



SUSSEX COUNTY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

President: Dave Leach

Report to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 17th October 2025

It's been another busy year in athletics in Sussex, with many highs and lows.

Highs include home grown athletes being recognised on national and international stages, numbers at our events mainly increasing and being surrounded by a whole community of people who love the sport.

We have staged:

- Four cross country league events.
- Two cross country championships.
- Four Under 13 track & field league matches.
- Four Under 15 track & field league matches.
- Took Sussex teams to every inter county fixture.
- The May Track & Field Champs including the Masters Track Champs.
- The Under 13 Track & Field with Under 11 QuadKid Champs.
- Steeplechase Championships.
- Masters Field Championships.
- An Endurance Squad.
- A Track & Field Under 13 Squad.
- The Arena 80/Sussex Young Athlete Award has helped several athletes who face financial challenges.

Over the year we also saw huge achievements from:

- Amber Anning winning both the British Indoor Championships and becoming the first British woman to win 400m Gold at the World Indoor Championships.
- Amber Anning running the fastest ever 5th place finish at a World Championships in Tokyo.
- George Mills winning 3K gold at the British Indoor Championships and Grace Van Agnews silver in the 800m.
- George Mills competing at the World Champs in Tokyo.
- Gemma Tutton (pole vault), Archie Davis (1500m) and Toby Harries (200m) representing Team GB at the European Athletics Team Champs in June.
- Toby Harries competing at the World Champs in Tokyo.
- Alex Riley breaking the under 20 British 5K road record which had stood since 1987.
- Ruby Jerges continuously breaking the Sussex senior women's long jump record across the summer.

- Under 15 Isabella Buchanan breaking the Sussex 1500m record along with under 15 boy Byron Roberts breaking the 3K one (putting his time 4th on the All Time UK U15 list).
- Julia Machin breaking several world records including the W55 World Pentathlon record.
- Marion Hemsworth was made a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire in the Kings New Years' Honours in January.
- Under 20 Eleanor Strevens won 1500m gold for GB at the Reykjavik International Games.

The lows are the same as ever. Decreasing volunteers and officials. Stadiums failing to provide adequate standards and equipment. Expectations rising. Provision of support decreasing.

On top of this change is coming. Next year we will see the age groups change. Behind the scenes we are all working to understand and prepare for the changes, hoping they won't cause too much disruption.

Whilst the changes are now inevitable, I would also ask that as a county we don't lose sight of preserving and celebrating what has been. We need to ensure the achievements and records over the years are somehow carried forward into the new era.

Records like Steve Overt's under 15 400m record of 51.6 from 1970 or Kerry Robert's 1983 1.82 high jump as an under 17.

Achievements like the success of the under 13 league which was set up by Keith May in 1992 and has helped encourage and develop so many young athletes over so many years.

I also want to highlight that whatever the age group banding, the infrastructure will essentially remain the same. We will need to continue to support clubs, volunteers and officials to ensure fixtures and squads go ahead.

Highlighted below is a round up of the different areas of athletics in the county over the past year. Apologies if anything has been missed. Please let me know if you would like something additional added.

Reports of activities within the various areas of the county across the year are presented below.

The Development Committee

By Kate Matthews

Firstly a huge thank you to Peter Masters who after many years of setting up and chairing this panel has stepped down from the role.

Track Facilities

Over the past year we awarded £2262 to Crawley AC towards new starting equipment. This was used successfully across the summer and as a result the county is now looking into the possibility of investing in a second system.

The county has recently purchased a new EDM costing £5022. This will be up and running for next season.

Chichester Runners has submitted the first stages of a grant application towards a new track being built. The county has agreed to contribute.

A80 Grants

A total of 10 athletes have been helped through this project over the past year.

Squads

The 2024/25 endurance squad was again run successfully. There was a total of 120 athletes. A decision was made to change the format of the sessions slightly, in that a fifth session was introduced and the length of each session reduced. This extra fifth session centred around strength and conditioning and nutritional education. The new format proved successful and will be followed again in 2025/2026. The first session of this season is due to take place this Sunday.

The 2025 track and field squad also took place. This was for under 13s from the previous track and field season. The sessions were held at Withdean Stadium and included 43 athletes. In the whole it was a success but there are definitely ways to improve it. I am currently looking at ways to run it in 2026, especially to utilise the opportunity to work on preparations for the age group changes.

