

Valley Striders Juniors - Report for 2023 AGM – from Bob Jackson

Membership

In last year's Annual Report, I said that between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 our junior membership increased from 108 to 130.

During the rest of 2022 (to the end of our membership year) we recruited 17 new members who paid a small fee for the rest of the year, giving a total of 147.

From 1 January 2023 to 31 August 2023 (the end of the financial year), 38 resigned (a not unusual percentage), 1 transferred as a "young adult" to the adult section, 108 renewed and 38 joined, giving a total of 146, an increase of 16 members from August 2022.

Our strength is to train a large number of juniors, improve their fitness and athletics skills, and offer them the opportunity to compete at whatever level suits them, from parkrun and Peco, through to West Yorkshire, Yorkshire, Northern and National Championships, also offering a wide breadth of athletics - road running, cross country and track & field.

We know that we currently aren't able to offer more than one training session a week, nor experienced event coaches, nor regular higher level competition in the Youth Development Track & Field League. In previous years around 10 juniors have transferred to "bigger" local clubs. In 2022/23, we lost 2 members (partly due to a house move), and recently one transferred to the same club as her brother.

Since 1 September 2023

As at 31 December 2023, a further 8 have joined, so we are 7 ahead of December 2022.

Our waiting list is currently around 25 of whom 13 have had 2 or more trial sessions during November and December – we will offer places to many of them at the end of January.

See <https://www.valleystriders.org.uk/juniors/> for general information about our junior section.

Membership Analyses

Membership Categories (categories marked "1st claim" mean first claim affiliation to England Athletics paid via VS)	31 Aug 2021	31 Dec 2021	31 Aug 2022	Change In/Out	New	31 Dec 2022	Resign	Change Out	Renew	Change In	New	31 Aug 2023	Change In/Out	New	31 Dec 2023
Juniors, first claim	14	15	5	10	2	17	-1	-7	9	4	2	15	10		25
Juniors, not affiliated	89	108	112	-10	11	113	-31	-9	73	12	30	115	-9	5	111
Juniors, social (not training)	5	6	13		4	17	-6	-5	6	4	6	16	-1	3	18
Juniors, temporary	0	0	0			0			0			0			0
SUB TOTAL JUNIORS	108	129	130	0	17	147	-38	-21	88	20	38	146	0	8	154
Juniors, full training	87	108	86		13	99	-21	-8	70	6	29	105	1	5	111
Juniors, limited training	16	15	31			31	-12	-8	11	11	3	25			25
Juniors, social (not training)	5	6	13		4	17	-6	-5	6	4	6	16	-1	3	18

Membership Categories	31 Aug 2022	31 Aug 2023	Chnge on Fin Yr	Financial Year - Comments	31 Dec 2022	31 Dec 2023	Chnge on Memb Yr	Membership Year - Comments
				This compares like-for-like at financial year end				This compares maximum numbers at calendar year end
Juniors, first claim	5	15	+10	Affiliating for Brownlee 5k, road relays, WY track & field etc	17	25	+8	Affil for WYXC & North XC Relays
Juniors, not affiliated	112	115	+3	Net increase of 13 junior training members (affil and unaffil).	113	111	-2	Net +6 junior training members
Juniors, social (not training)	13	16	+3		17	18	+1	
SUB TOTAL JUNIORS	130	146	+16	Having 3 training times has given opportunities to recruit new members, the waiting list is short	147	154	+7	NB Still have capacity to recruit for 4:45 and 6:15 sessions
Juniors, full training	86	105	+19		99	111	+12	
Juniors, limited training	31	25	-6	Half price for less than 10 sessions, also for school year 1. Number has dropped after big increase in 2022	31	25	-6	
Juniors, social (not training)	13	16	+3	Several compete without training, others are younger than school year 1, others true social	17	18	+1	

Training

Of the 52 Tuesdays between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023, we had 4 training nights when Leos was unfit for use so we ran a reduced session on footpaths and 1 night when the club went en masse to the Golden Acre Relays. We trained 35 weeks at Leos and 12 at the Grammar School at Leeds (GSAL).

