

CHAIRMAN'S AGM REPORT

2026

Introduction

In many ways, this has been a year of consolidation. The Media and Refreshments Teams have made huge progress in their spheres and set examples of how small teams increase creativity and sustainability (as people need to move on, new people join in). We have seen new people become involved as team managers and officials. Alongside coaches they form the basis of a successful BMHAC.

As always, there are challenges, not least because of new England Athletics age groups but, in particular, we need **more people to help in all aspects of the Club.**

Competitions

The achievements of our leading athletes have been really well recorded on Instagram and Facebook. It's great to note that younger athletes are maintaining their progress as exemplified by **Maisie Hibberd, Ethan Easton, the Spiers twins and Niraj Manojkumar** amongst many others. Others set a great example through the sheer number of competitions they take part in.

Our track and field league results were about in line with previous years but with some concerning trends. In the **National Athletics League** we were 4th out of 6 clubs, but close to the others apart from winners Swansea Harriers. In the **Southern Athletics League** we were relegated to Division 2. This means a lower standard of competition and no requirement for photo finish results. The key question is, **do we have the commitment to strive for promotion in 2026** and get back to a higher competition level?

We need to think seriously about the issues raised in both competitions. These include reliance on a few athletes competing in many events and low numbers of athletes turning out – especially in the **NAL with little more than 50%** of those attending the **SAL**.

These issues are not unique to BMHAC. Attendance at the **NAL AGM** revealed that NAL fixture dates do not have priority over BMC meetings, resulting in fixture clashes which may affect attendance at league competitions.

Nevertheless, huge thanks to the sterling efforts of the **team managers (Emma King and Jack Messenger in the SAL) and Ben Hazell (NAL).**

Thanks are also due to **Ray Gartland and Deborah Montgomery** as Managers for our men's and ladies' **Hampshire Veterans' League teams**. The men won the league again and the ladies were a battling third. Sadly, Deborah has retired as Team Manager having relocated to the West Midlands. The men went on to place 2nd in the Regional Final.

In the youth leagues we fared reasonably well. In the **Wessex League** we were 2nd overall, giving way to Swindon Harriers.

The **Alder Valley League** suffered from continuing timetable difficulties. Despite the efforts of Liz Flitcroft and colleagues from other league clubs, revised timetable proposals were rejected by the League Officers. We trust that a reduction in participating clubs to eight will ease the challenges for athletes, parents and officials.

BMHAC will continue to support the Alder Valley League in 2026 but will review how to provide good quality competition opportunities for all youth age groups from 2027 onwards.

Coaches have made concerted efforts to implement **the Club's rule about athletes representing BMHAC in competition**. Coaches are able to sign off athletes with conditions that make competition difficult. That said, large coaching groups and waiting lists indicate that we need to monitor athletes closely for attendance and competition record.

Thanks are due to all our team managers. Their work is vital in getting people out on the day. **Parents** are also vital in ensuring that young athletes arrive in good time...and turn up if they have committed to an event.

The **senior road running/cross country group** continues to thrive. We are currently third in the men's division in the Southern Cross Country League with a large marathon group training for spring races.

The Hampshire Hoppit

The highly successful **Hampshire Hoppit** trail races included a 10k for the first time in its 10th edition. BMHAC is hugely indebted to, and proud of, the work that Tim Fowler and his team does to produce one of the most highly rated races in the country. As one comment said, *'If you change nothing and keep everything the same it will be your greatest decision.'*

New Age Groups

The new age groups: Under 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20 come into force in April 2026. This will reduce competition opportunities for Under 10s. We will be holding two open competitions for Uner10s-Under 14s as a trial in May 2026.

We are also mindful of the need to ensure good quality inter club competitions for U18 athletes outside the SAL.

The Club maintained its performances in the National and Southern Athletic Leagues and the Wessex Athletics League. Getting consistent scoring across all disciplines remains a significant challenge.

