



137th AGM – Clonliffe Harriers AC

24th March 2025

**Address by Stephen Bateson, Honorary Secretary
Clonliffe Harriers Annual Club Meeting**

Members, Captains, Presidents and Past Presidents, Committee Members,

It has been a great privilege to serve as Club Secretary for Clonliffe Harriers again over the past year. This has been another busy and dynamic year for our club, marked by growth, change, and significant achievements.

One of the most notable developments has been the evolution of our coaching structure. With several long-serving coaches retiring or stepping away, we have taken the opportunity to reshape our structure to ensure a clear pathway for athletes, guiding them from Juvenile to Junior, and Senior ranks. Despite these challenges, our commitment to athlete development has remained unwavering.

Our membership has reached unprecedented levels, with a post-Olympic surge bringing us to 826 registered Athletics Ireland members in 2024. This growth has not diluted our focus; rather, our Club Captains continue to strive to provide the best opportunities for all athletes. The club has entered large numbers into National Competitions, with meticulous pre-planning to ensure that athletes arrive at the start line in peak condition.

The introduction of the Fit4Life programme, which operates from the clubhouse on Monday and Wednesday evenings, has had a positive effect on both membership numbers and the club's social impact in the surrounding community. The success of this group has been demonstrated in a number of road races, where they have represented Clonliffe Harriers in strong numbers.

From an administrative perspective, all club fees are now paid online, and with Athletics Ireland requiring active membership for race entry, this has resulted in strong membership retention in the early months of 2025. As of now, our membership stands at 710, representing 86% of last year's total. Monthly club committee meetings continue in the bar, while Dublin County Board meetings remain remote via Zoom.

Club Facilities and Athlete Development

There has been a continued increase in the use of the club gym, particularly for Strength & Conditioning and rehabilitation workouts. The investment in the gym has proven to be a wise decision, with regular use by Juvenile Throwers, middle-distance groups, Seniors, and Masters athletes.

Club Events and Achievements

The Brother Schools Run, held again in October at Trinity Sports Ground, was another huge success, with participation increasing to 1,700 athletes across 14 races. It was particularly encouraging to see young Clonliffe athletes on the podium in their school colours, and the club was honoured with a community award, presented to Noel Guiden on behalf of Clonliffe Harriers.



The Club Track Championships, held in June and July, saw strong participation across events ranging from 100m to 5000m. The Grand Prix Series successfully hosted 17 events, with increased numbers in most races.

The Clonliffe 2 Mile, which took place in Glasnevin in October under the looming threat of Storm Ashley, was a resounding success, with 214 finishers. We were delighted to see a Clonliffe winner for the second consecutive year, as Lorcan Benjacar outsprinted Sean Carrigg and Mahad Mohammed, finishing in 9:42. 1st Lady being North East Runner's Aine Cotter in a time of 10:45 with Conliffe's Helena Butterly in 2nd in 11:17. There were Junior winners from Clonliffe in both the male and female Junior categories.

The Morton Games, held on July 13th, was arguably the best edition of the event to date. The evening saw:

- Five stadium records,
- An Irish U/23 record,
- 13 sub-four-minute miles, and
- A home win in the Morton Mile, with Cathal Doyle taking victory.

In the Junior Men's race, Sean Cronin retained his title, closely followed by Lorcan Benjacar, securing a Clonliffe one-two finish. Meanwhile, Gemma Galvin (Ennis Track) won the Noreen O'Leary Trophy for the Women's U20 Mile, and In the Women's 800m, McKenna Keegan (USA) won in 1:59.82, taking home the Claire Walsh Trophy.

Our athletes have travelled to National Championships across Ireland, competing in Irvinestown, Tramore, and Westport, while making club history by sending both Junior Men's and Women's squads to Albufeira for the European Clubs Cross Country and Almond Blossom Cross Country for the development squad.

At the National Road Relays in Raheny, Clonliffe teams continued to make their presence felt, adding to the club's recent domination of the event.

Club Development and Safety

To support our athletes, we introduced affordable competition gear for Juveniles, which was so well received that it was extended to all adult sizes. Additionally, this year saw the introduction of a hi-visibility long-sleeved t-shirt, which sold 200 garments in a single day.

Under the co-ordination of Stephen Harkness, continued maintenance and security upgrades have taken place at the clubhouse. Additional car parking spaces were created by relocating the equipment container, while the installation of security cameras and lighting has improved safety on training nights.



We have also prioritized coaching education and athlete safety, including:

- Juvenile and Senior Sprints coaching courses,
- Safeguarding training for all coaching volunteers,
- Fire safety refresher training for bar staff.

Acknowledgments and Gratitude

None of these achievements would be possible without the dedicated team of volunteers who give their time and energy to support our athletes and ensure the success of the club. I extend my sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

I would like to extend my congratulations to our outgoing Ladies' Captain, Jenny Johnston, for her outstanding achievements in raising the standard of ladies' athletics at Clonliffe Harriers over the past four years. From the moment she took on the role, Jenny brought success and organization, fostering the development of young athletes and strengthening our teams in both Cross Country and Track & Field.

As both an athlete and Captain, she has led by example by securing medals in Cross Country and the Track & Field League. Her dedication extended beyond competition, as she played a key role in uniting our ladies Junior, Senior, and Masters athletes, most notably through the memorable celebration of the Morton Marvels' 60th anniversary, where each of the original Marvels was honoured.

We wish Jenny continued success as she now focuses on her continued athletics career.

A special thank you must go to Brian McDonald, our outgoing Club Treasurer, who has played a key role in overseeing the transition of the club's finances to an online, cashless system. From registration to club gear purchases, all transactions are now handled digitally—a major step forward for the club. Brian has also been an invaluable source of support to me as Club Secretary, and I greatly appreciate his work.

I would also like to acknowledge Declan Power for his assistance as Assistant Club Secretary over the past year.

Looking Ahead

As we look forward, I remain committed to ensuring the continued success and development of Clonliffe Harriers. If re-elected, I would be honoured to continue serving as Club Secretary, working alongside all of you to ensure that our club remains at the forefront of Irish athletics.

Thank you.

Stephen Bateson

Honorary Secretary, Clonliffe Harriers