



Garden City Runners News Release

14 January 2024

Stormbreak and Foodbank charity events arrive at parkrun

It's not often parkruns make the headlines — but in the absence of much other racing activity, we do so unashamedly this week.

Stormbreak Charity parkrun

Three GCRs—**Katy Healy**, **Jo Grant** and **Sam Males**—travelled to Poole this weekend to coincide with a *Stormbreak* charity meeting, for whom Katy is a trustee. Stormbreak was set up by **Martin Yelling** (of Marathon Talk fame)—a founder of the charity that aims to improve children's mental health through movement, and there was also a guest appearance by parkrun founder (and fellow Stormbreak trustee) **Paul Sinton-Hewitt**. Sam Males managed to smash out a PB on the fast, flat but very busy course, in a time of 23:13.





Top picture Katy Healy, Jo Grant, Sam Males. Above: Jo and Sam meeting Martin Yelling

Foodbank Run

Foodbank Run is an initiative that encourages running groups to partner with local food banks to organise a run and get participants to bring donations. GCR are getting involved by planning a parkrun take-over the first weekend in February (3-4)—providing pacers at Panshanger, and volunteering at both Panshanger and Beehive.

The club is asking members, whether running or walking, to arrive with donations for the Food Bank. They are also looking for pacers at Panshanger where there will be 10 pacer slots added to the volunteer roster for February 3. Please use the volunteer email panshanger@parkrun.com to fill one of these slots, stating pacing time preferences (18,20,22,24,26,28,30,32,34,36 minutes).

Joining the volunteer roster at Panshanger parkrun will also provide an excellent rest day opportunity for those doing the Watford Half the following day.

email panshanger@parkrun.com

The following day at Beehive is the Junior parkrun. Anyone interested in volunteering should email beehivejuniors@parkrun.com.

Over 2.1 million people use food banks—up from 1.5m five years ago. February has been chosen, as it is a key time of the year when families are hardest hit, with utility and food bills

up, and the arrival of all the post-Christmas bills. More information on the *Foodbank Run* initiative can be found on their website and their Facebook page using these links <https://runr.co.uk/pages/foodbankrun> / [FoodbankrunFB](https://www.facebook.com/foodbankrun) There are some inspiring stories of runs already completed.

More information on Hertford & District Food Bank can be found at <https://hertforddistrict.foodbank.org.uk/>

Dorney Lake 5K, 10K and Half Marathon

Dorney Lake held its 5K, 10K and Half Marathon races on Sunday at its picturesque location in Eton. **Willow Gibson** ran the 10km, **Hiran Fernando** took on the Half Marathon and **Lee Wood** did the duathlon, while **Donna** supported. Willow reports that the event, popular as part of prep for marathon season, was extremely well organised. As for Lee (*pictured below left with medal*), he had signed up for the sprint distance triathlon, a 5km run, 20km bike followed by a final 2.5km run.



Lee said he was unsure what to expect having rarely ridden a bike in the last few months and recovering from a hamstring niggle that had seen him DNF at the St. Albans 10K on New Year's Eve. "I was super happy to finish in 1:27:03 and second in my (admittedly small) age group despite being so cold I struggled to tie my shoe laces in transition," he continued.

"Dorney is a stunning venue and anyone considering trying a duathlon the flat course and closed roads make it an ideal race for beginners."

Other photos below.



Salcey Forest Canicross 10K



Thippi Rashleigh and **David Hale** (*pictured*) continued the GCR Canicross / Dog Running initiative by taking part in the ATW 10K at Salcey Forest. "This was quite a big event," reports David. "And with so many dogs taking part, it was not possible to hear the starting instructions as all the dogs were going crazy." That said, it was an excellent event, "with great facilities, a lovely course through trails of Salcey Forest and plenty of mud." David and Albie finished in 62 minutes , Thippi and Ninja in 66 minutes.

