Chairs Report 2025-26

May 2026

Dear All

It has been a phenomenal year of Running, Racing and Club Life. Below is a brief snapshot but I cannot truly encapsulate and do justice to the full spectrum of achievements and on-goings at 26.2 Road Runners Club. I will try.

The Grand Prix 2025-26 season had 107 members taking part across the year and came down to a dramatic final race.

The Handicap - at the time of writing - is all but wrapped up with one to go, anything could happen and a draw is *technically* possible albeit unlikely. A huge thank you to Dave Wilson and his team of volunteers and marshals who have shepherded 74 runners to cross the line 291 times so far this season.

The Cross Country season came to a close with the men fielding 85 runners finishing 4th in a league of 10 in division 3, the women finished 8th of 15 in division 2. The enthusiasm for cross country this year has been phenomenal; racing aside we hosted one fixture at Oxted and provided plenty of marshalls to the Oxshott meet. The season close saw Emma Stringer 3rd overall, 2nd in the over 35s. Flynn Orchard winning the u20 (and would have won overall had he not gone travelling), Joe Brewer 5th over 45, and Ed Franics winning the over 55s.

After many years of applying Ed Rowland finally got to run the London Marathon via the club's ballot. With so many races available to qualify for the club's marathon place it has been felt necessary to increase the qualifying races to enter the ballot from 8 to 10 races.

One of the races that 26.2 is becoming most notorious for beckons; the Green Belt Relay. Last year saw three teams entered with one coming 2nd in their category and the women narrowly missing out on podium and the vets team coming in 5th. A very impressive show in a race that is becoming more and more hotly contested by some very strong clubs fielding very very strong runners.

Other relays include the River Relay with Stragglers and the Nonsuch Relays hosted by Epsom and Ewell Harriers; where our women's team consisting of Katherine Stacy, Abianne Coates, Cristina Ifrim and Emma Stringer (also setting the second fastest recorded time of the day) placed first.

The club has also hosted races, the aforementioned Cross Country but also the Imber Court Relay, the Valentines 10km and the infamous Stragglers vs 26.2 Mob Match which was much more closely contested than in previous years. Meanwhile the Monday club runs continue to be so popular that other clubs make a point of attending.

Socially the club has held the Summer BBQ, Christmas Party, numerous post-race pub hydration meets and the Awards Night which - at the time of writing - is imminent.

The committee this year committed to staying around after the handicap each month, these ‘surgeries’ were brought in to have a consultation regarding the age boundaries for our competitions. No further feedback was given on that front, but the surgeries seemed to be a great success and valuable to hearing feedback from the membership. It gave the committee a chance to explain why some decisions go the way they do, but also receive direction as to where the members want the club to go. We will hopefully be keeping this open channel going, especially through the summer months when it is warm enough to just chat outside for a while.

The Club has been around for many years, and each generation has its own unique trial to overcome in order to maintain the club's future and pass on to the next generation of runners. Ours, it would seem, will be the rising cost of living, or cost of running in this case. On an individual level, the cost of shoes has more than doubled in 20 years. Furthermore, Surbiton and surrounding areas are very expensive places to live, which has the potential to price out potential members despite our membership fees being very reasonable. On a commercial level, everything going up by a few pence or couple of pounds at the point of transaction is tolerable, but hundreds of small transactions add up over the year. The club is not in any imminent danger, but it would be foolhardy to ignore the issue and not have safety-nets and discussions about how best to keep the club healthy.

The Club’s membership currently sits at 210 with 116 of those choosing to be England Athletic affiliated, compared to last year (217 members, 120 EA) this would be within what we would expect fluctuations to be.

My unreserved thanks goes out to the committee as a whole, they truly do so much work behind the scenes, that largely goes unnoticed, but I want to publicly acknowledge the work and enthusiasm they bring in. I can confidently say that there would not be a club without them. Unexpectedly we have seen Maria take on the role of membership secretary, Gerry step into the role of Treasurer, to both, my gratitude for stepping into those roles at short notice. This year sees our Captain Jacqueline Chang stepping down from that role, leaving some big shoes to fill, but I think I speak for everyone at 26.2 when I say that Jacqueline has been a phenomenal driver and instrumental to the club's running and function, thank you. Vice Captain Lisa Kingsbury is also stepping down, having been the face, voice and organiser of the club on Monday nights for the last two years, as well as organising social functions and media, a big thank you. Due to external ‘real world’ commitments and

pressures Steph Harvey and Rob Pyke stepped down from Treasurer and Membership Secretary roles respectively. They both brought a steadfast professionalism to the role and for this, we are hugely grateful. I wish them all the best in their new adventures. Sophie Cooke also passes on the baton of Club Secretary, I will miss the delicate balance of proficiency and wry knowing looks she brought to the table. I am meant to thank the others who have indicated they might step down, but I am refusing to because I want them to stay on.

That leaves me to say that I am proud to call myself a member of 26.2, furthermore I am humbled to be the chair that oversees this period of such enthusiastic and brilliant people that happen to all be runners of my favourite running club. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's AGM and continuing in the club's success and growth.

Kind regards

Henry Carter
26.2 RRC Chair