**Sedgefield Harriers**

**AGM 2017**

**Report of the Committee**

**General**

The year from the AGM of 2016 has seen continued consolidation in membership: we currently have 112 senior members which represents a very small increase on the previous year. Demand for the junior section has continued as strongly as in previous years but changes have been made to the way in which that demand is met.

The club again staged a number of successful events including the Neptune Relays, the Sedgefield Serpentine and the summer and winter handicaps.

For the second year running, a delegation of members visited Hamminkeln to run in the local running club’s Citylauf race. The event was a great success and we plan to visit again next year. An invitation for a reciprocal visit was accepted and a small delegation of runners from Hamminkeln SV visited for a very enjoyable weekend of running and sight-seeing which included Sedgefield Parkrun and the Sedgefield Serpentine.

The committee have been working hard to respond to the points made during last year’s Athlete’s Forum consultation exercise and welcome feedback on how we’re progressing against those action points, as well as any offers of assistance to help achieve them.

Looking to the future, we’re looking to grow the senior section of the club at all levels, investigate ways of improving participation for both seniors and juniors, and to work with the membership to negotiate ways to improve the club for all.

**Seniors**

The men’s cross country team achieved a great milestone for the club by coming second in their division in the Harrier League, thus securing promotion to the second division, and have begun strongly again in this year’s competition.

Our members continue to represent the club at a large variety of races of all distances and terrains, and at least two members have represented their country in marathon and duathlon events. Multi-events have been enticing several club members and at least one has completed a notable “Ironman” event.

The club Grand Prix has been a mixed success. The club responded to feedback by adding a greater variety of races and focusing on local races, but while some events have attracted a large field, others have seen small numbers able to attend. A questionnaire went out to all members recently and in the coming weeks we’ll be responding to that questionnaire as next year’s Grand Prix is put together.

Attendance at senior sessions has been strong again and the sessions have been delivered by a wider variety of coaches. Additionally, a Saturday morning session for beginners has proved successful and will be run again in the coming months.

Several club records have been broken at senior level including excellent performances from athletes that have moved up from the juniors.

**Juniors**

Demand for the junior section of the club has continued to be high but for a variety of reasons, there has been a re-structuring of the club’s offering, which has led to the minimum age being raised and and increased focus on competitions.

We believe this will offer a stronger pathway for meaningful development of young athletes whilst also allowing those who are less competition focused to continue to benefit from the sessions. 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, jumps and throws.

A Family Athletics session was trialled in part to replace the sessions for years one and two and proved a great success. Once the new junior structure is bedded in, this may be resurrected.

I reported last year that representation in competitions continued to be a problem and sadly that situation doesn’t appear to have improved despite numerous efforts to do so. It is hoped that the new structure will finally provide that impetus and get more juniors hooked on the buzz of competitive athletics. Those of us responsible for promoting the club can play our part by better celebrating the fantastic achievements of those young athletes who do compete.

Achievements to celebrate this year include a strong placing at the NE inter-counties championships, first and second places in the regional sportshall competition, which later led to the U13 girls competing in the national sportshall championships, a slew of U17 records broken in track and field events and a gold medal at the cross country county championships.

A Junior Presentation Night was held with professional marathon runner Matty Hynes helping out.

**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 benefiting all aspects of the club and I’m aware of three seniors and six juniors who will undertake some form of training in the coming weeks and months. 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. Our core of volunteers remains strong but new, committed volunteers are needed to take up the baton. To this end, we have appointed Mike Wood as volunteer coordinator and he will be progressing ideas to recruit and support volunteers over the next 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 given back to the NE Marathon Club as the forestry commission required the route to be changed and we were unable to fulfil that request.

Next year the club will once again organise the Neptune Relays, the Serpentine Trail Race and the Winter and Summer Handicaps and we may also look to instigate a new race to help replace income from the loss of the Hamsterley Marathon.

**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. As of today, it looks like we will not be able to hold the Winter Beer Festival next year.

**Social**

The annual dinner was once again held in the Hardwick Hall Hotel and was a great success, as was the Christmas social at Planet Leisure in Newton Aycliffe. A further social in July was warmly received and there was also a pizza night held at Durham House which proved a great success.

**Summary**

While not everything has gone to plan, the club has had an exciting year in which our members have won medals, represented their country, broken club records, run, cycled and swum great distances, helped the community, put on superb events, hosted great races, formed international friendships and welcome new friends as members. We look forward to making next year even better.