

HASTINGS RUNNERS under 18s

The club membership recently approved a proposal to lower the membership age from 16 to 12. This was passed by an overwhelming majority of 46 votes to 11, although it is subject to ratification by vote at the first opportunity to have a members' meeting in 2021. Please see below for full details on safeguarding, and certain restrictions which will apply to younger members.

SAFEGUARDING

- All our coaches are qualified to train "juniors" aged 12 and over, and all the required EA policies and procedures (including the appointment of two Club Welfare Officers) are now in place. Please visit our club website for full details: <http://www.hastingsrunners.co.uk/club-policies-and-codes-of-conduct>
- We have recently appointed two new Club Welfare Officers, Krista Barzee and Lena King, whose joint experience in the area of safeguarding should prove invaluable particularly with regard to the younger runners and vulnerable adults. The CWOs are the first point of contact for all club members and parents/guardians regarding concerns for the welfare of any young or vulnerable person. They will shortly be co-opted onto the Executive Committee, and will play an active role in ensuring that as a club we are fully compliant with current EA policies and procedures on safeguarding.
- Going forward we would recommend that a compliance review is undertaken once a year, with a report back to the executive committee followed by its inclusion as an AGM item.
- With these various policies and procedures now in place, our club can create a safe environment for these youngsters, many of whom wear their HR vests with some considerable pride.
- Today's youngsters represent the club's future, and by encouraging them at an early age within the club's supportive environment we would hope to ensure a steady feed of loyal younger runners. We hope that this will also encourage family membership and participation within the club.
- This will allow under 18s to attend track sessions, where all the coaches are used to dealing with the younger age range.
- As a club we relay much of our communication via email and Facebook, and this would need to be reviewed when we are dealing with under 18s. We might need to set up a separate Google Group for under 18s and their parents/guardians. Our Social Media policy states that "Coaches should not be "friends" with junior athletes online, and that all communication outside of coaching sessions is done by group text message, phone calls to

parents/guardians, or via a post on a closed club or governing body page rather than via your personal profile."

RESTRICTIONS

- 12 - 15 year olds must be accompanied to track sessions by a parent/guardian.
- 12 - 15 year olds can take part in the club only 5 kms races, but must be accompanied throughout the race by a parent, guardian or designated responsible adult (the latter could be another club member whose details are given to the club race secretary beforehand). They are not eligible to participate in longer distance races.
- 16 - 17 year olds can take part in club only races up to the distance of 10 kms, but are not permitted to participate in longer distance races.
- 12 - 17 year olds are not eligible to attend other main club training sessions such as the Tuesday/Wednesday club nights from Horntye. This is partly to avoid putting unfair pressure on run leaders who may not be used to dealing with younger members, and partly because the runs are often well in excess of 10kms.
- Although the lowering of the membership age ends the distinction between children and adult members, we have given some thought as to whether younger members could attend committee meetings, vote on certain issues and generally be involved in the decision making process. As EA defines children and young persons as people less than 18 years of age, therefore only adult members (ie those aged 18 and over) can attend General Meetings.

Nick Brown (club chairman)