



**ST ALBANS STRIDERS - AGM MINUTES
THURSDAY 27th OCTOBER 2016
8.30pm**

1. Chairman's Report

I'm going to start by recapping just some of the achievements during the past year, from our 461 members across the UK and Europe!

MWRRL

A fantastic team effort to once again win the MWRRL overall and finish in 1st place with our women's senior and our women's vets team, and winning the mob match. Individually prizes were won by Paul Adams finishing 1st in the open men's category and Wendy Walsh finishing 2nd in the women's V45.

Chiltern League 2015/16

Men - 5th / 14
Women - 4th / 14
Vet Men - 7th / 14
Vet Women - 1st / 14

Notable individual performances from:

Paul Adams - 4th senior men
Graham Foster - 2nd V50
Wendy Walsh - 1st V45
Liz Walls - 4th V55

Sunday League 2015/16

Men's A team - 5th / 20
Women's A team - 10th / 20
Masters Men - 10th / 20
Masters Women - 10th / 20

Wendy Walsh - 1st V45
Colin Braybrook - 4th V50

Other Notable Team Performances

Our Senior Ladies team of Lucy Waterlow, Wendy Walsh and Gill Pease got silver medals at the Stevenage 3K Road Relays. A great achievement to beat all bar one of the other 47 teams.

Lucy Waterlow, Wendy Walsh and Claire Kremer were 14th out of 195 teams in the Vitality London 10k in May.

Notable individual performances

Selected to represent Hertfordshire in the last year over cross country and track were Wendy Webster, Lucy Waterlow, Tom Crouch and Paul Adams.

Blake Vivian represented GB in the European Vets Half Marathon championships in Portugal.

Paul Adams won the St Albans Half in an outstanding 73:08. Sadly for Paul this was a terrible day at the office, almost 4 minutes slower than his 2009 Club Record of 68.50.

Anna Buckingham finished joint 1st woman in the 268 mile Montana Spine Race traversing the entire Pennine Way in 166 hours and 38 mins. Remarkably Anna also set the Club record for 100m on the track in 2016. True versatility!

On the Club champs front – dear Lizzie Barber achieved an outstanding age graded score of 89.02% in the Welwyn mob match 10k (50 mins and 29 seconds at the age of 70!) We all wish her all the best for a speedy recovery.

Laura Hicks (2nd claim) – wowed us all by in becoming the Queen of the Stampede, the outright solo winner of the St Albans Stampede in 17 laps; 68 miles to you and me!

Steve Buckle, Gary Warren, Pete Crowdell, Nick Pattison – set a team course record in the Stampede with 29 laps; a total distance of 116 miles!

Club Records

Club records wise, a number have been set on the track as we have taken part in the Southern Athletics League and Southern Counties Masters League.

It is worth pointing out that competing on the track is a good way to gain a club record and you can view the existing records on the website, to see if there are any that you think you might be able to beat.

A couple on the track worth singling out are Tom Crouch - 15.21 for 5k and then 31.52 over 10k which he achieved when taking part in the 'Night of the pbs' which was the 10k trial for the Rio Olympics.

Other new record holders this year across the age categories were: Martin Whitworth, Paul Adams, John Ockenden, Marc Phillips, Roger Attard, Anna Buckingham, Deborah Steer and Lucy Waterlow.

On the road, James McMurray set an amazing 10K record of 30.39 in Hyde Park, which I think will be hard to beat unless he gets a pb himself!

Congratulations to all!

Other Highlights from the Past Year

Membership Renewals

Not so many exciting new things to show off about this year but much work behind the scenes on important things that have needed doing. The team have worked particularly hard on the change in membership renewals from September to March, as well as a number of difficulties caused to our members database when moving from the old hosting platform to the new. So thank you to Deirdre, Hannah and Ed for all your hard work in this area.

Belt Tightening

Across the committee, the focus has been on tightening our belts in order to replenish the club funds we delved into with some of our new initiatives in 2014/15.

