



ASHFORD ATHLETIC CLUB

Promoting athletics at the gateway to Europe

Minutes of the Ashford Athletic Club AGM 2022

Held via Zoom due to ongoing Covid-19
Monday 25th January 2022 at 1930hrs

Present:

Paul Maxted – Chairperson & 12 Club members.

Paul welcomed everyone to the 57th annual AGM which is an achievement in itself. He also welcomed MS who has agreed to continue to be president for another year. Due to the continued Covid threat, had to hold via Zoom again.

1. Apologies for absence:

Vera Goodman, Helen Willcox, L Stuart-Smith, M Edwards

2. To confirm the minutes of the 2021 AGM:

Jacqi Snare confirmed the 2021 minutes, seconded by Kate Dickinson.

3. Matters Arising from the 2021 Minutes:

The slogan 'Promoting athletics at the gateway to Europe' has been added to all Club communication.

The Minutes from the 2021 AGM have been put on the Ashford AC Website.

4. To receive reports:

Outgoing Chairpersons report from Jacqi Snare

Firstly, I must say a big thank you to everyone here on the committee for his or her outstanding contributions to the club over the last year. The tasks sometimes can prove very challenging at times.

We as a club as a whole, the Coaches Officials, Volunteers, Parents and the athletes once again learnt to adapt throughout the year positively through this pandemic, especially with the Covid restrictions once again forever changing. So well done and thank you everyone for your support and patience.

Some positives to hold on to:

We are back up on our membership numbers equivalent to a few years ago prior pre-pandemic.

Positives from 2021 two successful Open meetings and through popular demand we hope to be holding more in 2022. Outstanding individual performances from track competitions to X country performances.

Another positive, the under 11's once again became Kent Sports Hall champions for 2021/22. Even more remarkable that all the events for the Sports Hall competition are all indoor disciplines. So some of our biggest challenges being that the indoor shute was out of bounds for the duration of 2021. We as coaches had to learn to adapt for the children/young athletes to train for all 10 individual events in the cold outdoors.

Therefore, a massive thank you to all the coaches involved in this, and a well done to all the athletes.

In addition, the annual Ashford/Givaudan 10k was run for the first time in its 30+ years, run as a virtual race, athletes/fun runners from all over the world represented this. Because of its success, we have been asked to run it virtually again in October 2022 alongside the live event, attracting even more competitors.

We also introduced this year, two Ashford AC young Ambassador positions, these roles involve being a representee Ambassador to all the young athletes in the club, a go-to if any issues or requests need to be passed to the Exec Committee. Kindly Jacqueline Benson accepted one of the roles. Thank you. We hope to announce the 2nd Ambassador in the very near future.

We also asked all members of AAC parents, athletes etc to complete an online survey for AAC. Three main bullet points we have taken from the results and will be moving forward on this are communication, athlete support and recognition.

So here's to moving forward to the future of AAC and a big thank you once again to all of you who each hold an important role in the support of the club.

We ad a committee are very approachable and please, any issues or requests etc you can email us at any time or catch us on most club nights. We meet the first Monday of every month via the new norm Zoom as a committee to discuss any issues arising.

Finally, after 5 years in this role as Chairperson, I will be stepping down due to work commitments to the Vice Chairperson position.

I would like to extend my thanks as Chairperson to everyone involved with AAC and in addition, I wish our new Chair Paul Maxted best wishes in this role and for accepting the new role as Chair for AAC. Thank you Paul.

PLR mentioned that there were actually 3 open meetings and not 2, also the need to make sure that everyone is aware that due to renovations going on, we may not be able to hold any open meetings until late summer.

Financial Report by Stuart Whorlow:

The financial report had been circulated before the meeting. The 10k virtual race brought in most money due to no outgoings, and this has helped to subsidise other parts of the club. Stuart explained the assets the club held and stated the total bank balance is a healthy £44,000+.

PLR questioned the amount against 2021 Xmas Meal. Kate stated it included all Coaches Christmas vouchers. It was agreed to separate these to make it clearer in the future.

Race Walking Report by Chris Hobbs:

It's been a challenging couple of years but umpteen pb's and club records prove our race walkers seized what opportunities presented themselves.

For background interest the Major Games are now 20km walk and 35km walk for both male and female athletes. The Commonwealth Games this year will include 10,000 walks.

I am proud to report that 7 walkers gained top ten positions in the power of 10 rankings this year. If under 13's were included, it is likely that Ava Chappell would also be number 1.

Millie Morris 10000m, Jacqueline Benson 20km and Jonathan Hobbs 35km all gained top six in the Senior ranks. These three were invited and competed in the British Senior Champs and Trials last Summer.

Millie represented England U20 walk in winning her event in the Manchester International.

The Committee should be pleased with the knowledge that Jacqueline Benson has improved her personal bests every year for the last 8 years since joining the club.

