

**AGM Friday 19th May, 2023 @ 7.15 pm**

**Venue**: “San Clu” Hotel, Ramsgate

**MINUTES**

**Committee Present:** President: Derek Sackett; Chairman: Pete Heath; Treasurer, Simon Cowdery; Secretary: Mark Hadden; Captains: Nikki Boyes & Chris Brenchley; Safeguarding & Welfare: Julie & Ade Neaves; Social Secretary: Janice Lee-Miller; Publicity Manager: Jon Holl; Membership Secretaries: Julie Neaves & Jo Holl; Webmaster: Andy Stevens.

**Club Members:** See attendance list below.

**Apologies Received From:** Vice Chairman: Kevin Bullions; Social Secretary: Janet Morgan; Junior Head Coach: Gary Gillatt; Anna Harrison; Michael Philpott, Gaynor Shelvey; Richard Purton & Jo Jeffries.

**Approval of Previous AGM Minutes** (11th May 2022); Approved by all attendant on 11th May 2022 and accepted by all present today with no further comments.

**Chairman’s Review:** The Chairman commenced with a general welcome and proceeded with a high-level summary of the past twelve months for the Club. It’s been a year notable as the first full non-Covid constrained year since the pandemic first struck. Membership numbers have remained buoyant throughout a period of cost of living challenges manifesting also in financial challenges for the Club (which the Treasurer will elaborate on). The Club has directed some successful races as well as achieved some notable personal performances at these and other events (as the Captain will highlight). TRAC has contributed to the Community via donations to charity as well as the Couch to 5K programme which Jon has again successfully led; our thanks go to him for this.

Future plans are straightforward with on-going survival of the Club being number one: all Clubs are facing challenges at the moment from multiple fronts and we want to balance our finances, keep a steady ship but with ambition to grow through the encouragement of new members. TRAC is not as cash rich as it has been in the past (cash has been eroded through planned expenditure plus months and months of zero income - set against certain on-going costs) and so we are anxious to move to a “cash neutral” position of fiscal stability. To achieve this we need race (and other) income to set against our costs and look to members to help eg by marshalling at our races and/or supporting the work of the Race Directors and Club Captains and, if not marshalling, by entering our races.

The Chairman concluded by noting that attendance at this AGM was the best there had been for many years and his thanks are extended to all present.

**Safeguarding & Welfare Report:**

* Our two officers have been in post since last May. They enjoy the role and its challenges and are happy to continue in position if wanted.
* In the year they have attended two courses to enhance their safeguarding and welfare skills and have also kept up-to-speed as Run Leaders too.
* Possibly the most contentious issue they have had to deal with lately is to define the Club’s position on under 18s joining in with organised Club seniors running/training runs. Here the issue is/was that some <18s are coming to road training runs and the Club requires a protocol around how to manage this within the context of its potential liabilities and insurance cover. Advice was sought from EA, clear guidelines developed and Run Leaders (RLs) made aware. It is hoped that the ruling can be displayed on the website and that, where DOB is entered on the booking-in app, that will be another check step for RLs. RLs with any concerns are urged to raise them immediately with our Safeguarding and Welfare officers, indeed, not just RLs, it’s the responsibility of all to flag up any concerns.
* Attention was drawn to the Safeguarding email address available on the website. This is a means of contacting our officers in confidence. Furthermore they are both at most training sessions, runs and socials hence visible and approachable.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer commenced with a caveat that some data eg Aug and Sept 2022 was missed in handover to him and also that there was not always a clarity of categorisation of numbers prior to him joining that he would have preferred. He cannot claim 100% accuracy therefore.

The Club has approaching 150 senior members, some paying the full rate, others reduced fees (OAPs/Students) and some none at all (Life Members). Membership fees are not presently covering the Club’s costs (eg hire of the track, lighting, commission to PayPal, website maintenance, training, affiliations etc) and so we need to generate additional income in order to arrive at, and maintain, steady state. Historically races that we ourselves have managed and promoted have provided a strong income source but races are now everywhere which creates a saturated marketplace and hence TRAC is not getting the returns it used to.

