitted his report below prior to the AGM, which Alistair read out on his behalf as Mike was having network connection issues:-

Welfare Report

There have no incidents that have required any action from either of the Welfare officers. We continue to offer support for any members who require financial assistance with their fees, which only requires an email to either Mike or Paula and this will be kept anonymous. We are still promoting that all Club members invest in ICE Tags, especially as more are running on their own and in the dark. Please speak to Paula about how to order them.

Coaching report

For over 30 weeks our Captain has stepped up and delivered an interesting and challenging Core training session on a Thursday evening for which he must be recognised and applauded. Also the committee have managed to create a Tuesday night running event which is Covid secure and allows us to still participate in Group running. A special mention to Graeme Loudain, who has not only set up our Risk assessments and policies to allow this to happen, but has also been instrumental in creating and setting up the different runs and courses to assist us all. Way back pre-Covid, we had trained lots of guide Runners in First Aid and kitted them all out with first aid bags and new bibs ready to implement our new 3 group guide running plan for Tuesday evenings. This has not been fruitless, as our guide runners still run with their first aid kits on Tuesdays and are all keen to step into their role as Guides as soon as it is safe for us to run in those conditions. Alan J commented how nice it had been to have had variation each week and added that with the lights on it all looked really good up there!

Nigel added his thanks and said they had done a tremendous job in getting the club up and going and wanted to thank Graeme and the people who had manned the gate up at the Barracks. Jo D wished to pass on her thanks as well. Kate commented that the fact that club had managed to welcome new members throughout this v difficult time had been amazing. Mike also wanted to thank Graeme for setting up the virtual xc course for all to do. Mike finished by reminding Graeme that there were a number of people who still needed to do the first aid course when it was possible to.

Action: Graeme to look into scheduling another first aid course when permissible

Marco asked if on a Tuesday evening it was possible to cross the road and run through the woods.

Graeme said that anyone could run there at any time, however if it was a club event a risk assessment would be needed, which would almost certainly indicate that running in the dark in the woods would be high risk because of the uneven surfaces and as a high risk event would not be supported as a 'club event'. Therefore, it would not be covered by our England Athletics insurance.

Alistair gave a huge thanks to Graeme, Mike and all those involved in coaching and to all the Run Leaders as well.

c. Communications Officer

Kate began her report by saying that 2020 had started well with Striders competing in 48 different events up to 15th March.

We all know what happened next, with only 13 actual events happening to date. Striders found many different and imaginative ways to keep running with the virtual summer 5k series proving particularly popular. 143 Striders had run at least 1 race this year (virtual or otherwise), covering over 10,000 km.

Simon Chambers stepped down from his role as Press Officer in the summer of 2020.

Simon had been Press Officer from April 2018 and he would like to thank all those runners who sent pictures and reports or shared them on Facebook. It had made the task of writing the articles for the Walden Local and Saffron Walden Reporter so much easier.

The club wanted to thank Simon for his outstanding contribution to the club.

During the summer Mark Fitzhenry took over as Press Officer.

Mark had been getting some great race reports into the local papers. And hopefully, there will be many more when we can return to normal racing. Kate asked if members could please let Mark know of any running challenges they had taken on, virtually or otherwise. And added that if you are planning to run an event, it is helpful to let him know ahead of time so he can prepare his copy.

And let's hope we will be back racing for real in 2021.

Looking ahead, some dates are now appearing in the Race calendar. Thank you to Stuart Frankland for taking over this role.

Kate continues to keep the website updated with technical support from Chris Dodge. As ever, Chris's support, website and database hosting is much appreciated. There are plans to try and make upgrades to the website to make it a bit more user friendly. This has not happened yet due to work commitments. If anyone has experience of using Wordpress and would like to help with Web development, please get in touch with Kate.

Graeme added that Kate had produced regular excellent Newsletters and she was also congratulated on winning the recent virtual 5k at Wimpole.

Alistair thanked Kate, Mark and Stuart for their ongoing hard work in keeping the communication going throughout the club.

d. Race Co-ordinator

Martin Green gave his report:-

XC League

Back at the start of the year when Covid was something that was happening thousands of miles away, we were in the midst of our cross-country league.

