

Chairs Report 13th October 2022

Twelve months ago we were just coming out of a strange period in all our lives and probably everyone here has been effected by the Covid virus in one way or another. The club had gone through a difficult period losing several coaches in key areas but since the last AGM we have seen the green shoots of a bigger stronger and financially sound club.

The endurance committee along with the endurance coaches have organised themselves into a well structured coaching set up, the appointment of both men's and ladies team captains have helped bring together championship winning teams with successes in several county races along with individual winners.

Juniors saw a 2nd place for the club in the Ellison league, the U15 girls won Silver in the Essex Road Relays, they went one better at the recent cross country relays by winning gold.

Individually Lyla Belshaw led the way by winning the Essex County and Schools cross country championships, she also achieved gold at the Eastern counties cross country, Essex league overall U15 girls winner, ECCA English national X country 11th, CAU Inter counties 9th, English Schools 8th, SIAB Schools 4th Lyla also holds both the Markshall and Highwood park run course records for Women with 17.34 & 18.24.

We also saw Isla Widdowson perform in the largest cross country fixtures, Essex county championships – Silver, Eastern counties cross country – Silver, South of England Inter counties – 24th, English champs 29th, CAU Inter-counties 51st and finally English schools giving a year to many 85th.

Finally Lizzie Wellsted showed us this winter what she could achieve – ECCA English Champs 19th, Essex League Lizzie placed 2nd in respective races, she surprised everyone by winning the Colchester 10k finishing in a very good time of 37.54.

Track and Field especially on the endurance side have seen several new coaches either as LiRF's, Coach Assistants with one being Athletics Coach with another working towards their full coaching licence, What's great to see are the likes of Isabela Minder, Emily Henderson, Amelia Green and recently Rachel Sale offering to help coach the junior groups both during the week and on a Sunday.

This year the club saw Tammy Belshaw moving up to level 2 Track judge, Paul Preston – Track judge, Steven Shippey joining the field team L1, here we need more so the club can assist in more leagues, but also thanks goes to Rick Thompson, Hazel Smith, Chris Sale, Chris Akehurst, Diane Wooller and Jill Mapp who helped at several fixtures in 2022.

EYAL – we had a good season with Michelle taking teams to Norwich, Ipswich and a joint home fixture in Colchester the club's youngsters achieved points totals not seen since 2019 – Thanks to Michelle Martin-Whymark for team managing.

SAL – Team manager Sam Hart worked hard to put together teams but to be honest Sam was never given the true support of the senior side of the club and a small team attended St

Ives, Cambridge and Braintree, Braintree with almost a full team showed what the Harriers can do winning the fixture I'm hoping the club's members will give her more support in 2023.

Individual recognition must go to;

Charlie Dobson – outstanding performances over 200 with a legal PB 20.19 and 400 PB 45.11, competed in the European championships reaching the final and placed a creditable 4th, Charlie was also a member of the European winning 4 x 400 team running the fastest leg 44.40!!

Dominic King – Dominic had a few upsets in 2022 even though having the qualifying time he wasn't chosen for any of the major competitions that said Dominic had the following successes – Essex county champs – Gold, WMA Masters championships – Dominic obtained Gold in the 5k, 10k and 20k walks.

Colin Ridley – Has had an exceptional year starting with a new UK age group best of 4.58:23 in the Ayo Falola dream mile, BMAF Indoor champs achieving gold in the 800 and 1500, this was followed up with another first at the England Masters AA Inter area match, During the summer Colin turned out for the club in both the Eastern masters and SAL leagues.

Rebecca Jeggo U23, BUCS 200m Silver, British indoors 200m Finalist, South of England Indoor 200m Bronze. Rebecca ran a PB 60m 7.59 and was only outside her 100 PB.

U15 Lyla Belshaw – Essex county 1500 & 3000 champion 4.35.85 & 9.55.16, Essex County Schools champion – 4.35.27, English School T&F Championships 2nd Silver 4.29.17 (this ranks Lyla 21st on the UK U15 all time list), England Athletics U15/U17 Championships – National Champion, Lyla ranked 3rd on Power of 10 for the 1500, and 2nd for the 3k.

I'm passing the chairs role over to someone else for 2022/23 and would like to thank everyone that has supported me whilst in that position to the committee, Rick Thompson, Sally Dobson, Richard Pickering, Paul Mingay, Allan Smalls, Maxine Simon and finally my special thanks goes to Paul Preston a man that did way more than just being a membership secretary, Paul is stepping down from membership and his other roles due to both work and family commitments I'd like to say a big Thank you, Paul is however continuing to coach.

In other areas I'd like to thank Nicola Hilson and Emma Begg for taking on the task of looking after the clubs kit, Michelle Martin-Whymark single handed team manager for the EYAL, Michelle also looks after the Junior waiting list and the sign in sheets for U18's, Sam Hart with her Partner Mikey Smith plus mum looking after all the SAL fixtures with their young family in attendance.

I'm signing off knowing that the new committee with its diversity of individuals will take the club into a new era.

Dave Smith
Chair

Colchester Harriers AC