

**Annual Report**  
**2023-2024**  
**Presented at AGM**  
**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Reference and Administration Details**

**Charity Name**

North Belfast Harriers

**Registered with Charity Commission of NI**

NIC100382

**Charity registered with the Inland Revenue**

**Charity Address**

c/o 17 Oldpark Terrace,

Belfast,

BT14 6NP

**Website**

<http://www.northbelfastharriers.com/>

**E-mail**

clubsecretary@northbelfastharriers.com

**Twitter**

@nbharriers

**Facebook**

North Belfast Harriers

**Committee Members & Office Bearing Position**

Margaret Stephens

Chair Person

Greg McClure

Treasurer

Denise Rainey

Secretary

Diane Taylor

Seamus McCann

Fionnuala O'Hare

Martin McNicholl

## North Belfast Harriers Report: 2023-2024

### Agenda

1. Election of Committee for Incoming Year
2. Financial Report – Greg McClure
3. Junior Report - Seamus McCann
4. Senior Report – John Black
5. Annual Review of Club Achievements & Development Plan –Margaret Stephens
6. Membership fees and other sources of income
7. Public Benefit Review
8. Items brought forward by members for discussion

**Election of committee members for the incoming year**

At the outset of the meeting the election of the incoming committee took place

The following committee members did not stand for re-election:-

The committee members elected and their positions are as follows:-

Mrs Margaret Stephens - Chairperson

Mrs Denise Rainey - Secretary

Mr Greg McClure - Treasurer

Mrs Diane Taylor

Mr Seamus McCann

Mr Martin McNicholl

Miss Fionnuala O'Hare

New Committee Members

## **Annual Review of Club Achievements and Development Plan**

### **Presented by Margaret Stephens**

2023-2024 has been another year of consolidation for North Belfast Harriers during which the club focused on addressing a number of physical infrastructure issues. The club continues to thrive in all areas from our junior section, through our vibrant growing Recreational section to our Senior and Masters sections. These sections continue to be supported in their growth and development by an increasing group of dedicated and knowledgeable coaches and volunteers who give up endless hours of their own time to support our runners. We are very lucky to have such dedicated support both in coaching and in the other areas required for the effective running of the club and I feel that it is very important that these people are acknowledged and thanked formally in this forum. I would therefore propose a formal record of thanks to all club volunteers to go on record in the official minutes of this meeting.

Could I ask for someone from the body of the meeting to second this proposal? Seconded by **Denise Rainey.**

In addition to all the volunteers it is important to remember that no matter how good the facilities or the coaches are the work has to be done by each individual to achieve results. Irrespective of whether these results involve i.e. breaking a world record, setting a new Personal Best(PB) or completing your first 5k or 10k or indeed your 500th Parkrun for that matter these are all causes for celebration and for pride in our club members.

### Club Objectives

Our club objectives are listed in our constitution as:

- To promote the health and well-being principally but not exclusively of the greater Belfast population through participation in athletics.
- To promote personal health and esteem through health awareness education and participation in athletic principally but not exclusively to the Greater Belfast population
- To promote athletics locally as an amateur sport to the local population of North Belfast.

We seek to achieve these objectives through delivering results against our action plan and we have just completed the third year of the development plan that was drawn up in 2021.

The Development Plan highlighted a number of specific areas - coaching, junior, recreational, senior, international and infrastructure and the following is an outline of progress in each area:-

## **COACHING**

Again we have seen further success in developing our coaching team on the junior side of the club. This year we have seen a further 7 newly qualified Assistant coaches joining the team, and a number of parents helping at other levels (more details in junior report).

