

The Stragglers Running Club (founded 1981)

Vision & Strategy 2018/19

Vision

We promote the development and enjoyment of running as a sport for life. We aim to provide opportunities for any member of the community to find a fulfilling balance of enjoyment, improvement, fitness and competition.

Strategy

We aim to be ambitious for the club and its members through encouraging mass participation, targeting race performance and offering race choice throughout the year. Specifically, this will be across the Winter Cross-Country Season, a Summer Series of races, relay races and Veteran competitions making up a varied and attractive programme to our members.

In particular the club aims to organise a series of high profile races for the wider running community including the Wedding Day, Cabbage Patch, Green Belt Relay, and River Relay races. As part of our programme we aim to support other club's races for a vibrant year-round calendar of events that supports the club network.

The club prides itself on being welcoming to all, has a strong ethos of camaraderie and operates a year-round social programme, often around races and events.

As a club we measure success in 2 ways:

1. Participation.

We aim to be one of the best represented clubs in the Surrey leagues and events in which we take part. This will be supported by a coherent Communications strategy with our Members* (see below). A key part of promoting participation and camaraderie will be the social activities of the club.

The ethos of the club is to encourage running for all abilities. Acknowledging that we have a responsibility to the community we aim to be welcoming to any new member and also aim to give back to the community through significant charitable fundraising from our races.

The focus of the Stragglers Running Club is running, however, we encourage other sections of the club in particular we acknowledge the contribution of StraggTri and Stragglist groups for those who want to cross train to enable a long, successful and injury free running career.

2. Performance

Whilst we might be called the Stragglers we aim as a club to enable members to find a fulfilling balance of enjoyment, improvement, fitness and competition and for everyone that wants to, the opportunity to achieve to their potential. Our ethos is to offer training and coaching for all sections of the club that want it. This will be by providing the appropriate training and coaching structure and in turn will be supported by a recruitment strategy* to attract new runners to join the club.

As a club we aim to compete 'at the sharp end' of the Surrey Cross Country and Road Leagues, offering great opportunities for our faster runners. In addition, we aim to promote and harness our strength as a club with our outstanding reputation for veteran competition.

How will we know we have been successful?

The club/committee will maintain a race schedule which will list the events we are entering teams for, the audience for those races, the objectives and the outcome. This will help the committee to understand what the members want and how things can be improved. The annual race schedule will enable the club to manage its priorities, spread workloads and keep the year under review.

Communications Strategy

We will assess the effectiveness of communications in terms of supporting the achievement of the club's strategy of participation and performance. To this end we will also ask the members what channels they prefer to use and how they respond, including

- Face to face conversations and briefings ie from group leaders
- Word of mouth
- Captains emails (Single message race promotion and organisation)
- Stragmail (Fortnightly summary of events on offer)
- Stragmag (Monthly retrospective review and digest)
- Social media
- Website etc.

All of this will be driven by pragmatism ie 'What works, works'

Recruitment Strategy

Why have one?

The Stragglers, like a lot of clubs in the Surrey League, are an ageing club. As at July 2018 there are 514 individuals listed as registered with the club with an average age of 50 (veteran categories start at 35 for women and 40 for men). Without recruitment and retention of new runners the club will, by definition, die out.

The club will over time become a less attractive place to be and the number of people representing the club at races will decrease markedly and impact the ability of the club to compete, for instance in Surrey League Cross Country where we will see a sharp decline compared to those clubs with more of a balance towards younger runners.

A full analysis of the registered members (as at July 2018) is presented below. The headlines are now that 86% of our ladies are veterans and 83% of our men are also now in the veteran category.

Ladies Category	Number Registered	Percentage
L35	23	11.39%
L40	28	13.86%
L45	17	8.42%
L50	30	14.85%
L55	34	16.83%
L60	19	9.41%
L65	11	5.45%
L70	9	4.46%
L75	3	1.49%
SL	28	13.86%
Grand Total	202	

Male Categories	Number Registered	Percentage
M40	38	12.18%
M45	46	14.74%
M50	44	14.10%
M55	49	15.71%
M60	36	11.54%
M65	26	8.33%
M70	12	3.85%
M75	8	2.56%
SM	53	16.99%
Grand Total	312	

Whilst there are Junior members of the club, this is not a large number and due to our restrictions in not offering Track Competition it is likely that this set up will be, in the main, a feeder for other clubs.

In the absence of a strong throughput from the Juniors, a strong and coherent recruitment strategy will be required to keep the club alive. These channels should include consideration of:

- Face to face conversations and Word of mouth (each Member to recruit a friend)
- Social media
- Website etc.
- Selective advertising
- Leafleting at Parkrun and other races
- Structured training programmes for new members

In particular analysis of local Parkrun results shows a high percentage of unattached runners including some quite fast runners and the club will actively consider what we can we offer new runners.