

# HAMBLETON ATHLETICS & RUNNING CLUB

## Chair's Report – 2023/24

Prepared by Gemma Wardle on 13<sup>th</sup> February for the Annual General Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### What's been happening?

In my view, 2023/24 has been our best year yet! As a founding member of HARC, I feel really proud of the progress we have made together, building a positive, inclusive and welcoming club.

We have had members taking part in a huge array of events, with everything from 5k to ultramarathon distances, 24 hour challenges to Iron Man events, and HARC representatives at the England Athletics National Indoor Championships and the London Marathon. Aside from the super performances and achievements we have seen in these various events, I would like to mention some of the other highlights:

- Our Awards Night was a wonderful celebration and saw all but one of our trophies presented for the very first time. The winners were thrilled to receive their awards, having had plenty of stiff competition for the top spots!
- Fundraising for charities has continued to be a prominent goal for many – thanks to the dedication of our runners, lots of charities close to our hearts have benefitted from thousands of pounds raised. This includes our annual HARC Angels event which resulted in a donation of £375 to Lucie's Animal Rescue, and £600 for Dementia Forward via the HARC Hydras' participation in the Scarborough Dragon Boat event.
- We have welcomed several new faces to our coaching team, and all the coaches have augmented their knowledge through experience, development days, and additional courses.
- Our collaborative work with Team Caterpillar has enabled us to add regular track nights to our calendar which have grown in popularity despite (or perhaps due to!) the intensity of the sessions on offer.
- Our programme of Couch to 5k courses has meant the HARC family has welcomed lots of new and returning runners.
- We have seen a steady growth in session attendance this year, culminating in an amazing 166 attendees at January's sessions. Prior to the current membership year, the most attendances in a month was 101. In fact, four of the last six months have seen record-breaking average attendance at sessions.
- Our social calendar has also been gathering momentum, with more events and more of you than ever before taking these opportunities to cement the friendships formed through our sports.
- We have received heartwarming feedback from members of the public who commented on the amazing support given by HARC members, not only to our own team, but to all runners crossing the finish line at Fountains Abbey Parkrun and the Snape 5k and 10k event. One of those who commented was inspired to join HARC, purely based on the level of kindness and support they witnessed.
- Our cross-country team are in the throes of the 2024/25 competition and we're really pleased to have both senior and junior representatives battling through the mud in HARC vests this year.

### Looking ahead

We will be celebrating the end of our current Couch to 5k programme at Fountains Abbey Parkrun on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, followed by customary post-run refreshments in the café. Let's give them lots of HARC support as they officially graduate – please put the date in your diaries and join us to run with them or cheer them on if you can. Our curry night on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March will provide a further opportunity to celebrate the group's achievements and welcome them to the HARC family.

Following the fun lots of us had taking part in our nearest 'big' 10km events in 2023, we are encouraging even more of you to sign up for Northallerton 10k and Darlington 10k & Junior 3k runs in 2024. It really was fantastic to see a wave of blue heading to the start line of these events, and even better to witness HARC runners supporting each other along the way and cheering at the finish.

Our club place for the London Marathon 2024 was won by Ruth Hancock, whose training is now well underway. We wish her the very best of luck – hopefully, the famous neon pink socks will make her easy to spot on the TV coverage!

We have a small army of HARCsters already signed up for Endure 24 in Leeds this June, keen to take on the challenge of 24 hours of five mile loops through Bramham Park. They're hoping for slightly cooler conditions than last year's heatwave and we wish them every success at the event.

Spurred on by the success of recent social events, the Social Team have lots in store for 2024/25 – please do continue to take advantage of the fun they have planned for you all.

### Special thanks

I know I say it in every report I write, but I cannot not mention our wonderful volunteers who works so hard to make all of the above possible.

You all see our coaching team giving their time and energy to lead sessions every week. What you may not know about are all the additional hours they spend checking the safety of routes, planning sessions, attending development days, keeping their qualifications up to date and much more. On behalf of everyone at HARC, I would like to say a massive thank you to Chris, Ruth, Nige, Alice, Jo, Nick and Becky – your efforts to get us all out participating in our chosen sports are very much appreciated, as are your kindness and support when we need it most. Thanks in advance go to Marc Blair, Michelle Slade and Michael Hollinshead as they join the coaching rota for the future!

Although usually not as 'visible' as the coaching team, our committee and non-committee volunteers do a fantastic job of ensuring that the club runs smoothly and that our members benefit from the best we can offer. The list of administrative, financial, planning and promotional tasks that go on 'behind-the-scenes' is probably much longer than most would imagine, but our team works hard to make sure that they're all taken care of. Again, on behalf of all our club members, I say thank you very much to Lynn, Sara, Becky, Michelle, Graham, Ruth, Alice, Chris, Bridget, Nige and Katy for all everything they do for HARC.

Lastly, to all our club members – THANK YOU! Ultimately, our club is special because of you. The way you all support each other, welcome new people, celebrate each other's achievements and pick each other up when things get tough are inspirational.

Wishing everyone lots of happiness in 2024/25!

*Gemma*