As you will hear when we come onto the Treasurer's report, we have managed that with a small profit this year. Not only that but we have made a number of changes that will reap further rewards in next year's accounts.

The upcoming Annual Awards Dinner has seen a rise in ticket prices, allowing us to provide the same high quality event, with less of a subsidy from the club. The Stampede made a profit in 2016 and plans are afoot to expand further for 2017 and the new Summer Solstice should have a higher profile in 2017 too.

New Website

We have become increasingly aware that the website has not kept a pace with everything we want it to be and with so much work going on in other areas of the Club, the workload of Hannah the Webmaster, has outstripped what can be reasonably be expected of any volunteer. Hannah, Andy and Deirdre have therefore led a project on behalf of the committee to find a suitable solution for this and will present their findings later.

Striders Survey

A great response – over 100 replies and without spoiling all the surprises in Jen's presentation, it was a heartening to learn the 95% of Striders think the club membership offers great value for money. So we're putting the membership fees up to £150 in March. Not really!

Summer Solstice

We got the new race off the ground in record time; the inaugural Summer Solstice attracted 178 runners, achieved really positive feedback and made a small profit, which, for the first year of any event was an unexpected pleasure. Andy N had the brainwave of making this the end of course target for the RWS runners and this worked really well and gave an added feel-good factor to the night for those of us putting on the event.

Particular thanks to Wendy Webster, Steve Alexander, Martin Halling, Peter Blackaller, Tina T and Andy Normile for all their efforts.

Fred Hughes

Sadly 2016 was the last year for Mandy and Lucy's as our fantastic race directors. They did such a strong job of hosting our flagship race which is a huge responsibility as at the end of the day, it is our biggest source of income.

736 runners took part in 2016 and the race received its customary accolades for great organisation and fantastically enthusiastic marshalling.

Stampede

Ben and Amy worked really hard on the second renewal of the St Albans Stampede and it was great to see it reach its target of 180 runners in year 2. The event had a fantastic atmosphere and if you haven't been along to run or help out yet, I urge you to do so because it epitomises all that is great about St Albans Striders. With the help of a whole army of support, Ben and Amy put on a brilliantly well run event with tremendous atmosphere and the race is something that we should all be truly proud of.

Striders Weekend Away

Following the steady start in 2015, the 2016 weekend away hit the ground running and all places were sold out within 24 hours of release! 38 of us had a brilliant weekend away in the New Forest, with varying amounts of running, cycling, cake eating and drinking.

Now firmly part of Striders programme, the weekend away will be going ahead again in 2017, venue to be announced.

Thanks so much to Jen who put her heart and soul into the organisation, even providing food for everyone as we arrived on the Friday evening, assisted by Graham.

Striders Coach Trip

34 of us headed to the Great Birmingham Run (formerly the Birmingham Half) 2 weeks ago and had a truly memorable day out.

The coach trip has established itself as part of the Striders annual calendar now and the plan for 2017 is to go to the Great South Run over the slightly shorter distance of 10 miles, which will hopefully encourage even more members to come along and join in the fun.

Handover to Deirdre for the Membership report

2. St Albans Striders membership report, 2015-2016

Teamwork

Firstly, supporting membership is very much a team effort so huge thanks to Ed for managing all the finance associated with club and England Athletics membership – no small task – and to Hannah for all the database and website activities which are needed. Many thanks.

Busy year

It has been an interesting and busy first year for me as membership secretary (busier than I had anticipated, actually and probably for Ed and Hannah too) due to two significant changes this year:

Timing of the membership year

As agreed at the 2015 AGM and as members have been notified since, we are changing the timing of the membership year so that it runs from 1 April to 31 March each year to coincide with the England Athletics year.

