# **AGM**

# **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

# **2023/2024**

**2023/4: A Year of Success**

BMHAC is, arguably, the most successful sports club in Basingstoke. Headlined by Ben Pattison’s magnificent World Bronze in Budapest, we have had national success in Women’s multi events through Jordanna Morrish and Laura Darcey. We are fortunate to continue our really strong traditions in middle distance, sprints and multi events through our strong coaching team. We have 2 young throwers who were ranked in the UK top ten last year.

We gained promotion to the National Athletics League (NAL) Premiership for the first time. However, following a League reorganisation, we will now be competing on a regional level but against the likes of Cardiff AAC, which will see competition at the highest club level at Down Grange in 2024.

Our successes are not confined to the elite levels. The Club was victorious in the Wessex Athletics League for the youngsters, Hampshire County Veterans League, and the Southern Cross Country League. We were promoted to Division 1 of the Southern Athletics League. In Hampshire Cross Country, we had 3 individual and 6 team medals in the Championships, including a repeat overall victory and for Tom Sycklemore, the senior men were 2nd team overall for the season, whilst the veteran men won!

At the recent British Masters Indoor Championships, Club athletes came away with 5 gold and 5 silver medals. Don Powell is still climbing mountains in his 70s – literally. He’s won three Welsh fell running championships in the past year. Charlotte Ragan continued her improvement across the board, evidenced by her four Club road running records.

We have celebrated some of our leading athletes…there are many others who train and compete week in week out, aiming to achieve their own goals. Every athlete who works at improving their performances is important to the Club.

## **Challenges**

All of this is encouraging, of course. However, there are challenges. Turn out in some age groups is low and inconsistent. We understand the challenges in managing family logistics and would be happy to look at helping address travel issues through car sharing (within safeguarding best practice) or laying on minibuses if the demand is there.

Our team managers work very hard to get teams out. Even replying to messages with a ‘sorry, not this time’, can be really helpful.

Consistency in training is the key to success. Too many young athletes miss too many training sessions.

**The Hampshire Hoppit**

Thanks to Tim Fowler and his team, The Hampshire Hoppit goes from strength to strength, with a 10km race added to the half and full marathons. Race day is 16th June. Be there!…as a runner or volunteer: <https://hampshiretrailmarathon.co.uk/news-2024/> .

**Our Volunteers**

Our Club of 700 members would not exist without our superb band of volunteers. Perhaps the best accolade in recognition of the quality of our volunteer officials and other helpers , not to mention the coaches…was the award of the NAL Chair’s Award in 2023. We were the first club to be recognised in this way. We were given the accolade in recognition of the quality and number of our officials and the friendly atmosphere of our matches.

We were also delighted that Dave Ragan was given the England Athletics Regional Coach of the Year Award in November. Congratulations Dave, the award sits nicely alongside the World Bronze you earned as Ben’s coach!

In common with most other clubs, many of our volunteers are, understandably, of ‘a certain age’. That said, it is gratifying to see some younger members becoming helpers, officials, team managers and coaches. **We need more!** With 37 coaches, we still short in some areas, with little slack to cover emergencies. Why not offer to help officials or coaches rather than sitting in the car?

There are many other volunteer roles, some of which can involve small amounts of time. Many will needed for…..

**The New Clubhouse**

OK, not so new! It’s nearly a year old now. It has been frustrating. We are waiting for connection to the electricity grid. The full story will be told by project leader, Felicity Edwards at the AGM. Thanks to her and the team who have helped manage the fitting out work and actually doing the work in many instances.

The new building will change the way athletes, parents, Club coaches, Committee members and other helpers communicate and share information and ideas.

**The Committee and President**

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow Committee members for their hard work over the year. Some have full time jobs and young families and fit their Committee responsibilities into their already busy lives.

In particular, I should mention new Treasurer’s sterling work on reviewing our financial control and budgeting processes.

It has been a pleasure having Dave Hope as our President this year. Dave has been an invaluable source of advice to the Committee and has put in many hours of hard graft in the Clubhouse. Thanks Dave.

**Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council**

We are fortunate in having such a supportive local authority. The Council team have done their best to facilitate earlier connection to the grid and have recently found money to buy new, state of the art, throws cage, pole vault and high jump equipment. We are currently in discussion with Council colleagues to secure winter access to other areas of Down Grange on a sustainable basis.

Leigh Henderson

Chair BMHAC
February 2024