

# STOPSLEY STRIDERS



## NEWSLETTER

Mar 2026



- The Chair's Monthly Run-Down
- 10/10
- ...more!!
- Annual Awards
- XC Dates
- Club Championship
- Race Suggestions
- Diary Dates
- In Memorial



**Mar 2026**



***Spring is in the Air*** 🌸

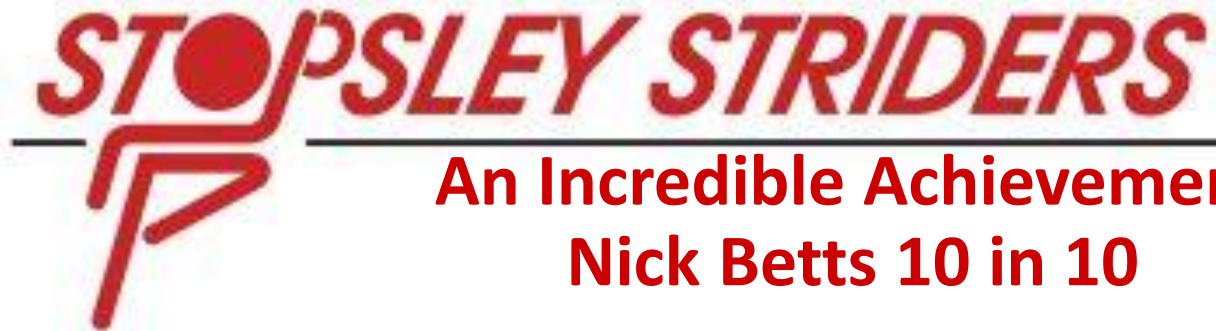
What an incredible month it's been for the club. March has delivered everything we could have hoped for — club records tumbling, PB after PB, and performances that have left us cheering from the sidelines and screens alike.

Alongside the racing success, we've seen some truly extraordinary challenges taken on, reminding us that our members continue to push boundaries not just for themselves, but for causes that really matter.

Add to that our fantastic Awards Ceremony — a brilliant evening celebrating achievement, commitment and community — and it's hard not to feel proud of what we've shared together this month.

And as we move fully into marathon season, we'd like to wish all our members taking on 26.2 miles the very best of luck. Whether it's your first marathon or one of many, we are behind you every step of the way — enjoy the journey, trust the training, and don't forget how proud the club is of you.

Claire  
Chair, Stopsley Striders



## An Incredible Achievement Nick Betts 10 in 10

Back in February, there were a few quiet rumblings around the club that something big was being planned for March. Whispers of a huge challenge, raised eyebrows, and a fair amount of disbelief followed... and then the rumours became reality.

Your Club Captain - **Nick Betts** - set himself the extraordinary challenge of running 10 marathons in 10 consecutive days, all in aid of MIND BLMK — and through grit, determination and sheer stubborn resolve, he went out and did exactly that.

This was no ordinary running feat. Day after day, Nick took on the physical toll, the mental battles, the early starts and weary legs, pushing himself through terrain, fatigue and doubt.

By the later days it wasn't just about running, it was about resilience — showing up, putting one foot in front of the other, and refusing to give in. What made this challenge even more powerful was the cause behind it. By taking on such an immense personal test, Nick helped shine a spotlight on mental health and raise vital funds for MIND BLMK — a charity that supports so many people in our community when they need it most.


As a club, we watched in awe as each marathon was ticked off, and felt immense pride seeing one of our own demonstrate what can be achieved with commitment, courage and heart. Nick's 10-in-10 was nothing short of inspirational, and a reminder of why running can be about so much more than times, distances or medals.

Huge congratulations to Nick on an incredible achievement — one that will be talked about for a long time, and one our club is truly proud to be part of.

# WOW!

## ...and there's more!

There has been so much going on even I cannot keep up with it all.....

We now have our very own Guinness Word record holder, and a budding TV star in the making!   
Congratulations to **Chris White**, such an incredible achievement, and good luck with the London Marathon.

🏆 Club records don't stand a chance with you all banging out PB after PB 🏆

We have a new 10-mile club record which is now held by Sandy Reeve-Smith  
Annelies Gerber is our new WV55 half marathon holder. Annelies also took 2<sup>nd</sup> Podium place VD55-59  
Danny Kelly is the proud holder of the new club MV65 20-mile record.

**A-MAZ-ING running and Congratulations to you all.**

Our run Directors debut event was a huge success; we received so much positive feedback he is gearing up to do it all bigger and bolder again next year.

Thank you to Kal and the team for putting on such a fantastic event. It would be great to see more of you helping and taking part in 2027.

**We also had Striders around the globe in Dubai and Brooklyn, and a mystery tour on the M1!**

**You have been busy!**

Sorry if I have missed anyone – ***March you did not disappoint!***

# STOPSLEY STRIDERS

---

## Annual Awards Ceremony



What can I say about this year's Awards Ceremony that hasn't already been said! It was a brilliant evening and a real celebration of our club. Huge thanks to everyone involved in making it happen, and to all who came along and made it such a great night. The lovely comments we've received since say it all.



