

Saffron Striders AGM

Wednesday 8th December 2021, 8pm

(Held virtually due to Coronavirus)

Present:

Alistair Cooke	Mark Fitzhenry	Andrew Page
Fiona Halls	Rachel Cornell	Toby Lumsden
Graeme Loudain	Nick Wilkinson	John Heanley
Alan Jones	Mike Bradley	Alan Gleaves
Lisa Plumb	Nigel Coates	Lisa Plumb
Fliss Tournant	John James	Chloe Brown
Ian MacDougall	Paula Thurston	Kate Holden
Simon Ede	David Tew	Mark Frow
Chris Dodge	Linda Brett	Margit W-James
Issie Grayson		

1. Apologies for absence:

Charlotte Diggins	Helen Howard	Wendy MacDougall
Nick White	Stuart Gibson	Jason Coles
Rebecca White	Jo Dallas	
Shani Lewis	Richard Auty	

Alistair opened the AGM and thanked everyone for attending what was the second *virtual* Saffron Striders AGM, due to the ongoing 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. He said that Saffron Striders was very much like family and was really thankful that members pulled together to support one another through this difficult time. He added the club would not have thrived without the support from members who volunteer for roles on the Committee, the Coaching team or volunteered to be a guide runner, first aiders or carver barracks gatekeeper.

He paid tribute to John Howe who sadly passed away in April this year at the age of 85, who was a well respected member of the club and a previous ex-Chairman who had made a big impact on the club. The Club had donated £250 to the British Heart Foundation in memory of John and Alistair added that once things were more settled pandemic-wise, the club would be consider discussing with John's family about an event to pay tribute to both John and also Steve White who the club lost last year in a tragic cycling accident.

2. Minutes of the 2020 meeting for approval

Minutes of the 2020 meeting were reviewed and they were then signed off as no amendments were made to them.

3. Matters arising

Action: Graeme had taken an action to look into scheduling another first aid course when permissible

The course was delayed by Covid, but took place in October 2021 after the responsibility for organising Guide Runners was passed over to Jo Dallas

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

The survey was agreed by the committee and issued in July 2021. The results were used as the basis for running plans for August 2021 and onwards when restrictions were eased. In particular the locations for the Tuesday evening runs did not show a significant preference for Lord Butler or Carver

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 £8,181.24 in its account. Last year it had £8,277.90.

Ian also confirmed that the Bursary Fund was included within the figure of £8,181.24.

He commented that this figure had not changed much from last year as due to COVID no events had taken place! He added that lots of new running vests had been purchased this year but these had not yet been sold.

He commented that each time the club hired Carver Barracks it cost the club £25 per evening, this had been used a lot due to not being able to run in the town because of safety concerns due to the COVID pandemic. Graeme had invested in some lights in order to make it safer to run at Carver Barracks when it was dark.

Ian also commented that a recent meeting he been held Mike, Graeme and Alistair and the outcome was an agreement for a budget to be set each year that would be allocated to the Coaching Team so they could forecast their spend accordingly without the need of requesting individual approvals until such time the upper budget limit had been reached.

It was added that that membership fee would need to be adjusted each year in order to help to cover these costs. Graeme added that the membership fee charged for this year was still below the normal level.

The question was asked if Alistair knew how much the new running track at Carver Barracks would cost to hire each time but this was not know at the present time.

Alistair also added that he now had access to the club's Santander Account along with Ian the Club Treasurer.

Ian also confirmed that the Bursary Fund was included within the figure of £8,277.90.

Alistair confirmed a copy of the club accounts would be made available to any member that requests it and they should contact Fiona (secretary@saffronstriders.org.uk) should they wish to be sent a copy.

Alistair thanked Ian for all of the work he had put in for running Treasury so well and he also thanked Graeme for all of his help with the budgetary process.

5. Committee Member reports

a. Membership Officer

Graeme Loudain provided the following report:

Total membership

	All Paid up Members	Change on LY	2 nd Claim
Dec 2021	219	+18	4
Dec 2020	201	-42	5
Dec 2019	242	+84	4
Dec 2018	158	+32	
Dec 2017	126		

Total membership is up by 16 on last year. Last year there was no beginners' course. He also added that every member had now paid their fees for this year.

Underlying

	All Paid up Members	Beginners Course	Not on Beginners Course	Change in 'Not Beginners'
Dec 2021	219	45	174	-25 (corrected -8)
Dec 2020	201	0	201	+30
Dec 2019	242	71	171	+66
Dec 2018	158	53	105	+3
Dec 2017	126	24	102	

Taking those who were on the beginners out of the total numbers, we have had a fall of 29 in underlying membership of 'not beginners'. Having said that, 17 of those who took part this year's beginners course were already members so the corrected reduction is 8.