For the 47 weeks of normal training, average attendance was 65 (56 last year) and the highest 87 - our all-time record.

The sports day at GSAL in September 2022 had over 80 taking part.

All training counted towards attendance medals for 25 appearances (bronze), 50 (silver) and 100 (gold). During the year, we presented 6 gold, 22 silver and 38 bronze to add to the 46 gold, 142 silver and 210 bronze since we started junior sessions in June 2012. We passed 20,000 individual attendances on the final Tuesday of the financial year (29 August 2023). We presented trophies for 200 sessions to the second and third members to have reached that milestone – Gus Cawcutt and Caitlyn Hartley.

At Leos we have continued with the 3 timeslots (4:45, 5:30 and 6:15) first introduced after in September 2020 to maximise capacity during Covid restrictions. We have a maximum of 5 groups and 5 activities per timeslot and a maximum of 12 juniors per group. Typically 15 come at 4:45, 40 at 5:30 and 25 at 6:15 (including the competitive group mentioned below).

At GSAL in the summer we had 2 timeslots (6:10 and 7:10), also with 5 groups. 4 of these groups did 4 activities - 80metres, 400metres, long jump and shot. At 6:10 we had a 5th group of the youngest members and they did short sprints, relays, long jump and tennis ball throwing. The long jump had been refurbished in Summer 2022 and we were able to use 2 pits and 2 runways so this enabled our athletes to have more attempts in the 10 minutes allocated to the activity. Also GSAL had moved the discus circle to be adjacent to the shot circles and we used both for shot practice, again enabling our athletes to have more attempts.

The “competitive” group at 6:15 – secondary school children competing in cross country and road running – became a more distinct group during the year, training at Beckett Park on the second Tuesday in the month and occasionally doing road or trail sessions away from Leos. In April 2023 they brought in some of the fastest final year primary school children to get them ready for the cross country season starting in autumn. Typical numbers in this group were low teens with a highest number of 16.

In summer 2023 the juniors joined the adults for two trial sessions at Bodington cycle track where we did a mile race, a half mile race, a relay race round the southern oval of the track and hill reps at the back of the pavilion.

Since 1 September 2023

Our all-time training attendance record was broken on the first Tuesday of the new financial year (5 September 2023) with 96 and again on 3 October with 99, but 100 currently eludes us.

The competitive group had a record high of 21 on 24 October. They are now training at Bodington on the fourth Tuesday of the month, sharing the track with Leeds University. They are given prescribed training sessions for training from home on Thursday evenings and occasionally meet on Saturday mornings.

We have considered using Bodington for a training session for the full junior club (it would be ideal when the rugby pitches are waterlogged) but the only timeslots available when it is term-time at the University are too late in the evening.

Sadly our planned sports day at GSAL on 12 September was cancelled due to bad weather as was the rearranged date of the following week. In 2024 we plan to hold this in late June or early July when we have light nights and hopefully better weather.

Training at Leos was hit by weather in early November and late December. We did organise some "road" i.e. pavement sessions on the Buckstone Estate and one week we re-introduced "Training From Home" where junior members were able to send details of their own training session.

Coaching and Leading

A huge “thank you” to all the parents who’ve helped over the last year.

Prior to Covid, we used to have four groups turning up at 6pm and had four parents leading from a pool of 6 or 7 names .

Now we regularly have 9 or 10 groups, each with 1 parent leading and 1 parent assisting. each group. For the younger groups, other parents act as “activity assistants” supervising slippery corners, hill running and backwards running at Leos. At GSAL there are activity leaders and assistants for each activity e.g. starters, timekeepers, finish line judges, long jump measurers, shot putt technique demonstrators, shot put safety assistants.

It is marvellous that so many parents are actively involved and I’m sure that it doesn’t happen to this extent at many other clubs.

During the year Alex Gostling and Richard Irvine have led the 6pm older group (mostly school years 7/8/9) several times away from the rest of the juniors and they also have parents assisting with their sessions.