The Club holds £19,504 of cash (down by c.£3,000 over the last 12 months) and £7, 000 of assets. Hence the Club needs to establish and maintain a viable income stream if it is to maintain its present level of liquidity and thereby avoid another £3,000 loss/erosion of cash such as it did in the last 12 months.

The Treasurer advised that he has moved the Clubs finances onto “QuickBooks”, an accounting software package, which provides improved organisation and transparency of our numbers - thereby enabling greater scrutiny if required/requested.

A question arose from the floor as to why the Committee feels it is necessary for the Club to carry this amount of money and why are we seemingly so focussed on making a profit?

The response was that the Club is not aiming to make a profit, it is looking to establish a point whereby it is “cash neutral”; indeed, TRAC’s cash reserves have reduced year-on-year over the last 2 plus years to the point where, now, we are aiming to achieve “steady state” ie where nett outflows equal nett inflows.

The above response was not sufficient for the questioner who suggested the cash surplus should be run down to a far lower base level and that this could be rapidly achieved by, for example, organising an event that has free entry. Only then, ie at low base steady state, should we be satisfied.

There was not a discernable level of support for this view around the room but there was understanding and the Treasurer himself declared a degree of sympathy whilst reiterating that we first need to establish stability before entertaining a reduction of the surplus and emphasising that we do give money to charities and, for example, promote the C25K from a “loss leader” premise. Furthermore, the President declared it to be a necessary buffer for the Club, especially in these uncertain times and the Publicity Manager mentioned receipt of a £500 grant from EA with the potential for some more money (probably less though)next year would help achievement of the sought after “steady state”.

The questioner persisted with a view that TRAC should reduce its surplus dramatically via the promotion of sufficient free races but it was pointed out we had £27,000 in the bank only a few years ago so there’s already been quite a substantial decline in reserves and this needs to be arrested, at least for the time being, whilst we demonstrate financial control. Further views from the floor pointed out how the Club’s finances helped improve the lot of Juniors and also members needing support with mental health. It was also highlighted that the cost of promoting and managing events was going up and up (Council charges for land use; cost of medical provision etc) and so we do need to maintain a suitable buffer in case a race gets cancelled or fails to achieve a break even number of entries.

The meeting moved on following the express view of the Chairman that, until TRAC can demonstrate stable finances, it would be foolish to intentionally reduce the Club bank balance any further. Only once the Club has achieved sustainable steady state financial control will it look at purposely reducing its cash reserves.

The Committee were reminded from the floor that, in the past, it has initiated a review of the races it promotes and perhaps the time has come to repeat such a review. The point was accepted (indeed it is already a Committee action) and the questioner assured that, yes, a review of TRAC promoted races will be instituted in the next couple of months. It will decide which races should continue to be organised and, if necessary, any that might be withdrawn from our calendar. **ACTION**: TRAC Executive Committee.

**Captain’s Review**

The Captains advised that this will be their final review as they are standing down after

several years of service to the Club. Any new Captain coming forward will have a good

foundation of successes on which to build. That said, following is an overview and update

coupled with a summary of achievements.

* **Team Event**

KFL completed:

* To recap after the last fixtures. Overall team TRAC 11th out of 18.
* Ladies’ Team finished 7th which is the highest the Ladies’ team have ever finished in the league. Well done.
* Individually Jordan Gilbert was our highest in 26th place overall; Brittany Crombie 14th overall Lady and, notably, both Phil Morton (41st overall), Tim Kerr and Jo Kemp ran in all 7 events.
* **From the last General Club Meeting in January onwards:-**

Canterbury 10m 2023.

* 27 traccies took part.
* Kick off race for the KCAA League.
* Some highlights were: Julie Williams first V55; 3 of our men under the hour and taking the Mens Team Prize for first 4. A huge achievement in this large race, congratulations to Andy Stevens, Jack Bradley, Lee Hardy, Jay Bailey.
* The KCAA clubs saw we meant business this year!

