



Stadium Runners Ethos and Vision

At its inception in 2003 Stadium Runners was intended to be something uniquely different from many of the longer established and arguably more traditional athletics clubs in the local area.

Stadium Runners was envisaged be a running club for runners who perhaps may not imagine themselves as being a member of a running club. This may include those new to running, those coming to running from other sports/fitness backgrounds or perhaps those returning to running following an extended break. As a consequence Stadium Runners has always striven to be an inclusive club meeting the needs of runners from varied backgrounds and at various stages of their running careers. It is precisely this variety that contributes in a large part to the club's unique spirit, supportive atmosphere and sense of camaraderie.

A key foundation upon Stadium Runners is based is the acceptance that its members have a wide variety of reasons and motivations for running. For some these may be competitive, whilst others see their running as a means of improving fitness, achieving personal goals or even as a way of meeting new people and making friends. Whatever their motivation all Stadium Runners share a belief that running can draw individuals together, create something unique and offer much more than simply running alone.

All Stadium Runners should feel supported by the club to improve and enjoy their running in whichever way they choose. The club has always recognised and valued the efforts of its member's running achievements both individually and collectively, formally and informally. While it is always positive to see Stadium Runners featuring towards the top of race results listings, it is equally rewarding to see a long established club member achieving a new personal best, a novice runner finishing their first 10K, or even a new runner completing their first club run, dripping with sweat, totally shattered but filled with elation that they've done it.

From the very beginning Stadium Runners recognised that attending a running club can be a daunting experience, for both new and more established runners. Many runners experience the same anxieties when running with a new group. "What if I'm not quick enough?", "Will I hold the rest of the group up?", "What if I get left behind?" are questions that have raced through most runners minds at one time or another.

Unfortunately many potentially good runners have been put off clubs by joining a regular club run and finding themselves "off the back", possibly in the dark and alone in an area unfamiliar to them. Stadium Runners are determined that this should not happen at the club, and whilst it is impossible to remove all first night nerves, the club strives to ensure new runners are welcomed, supported and reassured and most importantly **never** left alone whilst out on a club run.



Aside from the expectation to recognise, support and value the running achievements of other members Stadium Runners places few other expectations on its members, encouraging them to take as greater or smaller role in the club as they wish to. Club runs, events, social functions and meetings are provided for the benefit of all members but the Club recognises that individual's busy lifestyles can make regular attendance difficult at times. Consequently there is no expectation of regular attendance at club nights simply that members run when they can, and that when they do they are assured of the same warm welcome and support whether they run every week or just occasionally.

Similarly although Stadium Runners may be encouraged to represent the club in various races and events there is no compulsion or expectation on them to do so. The club recognises that not everyone is, or wants to be a racer although many of those who do so gain a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction, whether it be from running a local 10K, a fell race or one of the major marathons.

For those who do race, Stadium Runners in common with many other running clubs hold an annual Club Championship based around calendar of specified races taking place throughout the year. In keeping with the clubs ethos of inclusivity a system has been adopted which adjusts race time according to age, thus ensuring that the competition is more open and more Stadium Runners have a chance of being crowned Club Champion.

Additionally the club organises other "in-house" events during the year which through the use of innovative methods aim to "level the playing" between the club's runners. Using handicapping or systems that reward effort, teamwork, or even consistent run pacing often means that the fastest runners are not always the winners. In a similar vein the club's annual awards night is a celebration of the club and all the runners who have contributed to it. Whilst the clubs faster runners are recognised many of the awards are designed to reward broader contributions and commitment to running.

The nature of Stadium Runners means it is a running club which means many things to many different people, but it is commonly a place where its members feel "at home" with other individuals who share their passion for running. This has been achieved through a flexible and inclusive approach which recognises and values the individual efforts of all the club's runners, whatever their reasons and motivations for running.

Regardless of individual running pace all Stadium Runners share the experience of enduring the pain and discomfort in the pursuit of personal running goals, something which in turn allows us all to appreciate and share in the feelings of success when our fellow runners achieve their goals. The powerful bond of shared experience and respect which exists between club members is the very essence of Stadium Runners and is fundamental to the ongoing success of the club. Preserving the unique spirit which exists within the club will enable Stadium Runners to continue to support and encourage current and future members to improve and enjoy their running.