Although I don’t keep a meticulous record of when parents lead sessions, we did award gold, silver and bronze medals to some of our parents in March!

One of our parents nominated our juniors assistant coach / administrator for “Participation Coach of the Year” at the Leeds Sports Awards in March 2023 and he was very pleased to win that award!

Development

1 of our juniors this year moved up to the Main Adult Tuesday Group. This pathway is documented on the website.

Jamie Walker and Alfie Jones, who were in our junior group from 2016 to 2020, continue to prosper with our Elite Adult group.

Competition

From September 2022, the first main competition for all was the Peco Cross Country League of 5 races and one relay. This was open to school years 2 and above. 75 of our junior members took part in least one race and average attendance was 45. Emmy Deverill won her age category, Levi Woodger was second in his, Ewan Reid third in his and there were 5 other top-six places.

In the Peco Relay we had 12 teams of 3. In the Boys year 2-4 category, the winners were Thomas Grosvenor, Henry Rollings and Arthur Venning. In the Girls year 2-4 category, the winners were Erin Davies, Abigail Bottomley and Emmy Deverill

Twelve Striders – Eve Barton, Emmy Deverill, Alice Hirst-Sewell, Harriet Hirst-Sewell, Emily Parbutt, Ewan Reid, Henry Rollings, Ella Shanks, Seth Steere, Solomon Steere, Mary Venning and Sammy Whitehouse – took part in all 6 events.

In Autumn 2022 in the West Yorkshire XC League (year 5 and above), 8 junior Striders competed in at least one race. We had 3 teams at the Northern XC Relays at Sheffield and 2 teams at the National XC Relays at Mansfield – this was the first time we'd taken part in either event. In the Yorkshire XC Championships at Lightwater Valley (year 7 and above), 8 took part.

In the summer, 20 of our junior members took part in at least one track & field meeting. The majority only did one (but this is an objective of the club, to try things out, hopefully many of these will feel confident to take part when the season restarts in April 2024). Indi Banerjee, Athena Cooper and Jamie Walker (young adult) took part in 3 meetings.

The star performance of the year was by Tilly O'Brien who, in her first year at the club and in her first season in track & field, took part in all 6 West Yorkshire League meetings and finished runner-up in the Under-11 girls category.

22 junior Striders took part in the Eccup junior 1 and 2 mile races. Ewan Reid was 3rd boy school years 2-6, Conor Butterworth won the years 7-11 race, Ruth Friend and Isla Butterworth were 1st and 2nd girls years 7-11.

76 took part in the Golden Acre Relays. We had 23 teams in the races for school years 2 to 7, with Caleb Keene, Dora Walmsley and Samuel Keene finishing 1st in the years 2-4 mixed category. We had 2 junior teams (years 8-11) and one other junior runner in the adult race with Conor Butterworth, Joseph Urquhart and Sam Redmond finishing 1st boys (8th overall)

Ruth Friend and Niamh Archbold finished 1st and 2nd in the Cookridge Community junior run.

See <https://www.valleystriders.org.uk/events-for-juniors-autumn-winter-2022-23/>
and <https://www.valleystriders.org.uk/events-for-juniors-spring-summer-2023>

Since 1 September 2023

27 took part in the West Yorkshire XC League. Newish members Niamh Archbold and Dan Breedon ran all 4 races.

Harry Whittaker was 2nd in the Wetherby junior run and Joseph Urquhart 2nd in the Abbey junior dash.

We'd intended to take 6 junior teams to the Northern XC Relays at Sheffield but it was cancelled. 3 teams ran in the National XC Relays at Mansfield

65 juniors have run in at least 1 of the 3 Peco races that have taken place so far.

Schools Cross country

- Over 60 of our juniors have taken part in the Leeds Schools Cross Country League which consists of 4 meetings on Saturday mornings and is for school years 3 to 10. At one of these meetings there was, for school years 7 to 11, the qualifier for the team to represent Leeds at the West Yorkshire Schools championships and we think 11 have qualified.
- A large percentage of our juniors in years 3 to 6 took part in a local round of the Leeds Primary Schools cross country Games. Many have qualified for the Leeds final in early February and from this, some hope to qualify for the team to represent Leeds at the West Yorkshire Primary Schools event later in February.
- These above sets of events are schools competitions but we hope that training at Valley Striders has helped their performances.

