

VAC AGM: 21 SEPTEMBER 2020

(Held via ZOOM)

2019-2020 Cross Country Report

Summary

Fortunately, the 2019-2020 cross country season was completed before the restrictions of the COVID 19 pandemic caused the suspension of all competitions.

VAC staged the annual open Masters cross country championship on Wimbledon Common. A VAC men's team competed in Division Four of the Surrey Cross Country League and finished a creditable 7th out of 12. There was VAC representation in the BMAF championships, the South of the Thames matches and East Surrey League. Seventeen VAC members represented England, Scotland and Ireland at the British & Irish Masters International match at Aintree.

1. VAC Cross Country Championships, Wimbledon Common: 18 January 2020

Fine weather encouraged good support with 54 finishers for the last race on VAC's traditional "Thatched Cottage" course. It was fitting that a new course record was set by race winner, Mike Cummings of VAC and Herne Hill Harriers. Megan De Silva of Ranelagh was the first woman in a new championship record. However, the all-time record for the course still belongs to Clare Elms, set in an Inter-Area match in 2016.

For 2021, we are required by the Wimbledon Common conservators to use a course which does not encroach on the golf holes of the Common's two golf courses. A new two-lap, 5 mile course, which includes circuits of the scenic Queensmere pond, has been approved by the conservators. The 2021 championship is scheduled for 23 January but depends on being able to meet the COVID 19 conditions which will be set by the conservators and England Athletics.

2. Men's Surrey League Cross Country 2019-20

VAC fielded full teams of at least ten men in the four fixtures of Division Four in the Surrey CC League. Team spirit and commitment were excellent. Thanks go to Paddy Clark who continued as the Team Manager. The Club successfully co-hosted two of the fixtures (Epsom Downs and Lloyd Park), which involved providing officials for the finish funnel and producing the official results.

The VAC team finished 7th out of 12 in the Division, a big improvement on our lowly 11th the previous season. VAC's Gary Ironmonger won the season's M50-59 award.

The new Cross Country League season was due to begin on 10 October but matches on this day have been cancelled by England Athletics. Preliminary guidance on staging COVID-secure cross country competition was issued by EA today (18 September), including measures to ensure social distancing. It remains to be seen whether the next Surrey League match in November will go ahead, and if so, in what form.

3. VAC members in national and international championships

With a coronavirus lockdown imminent, only six VAC members made the trip to the BMAF Championships in Corwen, North Wales, on 14 March. Ben Reynolds (M55) and Anna Garnier (W65) won Gold Medals. The fixture was also the English Masters Inter-Area Cross Country Challenge but VAC did not have enough representatives for a team. Seventeen VAC members represented their country at the British & Irish Masters International at Aintree racecourse in November 2019. VAC's Clare Elms (W55) and Peter Giles (M75) won individual Gold medals. The 2020 event has been cancelled.

Maggie Statham-Berry

VAC Entries Secretary

18 September 2020