Tunbridge Wells Half.

* 14 TRAC runners with 12 men and 2 ladies.
* David Winch 1st V70; Andy Stevens 2nd V50; Phil Stevens PB; Julie Williams PB and 2nd VF55; Nikki Boyes 3rd VF55.
* Another good result in the team for TRAC in the KCAA.

Bromley BVAC 5m

* Andy Stevens 3rd O/A and V50; Strong performances from James Figgins and Terry Brightwell.

Folkestone 10mile.

* 7 new PBs from our 14 runners on the familiar Good Friday race along the Prom. This kept up our momentum in the KCAA League.

Next up is Chislehurst Sunday 21st. May.

KCAA results after the 4th race at Folkestone; Tunbridge Wells are leading the League and our men’s team are in 2nd place out of the 37 involved. The ladies are 7th out of the 43 teams.

Individually Andy Stevens is in first place in the league overall and leads his V50 category. Steve Suttle is 3rd V60 and David Winch 3rd V70. In the Ladies, Julie Williams leads the V55’s. These are all superb situations and positions for our relatively small Club so all should be very proud.

**Our own Club Championship** is following the KCAA league fixtures with some local ones added. All the results and events are on the Website.

**Other races.**

London Landmarks

13 runners took part and many spectators from TRAC making it a day out in the City. Charlotte Hadden and Steve Hawkins led our runners home.

Manchester Marathon

7 traccies. James Figgins and Peter Heath claiming times for likely Good For Age qualifications (GFA).

London Marathon.

14 traccies. Jack Bradley PB. Chris Brenchley, Phil Stevens, Steve Suttle, and David Winch all likely GFA.

Whitstable 10k.

18 runners enjoyed a bank holiday run.

Battersea Park 5k Abigail breaks the Club Record with 18:25.

Saxon Shore 10k Abigail breaks her own 10k Club Record with 38:49 plus she was first lady and 2nd overall in the race. A tremendous stream of results on the back of some dedicated training.

**Other**

Some highlights over the years to add from us two Captains:

* The 2019 and the later 2022 Relay results were the best that TRAC has ever achieved.
* The KFL 2021/22. TRAC finished higher than ever before with a full team turning out and great individual results.
* Team awards for races, Our own home races, local races at Wingham and Sandwich and recently at the big Canterbury 10m.
* Thinking outside the box during the pandemic and setting up leagues and competitions to keep us running. The beating of the bounds relay in groups of less than 6! Transition to get us back to training in groups.
* Bringing enthusiasm into the Club Championship and watching our runners excel against our own runners and against our competitor clubs.

**Juniors Review**

* Training at St Peter’s Rec is underway, Monday, fitness; Tuesday, similar; Wednesday, track and new coach Kevin is proving a really good asset.
* Many have participated in Cross Countries and Relays through the year.
* Pandemic reduced attendance significantly and numbers have suffered dramatically especially in terms of >18 leavers not being replenished by younger ones after Covid.
* Need to publicise our Junior Section more by exploring how to give it heightened visibility on the website and in social media etc with an emphasis on the sheer enjoyment the youngsters can get out of just running. Emphasise how experienced and dedicated our coaches are.
* The Juniors are satisfactorily supported by sufficient coaches at the moment but if anyone wants to come along to help they are more than welcome.
* A suggestion from the floor was that the Club should explore engaging a marketing company to promote our Juniors eg via generic photographs and utilisation of the video that’s already been produced (all in accordance with parental permissions of course). It was also suggested that we could contact the local Junior Park Runs to let them know of our existence and encourage any of their young folk to join us. Our Publicity Manager is pushing the Isle Magazine and other local organs to promote TRAC. **ACTION**: Ian and Derek to consider above and prepare points for Committee discussion and support.

**Social Secretary’s Review**

TRAC has had another active year on the social front.