See <https://www.valleystriders.org.uk/events-for-juniors-autumn-winter-2023-24>

Participation Awards

We have two perpetual cups, one for a boy, one for a girl, which we present every 6 months for participation in training and at events. To qualify, members must have attended at least 13 training sessions and have taken part in at least 13 races (which may include parkruns) in the previous 6 months. The cups cannot be awarded again to previous winners.

- March 2022 to August 2022 – Harry Ndawula and Lucy Sheen
- September 2022 to February 2023 – Conor Butterworth and Alice & Harriet Hirst-Sewell
- March 2023 to August 2023 – Samuel Keene and Niamh Archbold



Performance Awards

We purchase and award two trophies, one for a boy, one for a girl, every 6 months for the best age-graded performance in parkrun or junior parkrun.

- March 2022 to August 2022
 - Samuel Keene 79.0%
 - Isla Butterworth 75.1%
- September 2022 to February 2023
 - Sam Redmond 83.3% - 17:01 at Roundhay aged 14
 - Imogen Burton 74.4% - 8:18 at Roundhay juniors aged 10
- March 2023 to August 2023
 - Levi Woodger 81.6% - 20:51 at Woodhouse Moor aged 8
 - Ruth Friend 81.2% - 20:04 at Dalby Forest aged 12

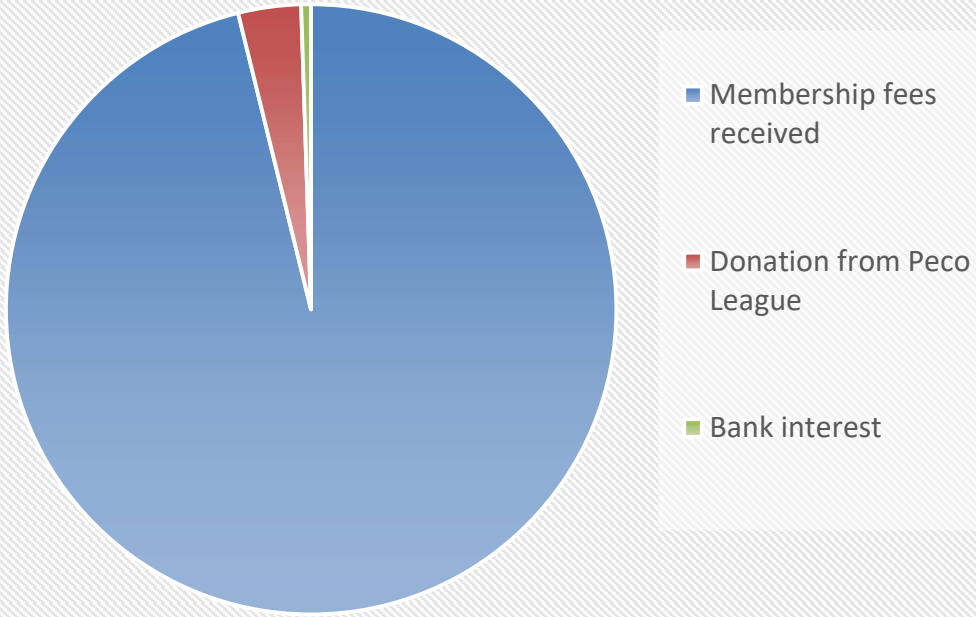
Sam, Levi and Ruth are the only V S juniors who have ever achieved AG% greater than 80%.