My feeling is that the reduction is totally Covid related, in that applications to join were not made and are still not being made because of Covid concerns. Since we have been having coverage of Striders in the local press, we are getting an application for membership or a trial every week. There are no unpaid membership fees.

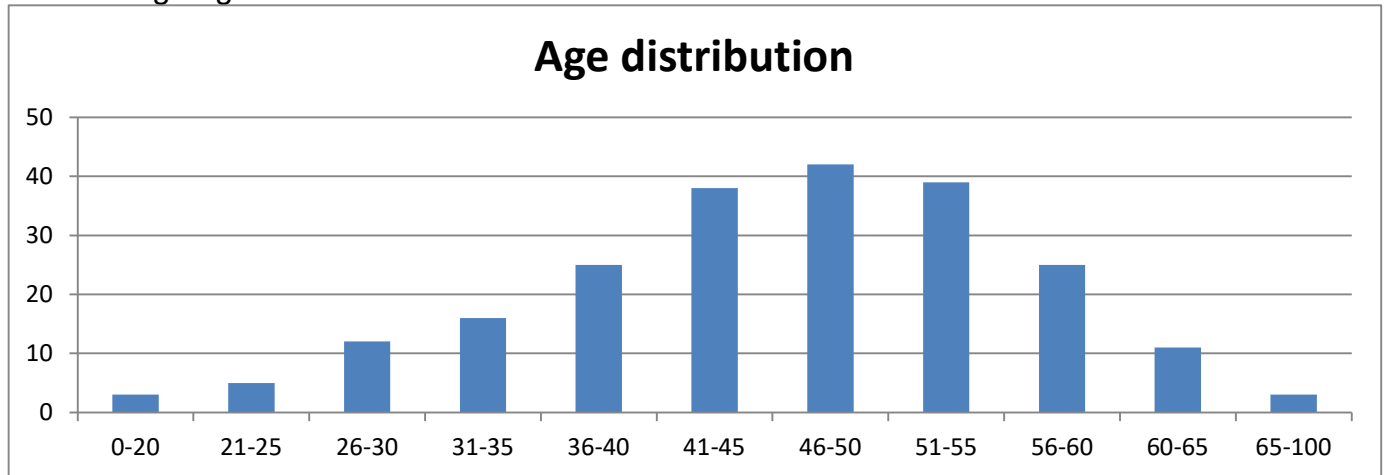
Gender

	2021	2020	2019
Female	107 (49%)	86 (43%)	127 (53%)
Male	112 (51%)	115 (57%)	115 (47%)
	219	201	242

After the reduction in the proportion of female members last year from 53% to 43%, the balance has recovered and is now about half of all members. This is almost certainly due to the re-introduction of the beginners course this year, which had predominantly female participants.

Age

The average age of a Strider is 46.



Our age distribution does not follow that of the population, with youngest and oldest being under-represented.

COVID-19 Coordinator

As the clubs coordinator I would again like to thank all of those Striders who have maintained safe procedures while we have been running at Carver airfield. I hope we do not have to re-introduce them.

Safeguarding

The club has adopted the EA safeguarding policies and procedures, which is a condition of affiliation. By doing so it will bring to the attention of all members that it is important how we deal with every individual and therefore make it more likely everyone is safe and confident in the club environment. Committee members and coaches are already signing up (literally) to this. The 2022 membership application and renewal form will require every athlete to agree to this code if they wish to be a member. He also added that in future when forms were sent out to members in April, each person would need to sign the EA Safeguarding policy and added that it was common sense to.

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 gave the following report:-

We have had an interesting year with 3 people undertaking a Leadership in Running Fitness Course (2 complete, 1 still to finalize). 1 person has signed up to undertake the Coach in running Fitness course in the new year.

We had a Beginners Course this year with 45 people signing up to start, unfortunately we lost quite a few this year through injury, and added that this was currently being looked into, but all those that completed the course have continued with some running and representing the club in various races and events.

It was agreed with the committee that there will be a Budget given to the Coaching Team to spend on kit etc going forward so they can easily and efficiently procure future equipment and branded kit for both the team and the beginners (beginners were issued their club shirts on week 2 of the course which was great to identify them and also to make them feel part of the club).

A Go Pro HD Camera has been purchased and we will be offering video analysis for individuals in 2022 (Graeme & Mike will be getting assistance from EA Coaches to assist with this)

We are very excited to be planning sessions for track training in 2022 once the Track is completed.