* The Presentation Evening at the new venue of The Racing Greyhound was well attended and highly successful.
* £234 was raised at our recent Quiz Night, profits of which will go to our nominated charity (Air Ambulance); it was an enjoyable evening and will be repeated in November.
* The BBQ season is on the horizon and already we have 6 hosts/locations arranged with only 2 more dates yet to be filled so please contact social secretaries via email address on the website if you would like to host.
* Consideration is being made to replace the lost summer relay with a run and rounders social/run evening.
* Feel free to email social secretaries with any suggestions.

**Election of Club Executive Committee for the Period 19-May-2023 to May 2024**

The Club Secretary introduced this item, stating that, in accordance with the Club’s constitution all of the Executive Committee roles are vacated each year and open for election. New volunteers coming forward have been minimal but, fortunately, a number of the current incumbents are willing to stand to be elected for a further year. A vote for each role/person was taken and the following unanimously (re)elected.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| POSITION | CANDIDATE | PROPOSER | SECONDER | ELECTED |
| President | Derek Sackett (re-election) | Mark Hadden | Pete Heath | Derek Sackett |
| Chairperson | Pete Heath (re-election) | Mark Hadden | Derek Sackett | Pete Heath |
| Vice Chairperson | Kevin Bullions (re-election) | Mark Hadden | Pete Heath | Kevin Bullions |
| Ladies Captain | Jo Kemp\* | Julie Neaves | Ade Neaves | Jo Kemp |
| Men’s Captain | Andy Stevens\*\* | Chris Brenchley | Spencer Hoult | Andy Stevens |
| Treasurer | Simon Cowdery (re-election) | Pete Heath | Derek Sackett | Simon Cowdery |
| Secretary | Julie Williams | Mark Hadden | Pete Heath | Julie Williams |
| Welfare & Safeguarding | Ade & Julie Neaves (re-election) | Mark Hadden | Jo Holl | Ade&Julie Neaves |
| Communications/Publicity | Jon Holl (re-election) | Mark Hadden | Ade Neaves | Jon Holl |

\* Ladies Captain will be supported by a Vice Captain: Brittany Crombie

\*\* Men’s Captain for all activities except Cross Country. Here Brittany will support assisted by Pete Heath.

Gary Gillatt will kindly remain in post as Head Junior Coach.

**Non-Executive Committee Members: Confirmation of Appointments**

* Membership Secretary: Jo Holl & Julie Neaves
* Social Secretary: Janet Morgan & Janice Lee-Miller
* Web Master: Andy Stevens

**Any Other Business**

* The Chairman & Treasurer gave notification that the 2024-2025 subscription will increase by £5 to £25 and there will be an increase of £5 or more for the 2025-26 season. This is to help meet rising costs and reduce the deficit that we are currently running at. These notifications were generally supported and it was pointed out that TRAC fees remained highly competitive (eg Kent Invicta is £50 per year).
* A question was raised concerning the Club Championship. After commending Andy Stevens for stepping forward into the role of Captain a reflection on the Club’s initial establishment, over 40 years ago, as a long distance running Club (ie organised with the Thanet Marathon at its core) was given. It was therefore asserted that the surfeit of shorter distance races in the current Club Championship is regretful both in the context of our history and in the interests of participating in varied distances. Furthermore was the assertion that it is possible to win our Club Championship now by competing in nothing greater than the 10k distance and, hence, a request for a more balanced programme in future years.

In response it was stated that, as previously, our Club Championship has sought to mirror the Kent Grand Prix which, this year, has a notable leaning towards the shorter distances. The point made will be borne in mind however when selecting races for next year’s Club Championship with an effort to present as balanced a programme as is possible/available.

The same member referred to an inconsistency in the system of aggregating Club Championship points for his age category which led to a second place position in the VM 60 category for a person who had beaten the runner who finished first VM 60 in all six of the races where they both competed. The member concerned builds his season around the Club Championship and the London Marathon. Having triumphed in six Club Championship races in his category he turned his focus to the London Marathon only to be pipped at the post in the Club Champs by a seemingly mathematical anomaly.

