

Middleton Harriers AGM Minutes, 7th February 2023

Middleton Arena

Present: Peter Gilligan (Chairman), Ge Kirk (President), Cathie Murphy (Ladies Teams), Steve Bassam (Finance), Craig Sutherland (Sec), Rob Bishop (C25K), Jen Laptew (Comms), and 26 Members.

Apologies: Mick Bull, Janice Pugh, Ruth Hare.

Minutes: Agreed.

Matters Arising: None.

Correspondence: None

Chairman's Report: Welcome to this AGM of the Club. Over the last year the Club has continued to grow and members have enjoyed the races and social events that have been arranged. The Road Championship comprising a good number of road and trail races was completed by a good number of members and climaxed in an excellent presentation evening held at Manchester Golf Club.

This year we have competed in in the Run The Moors Fell races and members had excellent results. We have nearly completed the cross Country Season and a Presentation Evening is planned for April. The Club arranged two races during the year: Eddies Revenge Fell Race and The Hopwood Trot Trail Race, at Hopwood, both with great success.

The Club handicap was held in August and was well supported by Club members.

On Boxing Day we had the annual outing round Tandle Hill and refreshments at the Hopwood Arms, another enjoyable morning.

We have held Committee Meetings every 2 months to manage the affairs of the Club and I thank the Committee Members for their support.

We have a new website and I wish to express thanks to Jen Laptew who has developed it and taken over the role of Communications Officer, the site is well worth a look at.

To end on a sad note, we have to report the death of two members: Barrie Fairbrother and Lou Gilchrist, two people who had been members of the Club for a long time.

Secretary's Report: The most important thing to report on has been the creation of a new web site. This has been well received and our thanks go to Jen for her Brilliant work.

E mails are going out on a regular basis and our Facebook page continues to get positive feedback, and participation on our WhatsApp groups is high.

Our thanks go to Janine and Graham Jordan and Steve Lowe for taking on the role of Tent keepers for the Cross Country Season.

In addition to hosting Eddies Revenge, and the Hopwood Trot the Club also assist in staging the SELCC XC in Heaton Park and on behalf of the Club I'd like to give a massive thanks to everyone who helps, especially Peter Gilligan.

Treasurers Report: The club started the year with a cash balance of £8014.24 and stock of £2331.50 giving a book value of £10,345.74 which is a high level of funds for a small club with no financial goal. We have ended the year with £8,848.32 which is a reduction on the year but still leaves us with £6000 in the bank which is still high. Due to the high amount of reserves Steve said that the membership would stay at £10 for 2023 but that it would need to rise in 2024 to achieve a break-even level.

The Key Highlights for the financial year were the £729 raised at The Hopwood and the kitchen at Eddie's Revenge, along with the donation to local charities from the entry money for Eddie's Revenge.

Outgoings consisted of entry fees for Cross Country, Relays, etc along with coaching fees and Track hire at Boggart Hole Clough. There was also £450 outgoing for coach hire to the BMAF Relays at Sutton Park. Steve concluded by saying that the finances were well in control.

Election of Officers: Peter reported that the current committee had agreed to continue in office and that he would accept a block vote. This was proposed by Mick Buck and seconded by Christine Brooks. Mandy Cregg and Kyrinda Carter-Moore also put themselves forward for the Committee and this was seconded by Jen Laptew. The proposal was agreed.

New Committee: Peter Gilligan (Chairman), Ge Kirk (President & Membership), Steve Bassam (Finance), Cathie Murphy (Ladies), Jen Laptew (Communications), Ruth Hare, Rob Bishop, Mandy Cregg, Kyrinda Carter-Moore.

Membership: Ge reported that as of December 2022 there were 70 men and 58 ladies giving a total of 128 in addition we had 13 social/life members. The membership did increase slightly due in the main to the club being able to resume training and racing again in 2022. We did attract 21 new members but quite a few older members for whatever reason did not rejoin. BUT we do have 3 new members already this year, so things are on the up.

EAA affiliation fee has been increased this year from £100 to £150 (of which the club pays) and after taking in concerns from Running clubs up and down the country the EAA has decided to increase the membership fee to £17 from April 1st (an increase of £1)

Road/Trail Championship Report: This was our first full season since Covid and this is reflected in greater participation.

In the Men's Championship 32 (27) men took part in at least one race with 17 (9) completing the championship. The Men's Championship was won by Jorden Burke with Paul Cain in Second and Leo Cain in 3rd position.

In The Ladies Championship 26 (19) entered at least one race and 14 (10) completed the Championship. Karen Hallett won the Championship from Jo Lynch in second and Janet Hunt in 3rd.

In terms of participation, our best turnouts were at the local races such as Cowm Reservoir 5K Series, although we tend to get more Category finishes in the smaller races outside of Greater Manchester. For the 2023 Season the race selection Committee have selected a number of local races as well as some races further afield.

Relays: Last season we fielded teams in the following events: British Masters Relay (2 Ladies Teams & 2 Men's Teams), Calderdale Relay (1x Open), 3 teams in the Wacky Racers Relays, and 2 team in the Cross Keys Relays. This is a good record and reflects well on our runners level of commitment.