We have also decided to move the Beginners Course to Thursday Evenings so it will coincide with the Circuit training sessions we undertake on a Thursday at Carver Barracks

Mike also asked for suggestions as to where the Bursary Fund could be used to help. He said the club had in the past approached the Food Bank with the offer of free places on the Beginners Course but added that this offer had not been taken up by the Food Bank.

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

Welfare Report

Mike reported that there have been a number of concerns raised to the welfare officers which have been dealt with in accordance with Club & EA policies and procedures.

No requests for assistance have been received for financial assistance with fees/kit or race entries.

Alistair thanked Mike and Paula for their ongoing commitments in undertaking the role of Welfare Officers to the club.

c. Communications Officer

Kate provided the following report:-

Thanks to Mark Fitzhenry for his excellent write-ups that manage to capture the spirit of a diverse range of events and gives everyone a mention in very few words.

Mark says "Looking back over the time that I have been Press officer we have managed to get into at least one paper each week. The Walden Local supports us more than the Reporter but they still include us when they can. We are not sure why they don't always publish our copy, possibly due to space on the day. Pictures obviously help, so please keep sending them in."

We had 6 reports published in the Saffron Walden Flyer. The copy deadline is 1 month before the magazine, which makes it hard to write something that is not too out-of-date by the time it is published so suggestions for articles always welcome.

Thank you to those of you that notified me and Mark of your race results and sent photos. I am not always aware of all races that are taking place especially events that are further afield, so this really helps.

Contributions for the newsletter are also welcome. I have enjoyed the "Member of the Month" feature so thank you to everyone who has contributed to this new feature. And if you have an interesting story to tell about your running journey please get in touch.

Thank you to Chris Dodge for his continued web support. Chris reports that the website is running well. If there are any features that users would like to see in the future again, please get in touch.

We still need someone to take over the race calendar. This is not too time consuming, only needing about 1 hour per month just to keep the calendar up-to-date with local races and training nights.

Alistair thanked Kate and Mark for their ongoing hard work in keeping the communication going throughout the club which had been really valued through the difficult year we had all endured.

d. Race Coordinator

Alistair provided the following update on behalf of the outgoing race coordinator Martin Green whom we bid farewell to earlier this year. We would like to wish him all the luck with his move to St Neots.

Please find the following short report on the races we were involved in and organising this past year.

Cross Country League 2020/21 - Due to Covid lockdown 2 (or was it 3) there was no inter-club XC league with Bishops Stortford, Harlow and Ware and we instead ran an intra-club challenge where runners could endure a challenging 4.5km and 8.9km circuit around Rowney Woods. Well done to everyone who took part, especially considering how muddy the conditions were and thanks to Graeme and Mike Bradley for working out the course.

He also reminded everyone that our first cross country race would be taking place this Sunday, 12th December at Bishops Stortford. An email had been sent out to all members with details.

Kevin Henry Summer Series 2021 – Once again the Pandemic interfered with our usual inter-club challenge with Ely, C&C, Newmarket, Cambridge Tri, and Haverhill. So once again we held a Virtual “just for fun” challenge against these clubs with members invited to submit their 5k times over designated weekends from April thru September. The results this year were great with Striders more than holding their own with 98 members 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

Club Championship - With so many official races postponed we introduced a slimline championship with points being scored for your fastest virtual (or real) 5 mile and 10k efforts, your 2 fastest 5ks from the KH Summer Series and final points scoring from our XC race at Bishops Stortford this Sunday. As it stands it's a very close run in between Craig Dyce, Chris Dodge, Ian Macdougall, with current back-to-back club champion June Brennan closely monitoring the podium steps in case of any last minute XC slip ups.

Fast 5 - Due to the early commitment the club and organisers would need to make in committing to organise an open-to-all (public) race a decision was taken in early April to not hold our Fast 5 race at Carver Barracks this year, although we hope Covid and conditions will permit us to consider once again organising our race in 2022, with possibly a start or finish on the track.

Looking ahead into 2022 – The Committee were very pleased to see recently when a Strider stepped forward and had offered to lend a hand with the organising of our 5k and XC races. At the time, our Treasurer Ian Macdougall who having recently retired had initially offered to step-in to organise our home race for the forthcoming XC season.

So yes, we had not 1 but 2 members offering assistance for what is a very key role for our club. So we are pleased and chuffed to announce that Fliss Tournant is standing for election at this AGM as our new Race Coordinator ably supported by Ian. Please give them your thanks, encouragement and most importantly your willingness to support them whether it's marshalling,

enlisting family members (at our XC race) or baking cakes which I'm sure you've all been busily practicing throughout the lockdowns.