This mathematical quirk may have emerged from the decision to introduce additional races into the Club Championship following release of the initial programme. This was considered necessary to avoid clashes with the cross country season but may have skewed the points system. He requested that this scenario is reviewed and/or not repeated.

His final point on the Club Championship was that, in the past it was a serious affair and he has a concern that, latterly, it is being taken too lightly; the Club Championship should not be positioned as a series of “fun runs” but as events to be seriously contested.

This final point was not met with any great sympathy in the room with the Captain in particular, but not alone, strongly disagreeing. The Captain has spent the last 6 years crafting the Club Championship into a popular and enjoyable aspect of our Club’s programme and the fact that it is inclusive of all ages, categories, abilities and motivations is something to be celebrated, not challenged. Other members spoke about how we are an accessible club (eg C25K) and pride ourselves in the sheer spread of difference within our membership and this extends to motivations too. We encourage those who are very competitive and focussed just as much as we want along with us those who are motivated by the opportunity to get out in the air with like-minded souls for a gentle jog, a bit of a joke and a nice chat. Another member pointed out that, even though he does agree with some of the critical points made, the Club has to move with the times, people change and we have to evolve too. On the subject of shorter distances it was pointed out by an older member that he no longer runs more than 10 miles and so to have plenty of 10ks is helpful to him because he can still accumulate points competitively in the Club Champs. The Chairman wrapped this debate up with reference to how, in the last year to eighteen months, the Club has had to deal with multiple “curve balls” and its subsequent actions have been always with a view to try and do what’s best for TRAC in these difficult times.

* The Publicity Manager took the opportunity to make all present aware that, since the pandemic, the number of people entering running events across the country is down by around 30% hence we can no longer rely on races as a source of income. Also, we need to innovate beyond Facebook if we are to continue to successfully engage with the < 25s.
* The Publicity Manager referred to awarding Life Memberships. He pointed out that this is something the Club does not take lightly, indeed it is five years since we have presented anyone with this honour. It is well nigh time therefore that Terry Brightwell’s years of unstinting service to the Club are recognised in this way. Terry has directed multiple races, been a committed Run Leader and coach and also Club Chairman at one point. The Committees recommendation that Terry is made a Life Member is well overdue and that recommendation was unanimously supported.
* The Chairman presented trophies to those not able to come to the awards evening: V70 Men Phil Cope (1st); V70 Terry Brightwell (2nd); Harbour Wall Banger team price: Vegan Team and 1st lady at Alan Green Charlotte Hadden.
* Jack Bradley ran the 2nd fasted time ever by a TRAC member at the London Marathon and special mention is made of that outstanding achievement.
* Finally, reference was made to the upcoming Club promoted Sackett 10k and 5k races. Most positions are covered but we are light at HQ (eg for giving out numbers etc) and even if you can come for just the hour before the race your support and help would be welcome. Contact via WhatsApp or Race Director Terry Brightwell or Marshal Coordinator, Maryanne Aitken.

**All were thanked for coming and the meeting was concluded at 2100 hrs.**

**List of Attendees**

Richard Allan

Sarah Bailey

Charlotte Barton

Zoe Berry

Nicola Boyes

Chris Brenchley

Terry Brightwell

Carol Burton

Jacob Burton

Simon Burton

Steve Clarke

Simon Clayton

Brittany Crombie

Phil Cope

Simon Cowdery

James Figgins

Claire Greenaway

Mark Hadden

Asmaa Hatim

Lee Hardie

Poppy Harris

Steven Hawkins

Pete Heath

Jo Holl

Jon Holl

Spencer Hoult

Glyn Jenkins

Jo Kemp

Ian Lockyer

Kirsty McMahon

Hannah Mills

Janice Lee-Miller

Ade Neaves

Julie Neaves

Lizo Ngqobongwana

Derek Sackett

Andy Stevens

Steve Suttle

Julie Williams

Eba Wojcechowaska