**HHH AGM 21st March 2017**

**Chairman’s Report**

As I stood before you last year I announced that that would be my final report to the AGM. Much wrangling ensued as it was clear there was an unwillingness for anyone to step forward to take on the role. Paul Cousins nobly stood forward and was elected as “Vice Chair”. He has progressively taken on as I have stepped back – indeed I missed the last 2 committee meetings. I think we all appreciate having a club, and having a club means that some people have to do the formal things as well as the informal things. Too few are willing to take on the formal things. If that doesn’t change there may be no Club one day. As I have said before, with privilege of being a member comes the responsibility of doing something. Take note as it would be a shame to see a Club that brings so much to our sport having to fold. I thank the retiring committee for their steadfastness in face of this adversity.

Now to a quick review of the year.

Firstly “management issues”,

We wrestled with a big change in the first months of the year. Marion Hemsworth and Mike Essex had developed an option for us to switch our Winter training location from Oathall to Warden Park, bringing the benefit of additional space and the potential to increase our Junior numbers. A lively Committee debate led to a positive view and before going firm with WP we invited member feedback – this was limited but seemed more positive than negative. I hope no-one has regrets. Please join me in thanking Marion and Mike for developing this concept.

My only observation, as Chair, is that we saw this as a first step – get more space- on a journey to being able to increase our junior training group numbers in face of a waiting list that is larger than the membership. The second step was to develop a greater number of coaches/coaching assistants from both the membership and junior parents. We’ve not moved fast enough in the last 6 months here. Linda became a grandmother this year and with too many other commitments she cannot do everything.. We really need someone else to step forward with the same commitment she has to assist in enrolling additional resources.

I’ll take this opportunity on behalf the club to thank the “Shed Crew” who devoted time to building our kit shed at the back of the Gym. Andy, John, Richie, Martin, Peter.

The second thorny issue that came up again was our kit / kit design. Mags Lazell ran a pretty open and transparent process, and she will say more shortly. Nevertheless the question of “beetroot or not” seems pretty resolved to me. There is no question that we cannot accommodate additional kit options and varying cuts etc.

Thirdly, you may remember that last year was golden anniversary year. We managed a number of recognition events during the year. A splendid Dinner Dance, a golden embossed T-shirt, “HHH is 50 pens”, a midsummer family event. Too much to recount in detail but thanks to all those who contributed.

Secondly, “sporting endeavours”.

The endurance Group have had a mixed year. We had tremendous highs in the X/C season : Men’s Div 1 Silver, Vet’s Gold, Ladies 2nd Div2 and promoted, Chris Smith (open), James Skinner (V40), Paul Cousins (V50) all gold individual. A number of county selections also came forward. At the SGP as individuals our Men members took the top 3 places in the open competition, won V1, 2nd V7; ladies open 5th, 3rd Senior, won V4, V7. However, having held the overall SGP trophy for 2 years our depth was not quite there this year and with men only finishing 2nd and the ladies 4th (not getting 10 runners out for 8 races really hurt) meant we finished 3rd. In the WSFRL, our participation levels let us down, dropping over 200 pts scored in the season taking’s us down from 10th to 12th in the Seniors, our Juniors were a little better only dropping 7 pts and 1 position to 6th. Needless to say we were well down on the “improvement” tables.

In the SDWR our Men’s team fought to the line on time, but having had to make a very late substitute who couldn’t reccie all his legs we fell victim to “harsh” rules penalty and slipped to second. Tom’s “unfinished business” continues. In the inaugural Ouse Valley Relay Challenge against Burgess Hill, a good day out was had by BHR and our partially complete teams, who ran fast enough to gain a narrow team win.

Our Juniors/Intermediates competed strongly in both the U13 and U15 Leagues in 2016, with the U13’s finishing as runners up in the Plate Trophy after winning it for the previous 3 years. The Youth Development League Team was supported well by our U17’s and U20’s and all those who competed enjoyed the opportunity of competing with Lewes and East Grinstead, as Team Sussex, and producing some good individual and team performances. The Southern Athletic League team, with Lewes, had some great results and our Masters League Team, again competing with Lewes, came away with excellent performances.

There were medals for Darja Knotkova-Hanley, Simeon Cousins, Lucie Venables, Ben Radcliffe, Alex Todd, Julian Boyer, Jack Chivers and Mike Bale in the Sussex Track & Field and Masters Championships.

2016 also brought the club some more track and field club records: Darja Knotkova-Hanley (U17 3000m), Abigail Redd (V35 1000m& 2000m Walk), Lucie Venables (SW 2000 S/C), Helen Diack (V35 Triple Jump & High Jump), Paul Cousins (V50 10,000m), Christian Lambert (U17 110mH), Mike Bale (V60 Throws Pentathlon, Discus and Hammer) and Wilem Robinson (U15 Long Jump)

The Sportshall League Team results were as expected and we finished 4th in both the boys and the girls competition, with Lucy Krombas achieving an U11 Speed Bounce League record. Charlie Bonwick-Adams, Oliver Simpson, Stanley Flower, Adam Dray, Tristan Coe and Ethan Lambert, together with Lucy, were all selected to represent Sussex in the various Inter County matches.

Thanks to all the team managers, coaches and athletes who all made this possible.

Coaching : Lucie will say a little more later, and I already mentioned the need to enhance our coaching support for Juniors. However, on behalf the Club’s members please join me in thanking Linda and junior crew, Martin and his endurance crew for the support and dedication they give to all our athletes in striving for their goals. We can say thank you now, but I know the thing that the coaches appreciate most is athletes competing, not just training.

Unsung Heroes: I know I made a point earlier about the Club needing people to do some o the formal admin stuff, and the difficulty HHH has in finding people willing to do this. I do however, want to commend those who actually do a lot of informal stuff that keeps the club being what it is. Some examples: Ben Adams who helped organize our WSFRL race with Mags Lazell (and for at much of the year found time to write some middy articles, Jean’s “cake & tea” crews who support every event we host, Andy Carter who covers many bases when a hand is needed, Marion Hemsworth who not only facilitates the endurance group but also keeps an ear on the local politics/council initiatives and represents us nobly, Rupert Purchase who mastered the WSFRL club entries and is now handing on to Julian Boyer, John Rix who administers the bank account and cash spreadsheet under Mags supervision, Barry & Tom for turning X/C from a club curiosity to “mainstream”.

Finally, just a week ago we paid our respects to Steve Horn, a club member who epitomises a lot of what being a Club member was about – always pulling on the maroon vest, signing up to any list of request for help. Steve, we miss you.

And now, as I do finally step aside, it’s “Goodbye from him and Goodbye from me”.