



Saffron Striders Running Club

Saffron Striders Running Club

Monday 8th December 2025 at 8pm

Kings Arms Public House on 10 Market Hill, Saffron Walden CB10 1HQ

Minutes

Present - 31 members:

Alistair Cooke (Chairman)	Linda Brett	Marco Arcidiacono	Claire Steel
Iain Rogers	Jake Bonham	Charlotte Diggins	Ian McDougall
John James	Nigel Coates	Lyn Hudson	Mark Frow
Peter Round	Dickon Clark	Mike Bradley	Claire Hopkins
Tim McMahon	Micke Engelbrecht	Jo Simpson	Toby Lumsden
Iain Cumming	Charlotte Teal	Rachel Hipperson	Fiona Viney
Matt Billis	Chris Dodge	Claire Sleep	Richard Viney
Kate Poulter	Angela Marin	Arthur Oliva	

1. Apologies of absence:

Alan Jones	Alan Taylor	Thomas Roelleke	Claire Rooney
David Rooney	Lisa Coles	Sheree Reilly	Yusuf Firat
Paula Thurston	Lee Gamble	Margit Wendelberger-James	



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Alistair opened the AGM promptly at 8 o'clock and thanked everyone for attending. He confirmed that the quorum for the meeting should be a minimum 10% of the total membership currently standing at 185 so 31 attendees was a fantastic turnout and the AGM could proceed.

2. Minutes of the 2024 AGM Meeting for approval

Minutes of the 2024 meeting were reviewed and no comments or updates were made, so were duly signed off.

3. Matters arising

Alistair refers back to comments from last year from Margit about the possibility of reinstating the Winter Circuits. He reminded the members present that the club had instigated a poll to confirm preference for Winter training resulting in a relatively inconclusive vote of 53% of members who voted indicating a preference for the outdoor track sessions and 47% voting for indoors core and circuit training.

He was happy to confirm that we are going to have the best of both worlds starting in January with the return of circuit training in the Old Sports Hall at Joyce Franklin, Newport for 10 weeks kindly coached by Mike Bradley as well as the track sessions continuing at Carver Barracks. Hopefully attendance for both sessions will be sufficient as the track currently costs £80/£60 (Winter/Summer) per week, whereas JF is a peppercorn rent and we would be silly not to give it a go. Let's hope 2026 will be our best fitness year yet!

4. Treasurer report on balance sheet and statement of accounts

Prior to the AGM Ian had circulated to all members of the club via Mailchimp a detailed copy of the Club and Race Accounts.

Ian summarised that the bank balance was down £1000 from last year mostly due to the increased cost of hiring the track at Carver Barracks. Ian said we should for the year ahead keep an eye on the balance and may have to consider raising subs to reflect increase. Just to make life a little more complicated the MOD have now asked for payments monthly in arrears. Alistair mentions that the England Athletics subscriptions will also be going up in April as usual. Alistair also confirmed that the Club was also able to make a £300 donation to the local Saffron Walden First Responders.



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5. Committee Member reports

Membership Officer

Claire gave her report :-

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Membership Report

Total Membership and Changes YTD (at 30 November 2025)

- 14% net increase in members YTD, with total now standing at 194 (170 at 31 December 2024).

Membership Renewals

- All members were notified of the need to renew membership at 1 April. Applications were processed and chased at regular intervals, with the final payment received on 24 June (30 June is the cut off to England Athletics' grace period).
- New online form has made the process much more efficient, however some members required several chasers to respond/pay fees throughout the period from 1 April to end June.
- 160 members renewed their membership, including 1 transfer from Second to First Claim.
- 40 members did not renew, including 1 transfer to another club (of the 40, 17 did not respond to multiple requests/chasers sent, so I assumed they did not want to renew and retired their membership at end June).

Beginners Course

- 32 individuals completed the 2025 course: 2 existing members and 30 new joiners (vs 31 in 2024).
- 11 of the 31 that completed the 2024 Beginners course remain with the club today; A 30% retention rate.

Joiners and Leavers

- 35 new members were registered YTD outside of the Beginners Course: 34x First Claim, 1x Second Claim – a re-joiner who had resigned in April (vs 31 for full year 2024).
- 1 member resigned their membership during the year, transferring to another club.

Date Joined/ Segment	No. Members
Total 31 Dec 2024	170
Leavers/Lapsed	-41
New Members	+35
New Members via Beginners	+30
Total 30 Nov 2025	194

Membership Type	No. Members
First Claim	192
Second Claim	2



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Total 30 Nov 2025

194

Trialists

- 89 trial applications received this year to date – a significant increase, particularly ramping up in the last 6 months.
- Of the 89 total YTD, 24 went on apply for full membership. This is a 27% conversion rate (vs 25% in 2024).

