



Garden City Runners: News Release from a Distance

Issue Six: 26 April 2020

The one after the AGM: a new club committee, a new week of challenges, same lockdown!

Results of the AGM

The first (and hopefully last) virtual club AGM was held via Zoom on Thursday night. A full report has been issued by outgoing Chairman Brad, but I'd like to take a moment to say kudos and thank you to our outgoing committee members and captains – Brad Smith; Andrew Newbury; Richard Somerset; and Charlee Chapman.

Your 2020/21 club committee and captains comprises:

Jane Molley (Chair); Nigel Cavill (Treasurer); Karen Atkinson (secretary); Sue Fletcher (membership secretary); Sean Bowen; Tony Harden; Tom Wackett; James Huish (men's team captain); Helen Paine (ladies team captain).

Richard Darley remains as men's team vice-captain and Hannah Frank takes up the mantle of ladies' team vice-captain.

GCR pub quiz

Continuing the Zoom success of the AGM, Rebecca and Brad are hosting a virtual charity pub quiz this Thursday 30th April, starting at 8.15pm after the now weekly Clap for Careers.

To sign up, simply donate to the GCR justgiving page to secure your place. Minimum suggested donation of £3 per person, all proceeds towards NHS Charities Together.

The 2.6 challenge

In honour of the weekend that should have been the London Marathon, the marathon organisers have established the 2.6 challenge to recoup some of the projected £66m that UK charities will lose out on. The challenge is simple – run, walk, dance, exercise a combination of 2.6 – that could be miles, minutes or whatever takes your fancy.

Unsurprisingly, GCRs have taken to this challenge like ducks to water – or should that be dinosaurs to parkway??

2.6 KM

CRAIG STEPHENSON and SHARON THRELFELL ran 2.6K around WGC city centre on Sunday morning – whilst dressed as dinosaurs! Craig reports that while running was just possible in the outfits, they could only manage short sprints so treated it like an interval session. Highlights of their dinosaur tour included: entertaining the Waitrose queue; having selfies with OAPs and the Saver's staff; frightening small children; raising sponsorship money; and being beeped by lots of cars. Look out for Craig and Sharon in an upcoming edition of the WH Times.

JACQUELINE MCCALLUM also took on the 2.6K distance with daughter Lottie.



2.6 MILES

JANE MOLLEY donned her best (and only) fancy dress for a 2.6 mile run up and down Burnham Green village green – securing another box on the GCR Bingo card in the process!

NIKKI COWEN also completed 2.6 miles in fancy dress up and down her road, before donning pink to complete a 10K.



TIM COOKE and RACHAEL EVERARD also completed 2.6 mile runs – inspired perhaps by the New Balance Strava challenge and the promise of discounted shoes!

26.2 KM

A popular distance for a long Sunday run this weekend!

JAMES DUNMORE ran a 26.26K distance along the Alban Way, through Sandridge and up to the Ayots in what he describes as a “fantastic country route – very fast flat first half, very hilly taxing second”. James tried to engineer a 2 hour 26 second finish but finished just 30 seconds out after miscalculating the last 260m.

26.2 MILES

Finally, GCR superstars BECCA HAYDEN and CHARLOTTE JONES both ran full marathon distances of 26.2 miles!

Becca chose a route around Welwyn Garden and surrounding countryside. Despite not having been in marathon training before COVID hit, Becca said she felt inspired to do something to support charities hit by the crisis and is fundraising for Mind UK (see Becca’s Facebook post to donate).

Charlotte, who should have been running London yesterday, took to completing countless laps of her garden to complete her marathon distance, and is still fundraising for local charity the Isobel Hospice.



Winner of the best costume for the 2.6 challenge

The prize for best dressed, awarded by Rebecca Barden, goes to Craig and Sharon the dinosaurs, although Terry the power ranger also deserves a special mention!

Craig and Sharon, your prize – appropriately two bags of dragon eggs- can be collected from Rebecca at a convenient time in a socially distant manner.

