



## Secretary's Report March 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

The third year of the club has been one of unprecedented change with the Covid 19 outbreak having a huge impact across the World and having an equal impact on athletics and how we've had to manage training. Despite that, I think we've still made progress and there's been some really positive progress and here's a summary of our year :-

- **Covid 19** – We have to mention that we've had a huge year of disruption with training being on and off at times during the year. We've also had to manage the way we train and split into socially distanced groups and this has worked very well, despite the extra admin in sorting out the groups on a weekly basis. The virus has forced us into a change that we've talked about for a while with smaller groups and I feel that our athletes have benefitted from the more focused coaching and I've enjoyed coaching more as a result. We'll have to continue with the groups when we can return to training as they've worked a treat. Thanks go to Gillian for creating the Survey Monkey each week and the Coaching Team for sorting the groups each weekend.
- **Athlete Performance** – 2020 was a tricky year for competition, but it's excellent to report that we had 15 athletes who competed in the short summer season. We had club debuts for Noah & Timmy Crompton, Amelia Dale and Ellis Ward, plus we also had young athletes competing with Alyssa Keogh, Sian Gowdy, Finley Mollon & Spencer Rochester in Run, Jump, Throw at Hexham. Most athletes hit new pb's during the short season and we're confident that the smaller groups have helped us to focus our athletes performances.
- **Volunteer Recruitment & Development** – 2020 was a challenge and we still have officials experiences to finish for Lesley Foster (Field) and Gwen Gill (Track) with Louise McLellan (Field) having done one of the first virtual officials courses in 2020. Sam Keogh is still working towards her Coach qualification. We've also had Niamh Kemp & Timmy Crompton join the list of Athletics Leaders. The Athletics Leaders have been a great help in 2020, especially Katie Moody, Katie Gill & Owen Wadge. Katie Moody was runner up at the England Athletics regional volunteer awards in the young volunteer category. As the club grows, we need to continue to plan to develop for the future by encouraging parents or young athletes onto the coaching pathway and to develop those already on the pathway.
- **Young Sparks** – sadly, the Covid 19 outbreak has made Young Sparks a bit too difficult and I'm not sure that the enthusiasm is there for it to return.
- **North East Youth Development League** – the 2020 NEYDL was abandoned, but we're hopeful that the 2021 series will take place and we'll have a composite team with Jarrow & Hebburn AC in Division 2 North.
- **Competitions** – 2020 saw our athletes win medals for the first time at a North Eastern level, which was fantastic. Despite the lack of competition in 2020, our athletes competed well in the open meetings that took place. Hopefully 2021 will see a lot

more competition for our athletes to compete at and we'll be encouraging them to challenge their pb's.

- **Partnership Working & Fundraising** – Despite the Covid 19 outbreak, 2020 has been a positive year for fundraising at the club. We were successful in being awarded £2,000 from the County Durham Community Foundation to buy Sportshall equipment and this is still to be purchased as the Covid restrictions meant that we had nowhere to store the equipment. In June, the long jump pit was eventually completed and a huge thank you goes to Durham AAP, the local County Councillors in Framwellgate Moor & Framwellgate School for their contributions. The pit allowed us to train throughout the summer and it's proved to be a very valuable asset. In November, the club had the opportunity to bid to Sport England for "Return to Play" funding and this gave us the opportunity to bid for a container to store our equipment as well as contactless payment device, more lighting and other equipment to maintain Covid secure training. The club was successful with our bid for £3,700 in funding and despite an issue with getting a container supplied, we now have one in place. We'll continue to look for new funding sources to help us grow. 2021 will see us enter our 3<sup>rd</sup> year as member of the Durham Boys & Girls Club and hopefully their athletics events will take place this year. Disappointingly, England Athletics have had a restructure and Anna Coulson is no longer their Club Support Manager for the NE and we're now talking to new people at EA and we have some competition plans brewing, once lockdown restrictions are eased.

We've achieved a lot in our first few years as a club, but there's still lots to do as we continue to grow. When we started the club, I was less than keen to become Club Secretary and have been looking to step back from the role for some time. Thankfully, Sue Crampton has agreed to be put forward as Club Secretary (subject to a vote) and my plan is to continue coaching and looking at how we develop the club and run our own competitions. It will also give me a little more time as I work towards becoming a Level 4 Athletics Official so that I can then volunteer at national and international events.

May we continue to fly high and burn brightly.

Mark Ellis  
Secretary and Coach – Phoenix Flyers AC