

Marlborough Harrier Club

President's report 2021

The 2021 season start off relatively normally with the 12 months previously being severely disrupted by the Covid pandemic and the restrictions that come with it. However, as we have all found out Covid never really goes away with the whole country going into a Level 4 lockdown on the 20th of September. This again disrupted the harrier programme and many sporting events across our region and the whole country. With the country transitioning to the traffic light system the club will need to make its position clear on vaccination status for members and visitors. My thoughts on this are that the Club doesn't hold a position on vaccination status but will follow and enforce Ministry of Health rules and guidelines as per the Traffic light system for all gathering's organised by the Club. I will discuss this more in the Committee meeting directly after the AGM.

The challenge for the club is to increase membership particularly in the 18 to 35 age group, which in turn will bring the young children along with their parents. However, this is easier said than done. This is not common to our club alone, Harrier clubs in general have a shrinking and an aging membership. However, it's not all doom and gloom. Out running around the hills and on the streets, there are plenty of people out there enjoying the outdoors. I believe people are interested in running for fun, fitness, and particularly wellbeing, probably more that hard out racing. It's in the health and wellbeing space I see an opportunity to increase membership. It's just a matter of getting them to come along and see what we are all about.

The club canvased members during to 2020 season to try and get an understanding on what types of events the membership was looking for, with the view of increasing the enjoyment for existing members and hopefully increasing the membership. The number of races and handicap events was reduced favouring more social runs and walks which appears to be well received. It's a matter of striking a balance as I wouldn't like to see racing disappear from our calendar.

Since the last AGM the Harrier Club has successfully put on the King of the Withers, The Mt Vernon Grand Traverse, and the 5k and 10k events for the South Island Masters Games. A big thanks to the organisers and the helpers on the day to make these races successful. This year the Queen Charlotte Relay and the Molesworth didn't proceed. The Molesworth fell victim to a mix of Covid and roadworks on the Awatere Valley Road cutting off access. We struggled to find a Race Convener for the Queen Charlotte Relay, so this was cancelled for 2021. As it turned out it probably wouldn't have gone ahead because of a mix of Covid and damage to the road. This is one of the things that the committee will need to decide early in the New Year.

As previously mentioned, most of the major events have been cancelled, but some of our members still achieved some significant results. Margarete Hazelwood won her age group at the Christchurch Marathon setting a new course record, she now holds records in two age groups. Carey Dickason also had excellent results at the NZ Master Athletic Champs winning both the 3000 and 1500 meters in her age group.

I'd like to finish up thanking the committee for their support, thoughts, and opinions throughout the year. The majority are happy to stay on in their roles which is very much appreciated. One change I'd like to bring in next year is to have the Committee meeting held on a Thursday evening at 5:00pm, this will enable Committee members to attend the meeting then go for a run, the meetings will also coincide with social nights.

I am happy to stand again as President of the Club, but I must admit I am a lot more passionate about running than I am administration. This will be my last year as President, however I will continue support the Club and will be happy to take on another role but feel it's time for someone else to pick up the reins.

Thanks, and Regards

Peter Mann