Mid-Herts Half Marathon

Disappointed not to be running London yesterday, REBECCA BARDEN took on the first running of the Mid-Herts Half Marathon. Rebecca reports –

“Handily, the race starts right outside my house on Parkway and finishes by the scenic WGC welcome sign on Valley Road. Due to social distancing measures, only one entrant is allowed and I was lucky to be selected to compete on behalf of my hometown WGC and to represent GCR. The race takes an extremely scenic route around the Ayots,, up to Codicote and Kimpton, before a return leg from Lamer Wood, along the banks of the River Lea and finally home across the Brocket golf course. It is self-navigated with no marshals of any kind, but I was cheered by chance encounters of friends along the way and enjoyed the beautiful Herts countryside on a glorious Spring morning.

Not including stops to maintain social distancing, chat with friends and take photos, my finish time was 1:53:59. I was first lady and first in my age group, 29 and over.

To mark the occasion I made a donation to Medicins Sans Frontieres, a charity that provides medical aid when needed in crisis situations around the world.”

Other Sunday runs

BARBARA KUBIS-LABIAK, HANNAH FRANK, KATH EVANS and RICHARD DARLEY all took on the WGC Centenary Way. STEVE EDWARDS also ran the loop but added some to complete a 30K distance.

ELAINE GILES took to the countryside to complete a gorgeous 10 miler instead of the London marathon. JOHN DAVIS also reported a 10 mile “plod” post beer and curry night.

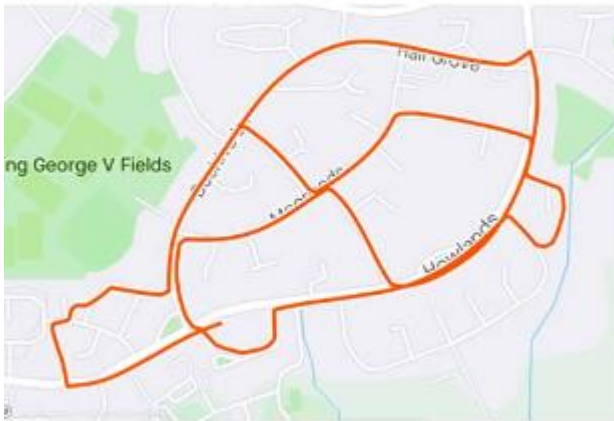
MARK ASHWORTH put his lockdown training to good use to report a 10K PB.

EMMA DEMPSTER ticked off another bingo spot with an impressive piece of Strava art



Emma Dempster
Today at 11:32 AM

**GCR bingo strava art, too hot,
too hungover**



Distance	3.17 mi	Avg Pace	12:15 /mi
Moving Time	38:56	Elevation Gain	101 ft

Wear pink for Hol

KATH EVANS asked GCR's to wear their best pink outfits on Sunday in honour of local charity WellChild and 18 year old Holly Smallman.

Holly sadly passed away in March after a long battle with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and chronic lung disease. Holly loved the colour pink so her family asked people to join them in celebrating Holly life by running in pink on Sunday.



Last week's "Out and Back" challenge

A fantastic turnout for last week's challenge – which was to run 25 minutes out and 25 minutes back, aiming for a stable pace or even a negative split! All completed it within seconds of the 50 minutes with some bang on.

Well done to everyone who gave it a go, especially those who gave themselves the extra challenge of an uphill return!

Next week's challenge – Run the Rainbow

Next week's challenge, posted by Karen Atkinson, is to Run the Rainbow – show our support and appreciation for the NHS and all key workers by running in rainbow colours. Dig deep into those piles of t-shirts and post your colourful selfies on Facebook throughout the week.

Save your blue shirt for Thursday's run and help turn the local streets blue for the NHS. Perhaps you could even plan a route that incorporates the NHS blue fountain on Parkway?

GCR Bingo

HANNAH FRANK was first to secure a row on the GCR Bingo card, but the race is still on for a full house! See last week's newsletter or the Facebook post for a reminder on the challenges.

Thoughts on the Centenary Way

This round-WGC 20.20K orbital loop has proved a popular choice for GCRs over the past few weeks wanting to test out their navigation skills on the full or part of the linked trail. With GCR vice-captains RICHARD DARLEY and HANNAH FRANK both completing the full loop for the first time over the weekend, JAMES AITCHISON offers some reflections on the route.

Centenary Walk 2020? From James Aitchison

"I love the Centenary Walk. It links some of our best local paths and has introduced me to new places. The leaflet with its sketch map of local features is charming. I enjoy following the current signage, and look forward to the metal signs being added.