For the coming season we shall endeavour to enter teams in the Northern Athletics 6 & 12 Stage relays at Redcar (April), BMAF (20th May), 2x teams in the Calderdale Relay (21st May), Wacky Races Relays (BH August) Northern Athletics Road Relays (September tbc)

This year we will not affiliate to Northern Athletics until we have confirmed teams for their events. There was a discussion on why we had not affiliated to Northern Athletics, Cathie pointed out that this had prevented 2 runners taking part in the NA Cross Country and there was a danger that they would consider their position with the Club.

Craig replied that we had affiliated to NA for several years and had not succeeded in entering a team in the relays since 2018. The Committee was agreed that should enough interest be shown then the Club would affiliate and enter the teams.

Fell Season Report: The 2022 Fell Championship season. A total of 6 men and 8 Ladies competed in at least one race and 5 men and 5 ladies completed the series. The Winner of the Men's Club Championship was Graham Jordan and the Winner of the Ladies was Karen Hallett. We also competed in the RTMFGP (Local Club Championship) and achieved 7 Podium places and 3 Awards.

Cross Country Report: The 2021-22 Cross Country season was much interrupted with postponements but ended successfully with all races completed, although not necessarily in the right order.

15 Ladies competed in at least 1 race with 10 competing the season. First Lady was Martha Urwin from Karen Hallett and Janine Jordan. Jorden Burke was the Champion Man from Michael Griffin and Andy Ndlovu. 21 men completed at least 1 race with 14 completing the Series. The male veterans won 3rd place in the MACC League Division 3 and are now competing in Vet League 2.

Socials & Review Of Trophies: Ge reported that there had been excellent feedback from the last presentation in January. There was positive feedback from all at the meeting and it was agreed that The Golf Club be used as again. Ge thanked the members who had facilitated it's use.

This year we had processed 34 Trophies which all needed recovering from previous winners and engraving – this is expensive. A total of £315 on engraving alone. Also some need repair work or replacing. Do we keep the present number of Trophies or reduce them?

There was a strong feeling in the meeting to keep the trophies at the same and also offers of help with the retrieval and transport of the trophies if required. There was a suggestion that the presentations be combined into one event, but it was felt that people liked going to more than one club social event per year. There were a number of suggestion as to alternative engravers who may be cheaper.

Club Races: Craig reported that last season we had hosted Eddies Revenge FR, the Hopwood Trot and Club Handicap – all had very successful outcomes but that Eddie's Revenge had had some issues which needed addressing and that there was to be an organising committee soon to prepare for the next event in June.

Cathie had organised a very successful Hopwood Trot The Hopwood Trot and was preparing for the next one.

The Club Handicap was a success and the improved facilities in Bowlee Community Centre were brilliant. We are preparing for the next event, and ideally we would like to run the event entirely in Bowlee Park without using the main road.

Training: The training sessions continue to grow with Monday, Wednesday and Fridays getting increased numbers and also a good turnout for the Thursday night fell training sessions hosted by Michelle and Dave. We are also getting a good number of attendees at the Sunday morning long run sessions.

Unfortunately Jason is planning to re-locate to Perth in the next month or two and this means that the Monday evening session will need a leader – if anyone wishes to take on this role please let us know – Cathie and John volunteered.

As the Wednesday group has increased in size there are more options as to how the set-off times might be organised to reduce the times of the re-groups. There are several ways of doing this – we could have a separate 7:00pm group or the sub 9 min/mile runners could set off 15 minutes after the main group. What are people's thoughts?

A couple of us have been thinking of how to improve attendance and make the training sessions a bit more of a social event – We thought this might be done by changing the venue for the sessions to The Ring O'Bells pub as a way of encouraging people to stay behind for a coffee or soft drink in relaxing surroundings.

There followed much discussion on training times and start times – some argued for going back to a 6:45, 7:00 and 7:15 staggered time. Some felt that a mass start with runners splitting off into groups of their own pace would be better as it gave everyone the opportunity to socialise before the start. It was queried why we meet on Mondays and Wednesdays rather than Tuesdays and Thursdays as other clubs. Jen suggested a questionnaire might give a good indication of people's preferences. Ring O'Bells was not a popular option on parking grounds, changing facilities and access on a Sunday morning. Peter asked everyone to look for suitable venue options. Questionnaire - Jen to action.

Couch to 5K: Rob reported that the 2022 C25K had been really good. The numbers initially participating had not been as high as pre-covid but he was happy to get as many over the finish line as previous years. He thanked Jo Bishop for all of the background work she puts in. He also congratulated Mandy Cregg on being the first C25K to become a Committee member and also Janet Hunt on being the first to enter a marathon. He thanked everyone at the Club for their support and said that the next C25K would take place in May over a 10 week period, with the 15th being the most likely start date (TBC). The question of publicising the programme was raised and Rob suggested that we use our Comms Manager.

Rob also raised the possibility of a race-break in Midleton Co. Cork. This was greeted with much enthusiasm especially those who had participated in the Ballycotton 10. Rob would follow up.

Club Kit: Cathie reported that there were regular sales and that the hoodies with a full zip were no longer available and suppliers of an equivalent design were difficult to find. She would continue to search the Internet. Several people suggested possible suppliers.

AOB: Welsh Castles – Karen asked if it was possible for the Club to enter a Welsh Castles team. There was general agreement that the club should enter it, but we needed 20 runners capable of 9 minute miling over a distance of 7-10 miles, and lots of logistics to resolve. We could keep the matter under review for next year.

Cross Country - Peter would no longer be able to take an active role in setting up & marshalling XC, he felt it was time for other people to take on the role.

Date of Next Meeting: TBA