GCR's next Canicross group run will be on Sunday, January 21st. Anyone wishing to be included in the GCR Canicross

WhatsApp group should contact David or **Barbara Kubis-Labiak**.

GCR Awards Night

As trailed last week, this year's GCR Awards evening has been announced. It will take place on Friday, March 15 at the Cocktail Bar, Misya Meze & Grill, in WGC.

"Tickets at £12.50 each will buy you a wonderful evening with running buddies, celebrating all the magnificent achievements and contributions of Club Members over the last year," says **Jane Molloy**. "This is when we have the chance to clap and whoop to show our admiration and gratitude for those who have done amazing things for and with the club. Delicious food, a bar and a disco are all promised.

Tickets are available from:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/gardencityrunners/1113049#>

But don't delay, as capacity is restricted to 100 people.

Race Committee seeks new member

A vacancy has come up on GCR's Race Committee following the decision by **Rebecca Barden** to stand down, reports **Tim Cooke**. As a result, a replacement is being sought.

The Race Committee is tasked with providing the following input to the main committee: Club Awards nominations; Race Budget; Avery Competition, calendar and rules and Westlake Championship, calendar and rules.

This sub-committee currently comprises **Daniel Pudner, Hannah Ahmet, James Huish, Lucy Iles, Peter Harvey, Richard Somerset, Sean Bowen** and **Tim Cooke**. "We aim to have a cross section of people to represent the club, attempting the same gender balance as in the general membership, and with a spread of ability, speed, and experience," says Tim. "The most important traits are to be committed and energised, so anyone wishing to get involved, or learn more about what the role involves, is invited to contact Tim Cooke at tim@softus.co.uk. Tim, meanwhile, played glowing tribute to Rebecca's sterling work, particularly during the difficult pandemic years.

Herts County Road Race Championships

After 14 years of much appreciated service on the Herts AAA Road Racing sub-committee **Sean Bowen** has stepped down as the GCR Rep. In his place is **Peter Harvey**.

County Road Races

Hertfordshire has 'County Championship' races where runners may compete as individuals and represent Garden City Runners. Anyone born in Hertfordshire, or having lived there for the last nine months, is eligible to participate. Championship races are held within a race such as the Fred Hughes 10 which is hosting the Veterans County Championships in 2024. The Senior Championships are for anyone eligible regardless of age. In order to be eligible for a Championship race it is necessary to tick the County Box. Even runners thinking they are too slow to win anything, should still tick the box, as there have been some unexpected team medallists (including 'B' teams!)

The following races are hosting Championships:

Jan 21st: Fred Hughes 10 miler at St Albans

Veterans, also an Avery & GCR Club Championship race (*Race entry now closed*).

Feb 4th: Watford Half Marathon

Seniors (not Vets as listed on the ATW website). Note that this is also an Avery & GCR Club Championship race

https://www.atwevents.co.uk/e/atw-watford-half-marathon-8841?tid=432&utm_campaign=Google+Ad+-+Watford+Half&utm_source=Google+Advert&utm_medium=Google+Advert&gclid=CjwKCAiA1-6sBhAoEiwArqIGPkVAnNHK0OA3cUcg-01HopK9AQ6v7KSQBLkpHbkeYW4tR6oA5I8pExoCOTkQAvD_BwE

March 24th: Hillingdon 20 miler (formerly the famous Finchley 20)

Seniors

<https://www.atwevents.co.uk/e/hillingdon-20-8921>

May 5th: Hitchin 10k

– Seniors

<https://my.raceresult.com/242800/>

More County races will be confirmed in due course.

