



ELY RUNNERS - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 7:00pm
EOSA
MINUTES

Present: Stephen Howard (SH, Chairman), Ann Thornton (AnT, Treasurer), Lizz McKiernan (LM, minutes) Ali Driver (AD), Allistair Berry (AIB), Andrew Scarlett (AS), Andrew Thornton (AdT), Andrew Rands (AR), Andy Barber (AnB), Andy Thompson (AT), Barry Graves (BG), Ben Morris (BM), Caroline Brown (CB), Charles Howard (CH), Debbie Abraham (DA), Debbie Fisher (DF), Estivy (Pedro) Perez (EP), Goska Leslie (GL), Graham Chapman (GC), James Fisher (JF), John Turner (JT), Jon Price (JP), Julian Moynihan (JM), Justin Smith (JS), Kath Gerighty (KG), Laura Todd (LTo), Laura Upstone (LU), Lee Tatum (LT), Louise Ivey (LI), Michelle Berry (MB), Peter Royle (PR), Pete Wood (PW), Richard Suswain (RS), Rob Pope (RoP), Ryan Parker (RyP), Stephen Kyle (SK), Theo Boyce (TB), Tom Levinson (TL), Tracey Wymer (TW)

The minutes of the 2025 AGM were approved as a true and accurate report of the meeting.

1. Chairman's opening remarks (SH)

The Chairman opened by thanking all of those for attending, EOSA for hosting us, PR for organising the event, and LM for recording the minutes.

He then laid out the form that the evening would take, saying that the AGM would begin by reflecting on the events of the past year, then we would elect the committee that will take the club forward over the coming year, and finally consider the future – discussing various intentions for the club in the year ahead and asking those present to discuss and vote on them.

He reminded all present that the evening would be an opportunity to learn more about how the club is run and to ask questions. He went on to talk about the club constitution and the primary objectives of the club which are:

- Promote running in the community.
- Provide training.
- Organise leagues and races.
- Organise teams for championships/leagues and competitions.

Plus two others identifying the disciplines we cover (road/track running, XC, fell racing etc) and national/regional affiliation bodies.

He told those present that the AGM (or EGM) is the place for members elect a committee and plan for the year ahead. The committee then implements the members' wishes for the year ahead and reports back in due course.

2. Treasurer's report (AnT)

The full accounts are attached at the bottom of the minutes.

2025 has been a good year. The club is in a very strong financial position. Membership subscriptions are up on 2024. Beginners is continuing strongly and a significant number of graduates move to join ER itself. The NYE 10k income is solid in spite of the increased First Aid provision cost. We have a donation pot of over £2,000 to donate to the chosen NYE 10k charity. That is for the members to decide.

The organisers of the Christmas Raffle and the Social Secretary agreed that the takings from the raffle, matched by the club, would be donated to the Arthur Rank Hospice as they have recently had a significant proportion of their funding cut.

We also want to encourage members who volunteer at club events to claim their mileage. This removes a barrier to members who would like to volunteer but feel that there is an unwritten 'rule' that mileage costs are never claimed. As an incentive, the club agreed to match any mileage claim with an equivalent donation to Arthur Rank Hospice. This year with the raffle, matched raffle and mileage we donated £1,184.75 – the raffle made (raffle takings £436, the club matching £564 and £184.75 mileage).

I would like the club to continue with this practice and would encourage members who volunteer to please claim the mileage (however small) – it just needs an email to treasurer@elyrunners.co.uk

Costs are inevitably rising and the cost of insurance for Frostbite has risen this year. The additional cost associated with the Club XC was for the installation of a gate at the bottom of Dean's Meadow. I'm sure those of you who ran the ~~mudbath~~ cross country race in February were grateful it was there.

Challenges remain with using the various accounts such as Stripe, PayPal and the normal Lloyds. I do need to take a deeper dive into the inner workings of Stripe to see if I can manipulate the reporting system to differentiate between the various payment categories (currently income is in lump sums on a weekly basis). I wonder whether we could use Stripe instead of PayPal for taking Beginners payments?

Please ensure all requests for payment, reimbursement, invoices etc. are made through the treasurer@elyrunners.co.uk email address (as opposed to FB Messenger which may get lost). I tackle accounts most weekends so your payment should be with you very quickly, all done via bank transfer.

Question: AIB asked where it was a legal requirement to publish our accounts publicly (the accounts are currently uploaded to the club website with the AGM minutes). AnT responded that she would look into it, SH added that it may be that we would be better to put the report on MyClubHouse where it can only be viewed by (logged in) club members rather than on the website.

3. Secretary's report (SH on behalf of outgoing secretary Lauren Thomas)

The club continues to go from strength to strength, increasing membership and participation and offering many activities for the first time:

Current membership stats:

- 382 current members (vs 355 2025, +8%)
- 18 Honorary Members
- 17 second claim
- 85 juniors (vs 67 2025, +27%)
- 110 senior females
- 14 committee
- 26 on coaches forum
- 120 EA registered (vs 111 2025)

Commentary:

- Membership up slightly on 2025.
- Racing attendance was also improved: FFL 114 (76s, 38j) up from 82 in 2025.
- Racing attendance: 5k league races also good numbers attending.
- County XC attendance: 48, most ever, several individual and team prize winners.
- Club Records: 373 now in total, 40% of them (143) were set during 2025, with 7 set so far this year.
- Hereward Relay – 7 teams last time, the most ever.

4. *Beginners' Representative Report (JS)*

JS began by summarising the Beginner's course which currently runs once per year. The course is advertised and attendees pay a small fee, the coaches deliver ten sessions and some attendees may subsequently wish to join the club (though that is not the primary aim of the course).

He commented that the current cohort is particularly talented and they have been encouraged to tackle more difficult sessions than is usual at this point in the course. Some of the current attendees possibly do not need a beginners course since they are already in a position where they would have the ability to run with the club, but he acknowledged that one purpose of the course is to increase runner's confidence in their abilities and to introduce them to the what it means to be part of the club.

He also mentioned that an important aspect of the course is the social element and commented that often during the course attendees may be working through personal issues and this often comes out when they start running. He said that the coaches support the attendees and that they have support from JP as needed for any welfare issues.

He reminded us that the usual Graduation Parkrun will be taking place on 4th April at Soham Village College. He encouraged all club members to come along wearing club kit to support those finishing the course

JS finished by thanking the course coaches who turn up in their free time. He also thanked AS who has helped on the current course.

Comment: SH said that the Beginner's course is a fantastically important part of the club because it promotes running in the community which is one of our prime objectives.

5. *Training report (SH)*

Senior Training for members continues to be a major objective of the club. Attendance has been good and is well balanced across all groups. All sessions are open and are accessible to all members.

There is co-ordination of venue but where possible groups are free to operate autonomously in terms of session structure.

Last year the committee lost the benefit of JT's experience as he stood down as training co-ordinator. Rather than find a single replacement instead we made more use of the Coach/Run Leader Training Forum to provide advice to the committee.

Some recent discussions/takeaways from the training forum:

- Senior training schedule for Summer 2026, with details of club and league races shown.
- Plans to support the 2026 Track & Field Agenda: Leagues, officials, field event coaching.
- Managing the ongoing relationship with King's School Ely and the use of their grounds.
- Updates to guidance on the use of Hi-Viz and torches at evening winter sessions.

Senior Training groups:

Over the course of the last year additional training sessions have been added to great acclaim:

- Friday Morning easy social run
- Tuesday 6pm "steady runs at a slower pace than the Thursday runs"

These have now become a staple in many members training routines and plans are to retain them going forward. SH also reminded members that if they have a group that they would like to start (as per the Friday morning social and Tuesday 6pm runs) they would be supported by the club.

In addition to regular training there have been a number of 'special events' such as the Woodditton to Ely Christmas Run (very well attended with a record over 50 members completing the full 18+ miles). Additionally there have been Sunday Chatty Runs on tour to places like Grafham Water, Plogging Events locally and the ever-popular Peaks Running Weekend towards the end of the year.

After review it was decided to reinstate the committee role of Training Co-ordinator for 2026.

Question: RP asked if there is an argument for having event specific training - for example, having training sessions that are guided towards half marathon progress in the run up to Cambridge half. He also asked whether, with the increased use of apps like Runna and with AI we are seeing an impact on people not attending training sessions because the sessions offered don't tie in with their plan. SH responded that we have offered event specific training in the past – for example, marathon training and that it was a good idea to be looked into further. AnT suggested it be put forward at the coaches forum as it would require coordination between the coaches and groups. SH reminded everyone that members are welcome (and encouraged) to move between groups according to their training needs.

Question: EP asked whether we could consider putting on events within the community in the interests of inclusivity, to show how a running club can be for everyone. AnT responded that we offer two free trial sessions to anyone who is interested in potentially joining the club and then they can decide if they want to join and that membership is relatively inexpensive. LM added that we have offered community runs, for example, the Let's Lift the Curfew Run and that she would be keen to organise more sessions like that (as EDI rep) in order to reach out to people in different groups and communities in society.

6. Junior Section report (DA)

Over the past year, the junior section has continued to grow and thrive, with strong participation and enthusiasm from our athletes.

A key part of this success is down to our dedicated volunteers. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all those who give up their time each week to coach and support the children. In particular, I

would like to recognise Alan, Jules, Julie, Estivy, Ali, Conan and Andrew for their continued commitment and enthusiasm. Your consistency, energy, and support make a huge difference. This year, we have had the highest number of qualified coaches involved in our sessions, which has helped to raise standards and provide even more opportunities for our athletes.

In terms of achievements, it has been a very successful year. We have had:

- Five children selected to represent the county in Sportshall Athletics
- Three children compete at county level at the inter counties cross country
- One child represent the county in combined events
- Eight athletes competing in English Schools Cross Country for the county
- One athlete awarded county colours in recognition of their performance

We also performed strongly as a team, finishing third overall in the Frostbite Friendly League, which is a great reflection of both participation and team spirit across the squad.

Additionally, we were part of the Track and Field League (EAL) for the first time this year. Out of our eight teams, four progressed through to the final, with two of these teams being from the junior section. This represents a fantastic achievement for the club and highlights the strength and development of our athletes.

I'd like to also thank those that stepped forward and completed an EA officials course in order for us to be able to compete in the EAL. Laura Todd, Fiona Waddelow, Hannah Ludmilla, Karen Wilson, along with coaches Ali, Kath, Estivy (Pedro), Alan, and Julie.

We have joined forces with C&C - and joined the Eastern young AL this season.

Overall, it has been a year of strong development, increasing participation, and excellent performances. We look forward to building on this success in the coming year.

Question: SH asked DA if the Junior section was at capacity. DA and AR replied that there is space for new members and that children are eligible to join from age 9.

SH also commented that it is important for the club to encourage junior members to continue into seniors and that the senior section offers its full support to the junior section.

BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS

7. Special Achievement Awards 2025 & Honorary Memberships (SH/AnT)

The following club members were thanked for their contribution to the committee and working groups as they are stepping down at this AGM:

- Andy Barber
 - o Trophies 2023-2026
- Ryan Parker
 - o Kit and Stores Officer 2025

The following club members were recognised with Ely Runners Special Achievement Awards:

- Lauren Thomas
 - o Social Secretary 2016-2021
 - o Club Secretary 2022-2026
 - o Senior Section Coach and Run Leader
 - o *With thanks for your years of dedicated service to the club.*
*(*Also proposed for honorary membership as ex-club officer – see 16f).*
- Debbie Abraham
 - o Junior Section Secretary
 - o Junior Section Coach and Run Leader

- Race Director Ely New Year's Eve 10k
- Awarded for *development of the club's participation in Track & Field.*
- Kath Gerighty
 - Chief Marshal 2022-26
 - Course Director and Stores 2023
 - Club Events 2023-26 (Race Director 2025-26)
 - Club Coach and Run Leader 2021-
 - *With thanks for your years of dedicated service to the club.*
- Alan Rutterford
 - Head Coach
 - Junior Section Lead
 - *Organiser of the club's first hosted Frostbite League Race at Ben's Yard in Dec 2025.*
- Peter Royle
 - Social Secretary 2022-
 - *Organiser of the club's extensive 40th anniversary celebrations over the summer of 2025.*

8. Election of Committee (max twelve) plus three officers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer)

- **Chairman:** Two candidates were proposed for the role of Chairman: Stephen Howard pBG/sGC, and Pete Wood pJP/sAIB. The candidates stepped out of the room and voting was conducted by a show of hands. SH received 19 votes and PW received 15 votes, therefore SH was re-elected.
- **Secretary:** Laura Upstone pAnT/sLM
- **Treasurer:** Ann Thornton pAR/sPR
- **Welfare Officer:** Jon Price pAL/sAS
- **Membership Secretary:** Caroline Brown pLM/sGC
- **Junior Section Secretary:** Debbie Abraham pKG/sTL
- **Junior Lead:** Alan Rutterford pAB/sDA
- **Beginners' Secretary:** Justin Smith pRyP/sJP
- **Social Secretary:** Peter Royle pJF/sTL
- **Club Captain:** Tom Levinson pPR/sBM
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer (previously Ladies Rep/Club Development Officer):** Lizz McKiernan pAnT/sMB
- **Training Coordinator:** Ben Morris pTL/sDA
- **Communications and Social Media Officer:** Rob Pope pRyP/sPR
- **Kit Officer:** Michelle Berry pAnT/sJP
- **Chief Marshal:** Ali Berry pKG/sAT

All approved

Question: MB asked whether there had been any discussion of how long it was appropriate for committee members to remain in post – i.e. should there be a maximum time limit? AnT responded that previously there has been the decision that the officers should ideally remain in office for a minimum of five years (due to the complications of changing over banking details) but that otherwise there are no minimum or maximum terms. AnT also commented that apart from this caveat all committee posts are available for re-election each year and members are encouraged to put themselves forward. AR commented that he does not think there should be a maximum term since the committee are volunteers giving their time. It was agreed that the committee would discuss MB's question at a future meeting.

9. Election of Events Working Group (EWG)

- **Race Director NYE 10k:** Debbie Abraham pAnT/sEP
- **Race Director 5k League:** Rob Pope pJS/sAS
- **Club Events Race Director (XC, TTR, 10kHC, 1mHC):** Ali Berry pAnT/sKG
- **Stores Officer:** Andrew Scarlett pRP/sPR
- **Chief Timekeeper/ Watches & Place Keeping:** Ann Thornton pMB/sJF
- **Assistant Timekeeper:** Debbie Fisher pMB/sAnT

- **Sustainability Champion:** Ben Morris pTL/sLT
- **Track and Field Manager:** Laura Todd pRyP/sJM and Debbie Abraham pRP/sLT
- **5k League Scorer:** Rob Pope pPR/sLT
- **Frostbite Manager:** Alan Rutterford pDA/sKG
- **3 x RNR Team Managers:** Lizz McKiernan (Mixed) pGL/sKG and Lee Thompson (Open) pAT/sRP (NB/ 3rd team captain to be decided later if needed)
- **Hereward Relay Team Manager:** Tom Levinson pAnT/sTL
- **Photographer (Events & Websites):** Connie Abraham (volunteered after the AGM)
- **Trophies:** Lee Tatum pAnT/sTL
- **All approved**

Question: (context: photographer position remained VACANT at the AGM) RP asked whether we could get a professional photographer in for some of the bigger club events. Committee will discuss this.

10. Consideration of donations

Last year the New Year's 10K donation went to Breast Cancer Now. The membership were asked to propose causes. AnT proposed that we donate this year to Arthur Rank hospice.

Approved

11. Annual review and re-approval of the savings set aside for the Track Fund

AnT reported that the fixed term deposit account matured in December, and we moved it to a new fixed term deposit account. It currently stands at £26,159. The purpose of this money is that if a track is built in Ely we will be in a financial position to have a stake in the track. There are no current plans to build a track. Members were asked whether they wished to continue with the fund.

Comment: EP asked if the money could be better spent on Track and Field equipment now – for example, if we could get permission to install a throwing cage on the King's School grounds, which would cost around £25K. SH clarified that this proposal does not mean that other money cannot be spent on Track and Field equipment, rather that we are deciding if we want to hold this money separately in addition so that if a track is built locally in the next 12 months we can move as a club to secure a stake in the build. BM asked about the other assets that the club has – asking if the other savings and assets are earmarked for anything. AnT responded that it is not and that members can propose items to use that money for if they wish.

Approved

12. Renewal of Affiliations/Joining

- ARC - and continue with open event ARC permits
- UKA - individual EA club registrations (£23 payable for individuals 2026-27)
- SEAA Competitions Ltd - provides championships in the SE region
- CAA - provides championships for Cambridgeshire
- Friends of the Roman Road & Fleam Dyke

Question: AIB asked if we could consider supporting a route that goes through Woodditton and Devil's Dyke rather than Fleam Dyke since we use that route more often as a club. AnT responded that the donations are small and she would propose supporting both. AIB agreed to look into a donation towards the Woodditton path and the Wildlife Trust for Devil's dyke.

Question: CB asked whether the club has previously had membership of the Fell Runners Association or Trail runners association. JT responded that those are individual rather than club memberships

All approved

13. Consideration to authorise Committee & EWG to organise the following events:

- Turing Trail Relay (4th Sunday in March) - Private Club Event with other teams by invitation only
- Club 10k Handicap on a Thursday in June when Little Downham Pavilion is available
- Club One Mile Handicap on a Thursday in June
- New Year's Eve 10k on 31st December
- Club Cross-Country Championships on a Sunday morning in January/ February 2027

All approved

14. Authorise the Committee to enter the club for relay, team and league events, including:

- Round Norfolk Relay – Teams composition to be decided by the team captains
- National, Regional, Area and County Championships including relays E.G. SEAA Road Relays
- Frostbite Friendly League
- Hereward Relay (including helping March AC with marshalling at ERFC)
- Turners and Arkwright's 5k League
- Green Wheel Relay
- Essex Road Relay Championships
- Track and Field Championships

All approved

15. Proposal (pSH) for the club's Officers or Committee (subject to the Treasurer's advice on the threshold reserve of funds) to authorise reasonable expenditure, to the benefit of the club and its members, including:

- Club membership (due 1st October) of the Paradise Centre for members to change/shower FOC after training or events
- Running/training/stretching/injury books for members to borrow
- Food after the **Turing Relay**, One Mile Handicap, 10k Handicap and for the Christmas Event
- Club team entries for relays, league membership, and championships
- Fund appropriate coaching and support courses (subject to commitment) for members
- Supplies for events, equipment for club use, race kit, and bibs for night training
- **Provision for refreshments for coaches forum and for committee meetings**
- **Provision for chips etc at PTSD socials**
- Provision for equipment for senior track and field events
- Mileage at 45p/m for official duties on behalf of the club and/or carrying stores from/to Ely or HQ for the club's open races, selected teams in events, and training events – **and additionally for the club to make a matching donation to charity for all claims made**
- Electronic race processing and recording equipment
- Trophies & engraving
- Support of new, local area races attended by and for the benefit of members
- Charities
- Kit store
- Athletics equipment and hall hire for Junior Section
- Access to training facilities e.g. track, safe winter venue for juniors
- **Coaching jackets for new junior, senior training or beginner group run leaders and coaches (max 1 per person)**
- **Provision for volunteers at events (for example, hot or cold drinks)**
- **Portable AED for events (AIB has volunteered to look into this)**
- **Carbon-offsetting for large events such as RNR**

NB/ items highlighted in purple are new proposals this year.

All approved

16. AOB from Members

16.a. Proposal: MB – for the club to approve a summer event similar to the Christmas Woodditton run. The idea would be for it to be a bit further afield (such as the Norfolk coast). We could do a similar range of distances as the Christmas run, and all head back to one point (suitable for a coach pick up which maybe the club could fund as per Christmas). Would imagine people could do it without the need of an aid station to save complications. This would be an opportunity for a wider range of members to get together than club nights and end of month pub gatherings.

Approved

16.b. England Athletic has a Club Volunteer Self Declaration and disclosure form - all club volunteers to be asked to complete this if not DBS checked as part of coaching /run leading qualification.

Approved

16.c. SH described the changes that have been made to club trophies policy – this year the number of trophies has been expanded to include male, female and optional ‘notable’ awards for each distance. Previously there has been the caveat that individuals can win a maximum of one award per year and cannot win the same award within 3 years. SH proposed that we discontinue these caveats as we now have more awards available meaning that these rules are no longer necessary.

Comment: KG mentioned that we should reinstate trophies for the mile handicap which have been lost

Approved

16.d. Proposal: LM – to send a letter to the Cambs AA (organisers of the XC Championships), querying their stance on unequal distances. In principle this was approved at a previous AGM. LM stated that she has spoken to many club members about it and while there is not complete consensus within the club, the general feeling is that this is something that members of the club want to see.

LM read the letter – text included in Appendix 2.

Comments: JT said that he had concerns about the letter since historically there have been good reasons for the difference in distances. JT commented that polling runners at the end of the run was appropriate (this was criticised within the letter). CB responded that it was a poor time to poll runners as many women refuse to run in this event until there are equal distances so their opinions are not heard. LTo queried the distances listed in the letter and whether they were current. LM responded that she would check these details before the letter was sent. LTo also commented that the difference between the distance at the Cambs XC event and later was a very important point as those who qualify in the local stage are “set up to fail” when they move to the national championships. TB commented that it is important to recognise that women are as capable as men at running longer distances.

Approved

16.e. Presentation: RP was scheduled to present the results of the Communications Survey. SH apologised that the AGM had run out of time. RP confirmed that he would continue to work on communications in the club as the now Communications and Social Media Officer.

16.f. Honorary Membership: As members were preparing to leave it was realised that the proposal for ex-club officers be granted Hon Membership had been missed. A vote was called and the motion was approved.

SH thanked all for attending, again thanked EOSA for their hospitality and PR for organising the evening, and closed the AGM.

Appendices:

1. Club accounts 2025/26 (AnT)
2. Letter to Cambs AA (LM)