

Chair's Report

Dear Members,

What a year it has been, it wasn't quite what I had planned!

I was voted in as Chair at the AGM in December 2019 and started full of optimism and plans to develop the club and implement many of the suggestions following the England Athletic review. This work came to an abrupt halt in March. Sadly other priorities took over and the focus was on ensuring the club reacted to the situation in the most appropriate way. We were very quickly able to respond to the changes and keep our members informed and updated as news became available to us. Sadly the 2019/20 winter leagues were not able to complete the season and the Track and Field leagues tried desperately to hold onto some fixtures, but these too became impossible. There were some valiant attempts to restart the 2020/21 winter fixtures, unfortunately most of these have now been cancelled.

We do have some good news: our training groups kept going throughout with coaches adopting many different forms of remote training, session plans being sent to athletes, training and coaching over zoom and 1-2-1 coaching via a phone video call. This put our athletes in a very good place when competitions were able to go ahead. SAC successfully hosted three opens and a highlight for me this year was the track and pole vault Open held at our track early September. It was a resounding success, organised by Katy Odell and fully supported with volunteers from all around the club coming out to make the event run smoothly and fully comply with England Athletic guidelines. I was also able to officiate and hadn't realised until then how much I had missed spending the day at the track.

After discussion and agreement with Active Nation we were able to gain access to the track for safe and secure training. This was not without extensive and detailed planning and I would like to thank the Throws group for pursuing this and specifically to Zoe Bond for taking the role of COVID Co-ordinator supported by Jon Tilt who worked together to develop the necessary risk assessments, action plans, athlete agreements and track booking system. Because of this we were able to enjoy exclusive access which was welcomed across many training groups. One of the hardest groups to restart training was the Academy, and again the club showed what it was made of, with numerous volunteers coming forward to help coach a series of summer courses for the young athletes; at one point at risk of having more coaches than athletes. The courses were a success and laid down a format to restart regular weekly training for the Academy. We successfully held sessions during September and October, but once again these came to a halt in November.

We did manage to implement some changes resulting from the EA Club Review: we have a fabulous new website, and I should like to thank Gemma Saint and Nick Wilson for their creative work and input. It's not finished yet and hopefully 2021 will provide some photo opportunities to enhance the website with our SAC branding. Through extensive research we have updated the club records and introduced a section on our international athletes, past and present. My thanks to Alan Cropp, Alan Forse and Andy Morgan-Lee for their endeavours with this piece of work. We have improved internal communications with the use of the club website, Facebook groups, the membership system and a 'Coaches Forum' all of which have been invaluable in getting the club operating again.

Externally the club appeared on both ITV and BBC local news showcasing the club in a professional and positive outlook.

We have come to the end of this year and the club is in a healthy position financially due to the excellent club management from previous years under the guidance of Richie Pearson and the resilience of the current team and our new Treasurer Debbie Callaway. Through the Opens and return to training we have shown ourselves to be a strong club and willing to go the extra mile, metre or inch to help each other and build for the future.

I would like to thank all our volunteers; to the Committee, and in particular to Stuart Saint who has been instrumental in setting up the online membership system who has decided to step down from the position of Membership Secretary; to our highly skilled and expert group of coaches for their continuing commitment and to all the volunteers for their time in helping to make SAC such a great club.

Finally I want to give thanks to every one of you for staying with us in these difficult times and look forward to getting back to doing the things we love which for me involves spending time at the track coaching, officiating and occasionally training.

Happy New Year to you all

Kind regards

Tracey