

COVENTRY GODIVA HARRIERS

Secretary's Report 2010/11

In this is my 21st annual report as secretary of the Club I start again with a general thanks to the officers of the Club, the Committee members, coaches, team managers, technical officials and other helpers who have enabled to Club operate over the last 12 months. Without these people and of course all the athletes who have competed for the Club and all who have been involved in the operation of the Club House there would be no club. I make no apology for in many places repeating what I reported last year this especially relates to areas where we have problems.

Compared to last year the Club had a mixed year on the competition front. The problems brought about by clashes of summer league fixtures which were flagged up at the AGM last year came to be. Representation was made to UKA and MCAA on this matter but to no avail. This brought about relegation in the Women's National League team to the lowest division and the combined Men's and Women's Midlands team dropped to Division 3. Primarily this was due to the lack of athletes. Those who turned out did well but it was the empty spots which saw us off. This was sometimes due to the fixture clashes but also to some non availabilities. The Young Athletes retained their Midland Premier division status. The winter season was not as successful as the previous year although the men retained the Birmingham League title for the third year. The senior women did well in the Midland Women's Cross Country League, but we still fell short of what might have been achieved and this continues to centre round the differences between individual and collective objectives or indeed any objective at all! These problems are made more difficult by lack of communication between all concerned.

The on going need for people to volunteer for any of the wide range of posts and/or activities that are required for us to operate effectively remains a major challenge if we are to even stand still as an organisation. Succession planning in volunteer organisations has always been a major challenge and it remains the case in Coventry Godiva Harriers. Ideas are needed but what we also need is folks to be involved. We do not want more jobs for those already immersed in running the Club. It has to be said that many of those who do work tirelessly for the Club and its members have been doing so for a long time and are not in the first flush of youth! As last year I ask the question – does anyone out there care?

Shortly after last year's AGM after agreeing the way forward for a new Club House, work started. This had some effect on meetings, but meetings of the Committee have continued to take place each month with a high commitment from Committee members. Of course thanks are also due to those who have worked outside the Committee but on behalf of the Club. The Chairman, Aaron Bodycote, with a dual role of athlete and chair has continued to do a good job and be hands on. As we will see once again from the treasurer's report, Charlie Kelly has worked tirelessly on the finances of the Club, a job which is so vital. He also has project managed the new construction ably assisted by Gordon Horne. On a personal basis, thanks are due to Julie Beckford and Keith Richards who held the fort whilst I was sidelined back in October in acting as Minutes Secretaries. Of late they have been able do other things thanks to Suzanne Bennett for coming on board to very ably carry out that function. Members access cards, a requirement of University of Warwick for gaining access to the athletics track, has continued to be an ongoing slog. Julie Beckford took that job from me and now she makes innumerable trips to the sports centre to deliver photographs and then pick up new cards for delivery to members. The process of writing to all last year's paid up members, 300 plus, reminding them that subscriptions would be due

at the end of March, happened again in early February and I would thank all members for responding so positively and so enabling the system to work although there are still a small number of stragglers!.

We continue to have a number of members who do not seem to have competing on their agenda or at least for the Club and this does make it difficult for team managers. **Irrespective of the structure, communications are at the centre, especially in ensuring that ALL parties know and are consulted about upcoming fixtures and selection criteria but remember this process should be two way.** The work of the Team managers is very often out of sight, out of mind and almost more by luck than judgement but our thanks should go to everyone involved in the management of teams which remains a vital job. This job can be made easier by athletes continuing to be committed and making themselves readily available or at least keeping the team managers updated on availability or otherwise.

Colin Jacks has continued as Officials Co-ordinator and a very big thank you goes to Colin for his unstinting efforts in arranging for Club officials at all the Track and Field meetings in which we have been involved. The number of leagues in which the Club is involved was decreased again this year with the Club coming out of the National Junior League. The fixture list has not helped in this area with often 3 meetings over a weekend. This involvement does put tremendous pressure on officials so that it is not surprising that for some events we had some difficulties. Getting assistance on the day where there are shortages has helped but we do need more qualified officials. Although now into 2011/12 further reduction in league commitments have taken place and we do have some new officials.

