

Victoria Park Harriers and Tower Hamlets Athletics Club AGM 2021: Minutes

Thursday 4th November 2021, VPHTHAC Clubhouse

Chair: Dave Robinson

Minutes: Hugh Murdoch

The meeting opened at 20.36.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

William Burbridge-James, Major Carr, Phillipa Cockman, Neil Cook, Katherine Gundersen, Marlis Haase, Steve Hobbs, Joseph Lukwago, Paul Mee and Will Yeates

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM were approved.

3. Directors' reports

Chair's report (Dave Robinson):

Road and cross country has been pretty magnificent. Despite losing a lot of good runners, we have gained a great number of new competing members. Track has been more difficult with a slower start post Covid restriction with the track remaining closed and with lower numbers.

We sadly lost Mel McClure who was a fantastic member of the club. She was astoundingly supportive and ran the information email for the club. She ran a lot of marathons, notably beachy head year on year.

Thanks to:

- The Board: Faye Jeacocke, Annie Trihan, Gav Lau, Rachel Morison and Cornelia Abe-Minale. Rachel was replaced by Hugh in February as the new Secretary.
- Clubhouse coaches and leaders. Mick Cairns, Steve Hobbs, Gav and Annie. Andrew Bates, Verity Stroud, Tony Bunbury.
- Track and field coaches. Cornelia, Alf, Claudine, Kelvin, Margaret, Manny who had to cope with a difficult start to the season, and whom we're trying to support more actively with monthly coach team meetings moving forward.
- Volunteers and parents who help at the track, Major, Len and Richard, stalwarts of the monthly handicaps. Helen for managing the 3 Bridges Relays and many others.
- Membership team: Neil, Mike, Annie, Gav, Faye, Major and Margaret at track. Changed subscription year to 1st April to match EA registration date.
- Bar team: Susan, Sophie and Marlis. Every week and organising the bake off and one off catering.

Over the past year we've undertaken improvement works at the clubhouse: installed heating in the hall, the 1st floor of the annexe has been gutted and is now a small treatment room and pilates room. In collaboration with Joe Dale (Osteo) and Sam White (Pilates) we are aiming to broaden the use of our clubhouse to develop a wider ranging fitness centre with more daytime use

Th Cottage has been let consistently for a few years. We installed a new kitchen in May.

At Mile End – GLL no longer provide a manned entrance to the track. We have an existing arrangement with them whereby juniors have free access on club nights and Sat mornings. Since losing the manned entrance the access arrangements are rather unsatisfactory and we now have no real indoor facilities along with a gym which is for the club's use but needs some investment. We hope to bring this back into use for club members. We will have to ensure all equipment is properly serviced.

We plan next year to combine the Mike Penman 10k with the Open 5 to host a new 'Mike Penman Open 5'.

Hugh Murdoch gave an update on the new website: the club has taken on Dave Finch to develop it. A small team is supporting him from the club side. It should improve external accessibility for the club, while also making some of the back-end features (like membership and a shop) more functional.

Finance report and approval of accounts (Faye Jeacocke)

Over the pandemic, we saw a reduction in subs by 19% and a reduction in HQ hire. We also spent less on events and EA memberships. We've spent this saving on refurbishing the building, an investment which should repay with increased Fitness, Pilates, Yoga, and Sports treatment bookings. along with Fabien's existing and very popular strength and conditioning sessions. It's still been a pretty healthy year.

The AGM adopted and approved the accounts by show of hands.

Women's Road and Cross Country (Annie Trihan)

Our club showed its strength of spirit in hard times. We now have a growing membership.

It's been an interesting 2 years as ladies captain. Met league is off to good start. Chingford league went well last year; many thanks to Joyce Berry for keeping us organised.

We had a smaller showing at Isle of Wight but did well. Hope to be out again in force next year.

Road races came back in earnest in Spring/Summer. Some great PBs. London marathon was a great high and lots of pbs.

Whatever you raced – well done; it's been a massive few years to get through. Hopefully next year will be a bit more streamlined.

Ultras: a number of women doing well.

Thanks to those who make it possible: the board, Sim and Neil. Len, Richard and Major on club champs and handicaps. Susan, Marlis, Helen, Sophie. Mick and Steve kept coaching through lockdowns on excel and podcast.

So many new faces – becoming the thread of the club. Big improvement in 2021 we hope.

Men's road and cross country (Gavin Lau)

It's been an unprecedented year. Again.

We kept doors open over a tough few years. The last few months has brought lots of fragmented groups together. We've had to say goodbye to some people who have left London for more green space.

We're a grassroots club, with people like Ewan Cameron on the cusp of British qualifying times. George Clancy: focused and increased his speed and achievement. Tim Miller – doing videos of races. Gerry Akrigg – joining and hitting his goals. Captain Sim behind the scenes supporting. Russell Toone and Will Yeates supporting behind the scenes. David, Sophie, Susan opening early, cleaning up late.