Good progress has been made in in this area within the senior club. There have been additional qualified LIRFs and CIRFs and a communication team set up to share information on training sessions and keep members better informed as well as giving more of a choice on training available. However there is room for further development on the senior side. What we need to do is to find a formula that will work within the senior part of the club that will replicate this success for the benefit of all our senior members. At present we have an effective structure in some areas but not in others. At the Couch to 5k level we have adequate cover at present but we need to look at more rotation of coaches/leaders here so that fatigue doesn't set in, this is our second biggest source of income for the club as well as a route for new members. A similar approach needs looked at for the Follow on groups to catch and keep new members. Through a number of recreational groups we have a structure and leadership that has allowed for groups to thrive and for effective training to happen. At the top end in the club we continue to have the necessary coaching structure but there is still a gap between these two where we need to find a way to encourage leaders/coaches so that there is progression through groups when required. Anyone who has an interest in delivering, to a plan, for both themselves and the people in their training group should make themselves known and any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

### **Aim for year ahead:**

We will seek to maintain and further develop the strong structure that we have built in the junior section.

We will also continue to progress and seek out solutions for the senior sections and implement these with the support of the senior members of the club. We will look to do this by developing further LIRFs and CIRFs where possible and empowering leadership within training groups to deliver the programs that people are seeking based on established and proven training plans.

## **PARTICIPATION**

This year has seen an increase in participation across the club. This has been particularly evident in the cross-country events with a significant increase in participation from juniors up. This has seen successes in the league for men and women, European qualification for senior men as well as senior championship success for the women (more details in other reports). We need to build on this and continue to encourage participation across the club.

The formation of a Cross Country Committee, in 2023, on the initiative of a small number of club members has contributed to this increased participation and we should endeavour to continue this approach and develop it further.

### **Aim for year ahead:**

Promote continued growth in participation in all events. Further promote the club's event participation scheme. Develop the concept underpinning the new XC Committee who meet monthly to identify target races and encourage participation at these events, ensuring that the club profile remains high which encourages new members to join.

## **RECREATIONAL**

The recreational side of the club continues to thrive with coach/LIRF lead training sessions weekly on Monday & Wednesday evenings. We need to continue to encourage and train more coaches as groups see regular attendance by large and growing numbers, attendance can be

in excess of 80 members across the groups on any night. It is important to note that this number does not include those who are participating in one of the club's two C25K. Numbers at the C25K remain steady but are still lower than just prior to and in the time directly after Covid.

Recreational runners have represented the club in the past year in all distances from 5k to cross country and through to the full marathon distance.

**Aim for the year ahead:**

To encourage groups to make more use of the clubhouse on week nights and Sunday mornings to support development of runners in this section and provide them with as much variety as possible in order to retain their interest and progression.

Encourage better communication between groups to allow people from different groups to participate in runs/sessions that might suit their needs at a particular time and to encourage cohesion across the various groups in this part of the club.

**SENIOR**

The senior end of club has once again had a positive year with some outstanding performances for both teams and individuals. (More details below in senior report).

**Aim for the year ahead:**

Continue to support the needs of the senior section. Encourage the use of the clubhouse as a focal point for training sessions that are not track based. Seek out effective leadership and coaching for all elements of this part of the club

**INTERNATIONAL**

**To have club representation on an international level**

The club continues to strive to help its athletes achieve qualification for national teams and allow them opportunities to compete at the highest levels in all forms of running, from Track to Road Running to Fell Running and we continue to have success at this level.

**Aim for the year ahead:**

Continue to support club representation at an international level whether this in a financial capacity or otherwise.

## **JUNIOR**

2023 has been a successful year for the junior section with increasing member numbers as well as more participation in particular events (more details to follow in the Junior Report). There continues to be good attendance throughout the year at training sessions.

### **Aim for year ahead:**

Continue to support junior members of club through investing in coaching and support to attend competitions.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Another aim of the club is to ensure that the club is managed in a safe, sustainable and professional manner. North Belfast Harriers is registered with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland and also Athletics NI. Therefore, the committee has continually reviewed practice throughout the year to ensure that we are abiding by up-to-date guidelines/ practice of both bodies. Our accounts were independently examined by an accountant (see financial report) and were of satisfactory standard. The financial report shows the club income covers annual expenses and that there are sufficient resources to address occasional expenses that arise.

