

Chairperson and secretary reports 2011

Chairperson: Margaret Leek

I began my report last year with the problem the Club was experiencing through the lack of qualified coaches and the ever increasing waiting list of youngsters wishing to join the Club.

I am pleased to report that the first of these problems seems to be easing. We were successful in our bid for a Sport England Grant and received £2,927 - £1225 for coaching courses, £1267 to purchase training hurdles and £435 for other courses (safeguarding and protecting children etc.). The hurdles were soon purchased and are used on a regular basis. The coaching course grant was soon spent as well, as seven members went on Assistant Coach and Club Coach courses. In addition to these, 6 more courses have been paid for by the Ipswich Harriers Supporters Association for which the Club is most grateful. On the last Club Coach course 5 of the 9 participants were from Ipswich Harriers – how great is that! All this bodes very well for the future of the Club and its athletes. The waiting list, as Colleen will probably mention in her report, fluctuates and when you seem to be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, more youngsters want to join! This makes it more important for members to be regular for training sessions and compete so as not to be taking up a place that could be utilised by someone on the waiting list who may be a promising athlete and be an asset to the Club.

Five coaches are booked on Safeguarding and Protecting Children courses in the next few months and myself and the President are booked on an Equity in your Coaching course for February 2012.

The updating of Clubmark is almost complete. It is pleasing to note that most coaches now keep registers in one form or another. This may seem “a chore” but an incident recently has proved how important these are when confirming when an athlete has/has not been present for training. Also if there was a reason to evacuate the centre, the Club would need to know that all those training have been accounted for.

Maria Thompson has been very busy during this last year editing and producing “The Harrier” our regular newsletter. A good way of keeping everyone informed of what's been going on. Many thanks Maria.

Our press reports have been excellent again this year, thanks to Graeme Crissell, a page nearly every time. Hope you're willing to continue Graeme!

The Supporters Association were kept very busy during May as all our home matches were given to us then. The profit from their sales has helped with financing the coaching courses. The Officials at our home meetings very much appreciate the attention they get from “the ladies” with drinks and biscuits! The BBQ was again a great success as was last year's Presentation Disco with special guest, Christian Malcolm.

Our league teams have had various degrees of success. Again the Senior Men, Senior Women and National Junior Teams have all stayed in their respective divisions although the Women and Junior teams have struggled at times to fill their teams. However, next year the Women (U17 upwards) will join with the men to take part jointly in the Southern Athletic League so it was good for the women to maintain their Premier League status for their last season in that League. This means that the U15s will be able to concentrate on the Eastern Young Athletes and East Anglian Leagues.

Our Eastern Young Athletes Team qualified for the Plate Final and came out winners! Well done to all of you. All age groups qualified for the East Anglian League Final and the Senior

Men and Under 17 Men won their sections on the day but over the whole season Ipswich were overall League winners.

Well done to all the Team Managers, especially Maria Thompson who took on the boys Eastern Young Athletes League as well as the Anglian League and to Mandy Godbold who has helped Yvonne Holmes with the Eastern Young Athletes girls. It is not any easy job but can be a very rewarding one.

What has been good this year has been the increase in Road Running. Neil Gillingham has managed to persuade/twist arms to get more athletes to take part. Neil has also improved his own performances and encourages the others. Two of our athletes, Ross Fawcett and Andrew Rooke took part in the ITU Duathlon World Championships held in Gijon, Spain. Ross took the Gold medal (in his age group) and Andrew the bronze (in his age group).

I would like to thank all the coaches for everything they do both in Harriers time and outside it; the Officials who give up their time to officiate at our home and away fixtures; the Committee for their hard work, a lot of which is done in their own time away from Northgate and to all the athletes who have represented the Club over the last year. Without all of you the Club would not function. A special "thank you" to our Treasurer, Sue Tunaley, who is stepping down from this position after several years. Many thanks Sue for all you have done. The Club is lucky enough to have a replacement, in Tim Byford who will hopefully be elected at the AGM!

Overall, I think Harriers is proving that as a Club we are moving in the right direction and hopefully with the help of James Cudmore, England Athletics, who is working with us, we can look towards more success in the future.

Honorary General Secretary: Leanne Thorndyke

In the last year the financial position of the club has remained stable and Ipswich Harriers has continued to be a local sports club that people want to join and be part of. I'm sure this will continue to be the case in 2012 as we enter the Olympic year. I fully support the proposals of the treasurer regarding membership fees.

I would like to thank all of the hardworking and dedicated coaches, without them the club could not continue. It's great news that we have had several people recently attending coaching courses as this will help us strengthen the club and meet the needs of all of our athletes.

I would like to say a special thank you to Sue Tunaley who steps down as treasurer at the AGM. Sue's hard work over the years has been invaluable and we hope she will remain a part of Ipswich Harriers.

Membership Secretary: Colleen Fuller

At the time of writing, the membership of Ipswich Harriers is approx 280. Fifty-four of these members are either Associate, Life, or Honorary members. We also currently have between 35-40 trial members, most of whom will probably become full members. For the majority of this year, it has once again been difficult to cope with the waiting list due to a shortage of qualified coaches. However, there is now significant light at the end of the tunnel and our thanks must go to the Ipswich Harriers Supporters Association for funding a number of coaching courses this year which has led to an increase in the number of fully qualified coaches within the Club. This has, in turn, enabled us to significantly reduce our waiting list during the last couple of months.