Accounts Summary

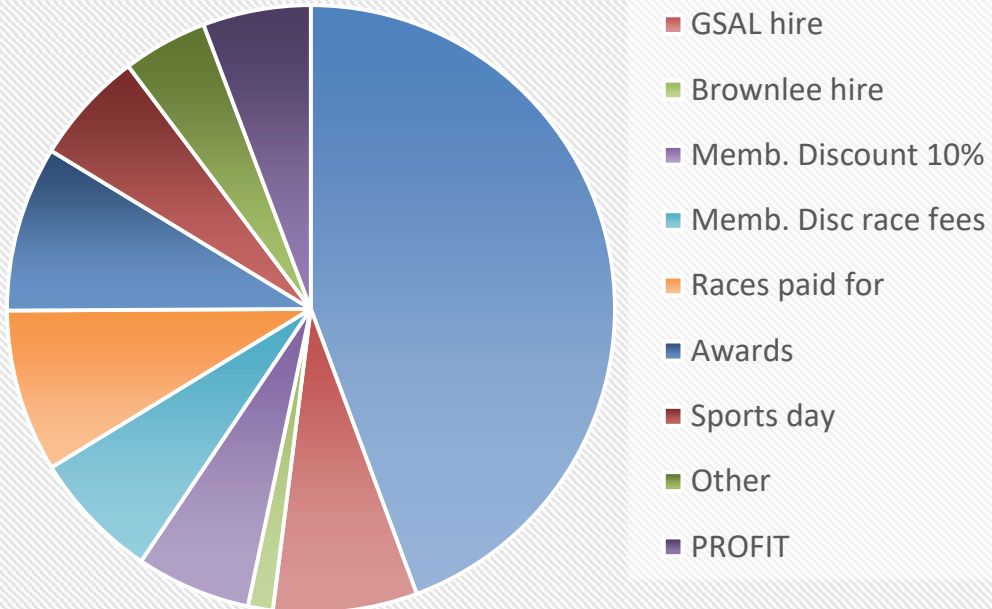
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Explanation of change in 2023 from 2022	Forecast 2023/24	Explanation
INCOME						
Membership fees received	3281	3910	4337	Increase in members	4400	
Membership Discounts - race fees paid by member in previous year	0	-230	-309	Eccup races and Peco races	-500	Eccup, Peco, Wetherby, Abbey Dash, Nat XC Relays etc capped at 50% of membership fee
Membership Discount 10%	0	0	-275	New offer in 2023	0	Insufficient funds to afford this
Donation from Peco League		100	150		150	
Bank interest			24		20	
TOTAL INCOME	3281	3780	3927		4070	
EXPENDITURE						
Leos hire of fields etc	2000	2000	2000		2000	
GSAL hire of athletics track	211	346	346	Booked for 2 hours in 2023 & 2022 Paid for 1 hour in 2021	400	Rate increase
Brownlee hire of circuit	0	0	60	1 session in summer holiday	120	2 sessions in summer holiday
England Athletics club affiliation	40	40	43	NB This is juniors share of club fee, not affiliation of individual members	43	
Races paid for by the club in current year	123	203	390	Peco & Golden Acre Relays in both years, North/NatXC in 2022/23	150	Only Peco, all other events refunded in memb fee in 2025
Awards - 25/50/100 medals, Annual awards	92	118	396	Attendance medals in both years Engraving of cups for 3 years in 2023	250	
Sports day trophies/medals	0	109	272	Medals for all participants in Sep2022	120	Revert to fewer awards
T&F Equipment	0	0	66		50	
Website	0	0	57	New website 2022/23	60	
Shirts and vests expenses	70	20	29	Building up stock	1	
Coach/Leader/First Aid courses					600	Give leaders who are interested some training to ensure continuity
Miscellaneous	1	108	9		0	
TOTAL COSTS	2537	2944	3668		3794	
PROFIT	744	836	259		276	

The above doesn't include anything where we collect money from the member and hand on the same money to the supplier e.g. England Athletics affiliation for individual members, race entry fees that are paid by members to us because we have to enter the teams as a club and payment for vests and T-shirts where we pay the supplier the same value

Juniors Income



Juniors Expenditure



Membership Fees 2024

Membership fees for the year 1 January to 31 December 2024 are proposed as follows

