

Ilkley Harriers AGM 2026

Committee Report

It's been another hugely positive and progressive year for Ilkley Harriers, with record membership, successful races, strengthened governance, and a real sense of momentum across both the senior and junior sections. The club continues to thrive because of the generosity, enthusiasm and commitment of so many volunteers, leaders, coaches and members. Thank you to every one of you.

This report summarises the key developments since the last AGM.

Membership

Membership has continued to grow at an extraordinary rate. As of February 2026, we reported **496 members**, the highest in our 40-year history.

England Athletics have increased their affiliation fee for 2026 by 15% (from £20 to £23). EA have explained that this rise reflects higher national operating costs, including insurance, safeguarding, governance requirements, and the delivery of club support services. In total, this means we will pay £25 per first-claim member (including £2 for Northern Athletics).

A huge thank you to **Petra Bijsterveld**, who continues to manage the entire membership system single-handedly with remarkable efficiency and patience.

Closer Integration with the Junior Section

Over the past 18 months, a concerted effort has been made to bring the senior and junior sections closer together. Regular joint meetings have continued, with shared planning around:

- PECO Cross Country
- Website redevelopment and the long-term plan to merge both sites
- Financial oversight and alignment
- Shared race support, equipment, and reporting at junior events

The juniors continue to run a vibrant and successful programme, and the committee is grateful to **Shirley Wood** and the junior coaches for their ongoing commitment.

Club Standards, Welfare and Duty of Care

The club continues to meet England Athletics governance requirements, including safeguarding, welfare and duty of care.

Key developments this year include:

- A First Aid course for 12 coaches and leaders, which has strengthened practice across sessions
- Ongoing refinement of risk assessments, with run leaders updating their plans
- Continued emphasis on incident reporting, with several minor incidents logged and reviewed

We also thank **Caroline Tong**, who is stepping down as Welfare Officer after making a huge contribution, particularly through her leadership of the Learning Disabilities group, which she has kindly agreed to continue.

Training Groups and Club Sessions

Tuesday night continues to be the heart of the club, with **10 thriving groups**, including Caroline's LD group, which remains a standout example of inclusive running. We have also held sessions on a variety of terrains supporting road and fell runners:

- Circuits on Monday evenings
- Saturday morning efforts
- Wednesday track
- Thursday speed/ endurance/ hills
- A new off-road group launched in autumn/winter
- A Jeffers hill session on Thursday nights
- A Couch to 5k programme for non-members, followed by a 5k–10k progression group

Thank you to all our run leaders and coaches. The club remains committed to offering a wide range of training and social running for all abilities whilst supporting the social and individual performance aims of our members.

Racing

Once again, there have been outstanding performances from Harriers on the road and on the fells. Too many to mention individually, but two stand-out highlights were:

- **Ben Rothery winning the prestigious Three Peaks Fell Race** – the first time a Male Harrier has ever won the event overall.
- **Nathan Edmondson breaking the club marathon record** in a stunning **2:21:14** at the London Marathon

The race league remained as popular as ever, creating healthy and friendly competition. Congratulations to **Jack Cummings**, this year's winner, and thank you to **Jean Sullivan** for organising.

A special thanks also to our race captains, who invest considerable time and effort to arrange club participation at relay events and cross-country. Their work has led to greater participation and enthusiasm than ever.

Races Hosted by the Club

2025 was another busy and successful year for Harriers-organised events.

Pete Shields Ilkley 10K

- 418 entries and strong financial performance
- Improved landowner communication, parking and logistics
- Plans to increase capacity to **800 runners** in 2026
- A major success story and a fitting tribute to Pete

Ilkley Trail Race

- Over **150 participants**, raising **over £1,600 for charity**
- The 2026 race will not take place due to ground-nesting bird concerns; April 2027 is being considered

Ilkley Moor Fell Race

- Continued to run successfully, and last year was selected by the FRA as one of the national "50 at 50" anniversary races, recognising it as a standout and historically important event within fell running.

Ilkley Incline

- Another strong year with **95 runners** braving the vertical challenge of 1 mile uphill.

Thank you to **Neil Chapman, Jean Sullivan, Alison Weston, Jenny Roberts, Peter Roll**, and all the volunteers who make these events possible.

Social Events and Community

The club continues to enjoy a strong social and events calendar:

- The Christmas Relays raised **£102.90** for charity
- The Celebration and Awards Night on 30 January received excellent feedback on the new venue and format
- Monthly post-run socials remain well attended
- The Addingham Away Run was again funded by the club and as popular as ever
- A Harriers takeover at the Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon/Half Marathon.
- The “Let’s Lift the Curfew” run attracted nearly 50 participants, with follow-up communication to non-members
- Hosting the **2025 FRA Dinner** in Ilkley
- Support and funding for the launch of the **East Holmes Fields parkrun** (a copy of their report is included in Appendix A).
- Support for the **Dying to Climb: A Return to Everest** fundraiser and awareness campaign for Harrier **Shaunna Burke**

These events are a huge part of what makes the club welcoming and vibrant. Thank you to everyone involved.

Communications and Social Media

A major step forward this year has been the development of a more structured approach to social media.

Will Worboys proposed a content strategy including race reports, interviews, route videos and fun features, and this is already improving our visibility.

WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram continue to be key channels, and the Ilkley Gazette reports remain an excellent way to showcase club activity. Thank you to our team of reporters.

Website Redevelopment

This has been a major focus over the last year. The committee has agreed to pursue a full rebuild, with:

- Estimated costs of between **£1,500 to £5,500**, to be shared with the juniors
- The senior site to be completed first, followed by the juniors
- A target completion of **mid-summer 2026**

This is a significant investment but essential for the long-term digital health of the club. We are grateful for the generous support and advice provided by **Ash Winter**.

40th Anniversary

The club reaches a major milestone in **May 2026** — our 40th anniversary. We welcome ideas from members on how we should mark the occasion.

Opportunity for Every Member to Play Their Part

This year we want to broaden opportunities for members to get involved in running the club. While we always welcome new committee members, we recognise that not everyone can commit to a formal role. Many Harriers already contribute enormously — as run leaders, race marshals, social organisers, Gazette reporters and more.

We would love everyone to play their part. Please don't wait to be asked. Training and mentoring will always be available. Please look out for more details in the coming months and help wherever and however you can.

Committee and Thanks

We have had a stable and committed committee throughout the year. My thanks to every member for their time, energy and good humour. This year, **four members** will be or have stepped down: **Jonathan Turner, Dawn Turner, Jeff Green, Kate Archer and Caroline Tong**. On behalf of the club, I would like to sincerely thank them for their tremendous support and valuable contributions over many years.

This has been my first year as Chair, and I have greatly appreciated all the support provided — particularly from **Jonathan Turner**, the previous Chair. It has been a privilege to serve the club, and I have enjoyed it immensely. The strength of Ilkley Harriers lies in its people — leaders, coaches, volunteers, race organisers, and the hundreds of members who turn up each week to run, support and encourage one another.

Here's to another successful year ahead.

On behalf of the Committee

Nick Kealey

Chair, Ilkley Harriers
