**Riverside Runners 2017 AGM – Secretary’s speech**

As a member of Riverside Runners living in Cambourne, the question I get asked the most, after why are you always late?, is why do you come to a running club in St Neots? I respond that I joined wanting to do to speedwork and found a group of friends. That I have a busy life and there is some form of club run or training pretty much whenever I can find the time to go. That I was made to feel welcome from the moment I went on that first run and Karen told me I could use Bing to plot running routes. That from that first time I wore the famous green and white top, I knew I would never wear another one. That I had found kindred spirits who just get it. I don’t have to worry about boring them with my running stories and questions…they all have them too. That the club is there for all of us in whatever way we can and want to access it – whether it be for a social life, trying to get fit, coming back after injury, working towards a PB, a new distance or a trophy.

And when my husband asked me why, when I already have too many things to balance in my life, did I want to be on the committee of the Riverside Runners and train as a leader, I respond that it’s because I want to help make the club even better, stronger…more open and to help more people find the joy in running that I’ve found. I work for a charity and one of the things we talk about is a virtuous cycle where our beneficiaries go on to help other people overcome their own difficulties and achieve success, and I feel like our club is the same…

There’s our outgoing club captain who has devoted so many hours to the brilliantly successful beginner courses and juniors amongst other things, that I have no idea how he has fitted in the training for the London Marathon place he finally got this year and so richly deserves. There’s our amazing junior coaches, and newly qualified leaders: who have done such a fabulous job that those who have moved up to Seniors are scoring points in the Frostbites and our great reputation has gained us a waiting list.

Alan Turnbull and his brother (Ian) – who run varied and challenging speedwork sessions for us each week, Maurice for organising the monthly handicap, Natalie & Adrian – who make anyone & everyone in the club feel welcome and special, Darren – Mr PMA, Gary – the lovely Gary Barnes, who has helped many a damsel in distress.

Dawn Parr with her cheery smile and Riverside green and white socks there at every Frostbite, Lucy Boothby with her quiet and subtle encouragement, Matt Sellick with his determination to keep the Saturday morning sessions going, Tony Hainsby – there cheering us all on at so many local events with a bundle of star awards to hand out, Phil – the fountain of knowledge who has an answer to absolutely any running question…and Sam our chairman who does so much behind the scenes in her quiet and efficient way…I could go on and on.

This year has seen long-established events run again and new events introduced: Not Kenny’s relay is now a highlight if the social calendar with 110 people attending and 66 running, Phil’s Christmas Chocolate Chase with a bit less mud than the previous year but more chocolate – most of which was found by Norma, I seem to recall, the New Year’s Day Bacon Butty Run, the new Parent & child relay organised by Darren with a great turnout. There was also great teamwork demonstrated at the Round Norfolk Relay and Thunder runs and Club trips to the Beachy Head marathon and Lisbon half.

And our two races – the ever-popular 10k and half marathon, which get amazing support from so many club members each year, whether they are marshalls, pacers, running…

The club championship is going from strength to strength in it’s new, more inclusive format, and even more members received completion awards at the presentation evening – 29 short distance completions and 18 long…only 4 races, with the longest being a 10k for the short-distance championship is very doable…even my husband, one of our newest recruits, thinks so as he has already completed one race and is determined to be up there collecting his award next year. The same goes for the Junior championship – it was great to see so many completion awards given out to them at their presentation evening too, and provides great motivation for the other members to get more involved the following year.

The amount of advice, support, give back and general good feeling throughout the members of the club is phenomenal. Is it our 30th year this year. We will be organising something to commemorate this towards the end of the summer – if anyone wants to help, please do let us know. More than that though. I have no doubt that we’ll be celebrating the auspicious day that the club was formed for many years yet to come.

I would like to thank everyone who served on the committee this year for your part in the administration and running of the club and I would like to thank every member of the club for making it what it is.