

THE UK'S BEST RUNNING CLUB

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There are nearly 1,400 running clubs in the UK catering for a broad range of runners. Identifying a single club that stands out above the crowd is not a simple task, but it'll be easier with your help.

We've put together this survey to find out as much as possible about your club and to answer some of the questions that will help the judges make comparisons between clubs of disparate size, reputation and ability.

Name of club	SOUTH CHESHIRE HARRIERS																																																			
Website address	www.southcheshireharriers.org.uk																																																			
Year club established	South Cheshire Harriers were established in 1986 out of Crewe & Nantwich Athletics Club. Originally based in Crewe, the club moved to its new home at 'The Vagrants ' sports club in Nantwich in 2006. This has proved to be a good move as membership has steadily grown since then.																																																			
No. of full members	130																																																			
Age and sex breakdown of members	<p>Membership Profile</p> <p>The are currently 130 members</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Ladies</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>U17 Girls</td><td>0</td><td>0%</td></tr> <tr><td>Junior Women</td><td>1</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Senior Women</td><td>11</td><td>24%</td></tr> <tr><td>FV35</td><td>11</td><td>24%</td></tr> <tr><td>FV40</td><td>10</td><td>22%</td></tr> <tr><td>FV45</td><td>4</td><td>9%</td></tr> <tr><td>FV50</td><td>5</td><td>11%</td></tr> <tr><td>FV55</td><td>1</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>FV60 (+)</td><td>2</td><td>4%</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Men</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>U17 Boys</td><td>2</td><td>2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Junior Men</td><td>1</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>Senior Men</td><td>20</td><td>23%</td></tr> <tr><td>V40</td><td>15</td><td>17%</td></tr> <tr><td>V45</td><td>15</td><td>17%</td></tr> <tr><td>V50</td><td>13</td><td>15%</td></tr> <tr><td>V55</td><td>12</td><td>14%</td></tr> <tr><td>V60 (+)</td><td>8</td><td>9%</td></tr> </table> </div> </div>	U17 Girls	0	0%	Junior Women	1	2%	Senior Women	11	24%	FV35	11	24%	FV40	10	22%	FV45	4	9%	FV50	5	11%	FV55	1	2%	FV60 (+)	2	4%	U17 Boys	2	2%	Junior Men	1	1%	Senior Men	20	23%	V40	15	17%	V45	15	17%	V50	13	15%	V55	12	14%	V60 (+)	8	9%
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How has your membership changed over the last five	<p>Over the last five years club membership has grown from 70 to around 130 and we have new members joining all the time.</p> <p>Membership has grown year on year and across all categories e.g. men/women, fast/slow, young/old. This is because we are</p>																																																			

<p>years?</p>	<p>committed to ensuring that we support the needs of all of our members, whether it be group leaders, coaching advice, club and interclub competition etc.</p> <p>Most significantly, South Cheshire Harriers has had a marked increase in female membership, and also a wide range of experience, i.e. from expert to the complete beginner,</p>
<p>What percentage of the membership has attended a club activity in the last month?</p>	<p>Over 75% of the Harriers attend our training evenings held every Tuesday and Thursday evening. The club consistently has a high percentage turning out, even on dark, cold winter evenings we can have up to 40+ runners. Some come down even though they have already run that day, or run to the club to complete their training with other club members.</p> <p>Although not all our members want to race, there is still a strong presence at races, especially for important club or championship races. For example, 17 men represented the club in the 2008 National Cross Country Championships, which accounts for about 25% of the male membership.</p> <p>At the Alsager 5 race on 1, February we had 39 club members take part.</p> <p>In January we held our Annual awards dinner where 80 people attended, that's approximately half our membership as at least 54 people who attended were actually members.</p> <p>We also have regular social events, including our Christmas meal in December where 35 people attended.</p>
<p>What efforts have you made to recruit new members to your club?</p>	<p>On top of the usual proactive word of mouth, we have regular positive press coverage in the local weekly newspaper, the Crewe Chronicle.</p> <p>We host three races of our own, including fun runs, which are advertised locally and nationally through the press and Runners WORLD magazine.</p> <p>We have recently revamped our website www.southcheshireharriers.org.uk. The site is updated on a regular basis and includes a monthly newsletter that members are encouraged to contribute to. The site hosts and links to a number of members blogs and has an active members forum where advice and information is shared.</p> <p>We also offer members SCH car stickers to promote the club and have given out branded mugs, fridge magnets and t-shirts with the clubs details at our races.</p> <p>We have our own club tent, which we put up at races and have recently created some banners to attract new members.</p> <p>We regularly negotiate opportunities with other local running clubs, including informally working with Crewe and Nantwich Athletics club where some of their juniors have joined us to</p>

