LINLITHGOW ATHLETIC CLUB – AGM - 26 APRIL 2023

**HEAD COACH REPORT FROM FRANCES WOOD**

INTRODUCTION

It’s been a good year with growth in membership, participation and activities we offer - and a return to normal racing and training. I’m proud of what we achieve as a Club. Our members are seen at so many events, from parkruns to ultras and from national championships on the roads to trails and XC. We have athletes winning medals at national events and many improving PBs or completing challenges they never thought possible before joining the Club and benefitting from the regular training and friendships it brings.

Many people make our coached sessions and our jogscotland group Let’s Go Linlithgow a great success. Thanks to them all for their commitment to getting qualified, continuing to develop and giving their time so willingly. But we can always use more volunteers, so contact me if you want to consider getting involved. And please use my contact details at the foot of this report to send me any views on anything in my report.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LAST YEAR?

* Stopped needing to keep registers and using Wix - got rid of lots of admin! Sent out our Coached programme – Tuesday and Thursday sessions - to all members at start of year (and goes to new members). Set up What’sApp Club Training and Racing Group to help folk keep in touch – 65 participants already.
* Included facilities fees in membership – members can attend sessions at Craigswood and the Cycle Circuit (opening on 27 May) without further payment. Prospective members get a four week free trial period.
* Many new members came from outside Linlithgow so we’ve seen changing patterns of attendance. Livingston sessions are popular - average attendance around 20. (At least half adult members came along at some point in year and we also get some Juniors and Youths. Club policy is 11-13s can attend sessions with a responsible adult and 14+ unaccompanied.)
* Paced runs and Handicap race continued to attract good numbers – less people attending other Thursday sessions. Need to understand why. We have a chance to use the Cycle Circuit at 8 on Thursdays – what do people think?
* Yvonne now co-ordinating Let’s Go Linlithgow. Growth in jogleaders (Leaders in Running Fitness) to 13 – supplemented by those who also hold coaching qualifications. Great community outreach with attenders encouraged to join Club. Reasonable number have but I think we need to look at this in conjunction with our wider membership structure and fees before 2024.
* More coaches and higher level qualifications: Yvonne now Coach in Running Fitness, Geoff P shortly to complete Athletics Coach, Rebecca became a Coaching Assistant and Roisin booked for this soon. Among members we have 2 with Event Group Coach licence (Level 3), 5 Athletics Coach/Coach in Running Fitness (Level 2), and 9 Coaching Assistant (Level 1) – not all currently active but a great pool of experience to draw on.
* Ian F has taken on role of Lead Coach Juniors and Monday sessions continue throughout year at the Academy. There’s always demand and a waiting list.
* Yvonne continues to lead Girls Running Group with Wyn and Rachel – meeting on a Monday. This is a social running group for ages 14-17 and remains popular.
* We tried to launch a Youth Group for boys and girls aged 14-17 who would like a more structured approach to training and development. Big thanks to Paul E for his efforts but it hasn’t got off the ground. We need to look again at this long-term Development Plan commitment. Any views?
* Club Championships – handicap and scratch – now co-ordinated by Paul D and provided some keen competition and great performances. We try to keep these races in mind when running coached sessions and posting on social media.

MY ROLE

I’ve been doing this for some years and won’t do it for ever, so useful if people are aware of what’s involved and think about whether it’s something they might take on in the future. Key things I do:

* Draw up the annual coaching programme, Session Plans and organise coach rota. Lead track coaching at Craigswood. Meet regularly with coaching team to review sessions and look at new ideas.
* Organise special sessions - intro to XC, beginners track, Club mile race.
* Keep in touch with coaches on education and training opportunities, licence renewals, changes to conditions e.g. first aid module at renewal from April 23
* Recruit and support new coaches and work with Welfare Officer on recruitment of volunteers, and PVG and licensing
* Provide individual advice and support to Club members and fellow coaches.
* Post information about races, performance and training on Club social media.
* Organise Club road and XC teams and XC season participation – with Jill H and others.

WHAT NEXT?

* See what use we can make of the Cycle Circuit and whether it will enhance involvement in the Club (Junior parkrun coming soon, should be great draw.)
* Consider whether we can offer any sessions – coached or LGL - in areas other than Linlithgow and Livingston.
* Recruit more coaches to provide greater strength and depth for adult and junior coached sessions - and for youth provision?
* Provide more focus on the competitive side of Club running for individuals and team – making sure LAC continues to fly the flag at various National Championships and caters for those who enjoy competing at whatever level.
* Succession planning for key roles like Head Coach and Welfare Officer, and for key coaches.

Frances R Wood, linlithgowaccoaching@gmail.com, 23 April 23