The current waiting list consists of approx 16 youngsters, half of which are not eligible to join until next year. This is at present a manageable number, but no doubt it will change drastically as we approach London 2012!

The job of Membership Secretary is very time-consuming and, whilst I am happy to continue with the role for another year (if elected at the AGM), if anybody out there would like to volunteer their admin skills to help me, I would be pleased to hear from them!

Officials Secretary: Tony Fuller

This has been yet another demanding season for the Ipswich Harriers Officials. All of our home league meetings this year were in May, so the pressure was on to provide the level of commitment and expertise that we are renowned for. As always, everyone who was asked put in the effort required to host very successful events.

Every year we call upon parents and others to assist our qualified officials and this year as in the past, we have been able to rely on the support given by so many willing helpers. This serves to enhance Ipswich Harriers reputation of being one of the most efficient and well organised clubs in the region. I must as usual offer my thanks to every one of the team that has helped to make the job of Officials Secretary run as smoothly as possible. Without your support, we would not be the very successful club that we are.

We must remember that the 'team' consists not only of our Track and Field Officials, but also the Scorers, Recorders and our Refreshments Team who keep us going throughout the day. We must also not forget the efforts of the Northgate ground staff who make sure that the facility and equipment is available and up to standard for competition at our home meetings.

Next season may provide us with a different range of difficulties to overcome. We don't know yet what the impact of the Olympics will be on our resources for league meetings. Because of the high standards and reputation of Ipswich officials, we have a number of our officials signed up for the games and wish them every success in London. However, it does leave us with the problem of covering our commitments in 2012. Having said that, I am confident that we will come through as we always do with your help.

A big thank you from the club (and me) goes out to everyone who has put in time and effort to ensure our continued success. As always, we welcome any of you who are interested in becoming qualified as officials in any of the Track & Field disciplines. If you would like more information on the process, please speak to me or any club official and we will be pleased to help.

Road Running Secretary: Neil Gillingham

This past year has been a successful year for the Harriers on the roads seeing a good number of Harriers racing in a selection of different events and some great results too.

There have been a number of victories this year for our athletes and these include the Harriers 'A' successfully defending their Ekiden relay title at St Josephs College in July this year. Individuals to get wins this year include James Powley (Kirton Friday 5), Elliot Palmer (Framlingham 10k) and Kieran Clements (Martlesham 10k).

There have been other equally impressive performances this year from other athletes this year including, Chris Rooke (2nd Ipswich Half Marathon), Andrew Revell (15th Kirton Friday 5, 5th Framlingham 10k and 13th Martlesham 10k), Patrick Gravett-Curl (6th Framlingham 10k and 9th Martlesham 10k), Lucy Barnes (1st Under 17 girl Kirton Friday 5, 4th Women at Brantham Friday 5 and 3rd Women at Martlesham 10k) Glynn Thomas (18th Framlingham

10k) and Neil Gillingham (16th, 10th, 24th, 12th and 11th at various races of the Harwich 5k series).

In the local Friday 5 series, the club had two athletes complete the series and receive an overall position. Neil Gillingham finished 20th in the senior men's age group and Emma Burroughs who took 3rd in the junior women's age group and receiving a trophy for her efforts.

The club had four runners this year taking part in the Virgin London Marathon, Glynn Thomas (03:23:30), Neil Gillingham (03:56:50), Kirsty Thorndyke (04:34:10) and Gary Austin (06:23:42). Neil, Kirsty and Gary all recorded personal best performances and Neil went on to complete the Robin Hood Marathon in September in a faster time of 03:41:31. The interest in the club places for next year's Virgin London Marathon has been impressive so it will be good to see at least three Harriers again lining up on the start line next April.

The list of races that club members entered this year is impressive and includes, Scenic 7, Hadleigh 10, Wymondham NYD 10k, Brass Monkey (York) Half Marathon, Great Bentley Half Marathon, Adidas Silverstone Half Marathon, City of Norwich Half Marathon, Brentwood Half Marathon, Joe Cox Half Marathon, Paddock Wood Half Marathon, Newham 10k, Virgin London Marathon, Virgin London Mini Marathon, Kesgrave 5k, Breckland 10k, Alton Water 10k, Woodbridge 10k and Fun Run, Harwich 5k Series, Ipswich Friday 5, Bupa London 10000, Kirton Friday 5, Stowmarket Friday 5, Bury Friday 5, Newmarket 10k, Great Bentley Friday 5, Ekiden Relay, Brantham Friday 5, Mersea Island Lions 10 Mile, Framlingham 10k, Experian Robin Hood Marathon, Bupa Great North Run, Ipswich Half Marathon, Martlesham 10k, Great Eastern Run and Saxons 5 Mile Race.

As mentioned last year a number of Ipswich Harriers have branched out from road running to take part in both triathlons and duathlons, the latter with great success. Neil Gillingham completed on consecutive weekends both the Virgin Active London Triathlon and Dextro Energy London World Championship Series Race both over the Olympic distance with sub 3 hour clockings at both. But it is duathlon where club members Andrew Rooke and Ross Fawcett and both excelled, after both competing at the Cambridge Duathlon in April, Andrew and Ross were selected to represent Great Britain at the ITU Duathlon World Championships this year held in Gijon, Spain. Both athletes returned from these championships with medals. Andrew Rooke took bronze in the 20-24 male sprint race and Ross Fawcett taking gold in the 18-19 male standard distance race becoming a **world champion** in the process.

As I said last year hopefully next season the club can continue to be successful both in terms of results and participation. It's fun; why not give it a go!!