But is the circuit really 20.20KM? Apparently, when the Walk was just measured by Herts County Council it did indeed miraculously come out at 20.20KM, but, sensibly, the organisers haven't risked re-measuring it since. On different runs I have clocked slightly over and under the official distance, but then I haven't taken precisely the same route. I wonder if judicious small diversions and short cuts could give the perfect platonic 20.20KM?

If you haven't yet checked out the Centenary loop for yourself find all the details here – www.wgc100.org/centenary-walk

Not-parkrun: Saturday morning 5Ks

GCRs continue to let the cancelation of the traditional Saturday morning parkrun bring them down! Please share your not-parkrun prowess on the GCR Facebook page for inclusion in the newsletter. A round-up of the alternative parkrun routes and their conquerors:

Subway relay not-parkrun

HAYLEY CONNOLLY took on this novel route that included a tour of the subways of Panshanger. Hayley took advantage of the late start of this not-parkrun to finish in a time of 27:28. SHERRY PEARSON took on a similar, but slightly different, tour of the Panshanger subways in time of 37:49.

Panshanger not-parkrun

BARBARA KUBIS-LABIAK and Kenji the dog completed this not-parkrun even in 27:19.

Dean Garden not-parkrun

ELIZABETH DEAN completed a double-not-parkrun up and down her garden on Saturday morning, running a total distance of 6 miles in 1:13:32.

Burnham Green not-parkrun

JANE MOLLOY participated in the 5th occasion of the Bunham Green – Bulls Green not-parkrun event. Jane finished in 37 minutes and reports that although it wasn't a PB today she was still top of the leaderboard!

St John's not-parkrun

RICHARD DARLEY finished 1st in the inaugural St John's Church to St John's School not-parkrun event.

Balls Park not-parkrun

The third running of the Balls Park parkrun saw SHARON THRELFALL, along with Acer and Jake, smashing their PBs to finish in a time of 28 minutes.

Kimpton not-parkrun

Another not-parkrun event celebrating its 5th occurrence, PAUL GUY reported his fifth consecutive course PB in an impressive time of 19:15.

Thorny not-parkrun

ELAINE GILES bravely battled thorns and injury to complete a not-parkrun event from Hazel Grove towards Colney Heath.

Panshanger Lane not-parkrun

STEVE BUTTON was first home at the inaugural Panshanger Lane event, finishing in 25:01.

Great North Road not-parkrun

An out and back not-parkrun route along the B197, KAREN ATKINSON, was first past the post in a time of 30:20.

Henderson Garden not-parkrun

KERRY HENDERSON also found a novel not-parkrun event that happened to be taking place in her garden - Kerry finished 1st lady in 43:28.

Birch Green not-parkrun

SARAH LYNN completed another Birch Green not-parkrun event, finishing in 35:24.

Continuing the GCR coronavirus weekly challenges!

While our usual group running routines are out because of social distancing, we are inviting club members to take on specific challenges on certain days of the week. The overall aim is to help us all to be as fit and strong – if not more so – when we come out of the other side.

Tuesday	Run Leaders Challenge As members are missing out on all the fun of our regular training sessions, each week a different Run Leader will come up with an idea for club members' solo sessions that day. It's a day to work on your own personal goals, the reason why you come to the club each Tuesday. It's also a day when the Run Leader's challenge will aim to bring us closer together virtually in our running community. Please keep an eye on the GCR Facebook page for the weekly challenge.
Thursday	10k Training Challenge We were all set to initiate two different 10k training regimes – and we're not going to let a pesky virus stop us! 10k is the average distance for both Midweek league and Sunday Cross-Country League, where we aim to shine for both performance and inclusivity. If you've just completed your Beginners programme, or maybe you've never run a full 10k, then there is the Bridge to 10k programme, thanks to Helen Harrison. If you're keen to improve your current 10k performance, then follow the excellent plan devised by Tom Wackett. The aim is to dazzle with our league performances next available opportunity. For more info - https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/covid19-2/
Saturday	Not –your-average-parkrun Challenge Run 5k. Wherever you want. Simple. Let's continue to get 60+ members out doing their best 5k on Saturday mornings, come rain or shine. Wouldn't it be amazing if GCR achieved a host of course PBs on the first official day of parkrun's return?
Sunday	Long Run Challenge Sunday is traditionally the day when endurance runners gambol far and wide, often going further than anticipated as a result of joyfully getting lost. This is your opportunity to get an impressive number of miles under your belt. Maybe you have had a marathon or half-marathon cancelled – do one anyway! Without the encouragement of the crowds or companion runners, what are the things that make you want to keep going?

