

Inverness Harriers AAC
Annual General Meeting 23rd Oct 2023
Chairmans Report 2022/23

What a difference a year makes! This time last year we faced an AGM with no President in place and a new committee that took on the task of bringing a hope of better things to come for the club and its activities. I am happy to inform the members that we stuck to our task and set the club back on we believe a more stable path for all. Ok we are not saying we got it all right and we have a plan to get to grips more for the results system for the track and field events and to provide meetings of value for all disciplines. We are laying a foundation to make it better for next year and the year after and sometimes getting things wrong creates a better learning opportunity for things to come.

We re-established the Club Cross Country Championships for the junior age groups and this year we had a senior event yesterday along with a great turnout of youngsters in the junior event. This acts as a time trial for the Club Handicaps which were also a great success last year along with the Christmas Relays. We congratulate Megan Keith on her Scottish Athletics Under 20 Athlete of the Year and her coach Ross Cairns who was nominated for Performance Coach of the Year. We also wish Ross good luck for this year's Awards evening as he has been nominated in two categories. Another former club member who deserves a mention is Andy Law who as a former team manager and club official was awarded Honorary Life Membership of Scottish Athletics for his services. He started his official's career at Inverness Harriers which he acknowledged at the recent SAL AGM. As we all know Megan had a fantastic year and not only in cross country but on the track as well with an unexpected selection for GB at the World Championships in Budapest. With the Paris Olympics looming next year, who knows? Could the club have its first Olympian? There will be more to report on the years successes indoors and outdoors at the Annual Awards Evening. We celebrated with High Life Highland the opening of the new floodlights with an 'Under The Lights Open Meeting' where the lights were officially switched on by our life member Colin Baillie MBE. We are in regular quarterly meetings with High Life Highland to discuss any issues and our relationship is particularly good

with them. We also hosted a Regional Superteams event and thank Jane and Craig for their support in organising that.

However, we have pointed out an area of concern about the track and its life cycle. The track was opened in 1984 and although there was a make-over around 2010 it is well past its best with the patching becoming a regular occurrence. These types of tracks I believe have a lifespan of about 30 years.

On that basis we, the club have submitted a letter to High Life Highland and to The Highland Council copying in Scottish Athletics with our concerns. We know and understand the situation with finance and the position with High Life Highland and the Council, but unless we take a stance to highlight our concerns, then athletics in this area could be in serious decline in the future to come with inadequate facilities. We now book the track for 6 days of the week and pay in the region of £20,000 a year for the rental and deserve a first-class facility.

We have also asked about potential rent increases to come next year and were told to work on a 5% increase. We have decided to recommend to the meeting tonight to keep the membership fees at £30 which they have been at for a few years. Hopefully, we can keep the track fees the same if High Life Highland keep to their proposed budget increase. But we will have a better gauge of that in the new year.

We also had a meeting with Scottish Athletics earlier in the year and hope to follow that up again.

The general topic was about a Club Development Consultancy Programme they have which they will support us in when/if we decide to take this forward. They also pointed out that Highland was a priority Area for Facility Development, and they are keen to collaborate with us to take our concerns about the track forward.

We still need more coaches, officials and volunteers to commit to the club sessions. We currently have a waiting list of about 150 and need more volunteers to be qualified and come on board. You will hear more on this from our membership secretary Emma shortly. To anyone thinking about volunteering, it is not as daunting as it seems. We are grateful for those that did respond earlier this year to go on a Rota, and our thanks go to Glenda for pulling that together.

We now have a Club Hut to be proud of and it has been a great transformation of what was there. Its more welcoming for any parents who wait for their

children and it's got our club history in the cabinets which we hope to expand. Thank you, Emma, for her drive to get this project complete. The committee have all worked hard and contributed to help and a special thanks to our club secretary Dianne for disseminating all the correspondence to the appropriate people. Everyone on the committee has taken on tasks to help the club function and all others who help that are not on the committee, whether its coaching, officiating, finance, teas or administration, without your support we could not function. We are indebted to you all and must continue to work and support each other to move forward together as a club.

Charlie Forbes

IHAAC – Club President