

Helsby Running Club – AGM – 28 June 2020

Chair's report 2019 - 2020

Well, what a year!

Who would have thought that mid-way through the year we would have had to completely re-think the way we practice our sport / hobby. I will come onto this later on in this report.

My tenure officially started in September 2019, one of the first thing the new committee did was to try and capture the culture of the club. A culture which had been developed so well and successfully by Jackie in the previous 8 years, Jackie we can't thank you enough for the fabulous work which you have done and the fabulous culture you have developed.

The words below describe this culture and act as a reference point against which we can make all our decisions. Helsby Running Club is known as one of the friendliest and most inclusive clubs on the North West and these words describe why

What makes us tick, what we can do for you.

Helsby Running Club's objective is to bring together local runners to improve their physical wellbeing and mental health by means of races, training activities and social media.

We welcome and will provide activities for all types of runners – runners who want to improve their competitive performance, runners who are starting off on their running journey and runners who want to use their running activity to improve and maintain their health.

We recognise that people's running needs will change as they grow and go through their life experiences and will provide a safe, supportive and friendly environment to accommodate this.

I will leave the detail of the individual events and activities to the reports from the individual committee members, it goes without saying that their support has been critical. The job of Chair can be quite lonely and the requirement for having a strong committee is paramount. This support includes; knowing that when people say they will do something it gets done, acting as a sounding board when asked, pointing out mistakes I have made or am about to make and providing ideas by the bucket load to help us improve.

One of the greatest pleasures in this job is seeing people develop in their running and seeing how running helps develop people. It is fantastic to see new runners come into the club and grow in confidence as they first venture onto Helsby park for their first C25K session or the Monday night speed session, at this juncture I would like to make special mention of Helen Owens and her team for the work they done in this regard.

It is also nice to see the way in which runners develop their confidence to do new, exciting and scary things; venturing onto the hill for the first time on a Wednesday night, trying their first ultra, training for their first marathon or entering their first fell race. The captains and coaches should take credit here. A lot of the time, these scary steps that people take to try new stuff goes unnoticed but the current situation has given us the opportunity to share our histories and achievements via social media; highlighting these adventures and perhaps, post lockdown, we need to find ways of maintaining this.

.....and then we get onto the infrastructure that makes the club tick; the money, the correspondence, the race licences, the insurances, the fixture lists, organising the races, motivating people to turn up, delivering the chip butties (I can't miss that one off) etc. Dare I say it the boring but oh so vital stuff and so, for everybody and anybody that is involved with this, a great big thank you.

We are all very lucky, in that we are one of the only sports / hobbies which have been allowed to take place since the start of the lockdown, we should be grateful for this and have adapted really well to this new situation. The culture of our club described above, allows us to do this very readily, it is great to hear of people running with buggies, people trying to improve their times, people getting stuck into big mileage, people using running to help sooth their minds and people encouraging their children to run with them.

Like many others I have noticed a surge in the general public coming out to exercise, as we come out of the current situation, we need to think about how we can maintain this momentum and bring people into the running community and our club. Our adaptability is one of our strengths, we have already been singled out as thought leaders in the way we are approaching next year's 4VHM.

We have much to look forward, not least the great new facilities at Helsby Community Sports Club and I look forward to whatever the next 12 months bring us.

Phil Gillard, 28 May 2020