

Saffron Striders AGM

Wednesday 1st December 2022, 8pm

Kings Arms PH, 10 Market Hill, Saffron Walden CB10 1HQ

Present (17 members, 14 in-person, 3 remote dialled in):

Alistair Cooke	Mark Frow	Christopher O'Donovan
Nigel Coates	Michael Bradley	Alan Jones
Graeme Loudain	Marco Arcidiacono	Chris Dodge
Kate Holden	Claire Steel	Fliss Tournant
Lisa Plumb	Charlotte Diggins	Mark Thackstone (remote)
Alan Taylor (remote)	Iain Henley (remote)	

1. Apologies for absence:

Ian Macdougall	Paula Thurston	Richard Auty
Issie Grayson	Chloe Brown	Nick White
Rebecca White	Stuart Gibson	

Alistair opened the AGM at 8:15pm as we needed to connect 3 members remotely via the phone to ensure the meeting was quorate in line with the club constitution. This states "The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 10% of total membership or 10 Members (whichever is greater).

As our membership stands at 165 members, we needed to ensure 17 members were present to conduct the business dealings of the AGM. Due to concerns around connection issues for the remotely joined parties we agreed to bring forward the election of the Club Executive Officers and Committee Members to the start of the meeting.

2. Election of the Executive Officers

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

Nominations were received for the role of Club Chairman and Club Treasurer with both Alistair and Ian happy to remain within their posts for another year and as there had been no further representations or proposals for these roles there was no need to hold a vote and they were duly re-elected.

No nominations were received for the role of Club Secretary, so presently Alistair is temporarily undertaking the role until we can find someone to take on this going forward.

Name	Role	Proposer	Seconder
Alistair Cooke	Chairman	Kate Holden	Lisa Plumb
Ian MacDougall	Treasurer	Fliss Tournant	Charlotte Diggins
<i>Vacant</i>	Secretary		

3. 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 9th November 2022 prior to the AGM. One nomination had been received for each of these roles.

Standing down at this AGM were Graeme Loudain from the role of Membership Officer and Kate Holden in the role of Communications Officer. Alistair thanked both for their time in post and wished them well as they take a well-earned break from these administratively detailed roles.

We were pleased to receive nominations for both Marco and Claire to join the committee and take on these roles for the club going forward.

No further proposals had been received to stand for these positions so again there was no need to take this to a vote and the following members were elected into these posts for the year ahead.

Name	Role	Proposer	Second
Claire Steel	Membership Officer	Graeme Loudain	Paula Thurston
Marco Arcidiacono	Communications Officer	Mark Fitzhenry	Chris O'Donovan
Paula Thurston	Kit and Ladies' Welfare Officer	Melissa Sangha	Lilli Pluck
Lisa Plumb	Social Events Coordinator	Charlotte Diggins	Michael Bradley
Alan Jones	Men's Captain	Charlotte Diggins	Michael Bradley
Charlotte Diggins	Ladies' Captain	Alan Jones	Michael Bradley
Michael Bradley	Coaching and Men's Welfare Officer	Lisa Plumb	Charlotte Diggins
Fliss Tournant	Race Coordinator	Lisa Plumb	Ian MacDougall

4. Minutes of the 2021 meeting for approval

Minutes of the 2021 meeting were reviewed and no comments or updates were made so they were then signed off

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

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

Prior to the AGM, Ian had circulated to all members of the club via Mailchimp (Monday 28th November) a detailed copy of the Club and Race Accounts.

Ian was not present at the AGM but provided this update which Alistair relayed;

This year has been a quiet financial year as we didn't begin our normal activities until Spring due to COVID and also we didn't organise the Fast Five race.

I am however pleased to report that our bank balance has increased for the first time in the last few years in spite of us having to pay for the use of Carver Barracks for training. This has been made partly possible by us becoming better at budgeting our income and expenditure. By using new cash flow spreadsheets, we are better able to control and plan our finances. Thanks are due to Graeme Loudain for his help with this.