We completed all 4 races with the final race at Bishops Stortford held on the 1st March. As a club we came third overall with the ladies coming joint second with Bishops Stortford. Ware were the winners (again). There were some good turnouts in the early races which then dipped

in the latter two due to the conflict with marathon training schedules and races that happen in the early spring. It was the intention for the 20/21 season to try and bring the races forward to late 2020 to relieve that pressure and to encourage more people to take part. The races that were run were well received including a very muddy home race on the 19th January where the men really took use of the home advantage by coming last by quite an impressive margin! Luckily the ladies were actually very on form coming second behind Ware.

Unfortunately, due to Covid the 20/21 season has been cancelled in its entirety. There was talk of running a virtual league similar to the 5k one but there wasn't any uptake on the idea from the other clubs.

Alistair added that he had a few prizes yet to be given out to various club members for the past XC season:-

Toby Lumsden was first MV70, June Brennan was first FV65 and Zib Gotto was first in the FV45 category. Alistair passed on his congratulations to everyone and would get the trophies to Zib and June in due course.

Championship Races

The Saffron Striders Championship took place this year over a single race, the Haverhill 10k that was completed by 12 Striders. Some marathons completed by some of the longer distance runners have added to the competition which is currently headed by Kate Holden!

Covid again had a dramatic impact on the competition with 11 out of the remaining 12 races being cancelled.

5K League

With the 5k league races being cancelled through March and April a decision was taken to adopt a more casual virtual league that would allow member clubs to compete against other albeit in a more relaxed fashion. 5 races were completed in all and the Striders held their own with 98 running at least one race, and a record 24 runners completing all 5. There were some great individual performances such that Saffron Striders men finished 3rd and the ladies 4th, with the club finishing 3rd overall. Martin also noted that some members of the club had come up with some excellent downhill courses as there were no constraints issued on which course you could do! The fastest lady in one of the 5k races did it in an amazing 13 minutes, it was since realised that she did it in a wheelchair but still in an excellent time!

Alistair thanked Martin for all his hard work in doing the Race Co-ordinator role.

e. Kit/Merchandising Officer

Paula did not have much to report but did say she had received some requests this year for various bits of kit and asked members to get in touch with her should they require anything. Alan J commented that he was keen to find out if it would be possible to get a lightweight, waterproof running top. Fi and Alistair added that they would be keen to purchase one too. Paula said she would look into this as she thought Saffron Apparel would be able to provide this type of garment for us.

Action: Paula agreed to look into getting a sample as well as a rough idea on cost and to include a note in a forthcoming newsletter to see how many Striders maybe interested.

Alistair thanked Paula for all her hard working with the kit role

f. Social Events Officer

Lisa Plumb gave her report:-

She did not have v much to report due to COVID this year but said that there were 76 attendees at the Annual Dinner which was held at the Golf Club at the start of February.

She had not planned anything else to take place at the moment but hoped that it may be possible to hold a club barbeque in the Summer, of course COVID permitting!

A tinsel run was planned to take place at Carver Barracks on Tuesday 22nd December and Lisa was going to hand out some prizes at that but emphasised that there would be no mulled wine or mince pies at this event.

After discussion it was agreed that it would be a good idea to hold a virtual annual dinner which Alistair and Alan J were going to look into putting on, in the absence of the club's usual Annual Dinner at Saffron Walden Golf Club

Alistair thanked Lisa for the great job she is doing as the Club's Social Secretary

h. Club Captains

Alistair first asked Charlotte if she had anything to be mentioned as the new Ladies Club Captain this year and thanked her for taking on this role and helping him with the Tuesday evening briefings if he was unable to be there himself. Charlotte responded that she had nothing to add but said that it was great being involved in such a friendly club!

Alan reported that he had received nothing but good feedback about the club, even better than last year and that all the new joiners had found the Saffron Striders Running Club extremely friendly.

Graeme wanted to thank both Charlotte and Alan for being there on a Tuesday evening to make any newcomers feel welcome to the club.

Alistair thanked both Charlotte and Alan for their great contribution as Captains within the club.

6. Election of the Executive Officers

- **Chairman**
- **Treasurer**
- **Secretary**

Alistair explained that in the Constitution the Executive Officers roles need to be filled first. There were nominations received for the executive officers to remain happily within their posts for another year and there had been no further representations or proposals for these roles.