There were already several reasons for this decision:

- We had collected EA fees with membership fees in the September of each year but would be notified later of what the EA fees for its next year would be. Every time the EA increased its fees, it led to the club losing money because we hadn't collected enough.
- Secondly, the offset in the membership years causes confusion: people can't remember whether they have current EA membership or not.
- Thirdly and differently, club membership has included with the Run with Striders course but times out just a few months later. With the new membership year, RWS joiners will have the opportunity to continue to train with us through the autumn and winter without further expense. I would expect this to encourage more new members to stay with the club for longer.

EA registrations

The change in membership year has become even more of a necessity with the EA regulation changes implemented this year. Road races held under UKA licence now require runners to be EA members if they want to run for their club and qualify for race entry discount.

This EA change has driven up the number of new memberships taken out by the end of August 2016. It was 73 compared with the historic average of 21 new registrations each year since 2008.

By the end of August this year, we had a total of 252 EA registered members. Excluding the RWS new joiners who were unlikely to take out EA membership immediately, this was a 10% increase in EA membership for the year. I anticipate this may increase this year as more members appreciate the value of EA membership.

Fees

Timing the club year to coincide with the EA year should make renewal of both much more straightforward and less confusing for everyone.

The membership fees for the club and EA membership year starting on 1 April 2017 will be:

EA - £14 (up from £13 this year)

Striders - £26 or £18 for volunteers. The volunteer discount will be available to all members who have volunteered at a Striders event since September 2015.

Membership numbers

Having a closer look at the membership figures:

We had 461 members at the end of August 2016, including the 33 who joined through RWS. Well done to Andy, Paul and all those associated with the RWS sessions.

133 either resigned or didn't renew. Most leavers don't let us know they are going or why though EA members transferring in or out of the club do have to notify us. The vast majority of leavers haven't been EA members.

In addition to the RWS, there were 62 new joiners during the year. This total of 95 new members for the year, although lower than for last year, indicates that we continue to attract strong local interest amongst runners of all abilities.

The ratio of men to women remains consistent year to year at 56% men and 44% women and, as in previous years, this was reversed in the RWS group at 64% women, 36% men.

Finally, 90 members had volunteered and qualified the discounted membership last year. Thank you to all our volunteers at all our events – you help to enhance the reputation of the club in both the running community and the wider community generally.

3. Treasurer's Report

Ed reported that the Club had made a surplus of just over £3000. The kit was showing as a loss due to the old stock from last year. This had been written off and therefore if taken into account, the Club had made a small surplus.

It was reported that the subscription income increased slightly due to EA membership but the Club would pay that back out.

Race events were in surplus, largely due to the Fred Hughes. It was also reported that the deficit for social events had dropped. It was also reported that there was slightly more money than last year and therefore accounts are in a reasonable good state.

It was going forward that there should be a separate budget for each area of activity which should make things clearer.

4. St Albans Striders' Survey Results

Members of St Albans Striders were invited to take part in a short online survey aimed at gathering members' views and experiences of the club, as well as suggestions for the future. Please see appendix 1 for survey results.

5. New St Albans Striders Website

There are two main issues at the moment. Firstly, our Communication system as a club – some people use Facebook, some people use the forum, details are not always up to date. We would like the website to be the first point of reference for information on the club. Secondly, our website does not function in the most efficient way and results in a lot of work for the committee. Therefore we are proposing the redevelopment of the club website to ensure it serves our needs as a club.

Some of the features we are looking to incorporate are:

- Members Area with individual login so you can update your own details, including email address to ensure they receive the club emails and add any performance details.
- Sign up for events and internal races without having to input your details every time.
- Club kit shop so you can buy multiple items in one transaction.
- News & Event pages that members can post on so everyone can see what is happening via the website.

We would like to spend up to £10,000 employing a web design company to design the website to our specification. The committee are behind this proposal and see this as an investment for the club's future. The main would be for the new website to be up and running by next years AGM.