The squad also won a large number of Kent and Southern championship medals.

I am glad that I don't have to nominate an athlete of the year, but the resilience award should go to Lesley Hall who was attacked while training nearly two years ago and despite on-going delays in hospital treatment, is back training and competing.

With the KYAL including race walks this year, we are keen to share the coaching provision to our younger athletes.

Finally, Hon Coach Chris Hobbs is set to be the Hon President of the National Race-Walking Association for 2022/2023. It's a dubious honour but with World Championships, European Championships, Commonwealth Games and World Team Champs it should be a good year.

I am happy to take questions at the AGM.

Chris Hobbs

Chris was congratulated on the achievement of all his athletes and of course, his own achievement becoming Hon President, he was asked to prepare something for the Website. He stressed to all present, that his training group was not only for elite athletes and was very happy to take on new athletes or any that just wanted to have a go.

Cross Country and Road Running Report by Stella Bandu:

Despite the Pandemic heavily disrupting the running competition programme, Ashford AC had a very successful year in road and cross country races. The focus was on quality and not quantity and supporting members during the lockdown and ongoing impact of Covid-19.

Road Running highlights: Oliver Prior and Marshall Smith were ranked 3rd and 5th nationally in the U23 10mile rankings. Will Knight and Adam Lane were ranked 14th and 15th nationally in the U20 5mile rankings.

Parkrun: The restart of Parkrun provided a much needed boost to participation. Many AAC members regularly participated in the 5km and junior 2km. Marshall Smith ran the fastest ever time at Ashford parkrun of 15mins 16secs.

Breaking Three Marathon Group: Three years ago, Ashford AC and Ashford & District Road Runners met with a view to pulling together a joint group to form a training group to prepare for the following year's marathon. After initial meetings with potential athletes, the group formed and trains at JRS on Tuesdays but also meets at weekends for longer runs. The group was called Breaking 3 to cater for the large number of athletes targeting a sub-3hr marathon. At the end of the mesocycle most athletes asked if the group could continue and it has grown to incorporate a large number of athletes including many who are yet to run a marathon. The group now trains all year round and enjoys good participation and numbers. A number of 6 weeks courses are offered including strength and conditioning, movement skills, speed as well as the ever popular 5k tune up. These take place outside the twice yearly build up to marathons with peak for spring and then autumn marathons. This training group is hosted by Ashford AC and coached by Gerard O'Sullivan.

Cross Country: Under 20 men team of Jack Small, Wegahta Zerom and Louis Small had an amazing year in which they won the South of England Cross Country Relay Championships and came second in the National Cross Country Relay Championships. All three participated in various British Cross Challenge Events.

They continued their success in early 2022 by winning the Kent Cross Country Championships. Jack won the individual title. Louis was 3rd and Wegahta was 4th.

Louis Small was selected to run for England in the Home Countries International Cross Country in Belfast. He finished 12th and was part of the victorious England team.

Kent League Cross Country 2021: With cross country not taking place in autumn/winter 2020/21 team manager Briony Walsh had the unenviable task of building participation up from scratch. Clashes with other cross country fixtures meant that our highly successful under 20 men were not often available for the Kent League.

Kent League Cross Country Final Results:

U13 Boys: Isaac Wood finished 63rd out of 109 runners in his first ever XC season with us. Brilliant work. And he unfortunately missed a race due to covid.

U13 Girls: Connie Druggan-Cherry finished 30th overall out of 66, she finished in the top 30 in every race. 14th in the finale one she competed at. Her first appearance also, so well done. Ava Chappell finished 59th out of 66 overall, she came 10th in the race she competed in. Unfortunately, she could not compete for the end of the league due to covid but she performed fantastically!

Liam Woodham for the U15 boys had a fantastic season finishing 14th out of 78 overall. He has improved so much during his time on this cross country team.

U17: Freddie Newing made his AAC debut this year and finished 47th out of 56 overall. He ran brilliantly in two meets and has many good races ahead of him. Jess Wilton finished 37th out of 54,

brilliant work in a new category. Unfortunately, she also had covid for the last meets of the cross country, but she put in a hard effort for the first two.

U20: Elisha Roger and Anna Hinson were both selected for Kent. Anna finished 4th overall in the U20 age group. She raced at every meet brilliantly. Elisha finished 10th overall, both brilliant efforts. Adam Lane and Wegahtha Zerom both put in fantastic performances, Adam finished 10th overall, Wegaththa joining us for the last race of the season and took a fantastic win at Footscray Meadows. There are no result yet for us seniors as we still have one more race to come in February.

Cross Country team selection December 2021:

The following members of AAC ran for Kent at the Southern Inter-Counties Cross Country competition: Ava Chappell, Elisha Roger and Anna Hinson.

