

HHH 53rd AGM 15th March 2019

President's report from Mark Sykes

As I searched my computer for a 2018 report I realise Marion must have excused me a report last year! Clearly the membership was fed up of me droning on and I should be retired and good only for handshakes while handing over silverware. However, it seems by "popular" demand I'm back.

There is no point me repeating so much of what Treasurer, Coach and Chair have already said : the club seems in quite rude health, both financially and with sporting endeavours. As ever, the club "happens" as result of the dedicated efforts of a small number of people. Marion – being one of those - highlighted many of the others in her remarks earlier.

So I will seek to ask the club some additional questions:

How does the Committee have confidence that they are leading the club in the direction members want? Carl & I attended a Sussex Athletics Clubs meeting at the end of last year. A perceptive lady from B&H Women's runners said (about her club) – "we need to create a time and space where members feel free to air their views in a safe place". We all may have thoughts about what that means – but I think we can all sense that not everyone is comfortable airing their thoughts in public at AGM or demanding time from committee members on a Tuesday evening. The informality of an after training/race "refreshment" is a start but what feedback gets to committee to shape things? What about those "quiet and silent" parents' views on junior sessions? Time was that HHH had "Athletes reps" on committee; other clubs have "team Captains" of various types whose missions include gathering member feedback; we have a Junior rep (and a fine job she does!). Other clubs/sports seem to be experimenting with "open meetings/discussion groups" rather than closed committee meetings. What ideas do you have that you think will work for HHH – the answer may not be the same for Seniors and Juniors; it may not be the same for T&F and Endurance running?

Following on from the above, I'd ask you to reflect on one specific aspect: How much is HHH a club for targeting "**team goals and success**" vs "a club where likeminded individuals can spur each other to achieve their **personal goals**". We have moments of team focus – recently Senior Cross-country, SDWR A team, and selectively Junior team events. There are many and diverse reasons why our participation in SGP, WSFRL have drifted; and sometimes the Junior teams seem thin in number. Have we got the balance right? If you disagree, how does the club get to hear your views? To the extent that the club has collective goals for 2019 – are we clear on priorities?

As efforts to establish a training track in Mid-Sussex begin to ramp up, this will inevitably (as Marion mentioned) demand that a degree of collaboration with the "Blue Army" from Burgess Hill ensues. I think the best way to preserve the ethos and long term success of the Beetroot army is not just about recording individual achievements, but it is also about building team identity and success, and ensuring the club management and members are vitally connected.

With that in mind, I have every confidence you will elect a committee to take the club forward while thinking –and to paraphrase John F Kennedy - "it's not what my club can do for me, it's what I can do for my club".