Sports Hall athletics

Sports Hall athletics successfully took place at Worthing. Again a huge thank you to Gavin Stephens, his team and all the officials for enabling this to go ahead.

Regionally, thanks to Andy Hall, Amanda Godfrey and Sean Dunford for team managing.

A success story – the Sussex Under 15 girls were selected from the regionals to travel up north for the UK Sportshall Final in April where they won a team bronze.

Officials

By Christel Shaw

It has been an incredibly busy year with both club and county meetings which saw many officials spending every weekend, sometimes both days, officiating at events far and wide.

We have apparently gone up in numbers this year according to the EA listings (currently 152), but I can honestly say that most meetings have seen the same officials turning out week in, week out, and I would say that this number stands at about 40, going forward this cannot be sustained as we are not getting any younger! We need to look at clubs having a recruitment drive to gain more officials, (especially starters and endurance) the more help we have in the county the easier it is to spread the load, and going forward unless clubs provide officials, then league events and even county champs

will not be able to happen or it may be that clubs cannot take part. I myself need to look at the long listing of officials and see how we get them back involved.

On a more positive note, and there are many of them we have pulled off an amazing year of athletics with those officials who turn out week after week and for this I am profoundly grateful. We had an EDM training day at the start of the summer season this year, which was well attended, and I feel of great benefit, we are looking to do another training day/refresher before the next summer season starts, along with any other training that officials feel may be beneficial.

We have a few officials who are looking to upgrade and while this is brilliant news, more would be amazing for our county. I am happy to help wherever I can, you know how to contact me as this is something that I am hoping to focus on this year, encouraging and helping wherever I can. Going forward we need to help officials reach where they want to go in their officiating journey and this includes helping to recruit willing parents. The way forward is letting them know that they only need to help at events their child is at and at times convenient to their child's events, they seem to have the impression they are signing away their life!!!!

So, to sum up what has been another successful year for Sussex athletics and the officials who go above and beyond never moaning about the amount of pleading emails they get from me! Let us look forward to another positive year ahead and start our recruitment drives, please feel free to give me call or email if you are unsure or just need a little help with anything, as that is what I am here for .

Thank you, Officials couldn't do it without you.

Cross Country

By Kate Matthews

Reflecting on the 2024/25 season seems so difficult for me as I already feel ensconced in all the goings on with the 2025/26 one which has just started. Oh well... here goes.

Before I do though, it is time for another thank you but this time to Phil Baker, who after years of hard work has stepped down from leading the cross country panel.

The 2024/25 season kicked off as usual with the always positive Cross Country Relays at Goodwood.

This was then shortly followed by the first fixture in the league, also at Goodwood. After this was Glyndebourne, Ardingly and Stanmer. Thank you to the host clubs Chichester, Lewes AC, Haywards Heath Harriers and Brighton and Hove) for all their time and effort.

The season was filled with solid entry numbers, mud, rain, wind and strong performances – everything it should have been.

Main Championships at Bexhill – As is usual HYAC took on the running of this event and again did the county proud. For the first time we decided to introduce chip timing for and it worked really well. I was able to get the results of more than 500 finishers easily and all medals were handed out on the day. Numbers were good across most age groups other than the seniors (particularly senior women).

Masters Championships at Coombe Farm, Lancing – more than 200 vet runners turned out on a very cold and windy day in January for these championships. It is one of my favourite events as it is always so positive and the farm is a great venue.

Inter-Counties events. First there was disappointment (for a second year in a row) as the SEAA inter counties fixture in December was cancelled due to bad weather. However, the UK inter counties did go ahead at Wollaton Park, Nottingham, where the county won a under 15 boys' team silver and had several top 20 finishers. These included Darcie Wickenden (U13G Crawley) 14th, Ciara Muzio (SW

Brighton and Hove) 12th, George Armstrong Smith (U15B Eastbourne) and Molly Smithers (U17W Chichester) 5th.

In January, at the SEAA XC Champs, Skye Widdows (U13G Brighton and Hove) won silver and Eastbourne celebrated their under 15 boys placing third and under 17 women second.