Any questions email peterharveyone@gmail.com

parkrun roundup

Some 98 GCRs took part in parkruns across the country at the weekend. Some of the highlights included Panshanger where the club occupied five positions in the top 10. First through the funnel was **Adam Wadley** (19:00), with **Paul Guy** finishing 4th (in 19:27), **Bruce Judge** 5th in 20:11, **Steve Ellerd-Elliott** 9th in 20:34 and **Simon Bostock** 10th in 21:28. Elsewhere, other commendable performances were at Grovelands (Enfield), where **Richard Somerset** finished 11th in 20:13; St. Albans, where **Chris Dungate** nailed an impressive 19:40 to finish 10th; Stevenage, where **Martin Mitchell** comfortably broke the 20 minute barrier, to finish 12th in 19:25. Further north up in the Lake District **Chris Eland** recorded a hugely impressive time of 18:38 to finish 9th. Running close to that time was **Chris Baylis** (18:42) which was enough to secure victory at Leavesden Country parkrun.

Full results for GCRs participating in Saturday's parkruns can be found [here](#).

Group Runs - Tuesdays 6.20pm for 6.30pm start, Dance Studio Ridgeway Academy

The group runs are planned to take approximately an hour, the following table gives an idea of the pace. To give variety, especially in the summer, distances will vary a little.

Group/Distance	Pace (mins/km)	Pace (mons/mile)
5k social	A gentle-paced run that would suit those who are still new to running, like a slower pace, are returning from injury or a break from running	
7k	7:30 – 8	12 – 13
8k	7 – 7:30	11 – 12
9k	6:30 – 7	10 – 11
10k	5:45 – 6	9 – 9:30
12k	5 – 5:30	8 – 8:30

Interval Sessions: various locations in Welwyn Garden City, 6:45pm start

Approximately 25 mins of high intensity intervals over distances from 400m to a mile, with rest periods, in various locations in WGC. Runners of all abilities are welcome, pace is dictated by the runners themselves, slower runners will simply do fewer repetitions. Members will be notified of the locations and session format on email and Facebook.

Group Runs – Thursdays 6.30pm Campus West

There are usually three groups as follows:

5k social	A gentle-paced run that would suit those who are still new to running, like a slower pace, are returning from injury or a break from running
Introduction to speed session	A training session for those who are daunted by the track. A mixture of intervals, fartlek and speed sessions. Ideal for those trying to improve their 10k time
Steady Group	Steady group run

Track Intervals – Thursdays 8:00pm Gosling Track

Meet at the track for 15 minutes of warm up activities followed by approximately 30 minutes of track intervals. Sessions comprise laps or multiple laps of the track followed by rest periods. Runners of all abilities are welcome, runners will be formed into groups based on targeted pace.

A reminder to GCRs that there are now parking charges at Gosling Sports Park – this page has details of car parking charges:

<https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/welwyn/gosling-sports-park/gosling-car-parking>

Circuit Training - Homerswood School

For those interested, former GCR member Steve Livingstone runs a very good one-hour circuit training session every **Monday at 6:30pm at Homerswood School**, Kirklands, WGC, AL8 7RF.

The cost is £5 (free for first timers). Five minutes warm up, 40 mins circuits, 15 mins stretching (great for runners). Bring a towel and some water.

Cross Country fixtures:

Please note the dates of Cross Country fixtures, in addition to the Sunday League, over the 2023-24 season:

27 Jan 2024 - Southern Main Champs - Beckenham

24 Feb 2024 - Nationals - Telford

26 Mar 2024 - Herts Vets – Watford

GCR Club Championships

The Club Championships principally consist of races open to the public, although other races may be included as long as they are not hosted by Garden City Runners. The races are ideally chosen from the Avery calendar; however, Race Committee may express flexibility including prestigious events and those facilitating Hertfordshire County Championships. parkruns may be included and should be local.

For 2024 the Championship races are:

Race #	Event	Date
1	Fred Hughes 10	21 st January
2	Watford Half	4 th February
3	Panshanger parkrun	9 th March
4	Flitwick 10k	14 th April
5	St Albans Half	9 th June
6	FVS 3k Relay	End July (tbc)
7	Stevenage 10k	15 th September
8	ATW Hatfield 5	24 th November

The above are subject to change where unforeseen circumstances dictate.

