

42nd Worksop Harriers Halloween Half Marathon – Sunday 27th October 2024

The Worksop Harriers Halloween Half Marathon started way back in 1982 with only the Covid Pandemic of 2020 interrupting this major local event, although there was a postponement, some 20 years ago, when very strong winds forced the closure of Clumber Park, minutes before the race was due to start, and the event had to be abandoned with all the runners about to set off. A new date was hastily agreed and arranged with runners still on the start line so that they could all be informed, preventing what could have been an unwanted outcome on the day. Fortunately, although we have had some interesting occurrences throughout the years, all the other race dates have gone ahead as scheduled.

A theme for many year' has been our race T Shirt, with long sleeves being generally preferred by runners at this time of year. The increasing financial burden of the event has prevented the handing out of medals as well as the T shirt, and this will continue until we can build up race numbers substantially, to the levels achieved immediately prior to 2020, or acquire substantial sponsorship for our event.

This year we started on the sponsorship journey with Chemodex joining us for the first time, supplying financial support, equipment for the event, social media assistance and many promotional banners which helped to brighten up the race village. This truly made a difference and along with Perry's, who have provided the lead car and financial support for many year', and the Lincolnshire Runner continuing to support us with prizes, gives us a base to move forward and build our event once again.

As with most large events, a small dedicated team sets the event in motion each year with several months of detailed planning, other key members then join the core team as race day approaches and they then set up teams of volunteer's, from club members, families and friends, which culminates in well over 100 volunteers and various contracting companies supporting the event over the race weekend and especially on the day.

For the first few decades the Half Marathon started in Worksop Town centre, adjacent the Town Hall, which meant that all the setting up had to be done on the morning of the event, leading to a lot of hard work and stress, in the dark! Since 2016 the home of the Race Village has been at Outwood Academy Portland, enabling the race village to be substantially set up on the Saturday and the final adjustments being made on the morning of the race, with only the equipment out on the course, signs and water stations, having to be fully established on the day, along with the necessary road closures. This allows a more relaxed atmosphere for the volunteers to work in and generates a better experience for competitors and volunteers alike.

This is most evident in the main sports hall, where the race entrants come to pick up their race numbers and start to interact with volunteers for the first time. This produces

a much more social atmosphere than the numbers being posted out and the runners simply turning up, running the event and hardly interacting with the race organisation at all. It also gives the organisers an early indication of how many competitors have turned up and what to expect when they return to the sports hall after the event to pick up their hard-earned T Shirts, etc.

The Worksop Halloween Half Marathon is not simply a road race but is also the major fundraiser of the year for Worksop Harriers & AC, which is a charity providing local runners of all ages the opportunity to train and compete in all the athletics disciplines and develop a healthy and social lifestyle. This event also facilitates the raising of money for other charities, with over £250k being raised for various local charities over the past four decades, this year the main beneficiaries being the Lincs. & Notts Air Ambulance, JOEL and From the Heart.

In addition to the main sponsors mentioned earlier we are also grateful to National Trust for allowing us to run through Clumber Park and Worksop College for allowing us to pass through their grounds and of course, Outwood Academy Portland for the Race Village. There is also great support from St John Ambulance and our traffic management company, Chevron, with the Green Toilet Company providing us with the extra necessary facilities, much needed just before the race starts, and Greencore for providing the volunteers with sandwiches on the day.

Communications are provided by Notts 4 x 4 out on the course with Oneintent running the Public Address system in the race village. Mick Hall photography is out on the course taking all the memory providing photographs and HS Sports Systems ensure that the runners receive their race times and finishing positions. Then we have support from Nottinghamshire County Council and Bassetlaw District Council, who ensure that the road sweeper is out on the course to sweep up the autumn leaves preventing hazards on sharp bends, and that we have sufficient wheeled bins around the race village for rubbish to be collected.

In conclusion, this is a massive event put on by a very small club and everyone involved should be very proud of what they contribute by supporting Worksop Harriers & AC and making this happen.

Peter Fendley

Race Director and Chair of Worksop Harriers & AC