Success for these continued at the British Cross Country Champs in February where Raya Petrova (U17W) won individual bronze and with her Eastbourne Rovers team mates team silver, as well as Brighton and Hove's Skye Widdows winning another silver.

Other notable successes in cross country included Tomer Tarragano (Brighton and Hove) winning the Blue Ribbon Long Course at BUCS and Eleanor Strevens (Eastbourne) the Short Course Gold.

Eleanor has enjoyed earlier success also taking gold at the Cross International Juan Muguerza.

Road Running

By Kate Matthews

With no panel up and running, this sector remains light on news. We did, thankfully, have Tom Ulliot who organised a successful inter counties 10K within the Brighton 10K last November. On top of this Gavin Stevens and his team staged another brilliant Road Relay Championships at Preston Park in April.

I have looked into forming links with the Sussex Grand Prix team but nothing has come to fruition as of yet. We would love someone to take on the role of setting up a panel for this sector and would welcome any suggestions and help on how to move this forward.

Sussex Indoor Championships

By Melanie Anning

This year's Indoor Championships at the David Weir Centre saw a record-breaking weekend, with six athletes setting Championship Best Performances (CBPs) and a seventh equalling one. The event, jointly organised with Surrey AA, drew over 230 entries from our county alone, a sharp increase compared with recent years.

The triple jumpers were in fine form, with four new CBPs:

- Alex Koloutsos (Brighton & Hove, U15B) – 10.19m
- Kuria Kenmochi (Sutton, SW) – 12.16m
- Jaiten Best (Brighton & Hove, U17W) – 11.86m
- Louis Ashworth (Brighton & Hove, U15B) – 11.11m

Other records included Jessica Bliss (Brighton & Hove, U20W) in the 60m hurdles with 8.87s, and Luca Mindel (Lewes, U15B) clearing 3.40m in the pole vault.

Meanwhile, Eastbourne's Bryn Smith (Senior Men) matched Tom French's 12-year 60m record, clocking 6.93 seconds.

Dylan Calvey (Brighton & Hove) was just 1cm shy of a CBP, winning the U20 Men's high jump with 1.94m. Isabella Carroll (Crawley) took two U13 Girls' titles in the 60m (8.58s) and long jump (4.18m). The Senior Women's 60m saw a repeat of last year's top three: Adeline Preston (Crawley) first in 7.69s, followed by Praise Owoye (Sale) and Sophie Hogton (Crawley).

Sadly, this proved to be the final joint staging with Surrey AA, who have decided to run their own championships in future due to rising participation and increasingly lengthy days impacting an ageing pool of officials.

My thanks to all the officials and helpers who have made these championships possible over many decades. I hope we can return in some form in the future.

Track and Field

By Kate Matthews

2025 marked a huge milestone in so much as it was the last season before age group changes coming in next year. It also proved a milestone in so much as we had such magnificent weather for most events – a very rare thing in England.....

May Track & Field Championships – With over 1000 entries we had nine CBPS across the two days including a world record high jump by W55 Julia Machin. Others included Jessica Bliss (U20 Brighton and Hove) in the 100mH (14.44), Jaiten Best (U17 Brighton and Hove) in the triple jump (12.10), under 15s Milo Hilborne (Crawley) and Bill Scott (Lewes) equalling the PV record with 3.70, Florence Matten (U15 Brighton and Hove) in the pole vault (3.21), Archie Oates (under 15 Crawley) in both the shot put (15.51) and discus (44.30), Kuria Kenmochi (SW Sutton) in the triple jump (12.59) and last but not least Imogen Matthews (SW HYAC) in the 5K (17.47).

Under 13 Track & Field Championships with Under 11 Quadkids – With weather warnings of heavy rain and wind in the days running up to the event in June, things were not looking bright for this event. Despite this, everything was fine on the day itself, and the atmosphere was brilliant. There were some very strong performances and many came close to CBPs but it was only Monty Rowland (Brighton and Hove) who produced one on the day in the javelin throwing 40.40. Coming very close was Jack Matten (Brighton and Hove) in the under 11 quadkids where his total score of 279 was one point shy of the record.

Steeplechase Championships – This year these champs were run on a Friday evening at Withdean alongside an open event. Athletes from outside the county were invited to take part as guests as well which meant we had solid competition in all races.