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BMHAC Facilities

The Clubhouse is now an established and central element of Club operations, including our highly successful drinks and snacks offer in training sessions! They now sell Club vests, take orders for hoodies and operate a second-hand shop.

Losing c £15k worth of equipment in a fire in Maidenwell Pavilion was a major blow. Replacements are on order. We are discussing short and longer term storage options with BDBC.

After serious delays in getting Wifi connections through BT, we are now looking at 5G connectivity in time for the 2026 Hampshire County Championships at Down Grange in May. We are purchasing a new public address system in time for the Championships, thanks to the generosity of Ian Byett.

Proposed Golf Facilities at Down Grange

As members will know, the Council's proposed relocation of all three elements of the current Basingstoke Golf Centre to Down Grange was defeated, against all the odds. Key to our success was working in partnership with Miranda Smith (Hockey Club President and Down Grange resident) Basingstoke Disc Golf Club and several other users of Down Grange. Basingstoke Rugby Club were fully in support although not directly impacted

The Committee

As the **Club Secretary's report** will show, we have made good progress in ensuring that BMHAC is state of the art in respect of governance. The Club has achieved all 7 of the EA Club Standards.

The AGM Agenda will include important **vacancies** to complete the revised team. One of those is the Coaching Coordinator.

As many will know, **Jackie Tobin** has been seriously ill (it was really good to see her at the President's Thank You evening) and has had to step back from the Committee. Liz Flitcroft has been coopted given her encyclopaedic knowledge of competition organisation and planning.

The **Committee is always looking for ways to improve its operations**. The Club Secretary's proposals for restructuring the Committee will be presented to the AGM. The underlying aim is to delegate decision making where appropriate, led by the appropriate Committee member.

As a group, the Committee, sees its job as fixing problems in the interests of the Club and its members. The plan is to have more agenda time to consider issues and proposals at greater length. We recognise that agendas have been too full and reactive rather than being strategic and proactive.

Club President

Huge thanks to **Pete Bolton** for his quiet and incisive advice and support to the Committee throughout the past year.

Health and Safety

The **Health & Safety Framework introduced by Coordinator, Neil Barton** is working well. Headlines are: 11 accidents recorded and reported to UKA, throws training arrangements reviewed to improve safety, Club defibrillator registered, New Years Eve Relays parking safety issues raised, uneven pavement on a road runners' training course identified and all necessary safety tests conducted.

Coaching

We need a **new Coaching Coordinator** as I stood down in September. We are fortunate to have an excellent and growing team of coaches with at least **three qualifying as Athletics Coaches** in the next few months and another seeking a jumps endorsement to his existing qualification. **More coaching assistants and helpers** are needed. We have a huge **waiting list** and many coaching groups are larger than ideal.

Thanks to the parents who already help coaches. Just having extra eyes and ears can be really helpful.

Officials

BMHAC is well known for the **number and competence of its officials** nationally, regionally and locally. However, it is clear that many of the group are getting to the point where they need to reduce or curtail their officiating activities, thus increasing the load on other officials.

In most track leagues clubs are penalised and **lose points** if they do not have the **required number of officials**. This has rarely happened to BMHAC in the past. However, we now need **more help**, even if it is just the occasional raking of a sandpit. So please offer your help, rather than just spectating, at competitions.

Press and Media

Marcia Coleman, Kian Mayoh, Meg French, Sienna Richardson and Henry Davis are the current members of the Press and Media Team. We have over 2000 Facebook followers and 1,222 on Instagram.

The redesign of the **Club's website** is well underway. Andy Goddard will show a mock up at the AGM, assisted by David Trepess who is coordinating content. The website will come under the Media Team to facilitate coherence in media content and messaging.

Thanks....

.....to **everyone** who has helped BMHAC in the past year, no matter how large or small the contribution in terms of time; it all counts and is really appreciated by the Committee. As we have seen with the Refreshments and Media Teams, sharing roles can reduce the impact on individuals.

Leigh Henderson
Chair
BMHAC
February 2026