GCR Avery Competition 2024

The GCR Race Committee has produced the calendar of races for the Avery Championship and the Club Championships. Details on all of the 2024 races are below, and these will also be published on the GCR web site, as soon as possible, and on the GCR Facebook group. Please note that the Avery Rules have been simplified by removing the Tiebreaker - in future, joint winners will share the trophy. The club is also creating a new award for the winners of the Club Championships - details will be revealed in the next few weeks. Happy Racing!

Avery Event #	Date	Event	Venue	Cost <i>Registration fees may apply</i>	Status / Notes
1	21 st January	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£20.00 aff.	Sold out
2	4 th February	Watford Half		£31.00 aff.	Register here
3	18 th February	SXCL Royston (Race #5 of 2023-2024 season)	Therfield Heath, Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
4 (V)	9 th March	Panshanger parkrun	Panshanger Park	Free	https://www.parkrun.org.uk/panshanger/
5	24 th March	Run Fest at Lee Valley (choice of Half or 10k)	Lee Valley Water Park, Waltham Cross	10k: £26.00 aff. Half: £34.00 aff.	Register here
6	14 th April	Flitwick 10k	Flitwick	£18.00 aff.	Register here
7	6 th May (tbc)	Kimpton Fun Run 10k	Kimpton	tbc	Details tbc
8	Mid-May (tbc)	MWRRL #1	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
9	End May (tbc)	MWRRL #2	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
10	Start June (tbc)	MWRRL #3	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
11	End June (tbc)	MWRRL #4	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
12 (V)	End June (tbc)	Welwyn 10k (if going ahead)	tbc	tbc	Details tbc

13 (V)	Start to mid July (tbc; poss. second week)	MWRRL Mob Match	Ridgway Academy, WGC	Free	Club will send out details via email
14	End July (tbc)	FVS 3k Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email
15 (V)	4/11/18 th August (tbc)	GCR Centenary 20.2k	WGC Centenary Route	Free	Club will send out details via email
16 (V)	4 th September (tbc)	Hatfield 5k #2 (Vets)	Hatfield	tbc	Details tbc
17	15 th September	Stevenage 10k	Stevenage	£16.00 aff. (before 31 Dec) £18.00 aff. (from 1 Jan 2024)	Register here
18 (V)	Mid October (tbc)	SXCL #1	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
19	20 th October	Stevenage Half Marathon & Marathon	Stevenage	tbc	Register here
20	End October (tbc)	SXCL #2 (poss. Jersey Farm parkrun as back-up)	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
21	Start November (tbc)	SXCL #3 (poss. Jersey Farm parkrun as back-up)	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
22	24 th November	Hatfield 5	Hatfield	£22.00 early-bird aff.	Register here
23 (V)	Early December (tbc)	Festive 5	WGC	tbc	Club will send out details via email
24	Mid December (tbc)	SXCL #4	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email

Aff. = affiliated. FVS = Fairlands Valley Spartans. MWRRL = Mid Week Road Racing League. SXCL = Sunday Cross Country League. Tbc = to be confirmed. V = participants can score by volunteering. WGC = Welwyn Garden City

Club Kit

Club kit is available from the Club Kit Secretary Richard Somerset.

We have vests, t-shirts, long sleeve tops and jackets in club colours in all sizes, **and *new* a cosy GCR-branded woolly hat.** See club website for photos. All items are £20 (£19.99 if you pay by bank transfer) except for the hats which are £12 and the jackets which are £42.

You can pay by cash or bank transfer. Please Facebook message or text Richard on 07790 591868 or email rich.somerset@ntlworld.com to arrange pick-up.

"Puffa" jackets are also available for £42, please contact Martha Hall on: ma-hall28@hotmail.com for availability and more details.

GCR Strava Group

If you'd like to join the GCR Strava community, follow this link: <https://www.strava.com/clubs/garden-city-runners>

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 over 350 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 Sean Bowen (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/

Please send reports of races and milestones, with photos if available, before early Sunday evening for (almost) guaranteed inclusion, to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk