

# FARNHAM TRIATHLON CLUB



## Annual General Meeting 1930hrs 11<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022 Garrett's Sports Bar Aldershot Garrison

### Attendees

Claudia Shand	Jonathan Porter	Gillian Barrett	David Barrett
Sue Tiplady	John Bennison	Andy Pickup	David Pinkney
Dominic Brooks	Nick Dennes	Chris Plummer	Cathy Berry
Dave Berry	Chris Roberts	Cathy Roberts	Shirley Wilkinson
Charlie Gray	Alana Sussex	Mark Zirbser	Steve Smulovic
Henrdik De Villiers	Christine De Villiers	Kim Mepsted	Lindsey Bamford
Naomi Fowler	Jo Wright	John Wright	Paul Flattery
Kelvin Spencer	Chloe Spencer	Sophie Gasson	

### 1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Haydn Jones, James Long and Ali Wigg

### 2. Minutes of previous meeting

There were no objections to the minutes from last year's meeting and they were proposed by John Bennison and seconded by Cathy Roberts and accepted unanimously.

### 3. Chair's Report

I believe that we are all members of a great triathlon club. Its strength continues to lie in its membership and in the depth of coaching talent that supports us all. Although you may look on us in the committee as its "managers" we are just club members. This is our club. We collectively decide how it is run and what its priorities are. If you have ideas for improvement, we would love to hear them, even more so if you can help to make the changes.

This last year was the year that we fully emerged from the pandemic. COVID reappears amongst our members regularly, so we still need to take care. The last AGM was one of the first face-to-face meetings we had held all year. We have mixed virtual and face-to-face meetings since then. During this last year we have managed to run a full range of training sessions and multi-sport events.

Similar to what happened last year, we have had to cancel some training sessions due to low attendance. We also cancelled some of our events for the same reason. We started the year continuing with our on-line fitness and yoga sessions, but attendance was low here too.

Earlier this year the committee had to take decisive action as the club was losing money, running sessions that were uneconomic. We have always taken the view that the training sessions should break even over a year, but this clearly wasn't going to be the case. We cancelled yoga and on-line fitness sessions completely. We increased our membership fee from £20 to £30. We also looked for ways to economise when running the club. One example that will

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be obvious in this AGM is that we are only awarding a small number of physical trophies, the remainder being certificates. As an aside, I took a straw poll when handing out trophies last year, and only one person really wanted a trophy for a year. We will continue publishing club results on our website.

Despite our financial strictures we have continued to invest in the development of our coaches, with two coaches on the pathway to Level 2 and one on the pathway to Level 3

## Committee Membership and Head Coach

The last year has continued to be a significant year of change for the committee. We unexpectedly lost our treasurer early in the year due to family reasons. Thanks to Stephen Thornton for facilitating the handover. I am extremely grateful to Naomi for stepping in and taking over.

David Pinkney is stepping down as Events Manager at this AGM. David has been thorough in his planning and execution of the events, and I am extremely grateful to him. The events we did run were well planned and executed. David has left a wealth of documents to assist us in the planning and running of events in the future. We do not yet have a successor.

Chris Roberts is stepping down as Head Coach also at this AGM. I for one cannot imagine FTC without Chris as Head Coach since he has been a constant in all my time of membership (20+years – Chris in his 24th year). He leaves a legacy of excellence in the coaching in our club – and we are all grateful. When Chris made his decision, we asked the coaches to make a proposal to the committee for how Chris should be succeeded. More will be said about this elsewhere, but Mark Zirbser will be taking over as Head Coach. Thankfully Chris will remain with the club as a coach. The club as a whole will wish Chris well for the future.

Cathy Roberts is stepping down as Membership Secretary. Cathy has also been an ever-present member of the club for as long as I can remember, being a serial volunteer running triathlons out of

Farnham Leisure Centre and producing the weekly Newsletter. Sue Tiplady has volunteered to take over the Membership Secretary role. The committee is still to make a decision on the future of the weekly newsletter. The whole club will also wish Cathy well for the future.

Sue is also currently our Welfare Officer. British Triathlon require that the Welfare Officer does not hold any other role within the club, for reasons of confidentiality and good governance. The BTF is content that Sue can do both roles for a short time while we seek a successor. Consequently, we are seeking a volunteer to take over as Welfare Officer.

Dan Pearce is stepping down as our webmaster responsible for IT and our social media presence. Chloe Spencer has volunteered to take over. Dan has significantly changed our web presence with a new website for which we are grateful. We wish to improve our presence on a wider range of media and apps. Sarah Gallichan is supporting us by setting up and developing our Instagram account. Please promote us when you are out training, racing and socialising with the club by either tagging farnhamtri, adding #farnhamtri, or mentioning the club with @farnhamtri in your post.

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This coming year will be my last year as Chair. I would like to work alongside my successor to provide a smooth handover. I will be spending quite a few months out of the UK in the coming year, as well as family commitments up North so I will not be able to be as hands-on as I have been.

## Events

We ran our first Duathlon event out of Bourne Green and linked this to a post-race social. This was both an excellent venue and event. We had to cancel the second Duathlon due to the low level of interest. We ran a Sprint Triathlon and Aquathon out of the Aldershot Garrison, and an Open Water Sprint triathlon and a Standard triathlon out of Horseshoe Lake, as well as a rather fun relay triathlon. One event was cancelled at Horseshoe Lake once again due to the low level of interest.

We invited Three Counties Tri Club members to compete in our Horseshoe Lake events. This increased numbers and competition. We also considered inviting them to some of our summer swim and bike sessions since they didn't run any. Something similar may be needed in the future.

The future of events at Horseshoe Lake is uncertain. There were real safety issues with bike-out-bike-in at the standard distance triathlon and the current lake management are uncomfortable with massed swim starts occurring when their regular swimmers are in the water. With goodwill these could be managed. Three Counties Tri Club have withdrawn from the venue due to these issues.

We were extremely fortunate to be supported by some "serial" volunteers who rarely competed but supported most events. Without more commitment to volunteer we will have to cancel some events. This hasn't happened yet – but beware!

## Socials

We have increased the number of social events we have held this year and these have been well attended. These have ranged from cakes after events, to a BBQ summer social and coach led socials. We have a bike maintenance event and a Christmas curry coming up. Thanks to Charlie.

I'm also happy to report that membership numbers are still strong at around 121 members.

## Lots of thanks

I must emphasise that the club is run by volunteers. This covers almost everything we do from daily coaching to providing race and event officials, running social events, etc. The list goes on.

Now on to thanking various people. I'd like to thank all the coaches for giving up so much of their time for our benefit, in particular our head coach Chris, and to Mark for taking a lead in what will come next; also to all on the committee for their work over the past year, and of course Cathy, who sits down every Sunday evening to write the weekly email. I would also like to thank

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David Pinkney for keeping the events on track. I have already mentioned the new members of the committee, Naomi and Charlie, as well as Chloe and Sarah, and I'd like to thank them for stepping forward and making a difference.

I would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to help the club in any capacity. Without you there would be no club.

## Performance and participation

Our members have taken part in lots of externally organised events and races with some success. I'd like to highlight only some of the outstanding achievements and efforts.

- Tom Rogers first good for age result (won entry last AGM) - London Marathon
- Sophie Gasson's successful swim across the channel
- Tom McGhie. Since joining the club around a year ago, barely able to swim 25m without stopping, he has since completed 2 London Marathons, 4 70.3 IM races, Bolton IM;
- Mark Richardson - chase the sun challenge, outrun the sun from Sheerness to Burnham on Sea. He's also done the tour of the M25 and many other events;
- Caroline Roberts - iconic Alpe D'Huez triathlon;
- Charlie Gray, Kim Mepstead and Lindsay Bamford - Outlaw Holkham Half;
- Charlotte Barton - Challenge Roth;
- Both Ruth Jones and Kelvin Spencer representing GB - 2022 European Duathlon Championships at Bilbao in Spain;
- Kelvin Spencer - Montreal Age Group World Champs. 4th indiv and gold in mixed team relay;
- Ruth Jones and Ian Howard both came 1st in Age group - GB Age group Celebration cup;
- Joanna Wright - 3rd in Age group IM World Championships UTAH 8th may. Kona IM;
- Anna Bellamy (wow) English National Age group Champion @ Standard distance – Bournemouth; British National Age group Champion @ Sprint Distance – Cardiff; European Sprint championships Munich - 9th in A/G {5th. Brit)
- Leo Maliphant - 4th in the Salisbury 10m RR;
- Sue Graves - F70 Open and Welsh winner Duathlon;
- Clare Grindrod, Tracey Fantham, Anna Bellamy, Ruth Jones, & Gillian Barrett - Munich European Sprint Triathlon for GBR Age Group team;

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First Southern Counties Cross Country race result Ladies team 6th, Men 13th overall 8th;

Last season – Overall second, matching best ever result;

· FTC finished 18th In Triathlon England South East Senior Series.

Not to mention our award and trophy winners to come later.

Well done one and all.

Future

In the last report I noted that the club had a fairly large financial buffer. This allowed us to sustain events as the pandemic lifted but that buffer is now depleted. This now also affects our ability to implement strategic changes.

Mark Zirbser polled members to ask them what they wanted from the club. The two headlines were “more local events” and “more fun”. During the year we attempted to hit both of these wishes, with the Duathlon being run out of Bourne Green and an increase in the social events, both after events and coach focussed social sessions.

Our financial situation overtook our discussion on strategy. Additionally, the poor take up of some sessions and events means we probably need a period of reflection, working out not only what we want but also what is feasible.

The financial pressure not only affects our own club. Locally several golf clubs, once buoyant, have closed. The increase in energy costs will inevitably put pressure on local pools and swimming clubs, some of which are bound to fold. Many members have annual memberships in gyms and pools, putting pressure on them to limit attendance at our club sessions. Furthermore, during the pandemic, many athletes became accustomed to training on-line (with apps such as Zwift). Some members continue to train alone online which is not as good as being coached. The coaches are looking at coaching unique triathlon sessions, a well-known example being brick sets.

We are hopeful of putting together a series of multi-sport events in the New Year. There are always many ideas about running events and how to generate interest as well as possibly taking part at a club level in events run by others. The committee and coaches will propose a timetable for next season, and we will need volunteers to support the events on the day, as well as volunteers to be race directors. It is clear we need to carefully reconsider the needs of the members, possibly aligning coaching with the events. There is little point planning many events, lining up venues and the like, and only ending up running a small number of them.

I believe 2023 demands that we reset our aspirations to match the needs of our members and the resources that we have at our disposal. As you have heard, there have been big changes within the club this year. The new committee and coaching team will lead making these changes – but there is always space for your ideas, enthusiasm and support.

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I will make some additional observations after the Treasurer has delivered her report. Wishing us all a great year in FTC

## 4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Naomi Fowler and was based on figures at 30<sup>th</sup> Sept Please follow the link for full report

Naomi also reiterated that low attendance and low membership are draining the club's resources and we, as a committee are looking at further measures to halt the losses. Wednesday's swim is an example of a session that could be cut from 6 lanes to 3 to reduce our costs. The committee increased the membership fees but as the numbers of members are down this hasn't helped. We are not in dire straits and options such as a block of training sessions has been discussed. Our support of the Hart Tri brought in £750 and we have considered applying for grants from local councils. The membership could support the club by attending just one training session a week which resolve the issue.

Chair's Comments - It is clear things need to change to make the club sustainable. More members swimming solves the problem easily. If 1/3rd of the membership swim one extra session a month then things are in balance. This corresponds to only 8 extra swims a week. Clearly more members who are active achieves the same end. Without this we will have to reshape the sessions. First will be reducing lanes. Next will be cancelling sessions. This is in your hands.

## 5. Head Coach's Report

This is a report of two halves, the first half from the outgoing Head Coach and the second from the incoming Head Coach. Coming out of COVID has shown that habits have changed, not just in our club but in every club I have talked to. The effort we have put in to keeping the connection has been an important part of the clubs coaching offering. It has shown however, that people have found other ways to satisfy their triathlete needs. We have continued to deliver sessions and the members who have attended have got a lot from those sessions. Blackbushe proved popular but numbers dwindled towards the end of the season. Sunday swim sessions continue to be well attended and with an expected fall when the lakes are open. Wednesday swims are popular when there are linked sessions delivered by the same coach, more on this later. There are additional sessions being planned, again more in due course. I thank the coaches for their work in many areas, preparation, delivery and reflection. I say it every year and make no apology for saying it again, they do so much behind what you see delivered. Thank you.

I have decided to step down from the Head Coach role. I have done it for many years and feel that fresh insights and ideas that the Coaching Team have will help the club develop further than I have time for right now. I took over from Dorothy Cooper in 2004, an excellent swim and triathlon coach. During my 18 years I have worked with some great coaches and we have continued to develop ourselves and this year is no different with Shirley, David, Hendrik and Mark all gaining additional qualifications. The highlight for me is being with a club for all that has reached members in many ways, meeting training, racing and social connecting goals.

I now have a particular interest in mental health and am training to be a counsellor which is where I want to put my effort. I hope to continue coaching if I am wanted and needed. I look

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forward to hearing how the future develops and now hand over to Mark to talk about plans for the future.

Mark presented Chris with a gift and card and thanked him on behalf of the club for all contributions over the years and expressed his relief that Chris is not completely escaping. He then announced the launch of a new virtual bike training session, an 8 week technical swim block to be established on a Wednesday and the offer of some video analysis for those who may wish to be analysed. He explained the new coaching team structure with a collegial system whereby Mark is supported by the other coaches.

## 6. 2021/2022 Committee Stands Down

The outgoing chair Andrew Pickup thanked the committee for their hard work and support over the last year. The outgoing committee stood down.

## 7. 2022/2023 Committee

Executive Members – John Bennison proposed Andrew Pickup as Chair and was seconded by Claudia Shand.

Shirley Wilkinson was proposed as Secretary by Cathy Roberts and seconded by Gillian Barrett.

Naomi Fowler was proposed as Treasurer by Cathy Roberts and seconded by Shirley Wilkinson.

Non-Executive Members

Andrew Pickup proposed the election to the Committee of Sue Tiplady, Mark Zirbser, David Barrett, Charlie Gray, Jonathan Porter, Chloe Spencer and Sarah Gallican. It was seconded by Kim Mepsted and carried unanimously.

## 8. London Marathon Draw

The draw for the London Marathon took place with the winner being Paul Flattery with Malcolm Watson as reserve.

## 9. AOB

Dominic Books asked what we are doing to recruit new members? Flyers are handed out in local sports centres and at any local events we might participate in. We are introducing a social media manager who will hopefully raise the club's profile on platforms such as Instagram/Twitter and Facebook. A marketing campaign could be considered when the funds allow. Andrew Pickup brought the meeting to a close.

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