We registered the club as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) with HMRC this year. This provides potential tax benefits for the club and gives a measure of personal protection to club officials in their financial dealings with the club.

The fees which we pay to England Athletics which are paid out of each member's annual subscription, are due to rise from £16 to £17 this year, so in order to ensure that we are able to pay for this year's club activities, we may have to review what the annual subscription should be going forward.

I think that if we continue to monitor and plan our income and expenditure, the club should be able to look forward to having a sound financial position next year.

Marco asked as if we already knew what the hire costs would be of the track facility at Carver. Alistair responded that early indications were that it would be circa £50 an hour to hire, which compared to the £40 an hour charge of the MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) at the Lord Butler was good value considering that would be an all-in price for track, floodlights and pavilion, and changing room access.

7. Committee Member reports

a. Membership Officer

Graeme Loudain gave his report:

Total membership

	All Paid up Members	Change on LY	2 nd Claim
Dec 2022	165	-54	5
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 down by 54 on last year. There are no unpaid membership fees.

Underlying

	All Paid up Members	Beginners Course	Not on Beginners Course	Change in 'Not Beginners'
Dec 2022	165	21	144	-30 (corrected -25)
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	

The year included a beginners' course with 21 participants. Taking those who were on the beginners course each year out of the total numbers to get at the underlying trend of 'non beginners', we have had another fall of 30 in underlying membership. Having said that, 5 of those who took part this year's beginners' course were already members so the corrected reduction is 25.

Last year, my feeling was that the reduction in numbers of non-beginners was due to Covid. This year the impact of Covid is probably insignificant. I do not have explanations of why there is an ongoing fall in numbers, beyond low retention of Beginners set out below.

Beginner's retention

Year of course	Number of participants	Number who renewed membership the following year
2022	21	Not due yet
2021	45	In 2022, 12 renewed, 33 not renewed
2020	0	0
2019	71	No record kept
2018	53	No record kept
2017	24	No record kept

In 2021 we had a total of 45 participants on the beginners' course. Of those only 12 renewed memberships in April 2022 and of those 12, 5 were already full members from prior years. So, our retention of beginners from the 2021 course was low. Records before 2020 were not maintained, but my recollection of the names of those on the 2019 course indicates that was a similar low renewal rate.

Triallists

It is hard to know how many triallists run with the club each week and also to know how many non-members run with us, because we do not keep registers. Triallists send their 'have a trial with the club' form to *membership* to which I respond, then I have no knowledge if or when they run, aside from those who subsequently send me a membership application.

Since September 2022 (3 months) we have had 4 completely new members plus 3 late membership renewals. In the same 3 months we have had 6 requests for trials that have not resulted in a membership application.