6. Election of Officers

It was reported that Adam Mellor had agreed to take on the new role of Special Projects dealing with special/ad hoc projects

It was agreed to increase the number of catering coordinators from two to three and Bernadette Newby and Philippa Walton would join the team.

Linda Green and Julie Curtis would also join the Run with Striders team.

A huge thank you to our outgoing committee members for their hard work and dedication to the club over the terms of their office. Stuart thanked Jen Conway as Deputy, who has given him so much support over the past two years.

The Chair also thanked Si Fraser the Men's Road Captain, Graham Smith as Club Champs Manager and Men's XC Captain, Shona Davis, Claire Stephen and Colin Braybrook for their diligent race reporting on the publicity side. Further thanks were also given to Mandy Attree and Lucy Stern, our fabulous Fred Hughes Race Directors who really gave their all in taking our great race to new levels and not forgetting Tina Tremaine, who had done a fantastic job with all the catering over the years.

7. Any Other Business

A concern was raised about the poor maintenance state of the lock-up. Adelle Stapleton volunteered to contact the management company to resolve this.

8. Chairman's Parting Remarks

The Chairman gave a personal summary of his time as Chair of the Club and personally thanked those who he has worked closely with during his time on the committee.

Parting Comments

I have been so proud to lead this great club and so grateful for the opportunity to be an integral part of the Striders magic.

It has been exciting, exhilarating, at times challenging, at times daunting, but it really has been an experience that I will treasure and something that I will look back on with pride.

You're such a lovely bunch of people and we should each and every one of us be proud of making this the friendliest and most welcoming of running clubs and long may it continue.

Thank you Striders.

I now call the meeting to a close at 9:30pm.

APPENDIX 1 - Member Survey 2016

In September, members of the club were invited to complete a short online survey. Over 100 responses were received.

The survey responses were reviewed at the last Committee meeting and a number of action points were agreed.

Thank you for your participation!

Q1. How important are the following benefits of being a Strider to you? Please rank each element between 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

This top level information will be used to help us to prioritise our efforts across the various aspects of the club. It was clear that all the listed benefits were important to most of the respondents, with most importance given to the structured environment of training nights and least overall importance given to the reduced race entry price that EA affiliation offers.

	1 Not at all important	2	3	4	5 Very important	Weighted Average
Meeting new people, making friends and social events	3%	17%	26%	27%	27%	3.6
It's easy to find people to run with at a similar pace	2%	7%	13%	36%	42%	4.1
Training nights provide a structured environment in which to push myself	3%	3%	7%	37%	50%	4.3
Reduced price race entry through club/EA affiliation	20%	25%	23%	18%	13%	2.8
It provides opportunities to take part in league races	11%	13%	22%	31%	23%	3.4
Obtaining tips and guidance from others on training, injury prevention, nutrition etc	7%	8%	25%	36%	24%	3.6

It was also clear that safety of running with others was an important factor for several respondents.

Q2. Do you think Striders membership offers good value for money?

Yes	95%
No	1%
No strong opinion	4%

It was clear that members overwhelmingly feel that the club represents good value for money. The Committee will aim to continue delivering a good-value running club for members, including a reduced

membership rate for those who volunteer at our events.

'Use of the track is invaluable. Please keep its hire included in membership fees!'

'It is excellent value for money. I suspect that we could charge more'

'Exceptionally! I am very lucky to be part of a well organised professional club'

Q3. Do you have feedback on how club funds should be spent?

Feedback received suggested that members felt club funds were spent appropriately. Suggestions and subsequent action points are listed below.

- **Gazebo:** the Committee will purchase a gazebo in the new Striders branding.
- **Updating the Striders website:** the Committee will be working to deliver a new website over the coming year.
- **Creating a team atmosphere:** Social events and coach trips will continue to be offered to members.
- **Training more Run Leaders:** We would like to include a list of qualified Run Leaders on our updated website. If you would like to undertake Run Leader training, please speak to a member of the Committee.
- **Branded Run Leader items:** the Committee will purchase a number of high-viz Run Leader vests to help identification.