Membership Report by Kate Dickinson:

Firstly, we would like to thank all of our members for renewing their membership over the last couple of years. It has been a struggle to provide everything that we would have wished for the club, but your support has been very much appreciated.

The transition to online membership and the use of training accounts has been an important step forward. Fortunately, we had just implemented this when Covid struck, so we were able to continue working our membership base in a safe and secure manner. Our numbers were understandably down in 2020, but through 2021 as we have been able to improve coaching numbers on a training night many of our core members have been back with us.

We have also had an amazing up-take of new members, enrolling at least 78 new athlete members from July 2021 – Dec 2021. This year so far, we have also had at least 6 new athletes join from the 10 that have just received New Joiner Forms. Our numbers look very promising for the future.

All membership subscriptions are now being charged at the normal full year rate, with the £5.00 discount for renewing members if paid up before midnight on 28th Feb.

Numbers on training nights for the last fortnight up to 80\85 a night. Kate explained members can have a warning set via account details so they receive an email stating they need to top up when they reach any level but cannot have an automatic top up.

The majority of new members are children however there are a number of 2nd claim adults especially going into distance group there is usually an influx of youngsters in Spring when schools start doing athletics.

5. Election of Officers

Nomination sheets had been put up in the stadium. Everyone has been re-elected although there is one ordinary member vacant as well as SAL and XC team manager vacant and it is thought there was also Vets Manager vacancy. It was agreed that the Club need more volunteers and this would need to be a focus for the club for the next 3 months. MS was asked if he would be SAL Team Manager. He feels all the coaches need to work together to support all athletes. PLR stat there was also a need for officials to support the team, it is impossible to be a team manager, an athlete and officiate. It was agreed a lack of officials is a national problem. RH suggested that the parents need to be spoken to, and told they have to assist otherwise their children do not compete. DL suggested parents are asked face to face. MS asked if there was scope in the budge to reward people. MS agreed he would consider being a member of the Committee.

President	Mrs M Seamon	
Life Vice Presidents	Mr D J Fox	Mr E A Hawkins
	Mrs M Seamon	Mr C Robinson
Vice Presidents	Mr & Mrs D Russell	Mr Ray Firth
	Mrs L Stuart-Smith	Mrs M Hambrook
	Mrs V Goodman	Mrs H Willicott
	Mr J Hobbs	Mr J Hughes
	Mrs P Missing	Mr P Woods

Paul agreed to open the meeting up for any other business.

Jacqi asked that Stuart Whorlow change the 'Xmas Meal' wording

MS stated that there was a vision statement on the website but no strategy document showing what the committee have achieved and what we want to achieve in the short and long term. He feels club members would want to hear what the committee was working on and a strategy document would get people interested however, it was noted that the low numbers at the AGM showed that people did not seem to be interested. Paul felt the first stage was getting feedback from club members and Paul agreed that communication has not been the best, but they are making committee members more visible training nights.

MS also had received feedback that open meetings was athletes main route to getting competition and are a good way to publicise the club to other athletes and clubs. There are plans for more open meetings in the future depending on the track renovations. MS also discussed succession planning and contingency planning.

SW mentioned the club has enough funds to offer financial incentives.

JM asked about the plans for the Stadium by Freedom Leisure. A very positive meeting was recently held. Work will start on relaying the outdoor track in March, when it is finished (probably August), the indoor track will be completed. They are also looking at other funding options. The Café is open however Freedom Leisure do ask people waiting in the café to buy a drink as it is a joint venture with the gym. A surveyor is coming out to survey the throwing area in the indoor chute. PLR said there would be a meeting with contractors in next few weeks to get a programme of works so training can be planned. Paul has asked if committee can meet the contract manager.

CH felt he would be able to promote the club around the country due to his recent appointment.

DL feels members should be encouraged to use the Café. He explained that when we first moved into the stadium we were going to use the Pod Plus area as a club house, but it was then rented out to them instead as the club was told we could use the Café at the time. FL have agreed we can scroll AAC info on the TV in the café. Paul explained our first aim is to build a strong relationship with FL and Tom the stadium manager seems happy to build the club and has made some suggestions already. JS suggested we have a coffee evening once a month and supply the coffee and chat.

DL is also concerned that athletes may move to other clubs 2nd claim to gain competition as we have withdrawn from the YDL. It was stated the decision was only for 1 yr, dependent on volunteers.

SB discussed funding, which she can access quite quickly, she is happy to sponsor monthly coffee mornings and the cost of banners but needs clear ideas as to what we want and how things are being implemented. Paul asked Kate to discuss with SB and those who have been involved in the club for a long time to get some history on the banners. Paul suggested setting up another meeting to start the ball rolling and Tom FL has a company to make them up. PLR s suggested having 5 banners and allocating 10yrs to each banner. Information can be gleaned from the website archives.

Meeting closed at 2031hrs