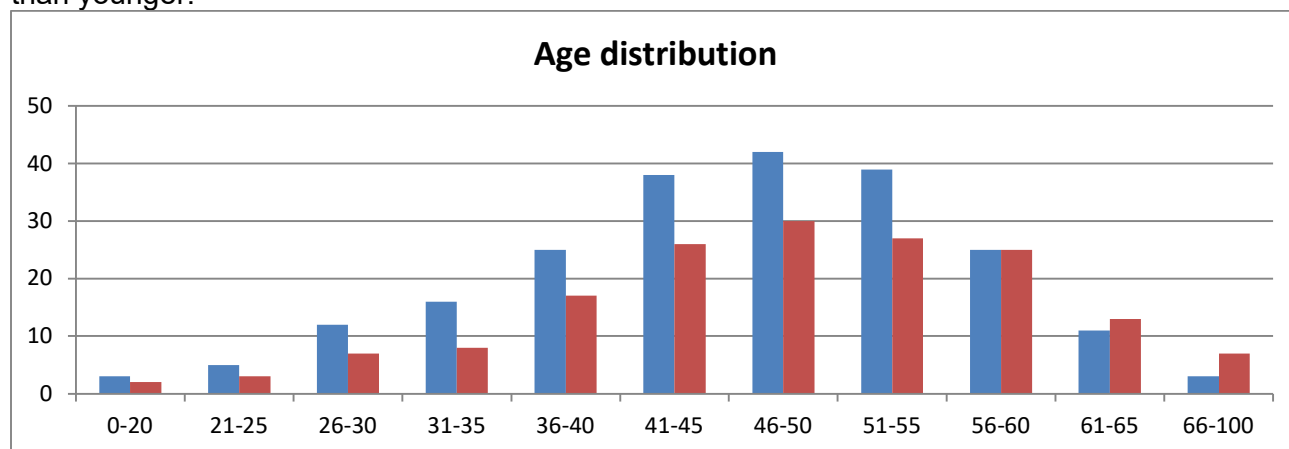
Gender

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Female	71 (43%)	107 (49%)	86 (43%)	127 (53%)
Male	94 (57%)	112 (51%)	115 (57%)	115 (47%)
	165	219	201	242

Even with the 2022 beginners' course being mostly female, there most significant fall in numbers was in female members.

Age

The average age of a Strider has increased from 46 to 48. Retention of older members is better than younger.



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

Communication with Members and Trialists

All new members and trialists had a response and welcome email within 48 hours of their application being received.

We successfully used Mailchimp and Stripe for menu choices and payments of the annual dinner.

Alistair gave a huge thanks to Graeme Loudain for all the hard work as he steps down at this AGM and appreciated the ongoing handover to Claire Steel as she takes up the post.

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Alistair and Nigel had commented in the meeting that similar drop-off in numbers of Club members but also volunteers had been seen at Cambridge & Coleridge and Grange Farm / Dunmow Running clubs.

It was discussed we should consider a follow-up email to all who fill in the trialist paperwork to find out if they were able to join us for a run and what impressions did they have of the club from their attendance. Alistair will ask the Club Captains and Membership Officer to arrange this and ensure we can get feedback back into the committee.

Fliiss mentioned that Watford Joggers use a short online form for trialists to capture name, ongoing contact and Emergency contact details. We could potentially use something similar for unexpected runners who may turn up for a trial with the Club.

b. Coaching Officer

Mike Bradley provided the following report to those present at the AGM;

Welfare team report

We have over the year supported a small number of members with financial assistance with club fees, this has been funded from our healthy club bursary fund. As a reminder this is available from either of the club welfare officers and it awarded based on need and without any required repayment. This fund is also available to assist members who are struggling to enter any races as well as with support to purchase kit to allow them to run. Renewal forms have a tick box so that we can be contacted to discuss individual requirements. All support is given in complete confidentiality.

This year we have dealt with an incident requiring disciplinary proceedings to be undertaken. In line with England athletics and club procedures and policies an independent disciplinary panel of members were assembled and a conclusion was reached with an outcome delivered under the close support and guidance of EA. Again, this was dealt with confidentiality as members personal details will not be discussed here or at any committee, club meeting or club events.

Coaching report

We have conducted a successful beginners' course and have retained a good few of them who are now running with us and representing us in races. Our alternative circuits on a Tuesday at lord butler have been well attended and feedback is positive. We should all be out hill training this evening and again thanks to Graeme for some challenging drills. Winter circuits will be at Granta school in Linton from 5th Jan until 30th of March at 7pm.

We now have a 3rd qualified Coach in running fitness who successfully completed his training course this year in Marco.

We are always looking for more members to train as coaches and anyone on the coaching team would be happy to explain the process and requirements to you.

There is also a need for more guide runners so that this great support we offer new and unsure members and trialists is not left to just a few members. The bigger the team the fewer times you will be asked to guide. If you are unsure ask any committee member. If you are a guide runner please ask a running friend to sign up.

Alistair gave a huge thanks to Graeme, Mike and all those involved in coaching and to all the Guide Runners as well. He also congratulated Marco for recently completing his coaching certificate.

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It was mentioned at the meeting that to help drum up support for Guide Runners (and maybe find a club secretary) that a separate email would be sent from the club as the messages related to these vacancies may've got lost inside all of the great content within the newsletters.