Governance

- 99% membership fees were paid as at 30 November 2024 (1 outstanding – recent applicant)
- Emergency contact details have been shared with the Chairman, Membership and Welfare Officers at regular intervals during the year.

Membership Fee Payment Status	Total	
Paid	193	(99%)
Outstanding	1	(1%)
Total	194	

Coaching Officer

Marco gave his report :-

Please see below my report on the beginners' course

- Beginners' course recruiting campaign was supported with enthusiasm by several club member with different initiatives, including posts on social media, posters and handing out flyers at Market Square. This last is possibly the most effective and surely most enjoyable thanks to great vibe from people interaction. Amongst different input, an enquiry was made from a gentleman in a wheelchair about opportunities to participate to club activities
- 33 beginners signed up for the course, attendance was highest on 1st session (29) but faded out steadily from week to week, dropping to approx. half in the last few sessions. Main reasons for missed sessions include holidays (particularly during the half term break) and injuries
- Course was completed following Graeme Loudain plan. Speedwork in the first session might have contributed to injuries, thus it should be considered to move it to wards final weeks. Graeme's plan however works generally well in terms of workload progression and it was effective in raising fitness step by step. Training was less focused on technical aspects than previous courses, while large attention was paid to motivating beginners and rewarding their efforts
- Beginner's feedback has been positive throughout the course, social aspect remains very important, with very few beginners seemingly showing signs of competitiveness



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- Fantastic support from large coaching team (including: Linda, Mike, Fitzy, Paula, Jamie, Jemma, Lyn, Iain, Yusuf, Kate and Lili) and helpers, including beginners from previous years
- Great sessions lead by Yusuf (who taught us how to Greek-dance) and Mike (who came up with hills slalom drill, with coaches acting as cones)
- Track at CB works very well, particularly to keep close together beginners with wide range of running abilities. Green at LBLC also worked well, maybe we should plan hills sessions at LBLC next year's regardless of track's availability
- Improver's initiatives will take place informally over the next few weeks, with focus on improving 5k running performance

Marco was pleased that he could give something back to the club but was standing down because of work commitments. Alistair thanked Marco for his time on the committee and will obviously be missed. He was pleased that Mike Bradley would be returning to the role.

Communications Officer

Dickon gave his report :-

Dickon thanked everyone for sending in their results. He would also be sending out a request for feedback on what should be kept updated on Club Website in the new year.

Alistair comments that the new announcements WhatsApp group is the quickest way to now get a message out the club ahead of Emails, the monthly Newsletter or Facebook. Mike asks if any new members would know about the group? Claire confirms that a link is now sent and included on membership pack.

Race Coordinator

John gave his report :-

5K Series 2025 Summary

The 5K Series 2025 consisted of six 5Km races on Thursday evenings from April to September 2025, with 8 participating Clubs: C&C, CTC, ELY, HI, HRC, NJ, RRC, SSRC

Thanks to our sponsors, Arkwright's and Turners who donated £300 each, which meant the total cost to each club was around £250, similar to 2024.

Saffron Striders 5Km event took place at Carver Barracks, Wimbish on 17th July, which saw almost 500 runners complete the course as well as a number of junior runners take part in a newly introduced 2Km race.

Thanks to all the Striders, family and friends who volunteered to help and marshal at our event, as well as to those who helped and then ran afterwards.



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An additional task for next year will be to have the 5Km course measured, probably by a UKA official. This will not only validate our course for 'power of ten' accreditation, but ensure the course is actually 5Km, not more or less!

The final 5Km event of the series was hosted by C&C at a new venue at the Genome Campus near Great Chesterford. Special thanks go to Alistair who stepped in at short notice to carry out the prize giving in my place, as I was recovering from covid and had to miss the event.

Congratulations to Claire Sleep and Tim McMahon for being awarded best male and female Strider participant of the series.

Next year's events will be decided by February/March 2026 in time for the first race in April. Some thought may need to be given to accommodating the number of runners expected per event, as I believe each race had over 400 runners take part. Both finish tokens and digital stop-watches currently only go up to 500.

In response;

Club Member Arthur Oliva mentioned that he found that there had become too many people turning up at ParkRuns and was concerned that our event could go the same way. Was there a point where our event would get 'over-crowded'? Iain confirms that he has found that many ParkRuns were massively oversubscribed and that Chelmsford there were a record 800 runners. Nigel recalls that Bishop Stortford used to have 2 separate leagues because of numbers. It was mentioned that at Ely this year it was tricky and there were injuries noted on the gravel start. John James confirms the next meeting will be in January and he will raise these issues. Alistair thanked John and Ian for their continued co-operation.