Q4. Do you think new and prospective members receive sufficient support and welcome?

Yes	57%
No	19%
No strong opinion	24%

We received positive comments on both general new members and the Run with Striders course.

'Whoever does the announcements always calls out a welcome to new members, and we tend to be quite a friendly bunch who can chat to new people and welcome them.'

'Excellent experience in the Run with Striders this year'

Suggestions and action points are listed below.

- **Monthly new members' night / run:** Prospective members are encouraged to come along for the first time on the first Tuesday of each month. The Committee will aim to ensure Tea Night is always held on the first Tuesday of each month – to ensure the 'New Members' Nights' are as effective as possible.

- **Buddying new members:** The Committee will contact those members who have suggested they are happy to help with buddying new members.
- **Website:** Our new website will have better information for prospective members, as well as a members' area,
- **More support and training plans for new members:** As the club does not have the resources to provide individual training plans, our updated website will have a section with links to training and advice (e.g. Runner's World), alongside details for recommended local coaches / personal trainers if new members would like more support with their training.

Q5. Do you have any comments or suggestions about our regular training session?

'Just to say a big thank you to those who take the time to plan and lead the sessions'

'The right mix of structure and do-it-yourself'

- **Advertised training schedule:** The upcoming track sessions will continue to be advertised via our website. We will aim to offer a similar schedule for other regular training options in the future.
- **Thursday training options:** A number of members suggested more structured hills and interval options on a Thursday night. As our Club is completely volunteer-run, please let the Committee know if you would like to be part of a Thursday night rota.
- **Identifying the Run Leader:** the Committee will purchase a number of high-viz Run Leader vests to help identification, and will investigate signage (e.g. 7-minute pace group).
- **Midweek Daytime Sessions:** The Committee will not be able to arrange midweek sessions in the near future. However, if you are willing to arrange a regular daytime run for members, the Committee would be happy to support you to advertise this.
- **Inclusiveness of training sessions:** All interval sessions (e.g. track, 1km reps, hill sessions) offered to members during announcements at our regular training nights are open to all. For longer runs, the pace and length will be advertised to help members choose the appropriate group.

Q6. Do you have any suggestions for the 2016/17 Club Championships?

Thank you to all who responded with suggestions for next year's Club Championships. The full schedule of 2016/17 Club Championship events will be released in early November.

Q7. In particular, we would like to include another coach trip in next year's Club Championships. Do you have any suggestions?

Several people proposed the Great South Run and it has been decided that this will be next year's coach

trip. and form part of the Club Championships.

Q8. Do you have any suggestions for social events next year, including the annual weekend away?

Suggestions for future social events included:

- **Annual Weekend Away:** Incorporating a race, staying at an upmarket hotel and increasing the number of available spaces. Suggested locations included Suffolk, rural Wales, the Peak District and the New Forest. There were also suggestions for walking the Great Wall of China, walking Lands' End to John O'Groats and completing the 'Three Peaks' challenge.
- **Summer Picnic/BBQ**
- **Pub Crawls**
- **Beer Mile**
- **Singles Night**
- **Karaoke Night**

Q9. Do you have any other suggestions related to the club (e.g. kit items, host races, league membership etc)?

There was positive feedback on the branded kit, league race opportunities and Striders host race events. Suggestions included:

- **Host Races:** Continue with current races and provide more notice about dates of events.
- **Activities / Presentations:** Hold Information sessions and presentations. The Committee will notify members about local events being held in the local area and continue to offer occasional events when there is sufficient interest.
- **Head Torches:** While it is not viable to maintain a stock of head torches for evening sessions, all Run Leaders will be provided with a head torch if they do not have one.
- **Kit:** Branded racing tops, woollen hats, caps, buffs, blue shorts, waterproof fleece jackets.
- **Email Mailing List:** The mailing list for Strider email communications will be updated by November 2016.