

Datchet Dashers AGM Minutes

Thursday 18th November 2021 (Cricket Club)

19:30 Start of Meeting

41 Attendees

1. Apologies for absence

Alison Allen, Charles Allen, Stuart Boorman, Melanie Golding, Richard Golding, Phil Kemp, Simon Black, Melanie Ratcliffe, Mark Ferguson, Sheuli Ferguson

2. Welcome from the Chairman / Chairman's report – David Priddy

This last year has been another unusual one. It started off with our shed being broken in to, and ends with us almost, but not quite, back to normality. Having started in lockdown, we were able to restart socially distanced training at the end of the 2020, and then we had to stop. We restarted again, were briefly disrupted by the royal death, but we are now finally back to a normal training schedule, although it must be said that the Thursday turnouts have been rather low since we restarted. And of course during a lot of this time anything competitive remained virtual. We did a couple of 24 hour challenges that proved popular and featured Dashers around the world, we ran a virtual London Marathon, and certain club members set themselves crazy targets to run from Land's End to John O'Groats. Everyone basically made the best of a tough situation, and some people have definitely come out of it fitter than when they went in – I'm expecting some impressive PBs next year.

Sadly the cross country season was one of the victims with an entire season cancelled. The Dash In The Dark went the same way, as did most of our social events. In fact even after lockdown ended it was still very difficult to plan for anything with confidence. We did manage to hold The Blind Dash and The Magic Mile events once things started to open up, but a combination of factors meant that The Divided Dash and The Jim Banks Handicap did not go ahead. This club thrives on the social aspect of our events, and that has definitely been missed.

We were pleased to be able to hold the Datchet 5k which for many was possibly the first mass start race they had done in a long time. This was followed by a very successful running of The Dashers Relay, so a very special vote of thanks to Bella and Gillian for organising it at short notice. It sold out very quickly and you could just feel how happy people were to be back out there racing again.

New on the scene this year was The Mad Nina. Rob MacMillan did a great job of organising this, no mean feat for something that was a new concept for the club, and we hope this will become a popular annual event.

And then came our birthday party at Dorney Lake. Everyone has been extremely positive about it, especially a lot of the members from years gone by who really enjoyed catching up with people that in some cases they hadn't seen in years. So well done to Sarah and her team for doing such a great job in organising the event, and for organising such a beautiful and perfectly timed sunset.

The club championship was a little different this year owing to the uncertainty about whether races were going to be held or not. Thankfully the solution we came up with seemed to work pretty well, although it does appear that a certain number of people still don't appear to have read the rules! We expect the forthcoming season to be back to the normal structure, and if the proposals being put forward tonight are passed it will be an extended season with more races.

And finally, as I start the third year of my temporary 1 year as Chair, I'd like to say thank you to the committee members for their work over the last 12 months. Running a club like ours takes time and effort, even during a year like this, and so it is important that members step forward and give their time and their ideas. So thank you everyone, and especially to Emily, Ian & Jez who are stepping down this time. We currently have a good team who are working well together and who have good ideas about where we'd like to go, so I definitely go into this year with a positive viewpoint.

I'll end by reminding you that this is your club, and whilst the committee may lead the way, we still need and value your input into how things are run. So if you have any ideas or suggestions please do come and talk to us and let us know. The club is in a strong position with a healthy bank balance and so really we can do almost anything we want to do.

3. Matters arising from the 2020 AGM minutes

There were no matters arising than required a response

4. Treasurer's Report – Robert MacMillan

In the financial year 2020-21 we recorded a deficit of £1240 compared to a surplus of £4852 in the previous year. The finances of both years were affected by the Covid lockdown. In the current year receipts were down due to the loss of race revenue and we made some exceptional investments, resulting in the deficit. In the previous revenue we had strong race revenue before Covid and low costs during lockdown. So this year was unusually weak, and last year was unusually strong.

Looking at the major items:

Race Revenue

In the financial year just past there was no Dashers cross country (in November 2020) due to

lockdown and no Dash in the Dark in Spring this year, resulting in £3600 less income than the previous year. However, the summer 5k brought in receipts of £261. And the summer relays brought in £666. As always, the club owes a huge debt of gratitude to Bella and Gillian for their organisation of this event.

Socials

The cost of socials was significantly higher this year as the committee decided the club should subsidise the 40th Anniversary dinner. As last year we were unfortunately not able to have the pizza evening or the fish and chips evening. Hopefully, these socials can be reinstated next year.

Sundries

The other major difference between this year and last is in the sundry items. This is mainly new investment in three things. The two new gazebos that had their debut at the cross country on Sunday cost £1509. New radios cost £467. And the Nina Smith Trophy for endurance running that Veronika won at The Mad Nina cost £370.

Summary

So, to summarise, in the current year we have made a small loss. However, across the two seasons covering Covid, the club has increased its funds by £3,600 and invested in some new items. The club continues to have a strong financial reserve.

5. Membership Report – Stuart Armstrong

a) Membership as at 18th November 2021 (figures in brackets for previous year)

Full members	256	(264)
Over 70 members	7	(7)
Honorary Members	9	(9)
2nd claim members	9	(7)
Total membership	281	(287)

b) Breakdown between EA affiliated and unaffiliated members

EA affiliated	194	(225)
Unaffiliated	87	(62)

c) Membership 'churn'

At renewal in January/February 2021, 54 members did not renew. 48 members have joined since mid-February, of which 38 are new to the club, and 10 have previously been members.

6. Ladies Captain Report – Emma Twomey

We started the season in all too familiar territory; locked down, group training suspended and races being cancelled hand over fist, but the difference this time was we were adapting to the pandemic. We immersed ourselves in Dasher bingo, virtual XC, virtual NYD parkrun challenges, virtual time trials and Barbara Mason getting us active with Pilates.

Three of my personal highlights during that early period of the season were:

1. Ann Mograby inspiring an army of ladies to sign up for the Lands' End to John O'Groats virtual challenge, which so many of the ladies nailed and drew inspiration from seeing just how many miles they had accumulated and where they had got to around the country.
2. Selby Striders for getting the competitive juices flowing again with the virtual 24-hour relay challenge and
3. Gillian Richards proving to us all that that good things can come out of pandemic's by breaking the elusive 25-minute barrier for 5 km

I think we were all relieved when life began to demonstrate some resemblance of normality again in the spring, with training and races both beginning to come back and the committee managing to layout a modified club champs plan for the season accommodating the chaos on the racing calendar.

It was great to see people start racing again but it was Race to the Stones and Endure that caught the mid-season headlines. I found it so inspirational to see the posts from the Dashers, working mainly as a team, to conquer the 100km challenge and the smiles at the finishing line of those that had just achieved something they had never put their mind and bodies through before. That was inspirational for all of us doing Endure the following weekend. Where the various Dasher teams cleaned up in the different sized team prizes and of course Ann Mograby humbled us all again completing 14 laps or 70 miles over the 24-hour period.

With the Endure warm up out of the way for Ann, the men made way for the ladies to dominate the inaugural Mad Nina. I think we all knew we were in for a long night when Veronika Gill and Ann Mograby went head-to-head for the title. A true lesson to us all in stamina and determination as the pair went lap after lap. The victory was eventually awarded to Veronika for completing 15 hours, one more hour than Ann who took the runner up position.

The Dasher ladies took the team prize at the Windsor half marathon with Chloe Scotchbrook, Louise Diggins and Susan Pye-Beraet bringing team honours home ahead of the marathon season finally kicking off. The Dasher ladies were well represented in Manchester, London and Berlin to name a few with Alison Jessop leading us home in 3:27 but with a number of fantastic PB performances across the 26.2 miles

Club champs kicked off with a one-mile time trial with Jilly Raw bringing home the honours ahead of Sarah Holland. The pair duelled it out at the Jules Jog with Sarah pipping Jilly which means that both ladies share the honours of ladies' champion for this season with Helen Bolt and Veronika Gill tying for third spot. In the age grade rankings Helen Bolt took first place ahead of Jilly Raw and Bella Shah. Congratulations to you all!

However over and above all of these phenomenal achievements there is one more lady I would like to recognise tonight. Somebody that is so amazingly talented but is so incredibly modest in her own ability. This lady smashed three PB's this season proving to us all that age is just a number. She was the only lady that broke a club record this season when she ran 43:38 at Battersea Park 10K, just two weeks after running a 23-minute PB at the London Marathon with cramp stops. That 10KM performance puts her 17th fastest UK woman in her age group and her marathon and 5km times put her in the top 35. This amazing athlete is Helen Bolt and for me Helen you have been the lady's performance of the season. Congratulations on an amazing set of results and let's get those marathon cramps solved for next year!

That wraps up the ladies 20/21 season highlights and I look forward to a more traditional 21/22 season with lots of happy and healthy miles.

7. Men's Captain Report – Chris Hunt

Firstly, I'd like to say a big thank you to my fellow captain Ian Gutteridge who can't be here tonight for his contribution to the joint men's captaincy over the last year. Ian sadly will be stepping down from his role on the committee but will very much remain an active member with a keen eye on all of the running stats across the club.

Now onto the main report,

2021 has seen some truly outstanding individual and team performances and it has been great to see the resurgence of our small club at local, regional and national levels.

The first key competitive event of 2021 took place in June time where a group of Dashers attended Endure 24, otherwise known as Glastonbury for runners. There was a great sense of camaraderie at the event to go with the excellent performances. In the men's 6-8 category, the team aptly named 'Jog On' achieved a record 48 laps which equates to 240 miles beating the second place team the Village People by over 30 mins and over a lap ahead. Special credit goes to Rob Foster for his 7 sub 30 min laps and to Ian Gutteridge for assembling the team.

Moving onto the track, we saw Rob McHarg become double Scottish champion over 800 metres & 1500 metres at the Scottish Athletics Combined Events & Masters Championships & Hurdles Open & British Champ over 1500 metres with a Silver in the 800 metres at the

British Masters Championships. Well done to Rob on this achievement. I'm sure we will see Rob clinch the Gold in the 800 metres in the not too distant future.

Also, In the summer we saw the return of the Dashers Relays, which were as always very well organised thanks to Gillian and Bella. A close fought race saw Dave Lee & Rob Foster otherwise known as Daddy Old Legs come from behind to secure the win over the Green Lane Gringos with a time of 31:23. This marked a new course record.

Speaking of Rob Foster, who couldn't notice Rob's comeback. Perhaps spurred on by a foolhardy bet from James Samson that Rob couldn't beat him over a half marathon in 2021, Rob set about putting the world to rights over the course of the season, culminating in the highest ever age graded performance recorded by a Dasher with 15:46 over 5km and a clean sweep across the Men's Club Championship. I'm delighted that Rob will be joining me as men's captain for the upcoming season.

In addition to this fantastic individual performance from Rob, we have also seen some other notable performances this year with Satnam Singh achieving new PBs in 2021 over 5km, Parkrun, 10km and half marathon. Well done to Sid.

October saw the return of marathon season, with many Dashers completing the distance. We started with the London marathon which took place in October for the first time in its history, but continuing the fantastic Dashers tradition of supporting the Lucozade drink station. The race itself saw Mark Ferguson and I battle it out over the distance continuing our recent history of seeing each other round about the 21-22 mile mark. Mark managed to break a V50 record that had been held by Ian Spencer for nearly 20 years, with a time of 2:55:22 at London marathon.

A week later, many Dashers took on the Manchester marathon, on a surprisingly warm October day with notable times achieved by Chris Fox with a time of 3:01:43, Ron Davies who completed Manchester marathon in under 3 hours 10 and from Chris Ellis a relatively new joiner in 2:52:52. Rob Foster then made the journey down a few weeks later to a very windy and wet Newport marathon in Wales. Whilst not achieving the time Rob wanted and deserved of sub 2:40, he managed to cling onto a sub 2:45 finish with a time of 2:44:35.

That wraps up the men's 20/21 season highlights and I look forward to the upcoming season with great headway already made in Cross Country at last Sunday's home event.

8. Communications Report - Shona Lowe

Our use of social media to promote the club and its activities has continues throughout the last year.

Instagram and Twitter are our public platforms we use most often. We get more engagement with our Instagram posts and this is reflected in the number of people who follow us - 501 followers on Instagram (up 150 from November 2020) and 340 followers on Twitter (up 2 from November 2020). We post several times each week and aiming to increase this as we move forward and as the club participates in more events.

Our Facebook page is a private group for club news, messages and for people to interact with club mates. Photographs uploaded may be used on the public platforms but we will not fully identify members, using only their first names.

The monthly round up blogs have resumed and this is an area that we are looking to expand, profiling members and celebrating what the club and its members are doing and achieving.

9. Election of new committee

Proposed Candidates:

Chair – David Priddy

Secretary – Louise Flisher

Treasurer – Rob Macmillan

Men's Captain – Chris Hunt / Rob Foster

Ladies' Captain – Emma Twomey

Membership Secretary – Stuart Armstrong

Fixture's Secretaries – Colin Adams

Social Secretary – Sarah Holland

Publicity Officer – Shona Lowe

Website Administrator – Guy Ratcliffe

Internal Races Co-ordinator – Elisabeth Smith

General Member with Coaching responsibilities – Paul Ashby

The new committee was unanimously approved by the members present.

10. Proposal for changes to the club constitution, annual season schedule and fee structures.

The proposed changes were presented to the meeting by Chris Hunt, and after a couple of simple clarifications were approved unanimously by the members present. The website has been duly updated to reflect the changes.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20:30.