Marco will take this back to discuss with Mark Fitzhenry to get some follow-up Mailchimp messages sent out.

c. Communications Officer

Kate gave the following report:-

As I am stepping down after 10 years, this is my final report and there will be lots of "thank you's". It has been great to see a full race calendar with Striders taking part in over 100 events this year as well as fielding strong teams for the X country and 5 k summer series. And the year is not yet over!

Well done all.

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 also took over the newsletter back in March, for which I am very grateful, and has been doing a great job keeping everyone up to date with club activities.

Mark would love people to keep sending him race results, reports, and especially photos as this helps us get in the papers and promote the club.

Thank you to Chris Dodge for his continued support hosting the website, results database and updating the club championship results. If anyone has any comments or questions, Chris is here to answer them in person.

Thanks to everyone on the committee for all their hard work. Mark will be continuing as press officer and producing the monthly newsletters. I am happy to announce that Marco has offered to take over as communications office joining the committee, where his enthusiasm and ideas will be very welcome. He will keep the results database up to date along with Chris O'Donovan, who has taken over the website and race calendar.

As ever, please help them by sending in your results via email or Facebook.

Alistair thanked Kate and Mark for their ongoing hard work in keeping the communication going throughout the club. He also thanked Marco and Chris O'Donovan for joining the comms team assisting with the webpage support and race results.

d. Race Coordinator

Fliss provided the following report to those present at the AGM;

Cross-country 2021/2022

The year started off with our annual cross-country league, back after a COVID hiatus. The usual 4 clubs participated, with Saffron Striders placing 4th out of 4 overall. The scoring uses the aggregate positions of the top 8 male and female runners from each club, with the lowest score being the best, so a good turnout is important if we want to do well in the future.

Hockeys 5k 2022

This year was the first in-person 5k series since 2019 and the first time with all 8 clubs participating in all races. The winners of the 2022 series were C&C, with Saffron Striders placing 7th out of 8. There was an average attendance of 339 runners per race across the series. Hockeys kindly sponsored this year's series and a new perpetual trophy was put up for grabs by Henry Rowe.

Looking into 2023

Planning is currently underway for the 22/23 cross country season. The proposed dates are

- Race 1 - Bishop Stortford, 4th December
- Race 2 - Saffron Striders, 22nd January
- Race 3 - Harlow, January 29th January
- Race 4 final race - Ware Joggers, 27th February

A meeting will be held in January to begin the organisation of the 2023 5k series.

Alistair thanked Fliss for all her great work in this role in which is her first year and despite moving away to Rickmansworth continues to show great dedication to the Striders (and even made the trip especially for the AGM!)

e. Kit / Merchandising Officer

Paula was unable to attend the AGM but provided the following report which Alistair read out in her absence;

We now have a web shop. <https://www.saffronstriders.org.uk/club-kit/>

This is run by local company Saffron Apparel where we can purchase hoodies and t shirts now. I'm in talks with them about supplying running vests which hopefully will be added to the shop too.

Anyone who has any suggestions of any other clothing they may like to see in the web shop please feel free to message me.

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

Claire mentioned she had ordered a Striders Hoodie from the shop and was able to pick it up swiftly and was very impressed how easy it was.

f. Social Events Officer

Lisa Plumb gave her report;

The past 12-months have been relatively quiet, although, we started the post COVID period with the annual Tinsel Run on the last Tuesday before Christmas as we have done before. There was a good turn out in the market square for mulled wine & mince pies. The same again is on the agenda for this year on the 20 December, the "fancier" the dress the better!

In the diary for next year already we have the annual dinner; once again at the golf club again after a successful dinner there again in February 2022. There were 66 diners in attendance on the last occasion, a mixture of Striders & their partners.

The normal award ceremony took place to recognise our achievers & those that make great contributions for the benefit of the club.

So there's another date for your new diaries being Friday 24 February 2023, I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Other ideas for social are welcome.... With the return to the normal marathon season I will look at a pre / post marathon pasta party as we have done in previous years. A summer BBQ in the past has also been popular post a trail run. Suggestions are always welcome.

Alistair thanked Lisa for the great job she is doing as the Club's Social Secretary and commented she was certainly missed at the recent Captain's night out.

g. Club Captains

The Club Captains had nothing to report at this years' AGM.

Alistair thanked Charlotte and Alan for their support to the Club as Captains. And hoped they could increase further our representation at the XC and 5K events as a great way to keep members engaged with the club.

h. Club Chairman

In closing the reporting Alistair provided the following remarks to the AGM;

It's been great this year to see Striders return to a more normal way of operating now that we are free of most of the Covid Restrictions. Yet we reflect that uncertainty in the world hasn't exactly ended there and I was pleased to see the great suggestion made to the club undertaken for us to make a donation to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and the British Red Cross as they supported those impacted by the war in Ukraine.

I'm encouraged to see some new faces from the membership joining the team of people that make this club possible to operate (namely; Claire Steel, Fitzy, Marco and Chris O'Donavon).

Also a big thank you has to go to Jo Dallas and Sue Hayden for organising the Tuesday night gate and guide runner rota, no easy task even with WhatsApp there's always a few last minute transfers going on right up until 7pm.

As Chairman there's been a few things that I've trying to help ensure the club continues to grow, thrive and go from Strength to strength.

There was the application to the HMRC to secure Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) accreditation ensuring we have a certain level protection for club officials and ensures we should not be liable for tax unless club income surpasses 50k trading, 30k on property and also if we receive a significant charitable donation, we could claim gift aid on this amount. All these changes meant a change to the constitution which was updated in the August.

Alongside this I was pleased that Henry Rowe was able to pull a few strings and managed to secure us with £500 sponsorship for the 5k series from Hockeys estate agents, alongside this I had worked with the marketing team to setup the 5k series Facebook page. Thank you also to Henry for the good egg trophy which goes to the runner of the series as put forward from each club.

I'd like to thank also the welfare team and all that they do to support club members and I'm pleased to share that the Saffron Striders are listed on the Uttlesford frontline website for local residents looking for ways to tackling issues related to mental health such as staying active and running.



Finally and likely the most exciting prospect is the opening of the new track facility, I've been attending the MOD community meetings often during the working day to ensure Striders have a

voice and are represented in the discussions. To that end there was an opening event on October 5th which the MOD had lined up some local dignitaries and commonwealth athlete Nicholas Brett (lawn bowls) and I was pleased to get a number of us (coaching and welfare) along to the cutting of the tape.

That said it was a somewhat premature firing of the starting gun....

The MOD are currently undertaking internal testing with barracks personnel to iron out final snags, and once the issue around the floodlights is resolved (talk of a small substation being rolled out to support the extra power) then we can look forward to scheduling our time on track and working through plans with the coaching team for structured training.

In line with this is recent introduction of a structured session available on Tuesday evenings for those who don't want just a social run.

Once confirmed we will look at the budget in terms of the fees (expected to be circa £50 an hour) in terms of setting the right balance for the membership fee going forward given the costs of hiring facilities (Granta School, MUGA at LBLC and the Track at Carver).

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Finally - I'd like to lay down a challenge to all members to try and find one way you can give back to YOUR club in this year ahead. And by this, I mean something other than pulling on a club shirt or a marshal vest at a race.

Whether it be lending a hand organising a club social activity, joining the guide runners to ensure new members get a warm introduction or help promoting the club via local businesses or bringing in new potential Striders to join our beginners' group.

This is after all YOUR club; it can only seek to grow stronger with members support and involvement.

Please don't sit back and just leave it to the usual folks – we are all only happy to continue offering to volunteer up our spare time if we feel supported from the members.

8. Any Other Business / Close

There were no AOB raised.

Alistair formally closed the AGM at 9:20pm and wished all the Striders a very Merry Christmas and hoped that 2023 would see him personally return to running with the club he loves.