Kit/Merchandising Officer

Paula gave her report:-

Following the completion and approval of the design for the new club race vest, we were preparing to move into production when Saffron Apparels original supplier unfortunately went into bankruptcy. They have since secured a new manufacturing partner who will begin production in the new year. Once production is underway, the new race vests will be made available for members to purchase through the club web-shop.

Alistair asks Paula if there has been any progression with the new flag? Paula replies that this will hopefully still be free of charge once we put together a large new order.

Claire Hopkins asks, why do we have an array of different yellow/purple vests? Bishops Stortford all have exactly the same shirts and look very smart. Ian asks if our colours have to be registered with EA. Nigel Coates replies that he had never seen any such correspondence. Paula confirms that the purple sweatshirts have definitely been the most successful. Arthur recalls that black was our original colour. We agree that although the yellow is nice, it does attract the bugs. Also the logo on the shirt sponsored by Arkrights was extremely thick and crinkly. Alistair also reminds us that having a printed logo might cause issues in an affiliated race. We could have something plainer and mentions a possibility of branded sock? He would enquire about the possibility of some Saffron Walden themed "Monkey Sox" to see if we could get some Striders socks designed and work with Paula on this



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The committee would agenda this at the next meeting.

Social Events Officer

Lyn gave her report:-

2025 turned out to be quite a social year for Saffron Striders. We started off with our annual dinner in February at the Golf Club. This time we went for a change and had a buffet meal.

We have had a few very enjoyable Friday nights at “Spoons” followed by the Market House. As the weather got warmer, we were lucky enough to have use of the club house at Saffron Walden Cricket Club for pizza and drinks after a few Tuesday night runs. Thanks to Paula for arranging those.

During the summer we had a lovely evening at Saffron Grange watching the sun go down with a glass or 2 from our local vineyard. We also had an evening at our local brewery Wyldesky following a wonderful cross-country run in glorious weather.

As for the rest of the year, we have our Tinsel run coming up on Tuesday 16th December. This year, alongside the mince pies, we will have mulled cider on offer too.

Our thoughts now go to 2026. Save the date as our annual dinner has been booked for Friday 27th February at the 8 Bells in Saffron Walden. Details to follow. As for the rest of 2026, it would be nice to have more of the same, and we will continue to encourage our members to meet up and have a well-earned drink outside of our runs.

Club Captains

We've seen strong participation and performances from the ladies this year. At last year's cross country we had a full contingent at all but one of the races (8, 10, 9, 7) helped by the trial trail run organised by Mike Bradley and by more open and regular communications about these events. Ware had lower attendance and as the furthest race (by location), perhaps lifts/car sharing would help; this is something we will try to encourage this year. We've had a good influx of younger runners this year and some keen cross-country runners amongst them, so I am optimistic about participation this year. It would be great to reach a position of having comfortable numbers of runners to spare at every race.

The Summer Series races are more popular and better attended (16, 10, 13, 9, 45, 16) possibly due to the lack of mud, but also probably due to timing. The ladies were joint 6th overall (of 8). I'd like to thank Al Taylor for his efforts in encouraging participation in this race series.

I would love to see greater Ladies participation in the Club Championship and will be working with Marco and Dickon to raise awareness of this race series.

Individually we've had many success stories across all distances and terrains – with age group placings in local and even international marathons! Well done ladies.

I'd like to thank the men's captain, Alan Jones (aka Jonesy), who is stepping down this year, for persuading me to become ladies' captain in the first place, for showing me the ropes (I was totally clueless) and for everything he has given to the club over the years. I'm so glad he did suggest this role to me as it's been one of the best things I've taken on.



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I'm looking forward to working with the new men's captain and it's a pleasure to get to know and run alongside so many of you. Here's to another year of successful social and competitive running.

Welfare Officer

Paula gave a joint report:-

Both Thomas and I are pleased to confirm that there have been no welfare issues requiring our intervention during the past year. The club environment has remained positive and supportive, and we have not received any complaints or concerns that needed formal action.
Paula

Chairman

Today marks my 10th AGM now sworn in as your club Chairman and while I'm happy to stand and not planning on retiring from running any time soon, I do feel like it's time for someone else to take up the reins.

As you can see from the fantastic work of the committee, the role is very much about keeping the ship steady and away from rocks. As I would like to find someone to take on the role from next year's AGM and would be willing this year to offer to give anyone interested a chance to understand what it involves on a week-to-week basis.