The Nominators for each role received was as follows;

Club Chairman – Alistair Cooke. Proposed by – Graeme Loudain, Seconded by – Alan Jones
Club Treasurer – Ian MacDougall. Proposed by – Wendy McDougall, Seconded by – Neil Halls
Club Secretary – Fiona Halls. Proposed by – Graeme Loudain, Seconded by – Janet Lipski

As there was one nomination for each role, a vote was not necessary and Alistair, Ian and Fiona were duly re-elected.

7. Election of the Committee Members

The Executive Officers had determined the Committee should continue to be made up of the following roles;

Coaching Officer
Membership Officer
Social Events Officer
Men's Captain
Ladies' Captain
Communications Officer
Kit/Merchandising Officer
Race Co-ordinator

All of these roles had been duly notified to members when the agenda was circulated on the 9th November 2020 prior to the AGM. One nomination had been received for each of these roles except Race Coordinator which there had been no proposal before the Weds 25th November deadline.

During the AGM Martin Green had agreed to re-stand for election as Race Co-ordinator given the view from the committee that the club would seek to separate the role into a more manageable workload whereby "on the day" Race organisation could be handled separately from the role to interaction with other clubs on the league organisation and results processing.

Supporting Martin's application to re-stand were Simon Ede and Kate Holden.

A vote was then taken with those present at the AGM and with no objections or abstainments received Martin was duly sworn into the role as Race Coordinator for a further 12 months.

For the other committee roles no further proposals to stand had been received so there was no need to take this to a vote. Therefore for the year ahead the Saffron Striders committee is confirmed as;

Coaching Officer– Mike Bradley
Membership Officer – Graeme Loudain
Social Events Officer– Lisa Plumb
Men's Captain – Alan Jones
Ladies Captain – Charlotte Diggins
Communications Officer – Kate Holden
Kit/Merchandising Officer – Paula Thurston
Race Co-ordinator – Martin Green

8. Voting on resolutions proposed by members

Alistair had put on the Agenda details of the resolution that the Committee proposed which would allow the club to hold meetings by a video type link.

The proposed new clause insertion listed in italics) below is as follows:-

Interpretation of Club Constitution & Rules

The Constitution may be added to, repealed, or amended by resolution at any Annual or Special General Meeting carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the Members voting thereon.

The Committee shall be the sole authority for the interpretation of the Constitution and of Club Rules. The decision of the Committee upon any questions of interpretation or upon any matter affecting the Club and not provided for by the Constitution, shall be final and binding on the Members except if

otherwise directed by the Club in a Special or Annual General Meeting.

The following descriptions are used in the Constitution in relation to meetings, with the inference that the physical presence of the relevant individual is required; 'in person', 'show of hands', 'personally present', 'present'. These descriptions and any other similar descriptions can also be determined by the Committee to apply to video type electronic communications when more appropriate, such as when physical meetings are not permitted.

A vote was taken and with no Objections or abstainments received this proposal was duly agreed and carried and Alistair thanked everyone for agreeing to it.

9. Any Other Business

Training on a Tuesday night

Alan G asked if the club was proposing to keep training at Carver Barracks after COVID had passed. Graeme asked him which location he preferred and he said the town, After discussion it was agreed that a Survey would be sent out to all members asking their opinions on both locations and timing and also what they would like to see included in these training sessions.

Graeme also mentioned that it may be possible to run different group training times as we now had use of the Barracks facility from 6 pm – 9 pm on a Tuesday evening

Action: *Graeme & Committee to prepare a suitable survey to be sent out to all in the New Year.*

Alistair and Graeme were congratulated for keeping the club going through what has been a v difficult year.

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In closing the AGM, Alistair wished all the Striders a very Merry Christmas and hoped that 2021 would be less disruptive than 2020 has proven to be for us all.

The club looks forward to recognising our annual achievements with another virtual first, via an online awards presentation and quiz evening in February/March. The club watches-on with interest the developments at the Barracks in terms of the new running track and pavilion facilities and hopefully with the vaccine now being rolled out we could see a return to more structured/formal running and racing from the Spring/Summer time.

The AGM was declared closed at 9:32pm.