Thanks are also due to the University of Warwick for their continued provision of the facilities that we enjoy. There have been problem on occasions with access and these have very often been down to members not having their access cards. All members are reminded that this is the means of access and failure to have a valid card may incur an entry fee. There is an ongoing problem of use of the facility outside our exclusive times on Tuesdays and Thursdays and this has been discussed with the University

On the social side the Dinner and Awards evening went well again. No dancing this year and a new venue, Hearsall Golf Club. The numbers attending were down on previous years but the general consensus was that it was excellent in all respects whilst keeping tickets at the same price as the previous year. Once again the function would not have been possible without the support of NP Aerospace who enabled award winners to attend free of charge.

Child Protection issues have continued to be overseen by Mike Cosser and Ann Kirkham, thanks to them both once again. The UK Athletics coaching and officiating systems carry with them the need for CRB clearance checks and Ann and Mike have signed off the application forms as required.

Membership continues to hold up with 82 new members last year. Special thanks again must go to Julie Beckford her unstinting work in the collection of subscriptions along with photographs and signing up new members. The Club have again affiliated to England Athletics for 2011/12 and registration lists of members have been sent to them. Unfortunately, athletes do not always make their change of addresses known and so it can be difficult to communicate with them. Update forms have been given to most existing members so this problem should be reduced

Thanks are also, once again, due to our band of coaches. Zara Hyde Peters has done a sterling job on coach development and the number of qualified coaches has increased. The problem now is getting the coaches to be proactive in their coaching for the benefit of the Club. We are still short of coaches in the technical areas, throws and jumps particularly. Special thanks goes again to Dave Dix who, through the Warwick University Endurance Academy, has given some focus to coaching provision in that area especially with the special events that have been put on.

Promotions as always have played an important role in the activities of the Club. Thanks again to all who have been involved in those promotions, officials, coaches, team managers and helpers in the back room on results and the Club House team. For the latter, special thanks must go to Chris and Gordon Horne for their major efforts with the temporary Hungry Harrier. Although there have been additional helpers throughout the year there is an ongoing need for more assistance behind the counter. Thanks are due to the group (Martin Slevin, Vince Clisham, Julie Beckford, Pete Banks and Aaron Bobycote) who took over the organising of the New Year, May Day and Autumn 5 road races. All were successful and enhanced considerably the income and profile of the Club although the team is looking at the ongoing format and dates of these events. It would be nice and perhaps a sign of appreciation if more Club members entered in our own events. The Club also promoted again a Birmingham League fixture which was well received once again.

Over the last 12 months the team working with the Godiva Kids has continued. Numbers are consistently good and the enthusiasm of all concerned remains high. The sport is about medium to long term involvement and so the next stage in these activities is to manage the transference of those youngsters, who show ability and enthusiasm, into the mainstream of club activities and competitions. This has started to happen with good numbers in the Young Athletes League very ably overlorded by Chris Hazell. Thanks are also due to Roger Medwell, Sally Eldridge, and Gordon Horne, their excellent job is greatly appreciated.

Thanks again to Nick Winch in maintaining the Club website an out of sight and out of mind but an important tool in keeping members informed.

Again no report would be complete without thanking Roger Medwell who, as Managing Director of NP Aerospace, has given so much support to the Club and its members again over the last year, including the Dinner, our race promotions and for senior athletes, Pounds for Points. As a result of their renewed sponsorship the additional awards strata introduced last year of Performance Awards was used again with 31 athletes receiving something from the available pot. It does, however, continue to surprise me that of that number only about 30% expressed their thanks through the Club!

Bill Adcocks
Hon. Secretary