It's been another fantastic year for the Striders, I'm always pleased to see the success of our beginners' course bringing in some new faces, but also the track facility at Carver has attracted a new breed of (thankfully) younger runners to the club.

Saffron Walden continues to grow as a town as we can all attest on the town circuit, so we should never be short of new members to our midst and who knows future volunteers to the Guide Run Route, Committee members or even a new Club Chairman is just about to move to the area.

I'm equally pleased (as are my core muscles) to see the return of Circuits and Core session early in 2026 at JFAN, and would like to thank our returning head coach Mike Bradley for agreeing to put these sessions on, I'm sure with all the festivities ahead the sessions will be very well attended.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a pleasant end to 2025, here's to a lovely peaceful and healthy Christmas to us all, and I hope 2026 brings all that you want to achieve with the Saffron Striders and who knows, maybe even a cheeky little PB somewhere out there for you.

Cheers, Al

6. Election of the Executive Officers

- Chairman
- Treasurer
- Secretary



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Nominations were received for the role for the role of Club Chairman, Club Secretary and Club Treasurer and Alistair, Linda and Ian were happy to remain within their posts for the coming 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.

Name	Role	Proposer	Second
Alistair Cooke	Chairman	Charlotte Diggins	Tim McMahon
Ian MacDougall	Treasurer	Linda Brett	Dickon Clark
Linda Brett	Secretary	Paula Thurston	Dickon Clark

7. Election of the Committee Members

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

- Membership Officer
- Coaching Officer
- Communications Officer
- Race Coordinator
- Kit/Merchandising Officer
- Social Events Officer
- Club Captain Female
- Club Captain Male
- Welfare Officer Female
- Welfare Officer Male
- Chairman

All of these roles had been duly notified to members when the agenda was circulated on the 17th November 2025 prior to the AGM.

Standing down at this AGM are Marco Arcidiacono and Alan Jones. Alistair thanked both Marco and Alan for their time in post and wished them well. Good news is that Mike Bradley has applied for the role as Lead Coach and Jake Bonham for the role of Men's Captain. Both these have been proposed and seconded by the committee.

Proposals had been received to stand for 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	Charlotte Diggins	Linda Brett
Dickon Clark	Communications Officer	Alistair Cooke	Paula Thurston



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Paula Thurston	Kit and Ladies Welfare Officer	Charlotte Diggins	Dickon Clark
Lyn Hudson	Social Events Coordinator	Linda Brett	Dickon Clark
Jake Samuel	Men's Captain	Alan Jones	Claire Steel
Charlotte Diggins	Ladies' Captain	Linda Brett	John James
Michael Bradley	Coaching Officer	Paula Thurston	Linda Brett
John James	Race Coordinator	Linda Brett	Alistair Cooke
Thomas Roelleke	Men's Welfare Officer	Paula Thurston	Dickon Clark

8. Voting on resolutions proposed by members:

No resolutions were received.

9. AOB

Jo Simpson asks about the possibility of a 'middle' progression group on Tuesday evenings? Mike Bradley alerts us to the shorter run is the larger group and it invariably ends up splitting into two groups anyway. Alistair is concerned that it would be a struggle to find 6 GR's a week and wonder if we are trying to make this too complicated. We did all agree that this is probably why 'improvers' from the Beginners Course find Tuesday runs quite daunting. Tim agrees that the new year is the best time to action this and would look into it.

Charlotte thanks Tim for his hard work in coordinating the rota and we all agree that it is working really well. It is noted that the longer 10k run group rarely need a guide runner and instead of doing 10k (long) and 5/6k (short) runs, a 7k and 5k would be more appropriate during the Winter. Summer routes may be an issue using this new format.

Peter Lloyd suggests maybe changing the guide runner role to a pacing strategy? This is used at ParkRun and it works well. Alistair reminds us that these questions come up every year and confirms that Tuesdays is 'social' running and Thursday is more geared for pacing and training runs.

Rich Viney asks if we are able to encourage a younger age group to join the club? Alistair mentions the probable collab with Unique Gym. Charlotte Teall reveals that Unique had started a Run Club on a Friday Morning at Carver Barracks but the hire of the track was proving too expensive. Jake Bonham mentions that he actually joined Striders specifically to use the track. Peter Lloyd asks about the specific coaching for improving mileage etc. Although this is a nice idea, Linda mentions that the Coaching Team are all volunteers and unfortunately are not able to commit to any additional coaching at this time.

Alistair formally closed the AGM at 21:29 and wished all the Striders a very Merry Christmas. He reminds us that following the meeting the draw for our one space in next year's London Marathon would be taking place.