There'll be weekly reminders on our Facebook page, and we want to see lots of submissions to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk of photos, reports of personal achievements and stories for future newsletters.

Route of the week

This week's route recommendation is to simply get out and enjoy the last of the glorious Herts bluebell season!

A few personal favourite spots:

- Sherrardspark Woods, north east corner at the top of Knightsfield;
- Ayot Greenway, particularly the WGC end near Ayot St Peter;
- Near Tewin Water, on the Centenary Way between Digswell and Tewin;
- Great Symondshyde Woods (pictured below on my long Friday run).



Running safely

We love to see club members being active in inventive ways in these difficult times. We urge everyone to exercise safely – not just for their own benefit, but especially that of more vulnerable members of our community and our NHS. As a club we have an opportunity to set the best example in how we exercise.

Government advice is changing regularly. Please check before you run.

At the time of writing:

- Exercise on your own or with someone you live with;
- Remember only one outdoor exercise a day and that you should only travel if essential, avoid driving to your running route and instead plan a route from home;
- While out running, keep a safe distance of at least two metres from others, stopping if necessary to allow others more room to go by, and give a wide berth when overtaking;
- If possible, plan routes that take you away from town centres and out into the countryside, the fields and footpaths are nice and dry so take advantage;
- Generally, places are quite quiet due to social distancing but it is best to avoid busier areas – at the moment that seems to be the Waitrose car park queue and Sherardspark woods at lunch time;
- If you cough or sneeze while running, it's extra important to cough or sneeze into your elbow;
- Avoid touching or contacting other surfaces with your hands, like gates or stiles, use your sleeve or gloves to open gates if necessary;
- Wash your hands before you head out and as soon as you get home.

Route planning

Struggling to find a suitable route without your run leaders guidance? Check out the GCR Strava members group for inspiration from your fellow GCRs! Strava have also just realised a route planning feature for Summit members.

The following apps and websites also come recommended by club members:

- Footpath (app)/ MapAMeter (online): Editors recommendation! Footpaths and distances across the UK and Europe (I've successfully used it in Norway and Italy), with a handy "snap to path" feature for the less-diligent route planners amongst us;
- Map My Run: Also has others saved nearby routes for inspiration.
- Plot A Route: Same as above.

Happy and safe running everyone!

Club Kit

A reminder that new club kit is available from Kit-Meister Richard Somerset. All items cost £20, you can pay by cash or bank transfer, either FB message or text Richard on 07790 591868 or email rich.somerset@ntlworld.com to arrange pick-up. Kit available includes:

- Men's vests, from XS to 2XL
- Men's t-shirts from XS to 3XL
- Men's long sleeve tops S to XL (please contact Richard if you want XS or 2XL and he will place an order)
- Women's vest from XS to 2XL
- Women's t-shirts from XS to 2XL
- Women's long sleeve tops, from XS to XL

Avery League 2020

The Avery League is currently suspended.

GCR Strava Group

If you'd like to join the GCR Strava community, [click here](#) for details of the group. It's a great way to keep in touch with your fellow club members during this time of isolation.

Join Garden City Runners

Do you live in or near Welwyn Garden City? Like running? Garden City Runners is your local running club. It has nearly 300 members and encourages participation by all. The club has a varied training programme to suit everyone, from working up to 5 kilometres right through to full marathons. Try a few sessions before joining. Membership is only £20 per year and is available on the GCR website via the new Membermojo platform (note that it is no longer possible to join via the old application form). Simply log into <https://membermojo.co.uk/gcr> and follow the instructions. If you want to know more about the Garden City Runners please contact Helen Paine (Secretary) or Sue Fletcher (Membership) at gcr@gardencityrunners.org.uk, visit our website <https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/> or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/