- Junior full membership (weekly training) £40 (no change). In 2023 we gave a 10% cashback to anyone who had been with us for a whole year but we won't be doing that in 2024.
- Junior limited training (10 sessions or fewer) £20 (no change).
- This category also applies to Juniors school year 1, but for them there will be no limit on sessions. There are no races accepting this age group and we offer training sessions to them when spaces permit and when ground conditions are suitable (this was new in 2022)
- Junior social membership (no training, no competition other than parkrun) £5 (no change),
- This category also applies to juniors younger than year 1 for whom we don't promise any sessions.
- Those juniors competing in West Yorkshire League and higher competition for which England Athletics affiliation is needed will pay us an additional £21 to cover the EA and Northern Athletics affiliation fees. This money will be paid on to EA/NA. (Was £19 in 2023)

In addition, for those who were full or limited training members for all or part of 2023, we will refund their race fees for the last two Peco races of the 2023/24 season, for the Eccup, Wetherby and Abey Dash junior races in 2024 and for the first three Peco races of the 2024/25 season in the form of a discount when paying their membership fee in 2024. This was part of the arrangement for 2023 – assuming there were sufficient funds – which there were. There will a page on the website to say how much each person's discount will be.

Of the 154 current members, 83 will (if they renew) get a discount that averages £5.78. One person, who ran all the 9 nominated races, will get a discount of £19.

A similar arrangement will apply for the following year, i.e. for juniors who are full or limited members in 2024, then when they renew for 2025 – if there are sufficient funds - they will get the discount on the Peco, Eccup and possibly other races that they have run in 2024.

We are in the process of reviewing membership rates and/or discounts for the 21 members who are in the “competitive” group. As they rarely use Leos this allows use to recruit more members to run there. Leos is our most expensive resource which is effectively part of their membership fee and they are paying weekly admission fees to Beckett Park and Bodington/Brownlee Centre.

Social

I'll just copy what I wrote last year ... and the year before ... unfortunately nothing has changed.

A disadvantage of the 3 timeslots is that sometimes I feel we are three separate clubs in that those at any one timeslot have only met those in the other two at the Sports Day and at events.

I hope we can reintroduce hot food at Leos after training. We would have to have 3 timeslots for this too, but actually this would make it more manageable for the catering staff – when we used to have just one session it used to take a long time to serve a queue of 40.

The Xmas runs in Roundhay Park are well-attended whatever the weather (special thanks to Gemma Traviss-Turner and Nicola Hartley for helping lead the 2023 edition)

Communication and Feedback

We use SurveyMonkey for parents to book sessions for their children a month at a time.

Each week, we use the website to list the juniors invited to attend each session.

We have a Facebook Group for parents to confirm attendance at training sessions, to announce and allow discussion of arrangements for events (e.g. Peco, WYXC), for photos of events and presentations, and for advertising lost property which we're attempting to return.

We have a Facebook Group for parents who have volunteered to lead groups. This has already generated ideas for different activities.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/875346096745584/>

The website is also used to publicise events and record results. The juniors section of the website has been reviewed in the last 3 months and updated as needed.

I would welcome any other feedback for improvements – please email the juniors@valleystriders.org.uk email address.

More Thank Yous

Thank you to

Head junior coach Richard – we don't meet so often as his 6pm group isn't so often at Leos but frequently have chats in the evenings to plan what we're going to do next. I look after the spreadsheets and Facebook while he looks after the coaching.

To Alex Gostling for developing training plans for the older juniors who train with us (each week she sends out a suggested session for Thursday evening).

To Paul Furness – who has again travelled from Boroughbridge to support 10 sessions at GSAL this summer. Paul has also been a field events judge in the West Yorkshire T&F League for the last 5 years, enabling us to satisfy the condition of entry to the league that every club must provide 2 volunteers.

To Hannah Corne, our Junior Welfare Officer, with whom I've discussed some safety issues regarding dark evenings and car parking.

To the families Rollings, Deverill, Hostert and others who have brought the club gazebo to the Peco Races

And, finally, a huge thank you (again) to ALL the parents who have helped at the sessions on Tuesdays.

Bob