Masters Track & Field Championships – some Masters track events were incorporated into the May Champs, but the rest (sprints and hurdles) and all field events were held in a separate, stand alone championship at Lewes in August. Thanks to Mike Bale for meeting managing this one. Reports show it was a great success and we will be looking at making it a “whole” event with all disciplines next year.

Under 13 League – East and West Division fixtures were held at six different tracks across the early part of the summer, followed by the final at the K2, Crawley, early September. Thank you to all clubs that hosted a fixture – these being Crawley, Horsham, Lewes, Eastbourne and Brighton. Across all fixture there were league records by Ada Greenaway (Brighton and Hove) in 600m, Monty Rowland (Brighton and Hove) in the javelin, Brianna Ripley (HYAC) in the 150m and David Peter Nzeama

(Crawley) in both the 75 and 150. Brighton and Hove were crowned this years team winners. The under 13 league was established by Keith May 34 years ago. T

Under 15 League – Four fixtures were held at Withdean across the summer with Brighton and Hove taking the title. There was an astounding 8 league records broken with many of these at the final fixture. These included Harley Saunders Neate in the 80mH, Archie Oates in the shot put and discus, Athur Rogers in the javelin, Florence Matten in the pole vault, Isabella Buchanan in the 800m, Brighton and Hove in the 4x300m relay and HYAC in the 4x 100m relay.

The age group changes means this year marked the very end of the u13 and u15 leagues.

3K Champs – these were held within the under 13 league final at the K2. Isabella Buchanan (HYAC) broke her own Under 15 record running 9.44.1.

Inter County Events – Firstly we had the U13 inter counties at the beginning of August at Walton where Sussex were 4th in the girls and 6th in the boys. Ada Greenaway won the girls' 800m whilst Month Rowland won both the discus and javelin. Then at the beginning of September the county sent an under 20/senior team on one day and an under 15/17 the following to the SEAA Inter Counties at Oxford. It has bcome clear that it is no longer viable to send an under 20/senior team and we are unlikely to do so again next year. However, the under15/17 was a huge success with our under 15s winning gold out of 11 counties.

Sussex Schools

Cross Country – The Sussex Schools XC Champs took place at Waterhall, Brighton, in January with nearly 900 competitors. The top 20 in each race progressing to an inter county event at Newbury. Here junior girl Elizabeth Hutchinson won the race leading the Sussex team to silver whilst Eloise Hudson was third leading the Sussex senior girls to gold. Raya Petrova also enjoyed a storming race placing third.

This then led to the ESAA XC Champs, being held on home ground at Ardingly. Home advantage paid off with a bronze in the inter girls, silver in the junior boys, bronze in the junior girls and an amazing gold in the senior girls. The county had 32 top 100 finishers- one more than the previous year.

Track and Field – A team of 70 Sussex athletes travelled to Birmingham for the ESAA 100th Track and Field Champs in July. It was a great event with 10 medals, 24 athletes reaching National Standards, 10 reaching entry standards and several achieving PBs across the two days.

Gold went to Alice Howie (SG) in the hammer. Silvers to Rae Le Fay (SG) in the steeplechase, Owen Wallek (SB) in the 3000m, Isabella Buchanan (JG) in the 1500m, Jaiten Best (IG) in the triple jump, Florence Matten (JG) in the pole vault and Milo Hilborne (JB) in the pole vault. Bronzes to Jessica Bliss (SG) in the 100mH, Ava Hayes (IG) in the pole vault and Bill Scott (JB) in the pole vault.

Jaiten Best was selected to then compete at SIAB and the 4x100m Sussex record was broken by the senior boys.

11 PBs went to Alice Cox, Bethany Naylor Davis, David Michael Ologho, Louis Ashworth, Rae Le Fay, Freddie Matthews, Arthur Rogers and Sonny Crisp.

Combined Events – Junior Girl, Seren Rowe, won silver at the Combined Events National Final in September.

In Remembrance

Sadly we have lost some club and county stalwarts over the past year. Please take a minute of thoughts for the following:

Timothy Medcalf (East Grinstead and county athlete).

Toby Wolpe (Lewes AC).

Angela Brinkhurst (Lewes AC and county official).

Jack Shelton (Crawley AC).

Kate Matthews 2025