Dr Mordi – always running around with a group: 6.15 group of Tuesday track.

For the Chingford league, when we had limited numbers, we didn't set a qualifying time (as other clubs did). Andrew Barrington 6th; Stephen Fabes v40.

In the summer we opened back up. We have 450 members now.

The club handicap averaged 90 runners.

Participation in the Southern Athletics League (SAL) across the club is a good bridge between road and track.

Club member David Bone has put on ultra race – finishing in Olympic park.

Orion fell race.

Chunder mile: 8 starters – champion is Dom Howarth. Hannah Knight was the women's winner.

Flowers Mile. Kicked off racing back with each other, with the summer barbeque – juniors and seniors running together.

And a new website should make governance and engagement more accessible.

Juniors (Cornelia Abe-Minale):

The biggest problem is we're low on numbers. There was a mixed bag coming back from COVID: some were very unfit. Some come back faster than ever.

U17 & u20's made up the majority of athletes participating in the SAL. It is a friendly league which helps with parents & some athletes helping at the meetings. We are struggling to get attract any quantity in the U11s as it is these young athletes who will then flow through the age groups. Next week, we're at Tower Hamlets and Hackney schools recruiting for the cross country season.

Juniors are struggling from having no gym for strength and conditioning. Having an indoor facility is invaluable in the winter particularly. We need to get in as soon as we can. Met league affected by numbers, though we have had age group wins.

We're hoping to recruit more. Get through winter; next year do better. So please: send talented kids our way!

Membership fees:

Dave Robinson re - presented the proposal, previously advised at the 2019 AGM, to increase fees in 2020. This was again deferred in 2020. The proposal is to increase clubhouse fees by £12 a year (£1 per month on direct debit). Faye advised that EA fees have gone up, league fees have gone up and we are continuing to pay for use of the Community Track for Tuesday speed work.

There was a show of hands in favour.

Awards

Spirit of Cross Country

June Barrow-Green gives the Spirit of Cross Country Awards every year in the memory of her brother, who died young, and who inspired her to take up running. The awards were for:

- Gerry Akrigg (men)
- Sarah Knox (women)

Club Spirit:

Hugh Murdoch outlined that, where normally we give out awards for the most improved athletes, because COVID affected racing, we wanted to honour those who had made the effort to keep the club running through the pandemic. Three awards were given:

- Susan Leese and Sophie Critchlow

Hugh read out a nomination received from Verity Stroud supporting Susan and Sophie for the award:

‘My nominations for the award are Susan and Sophie for everything they’ve done to keep the bar and kitchen going, when it was able to open up again. They just get on with it, with a smile, week after week.’

- Pele Mordi

Hugh read out a nomination from Susan Leese for Mordi.

‘He arranged a socially distanced intervals group, delivering Mick’s sessions on a Tuesday night and then getting us down to the marshes on a Saturday morning for a handicap style “not Parkrun”.

‘Thank you Mordi for raising the spirits of us all during a difficult time.’

Life Membership:

- Dave Shortridge

(Major Carr nominated, Dave Robinson seconded)

Has run on track, road and cross country. Has been committed to the club for far longer than 21 years and has shown exceptional commitment.

- Jo Singer

(Faye Jeacocke nominated, seconded by Joyce Berry). Jo has been a regular at Met and Chingford leagues. Really led the team when there weren't many women. Catapulted to where we are now.

- Cornelia Abe-Minale

Dave Robinson nominated, seconded by Simeon Bennett) She has done so much to bring juniors xc and track together and worked tirelessly over the years.

All were approved by show of hands.

Retirement and election of trustees

Dave outlined that under club rules, every year a third of the board should retire or retire and stand for re-election.

Finance Director:

Faye Jeacocke stood down and restood. Proposed by Dave Robinson, seconded by Susan Leese.

Club Secretary:

Dave Robinson thanked Rachel Morrison for her service. She stood down in February and was replaced by Hugh Murdoch. The AGM was asked to confirm Hugh Murdoch's appointment. Dave Robinson proposed; Gigi Giannella seconded.

Director of Women's Track and Field:

The position is vacant after Charlie Maling stood down earlier in the year. Bessie Venables was proposed by Cornelia Abe-Minale, and seconded by Annie Trihan.

All positions were elected by show of hands

Motion: Gavin Lau

Gavin Lau proposed a motion that would allow the board to create new roles that would support with the administration of club activity.

June Barrow-Green asked whether we could ask them to report to the board once a year.

Simeon Bennett asked if there would be the concept of sub committees for events such as the IoW fell race.

Gavin Lau proposed and June Barrow-Green seconded. There was a show of hands in favour.

The meeting closed at 21.53.