**Huge congratulations to all our award winners.  
Thank you for your achievements, commitment and continued support of the club. We wish you all another happy, healthy and successful year of running ahead**

# Annual Award Winners

AGE CATEGORY	Awarded to
<b>Senior</b>	Lauren McKay Kallum Wrigh
<b>Vet 35</b>	Rob Barnes Fran Major
<b>Vet 45</b>	Christine Lathwell Gez Fallon
<b>Vet 55</b>	Sileshi Temisi Ruth Doyle
<b>Vet 65</b>	Pam Abbitt John Chapman

PERFORMANCE
Chris Lamont Dave Thompson-Trace Cathy Stephen Annelies Gerber Andy Reeve-Smith Liz Barker Riichard Hardy

IMPROVEMENT
Sandy Reeve-Smith Heather Chandler Emma Butcher Steve Close Ellie Davies Paul Whitford Deb Berton Paul Abrahams Kulwinder Assra Helen Harris

NEWCOMER
Leanne Hunt Chris White

Ken Abbott X-C Handicap
Jamila Salam Ellie Davies

The Bill Barrett Award
Sandy Reeve-Smith Gez Fallon

Chairs Award
Gez Fallon

The Ken Abbott Award
Chris McLaren

The Dave Debnam Award
Chris McLaren Karen Ashby

Rosa Trophy
Andy Durrant

Park Run Award
Mark Layzell

# STOPSLEY STRIDERS



## XC 26/27 Dates

**\*Hot off the press\***

- #1 25.10.26 Dunstable Lions
- #2 15.11.26 Wootton or Wellingborough
- #3 13.12.26 NHRR
- #4 10.01.267 Bedford

DRUMROLL PLEASE!



**#5 31.01.27 STOPSLEY STRIDERS**

**YES, IT IS OUR TIME TO SHINE ONCE AGAIN**

**THANK YOU TO KAL and ANDY FOR SECURING THIS XC EVENT**



# STOPSLEY STRIDERS

## Club Championships



- 10k - 12<sup>th</sup> April - Flitwick
- 5 mile - 19<sup>th</sup> April – Dunstable\*
- 5k - 12<sup>th</sup> June – Marston
- Half - 14<sup>th</sup> June - St Albans
- 10k - 26<sup>th</sup> June - Beds AAA\*** (bulk club discount avail again this year) Sign up on Spond
- 5k - 22<sup>nd</sup> July - Doug Anderson\*
- Half - 11<sup>th</sup> October - Luton\*
- 10 mile - 20<sup>th</sup> September Leighton\*
- 10 mile - 31<sup>st</sup> Dec - Buntingford 31<sup>st</sup> Dec
- 20 mile - Any - consider Oakley\* 29<sup>th</sup> March (usually a big Strider presence)
- Marathon - Any: not virtual

Races with \* are County Championships

Submit your race results on the website:

Club Competitions > Record your race > Your Races and add to the form.

Alternatively: [www.stopsleystriders.org/record-your-race](http://www.stopsleystriders.org/record-your-race)



## Race Suggestions

Race suggestions, please also check our Facebook 'Race Suggestion' page for other events taking place that may not be mentioned below:

12<sup>th</sup> April – Flitwick 10k

19<sup>th</sup> April – Dunstable 5 mile – Club Champs

3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> May – MK Marathon Weekend

4<sup>th</sup> May – Watford Mencap 10k, 5k and 1k fun run ATW

17<sup>th</sup> May – Wheathampstead 10k trail ATW

25<sup>th</sup> May – Hatfield Broad Oak 10K ATW

14<sup>th</sup> June – St Albans Half Marathon ATW

19<sup>th</sup> June – St Albans Summer Solstice ATW

26<sup>th</sup> June – **Beds AAA 10k** (bulk club discount avail again this year) Sign up on Spond

28<sup>th</sup> June – Silsoe Stride ATW

**Submit your race results on the website:**

Club Competitions > Record your race > Your Races and add to the form.

**Alternatively:** [www.stopsleystriders.org/record-your-race](http://www.stopsleystriders.org/record-your-race)

**For all ATW events remember to claim your 10% Strider Discounts, use the code STOPSLEY\_10**

# STOPSLEY STRIDERS

---

## Diary Dates



**13<sup>th</sup> April – Committee Meeting, limited coach availability** club open as usual

**Bluebell Run – Date TBC**

**12<sup>th</sup> April – London Landmarks Half Marathon**

**★ 16<sup>th</sup> April – Beginners Course ★**

**27<sup>th</sup> April - Evening Social - SWMC**

**10<sup>th</sup> May - Long run Sunday**

**19<sup>th</sup> May – Dunstable 5 mile – Club Champs**

**19<sup>th</sup> May Manchester Marathon**

**26<sup>th</sup> April London Marathon**

**Watch this space for more info!**



# Remembering Mark Layzell

It's hard to believe that it has been six months since we lost Mark Layzell so suddenly. Mark was not just a much-loved member of Stopsley Striders, he was a huge part of the fabric of our club and the wider community.

As one of our coaches, Mark always gave his time freely. He was endlessly supportive, encouraging and patient, and had a natural ability to help runners believe in themselves. Mark was there for everyone, but he had a particular gift for connecting with those who perhaps found running a little tougher or were just starting out — quietly helping them find confidence, enjoyment and a sense of belonging. He never judged where someone was on their running journey; he simply wanted to help them move forward.

Mark was a passionate advocate for Stopsley Striders, proudly representing the club wherever he went. He loved his parkrun tourism, collecting new locations and new stories along the way, and sharing many of them through his running blog, *The Silent Runner*, which reflected his thoughtful and reflective approach to the sport he loved.

On Saturday 28th March, a memorial bench was dedicated in Mark's memory at Wardown Park. It is a fitting place to pause, reflect and remember someone who gave so much to others — both through running and simply by being kind, present and supportive.

Mark is very much missed by all of us. His encouragement, generosity and quiet humour live on in the runners he helped and the community he strengthened, and we are incredibly proud to have called him a Strider.



**Mark Layzell**  
**26.03.67 – 04.10.25**