A reminder that our XC literally starts this coming weekend with our first race at Bishops' Stortford (12th December) followed by Harlow (Jan 9th), our Home Race at Joyce Franklin School (23rd January) and the final lovely round at Ware the day before Valentine's Day (13th February).

Finally, Kate Holden is already starting to pull together a plan for next year's Club Championship, and hopefully by the time our Committee Meeting in January or the Annual Dinner in February we will have announced the qualifying races in 2022. Just keep your fingers crossed Covid doesn't interfere anymore into our competitive race plans.

Graeme made a suggestion that points were awarded to those members who assisted with helping out at our events by marshalling etc.

It was also suggested that members would be able to get club vests to be personalised to say they had been Club Champion that particular year.

Action: Paula agreed to look into this and discuss with this years' Club Championship Winner and Strider of the Year if they would like a personalised vest along with or instead of a Hoodie.

Alistair wanted to thank Martin for all the hard work he had put in for the club and will ensure he receives an invitation to our annual dinner in February (Covid allowing!)

e. Kit / Merchandising Officer

Paula submitted the following report:-

We are pleased to say we are now using Saffron Apparel, a local company, to supply our kit.

We used them firstly for our beginner's T-shirts which they turned around in exceptional time. It was then decided that the coaches needed a different colour shirt to stand out from the beginners and they now have a grey shirt also supplied by Saffron Apparel.

In the coming months they will have hoodies and T-shirt's to order via the online ecommerce web shop which would mean members would be able to buy directly from the online shop without going to Paula first.

As supplies of the club's vest's we're diminishing, we have ordered a further 25 to replenish our stocks. This is through a charity clothing company as we didn't want to change the style or design of the tops by going somewhere else.

Paula also added that she currently had a good stock of sizes and colours re running vests and that the coaches tops were now silver/grey to stand out from the purple tops and she added that this was working well. She said Graeme at Saffron Apparel was extremely helping and had even been printing names on tops etc for free!

The total kit spends this year are.

Beginners T-shirt's £374.00
Coaches t shirts £144.00
Running vest tops £536.00

Mike Bradley asked Paula if she could look into getting some purple and yellow bobble hats for everyone to be able to buy.

Action: Paula to look into purchasing bobble hats!

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

f. Social Events Officer

Lisa Plumb gave her report:-

Obviously it had been very quiet period this year for Social events!

Due to COVID that even the recent Captains' drinks which were due to take place on Friday 3rd December in Saffron Walden had needed to be cancelled due to the current increase in infection levels.

Lisa hoped that the Annual Dinner at Saffron Walden Golf Club would still take place on Friday 25th February but added that she would have to check nearer the time.

Alan Jones suggested if the Annual Dinner can go ahead then it would be a good idea to encourage everyone attending to do a lateral flow test before attending. Those present at the meeting felt that this would be a good idea and would provide further reassurance for attendees.

Action: Lisa to request that everyone attending is encouraged to do a lateral flow test before attending the Annual Dinner

Alistair reported that a holding deposit of £200 was all that had been paid to the Golf Club so far.

Lisa also reported that the Tinsel Run should be taking place on Tuesday 21st December and would involve Mince Pies and Mulled Wine and added that she hoped that that would be able to also take place as an outdoor event.

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

g. Club Captains

Neither Alan nor Charlotte had anything to report in their roles as Club Captains.

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 Fiona Halls)
- **Club Treasurer** – Ian MacDougall. (Proposed by Wendy McDougall, Seconded by Rebecca White)
- **Club Secretary** – Fiona Halls. (Proposed by Paul Thurston, Seconded by Alistair Cooke)

As there was only one nomination for each of these roles, 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;

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

All of these roles had been duly notified to members when the agenda was circulated on the 12th November 2021 prior to the AGM. One nomination had been received for each of these roles.

For these committee roles no further proposals to stand had been received to stand in these positions so there was no need to take this to a vote.