The club continues to be managed on a voluntary basis by the committee, who also act as the trustees.

## Club Fees

As in previous years the club have given consideration to the financial position of the club and the financial reserves that are required to ensure that it meets potential financial needs and allows it to operate within the constraints of its charitable status.

The committee **proposes that** we hold the annual fees at £60 adult £40 Junior with a reduced rate for new members of £40 in their first year.

We would once again ask that all tax payers consider signing up for gift aid. By doing so the Inland Revenue will pay an additional £12 into club fees at no additional cost to the individual. It's as simple as ticking the relevant box when you are renewing your membership. Please take that action.

***Proposal:*** At this point we would like to propose that the fees remain at £60 for adults and £40 for children for the coming year with a first year membership fee at the reduced rate of £40.

## **Membership is now due!!!**

- Membership year is now over so all fees are due for renewal.
- Payment can be made via the membership link on the club website which will now be open or directly (<https://membermojo.co.uk/nbh.>)
- Special arrangements can be made for those in financial difficulties. This will be dealt with in a completely confidential manner.
- Any issues/queries please contact John Black via [membership@northbelfastharriers.com](mailto:membership@northbelfastharriers.com)

We would thank all members who have already renewed their membership

## **Review of Public Benefit Statement**

One of the club obligations as a charity is to ensure that our club is fulfilling its obligations with regards to public benefit. Below we have detailed our club aims and how we have met them this year and how the public has benefited.

Our club objectives are listed in our constitution as:

- 1. To promote the health and well-being principally but not exclusively of the greater Belfast population through participation in athletics.**

Afer Covid we have moved to return activities to pre-covid levels. We have conducted programs suited to all abilities and we have encouraged all to further their health through athletics. A variety of programs have been provided and marketed locally, these have been targeted at youth, beginners, 5-10k, half marathon and marathon runners. All the programs are connected to supply a pathway for progression. The achievements of these groups are listed in the annual review.

We are satisfied that the club has offered the opportunity for improved health well-being to the local community during 2023-2024 year.

- 2. To promote personal health and esteem through health awareness education and participation in athletic principally but not exclusively to the Greater Belfast population**

Within each program, the objectives are to promote fitness, personal health and self-esteem. We actively encourage people to engender confidence and we provide opportunities to experience new challenges like cross country, half marathons, marathons, Pilates, yoga and core training.

After covid and due to ongoing restrictions increasing participation was difficult. However now the opportunity exists through our training nights for members to mix with other members socially, to make new friends and to improve their own mental health.

In 2023/24 we have seen:

- around 150 people graduate from beginner's programs at Girls Model and ERC and Waterworks;
- Across the sessions from Monday to Thursday we are seeing pre Covid numbers with somewhere in the region of 100 people with at least 10 coaches and volunteers attending each night;
- Significant increase in members attending events therefore increasing participation, particularly in areas such as cross country.

Over the last few years there was little opportunity to organise club events or social opportunities but thankfully in 23/24 we were able to increase the number of social and club events. We had a Christmas dinner with about 100 people and the Laganside 10K saw over 1000 participants both senior and junior along with many club members volunteering in roles at the event and in its planning. It is hoped that we will continue to increase the number of social opportunities during the course of the coming year.

We are again satisfied that the above evidence demonstrates that the club continues to provide public benefit and promote personal health and esteem through athletics helping people gain an awareness of health education.

### **3. To promote athletics locally as an amateur sport to the local population of North Belfast.**

During the year, the club continuously promote the activities and achievements of the club to the local community to illustrate the possible benefits. This is done through:

- Weekly reports on website and shared to Facebook;
- Reports and features in local newspapers;
- An active twitter account;
- Awards and presentations;
- Supporting local running events e.g. parkrun and Colour run.

## North Belfast Harriers Report: 2023-2024

We are again satisfied that the above evidence demonstrates that the club fulfilled its public benefit and promoted athletics locally as an amateur sport to the local population of North Belfast.