	<p>help with their training. We also support the Cheshire Athletics Association and attend their committee meetings. We keep in contact with Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and last year were given a number of awards from the Council to recognise our contribution to sporting development and excellence in the community.</p> <p>Moving to the Vagrants has allowed us to hold quarterly open evenings to show the public what we offer. Our new location also gives us much wider running opportunities as it ideally located for cross county and road running</p>														
<p>What has been the club's greatest competitive success over the past two years?</p>	<p>As a team: Winning the North Staffordshire Road Running Association's Men's team prize by being the best over a series of 20 races run over 12 months.</p> <p>Winning the North Staffs cross-country division 2 league.</p> <p>As individuals: Mike Hatton having the fastest marathon time in Cheshire</p>														
<p>What leagues do you compete in? (please provide recent results where relevant)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Staffordshire Road Running Association – 2008 first in men's team prize • North Staffs cross country – Winning Division 2 league, promoted to Division 1 for next year • Northern Counties Cross Country Championships • National Cross Country Championships • Cheshire Cross Country Championships – 2009 SCH Nicky Lowe took gold in the Over 35 women's event, her time of 30.47 good enough for 15th overall. Mike Hatton, took silver in the Over 45 men's event and we also took bronze in the women's Over 35 team event. • Inter-Counties Cross Country • Cheshire Grand Prix series <p>We also have members compete in the following high profile races:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London, Edinburgh and Snowdonia Marathons • The Original Mountain Marathon • Saunders Mountain Marathon • The Paddy Buckley Round • The Bob Graham Round • The Great North Run • Iron Man UK • City Parks Grand Prix • 3 Peaks Challenge 														
<p>What races does your club organise or host? (please include name, date last hosted)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Race</th> <th>Date last hosted</th> <th>Entry numbers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Air products/Easter Bunny 10K & fun run</td> <td>23/03/08</td> <td>206</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Cheshire 20</td> <td>11/05/08</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Halloween Hell Raiser + fun run</td> <td>25/10/08</td> <td>87</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Race	Date last hosted	Entry numbers	Air products/Easter Bunny 10K & fun run	23/03/08	206	South Cheshire 20	11/05/08	80	Halloween Hell Raiser + fun run	25/10/08	87		
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<p>What charity of community initiatives has the club been involved in over the last 12 months?</p>	<p>Many of our members compete in major races to raise money for charity, last year alone the Harriers collectively raised around £20,000 for various charities including Cancer Research, CARE International UK and Christies Hospital in Manchester.</p> <p>Last year several Harriers, as well as the club itself were awarded Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council awards in recognition of the contribution South Cheshire Harriers have made to sport in the community.</p> <p>Proceeds from our Easter Bunny 5K race go towards Hope House Childrens Hospices.</p>
<p>Please add any extra comments explaining why you consider your club worthy of the title of UK's Best Running Club.</p>	<p>South Cheshire Harriers has steadily become one of the most respected clubs in Cheshire and Staffordshire. We regularly do well in competitions, but our collective belief is that our club is for all runners of all abilities. Our commitment is to ensure that all of the Harriers feel that they have the support they require to attain their personal goals; this has meant that we have a very loyal and active membership.</p> <p>The start of this New Year has seen new members join that have never run before and also existing members come back to the club returning from injury. As a result one of our long standing members is organising walk/jog sessions to help get members up to or back to the level of fitness they desire. This benefits the club as we retain members and most people who come down to the club will join.</p> <p>The club is made up of people who run for all different kinds of reasons from those who enjoy a gentle job out to those who compete competitively in road and cross-country races. Our ranks are further strengthened by a good selection of fell and ultra runners, so there really is something for everyone.</p> <p>SCH actively encourages and supports those who want to take part in races, and since 2001 has run it's own race championship. Adding a ladies championship in 2006 and this year due to popular demand an off road championship too.</p> <p>South Cheshire Harriers is a club for all, and we are being increasingly known throughout the North West for being a friendly and supportive part of the running community. It is regularly noted by those who watch us compete that we stay and support all our runners at races, fostering an environment of cooperation and building a winning team mentality. Our club is founded with a strong sense of community in mind and this has in turn developed into many close friendships being made.</p> <p>The club is actively managed by the members and holds a committee meeting every month, the members of which are nominated by the club.</p>

	The club has taken great leaps forward over the last five years and it really has adapted and changed to meet the needs of its members. 2008 was a great year for the South Cheshire Harriers, with its largest membership to date and its members winning some fantastic awards. The club is going from strength to strength and will continue to grow and be successful for many years to come.
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey – to send us your submission, please email this document to editor@runnersworld.co.uk, including “UK’s Best Running Club” as the subject line of your email.

A panel of judges will assess all of the entries at the end of March with the final result announced at a ceremony on April. The winning club will also be featured in the June issue of Runner's World Magazine.