Therefore for the 2022 year ahead the Saffron Striders committee is confirmed as;

Membership Officer – Graeme Loudain
 Coaching Officer– Mike Bradley
 Communications Officer – Kate Holden
 Race Coordinators – Fliss Tournant
 Kit/Merchandising Officer – Paula Thurston
 Social Events Officer– Lisa Plumb
 Men's Captain – Alan Jones
 Ladies Captain – Charlotte Diggins

Nominations were received as follows for these roles:-

<p>Graeme Loudain – Membership Secretary</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Lucie Heanley Alex Ros</p>	<p>Kate Holden – Communications Officer</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Helen Howard Mark Fitzhenry</p>
<p>Lisa Plumb – Social Secretary</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Kate Holden Fiona Halls</p>	<p>Mike Bradley – Coaching</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Alistair Cooke Alan Jones</p>

<p>Race Co-Ordinator – Fliss Tournant</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Kate Holden Alan Jones</p>	<p>K it/Merchandising Officer – Paula Thurston</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Melissa Sangha Fiona Halls</p>
<p>Alan Jones – Men’s Captain</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Charlotte Diggons Fliss Tournant</p>	<p>Charlotte Diggons = Ladies Captain</p> <p>Proposer and Seconder</p> <p>Fiona Halls Alan Jones</p>

Alistair was delighted to report that Fliss had stepped forward to take on the role of Race Coordinator and that Ian MacDougall had offered his assistance and support with the XC race series.

8. Voting on resolutions proposed by members

Fiona confirmed that items had been brought forward by the membership for discussion at this years’ AGM.

9. Any Other Business

Toby Lumsden asked for feedback from those present at the AGM about the appropriateness of running at Carver in darkness. He felt it was safe running on his own around town than it was at Carver. He suggested whether we should consider a move back to town.

Mike, Alan, Alistair and Graeme responded. With regard to the current choice of venues, this had been made resultant of the survey of members made in July 2021 (and after everyone had experiences of running in the dark at Carver during the prior winter period) which showed that there was no significant overall preference of venue, such that we alternate between Lord Butler and Carver to meet as many members preferences as possible whilst understanding it will not be a perfect solution for everyone.

The other issue the committee had considered in this decision was risk and the UKA/EA requirement that we carry out a risk assessment for all club organised events (including for example the January 2022 XC event as well as our regular Tuesday evening runs). Risk assessments are not about what accidents may or may not have happened in the past, but to consider and reduce the potential for accidents occurring in the future.

It is accepted that there is a degree of risk wherever we run. Running in darkness with head torches is not risk free. Running in a group around town has a higher risk profile than when running alone. The assessments carried out (and agreed by the whole committee) showed that running in town in a group posed an unnecessarily high risk whenever speed or competition was involved or encourage, not only because of the risk to runners themselves when crossing roads and kerbs, but also because of the unpredictable behaviour of members of the public, cyclists and motorists being outside of our control.

To reduce that risk, within the plan for having two venues for Tuesday evenings, we decided to run the faster events (e.g. intervals, mirror) at the traffic free Carver venue and the easy paced “Social” runs at Lord Butler. Additionally our assessments showed that we needed to have Guide Runners for each route / distance that start from Lord Butler, to shepherd groups around the route for anyone unfamiliar with the town. The risk assessment also showed that we should have access to basic first aid kits at all of our events including the various routes run at Lord Butler and Carver and while not strictly necessary, we encourage as many guide runners as possible to undertake basic first aid training for runners which the club funds.

The assessments carried out (and agreed by the whole committee) showed that running in town in a group posed an unnecessarily high risk whenever speed or competition was involved or encouraged, not only because of the risk to runners themselves when crossing roads and kerbs,

The coaches attempt to make the fortnightly runs at Carver interesting by including intervals, fartlek and mirror runs. Any suggestions to improve interest are welcomed.

It was agreed that another survey could be considered by the committee in the spring (after the current winter cycle) is over and when we have a clearer view on the availability of the Running track on our traditional Tuesday and Thursday night club meets.

For reference, England Athletics (EA) and UK Athletics (UKA) state:-

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting everyone who is affected by your activities, including athletes, spectators, coaches, volunteers and officials. Risk Assessments will help you to focus on the risks that really matter – the ones with the potential to cause significant harm. All clubs/event organisers should undertake risk assessments. The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'.

Related to this discussion Chris Dodge reported that he too did not run at Carver Barracks when it was dark due to safety concerns. He asked if it would be possible to arrange an informal run from the Leisure Centre on a Tuesday evening for those who did not wish to run at the Barracks.

Alistair confirmed that this would be fine except would not be considered a Saffron Striders official club event or meet so anyone who did participate would not be covered under the Club Insurance provided by our affiliation under UK and England Athletics.

In closing the AGM, Alistair wished all the Striders a very Merry Christmas and hoped that 2022 would be less disruptive than 2021 has proven to be for us all.

Alistair thanked everyone for attending and added that it was exciting to see the track progressing. He again thanked the Committee, guide runners and club helpers for all their support this year.

The AGM was declared closed at 9:57pm.