**Sedgefield Harriers**

**AGM 2016**

**Report of the Committee**

**General**

The year from the AGM of 2015 has seen a period of consolidation in the senior section of the club with membership levelling off at 110 senior members. Demand for the junior section has continued as strongly as in previous years and numbers have been constrained with the use of waiting lists.

The club again staged a number of successful events including a record turnout at the Hamsterley Marathon. Top of that list was the North Eastern Cross Country Championships which was a great success for the club in extremely trying circumstances and an outstanding testament to the club’s many volunteers.

A delegation of 9 members visited Hamminkeln in association with the twinning association to run in the local running club’s Citylauf race. The event was a great success and we plan to visit again. An invitation for a reciprocal visit has already been extended to Hamminkeln SV’s chair.

An Athlete’s Forum was held in July which offered the membership a chance to air their views on the running of the club. Several salient points were made and these are being worked through at committee level.

Going forward it is likely that the club will continue to consolidate in terms of structure, coaching offer and events. Performance is centrally important to the club and based on coaching, variety of sessions, growing representation at races and the increasing standard of athletes it is expected that performance will continue to improve.

Looking to the future, we’re planning to update our communication strategy including a re-work of the website and regular opt-in newsletters. We’re also looking to consolidate the work that has begun to encourage members at all levels of the club to compete in competitions whether track, road, trail, fell or cross country.

**Seniors**

Senior athletes competed once again in cross-country in the North East Harrier League. There were teams in the North East Cross Country Championships and individual entries at the Northerns and Nationals. Individual seniors competed on the track in the North East Grand Prix, the North Yorks South Durham League and in Vets championships. Road relays have proved popular and the club had teams at North York Moors AC and Crook relays.

The club Grand Prix has once again been a great success with strong turnouts in most races.

Attendance at senior sessions has been strong again and the sessions have been delivered by a wider variety of coaches.

Marathon and ultra-marathon distances continue to be popular within the club and several members have debuted enthusiastically at those distances this year.

The beginners running group which previously ran under the name of Sedgefield Happy Feet Joggers has successfully integrated into the club with runners training in parallel with the standard evening sessions and good representation in competitions. A new beginners group is starting to run on a Saturday morning.

Several club records have been broken at senior level and there have been strong performances from athletes that have moved up from the juniors.

**Juniors**

Demand for the junior section of the club has continued to be high. The junior section continues to be well structured and offers a defined pathway for juniors from the age of five years right through the club to senior ages. Within this pathway is the opportunity for juniors to have a good grounding in athletics skills and to be able to experience a range of athletics disciplines which includes sprints, endurance and jumps.

Representation in competitions continues to be an issue, especially with the older juniors, however those that do compete have achieved great success, including a gold medallist at the North East County Pentathlon championships and a number of athletes representing their county schools teams at both cross country and track and field.

A Junior Presentation Night was held at Sedgefield Race Course with World Championship bronze medallist Rabah Yousif as special guest.

**Coaching**

The Club Committee remain fully committed to supporting coach training and education to the long-term benefit of the club. A number of coaches have been trained this year benefitting the Minis, junior section, senior section and coaches focused on beginners. This makes the coaching at the club more robust and enables growth and improvement in performances.

**Volunteering**

Any amateur sports club is only as strong as its volunteers. It is gratifying to note that we have an exceptionally strong core of volunteers and we continue to receive strong support from within the club and the community at large.

The Club Committee aims to find new ways of encouraging participation in the coming year.

**Club Race Events Programme**

The Neptune Relays and the Serpentine Trail Race attracted strong numbers once again and both events went well and received positive feedback. The club winter and summer handicaps were also well supported. The Hamsterley Marathon was again a success, attracting a record entry.

Of special note is the North Eastern County Athletics Association Cross Country Championships which were held in very difficult conditions and which were a credit to the club. Feedback for volunteers on the day and for the detailed organisation of the event was exceptional and the event attracted a record field of runners.

Next year the club will once again organise the Neptune Relays, the Serpentine Trail Race and the Winter and Summer Handicaps along with the Hamsterley Marathon.

**Awards**

The following awards have received by the club and club members;

England Athletics North East Region Volunteer Awards

Victoria Shepherd - Volunteer of the Year Runner Up

Northern Echo Local Heroes

Ean Parsons - Sir Bobby Robson Leading Light Award Winner

**Community**

The club continues to play an active part in the local community and supports events including Run Santa Run in aid of Butterwick Hospice, the Sedgefield Winter Beer Festival in aid of our own FoSH and the annual Town Council Snow Party.

**Social**

The 10th Anniversary Annual Dinner and Awards Evening was held at the Hardwick Hall Hotel and our guest was NECAA Secretary Archie Jenkins who presented awards to members. Special awards were given to Ean Parsons, Marie Walker and Scott Hydon in view of their contributions over the first ten years of the club. There was also a Christmas social night at the Golden Lion.