



Election of Club Chairperson July 2019

Final Report

Election of Chairperson of the 100 Marathon Club 2019

Introduction

In October 2019 three of the members of the current committee of the 100 Marathon Club come to the end of their three years tenure. Two of these members Jon Aston (treasurer) and Maryanne Aitken (kit manager) were automatically re-elected as they were unopposed. The third committee member David Lewis (chairperson) chose to re-stand against four other members of the club who nominated themselves for election.

The number of candidates is unprecedented for 100 Marathon Club committee elections. The committee prior to seeking nominations decided to use a simple polling system with the candidate receiving the most votes elected to become the next chair of the committee.

The committee decided that an electronic web-based survey and polling system called 'Survey Monkey' should be used to conduct the vote, the club pays a subscription to use this system and had an existing account. The treasurer Jon Aston was asked to administer the vote and manage the process.

On 26th June 2019 the club secretary sent an email to all members asking for nominations to the positions up for election at the end of their period of tenure. No nominations for treasurer or kit manager were received and five nominations for chair were by the members listed below.

- David Lewis
- Jo Yarnall
- Davey Green
- Nick Nicholson
- David Davidson

Process

Two of the nominations were received from existing committee members in David Lewis (chair) and Jo Yarnall (co-opted member to advise on data protection and GDPR). The remaining committee members discussed how to manage the process once nominations had been received and decided that in order to maintain fairness that David Lewis and Jo Yarnall would be excluded from further discussion and decision making about the election. It was also decided to restrict their committee privileges so that could not gain an unfair advantage over candidates not on the committee, for example their access as moderators to the club's social media accounts or global email system was suspended so that they could not be accused of uses committee privilege to give them an unfair advantage with canvassing.

Each candidate was invited to submit a 250-word statement in support of their campaign, these statements were published when the vote opened. One candidate submitted their statement after the deadline for submission, the committee decided that inclusion of his statement could be seen as being unfair as the other four candidates all submitted before the deadline.

A two-question form was designed in Survey Monkey giving respondents the option to select one of the five candidates or to abstain from voting, a comments box was included and respondents asked to make any comment that wanted.

The survey was configured in such a way that an email with a link to the survey was sent to the email address registered with club for every member eligible to vote, and to accept only one vote from each member.

The committee decided that only members who had joined the club prior to the opening of the ballot should be allowed to vote. Therefore, all paid up full and associate members be they first or second claim who joined before midnight on 13th July 2019 were eligible to vote.

A total of 736 invitations to vote were emailed to members as the vote opened at Midnight on 13th July 2019.

Nine members of the club contacted Jon Aston whilst the vote was open to say that they had not received the email, there was a particular problem with some overseas email accounts. In this cases invitation to vote emails were sent to alternative email addresses or a link to voting page was sent.

One member contacted to inform Jon that his link did not work correctly and that he could not vote. A second invitation to vote was sent to this member via an alternative email address. During analyses of the results it was found that this member had already managed to complete their vote from the original email and that is why they couldn't vote when on forgetting they had previously voted tried to do so again. Their second vote was deleted from result, there is no suggestion that there was any wilful intention to vote twice by this member and no other action was felt appropriate.

The vote was closed at midnight on Sunday 28th July 2019. Two votes were received on Monday 29th July after the vote had closed, however as these registered one vote in favour of the two leading candidates, they were allowed to count as they would have made no difference to the final result.

Following closure of the vote Jon Aston checked every single vote registered against the email addresses that invitations were sent to and cross referenced with the membership database to ensure each vote cast had come from an eligible member. This process also checked that each member had only voted once and other than the single occasion described above this was found to be the case.

A second planned failsafe check was to check the IP addresses of each respondent to make sure that each vote has come from different computers or devices, however this check was not possible because the way we chose to collect responses meant the IP address of the server to which members were directed in order to complete the survey was recorded rather than the members own IP address. This resulted in large numbers of respondent seeming to have the same IP address.

Seventy emails were sent out over the last two weeks to a randomly selected group of respondents, they were asked to check that the date and time and the registered email address were correct for when they cast their vote. Any member who believed the information was incorrect was asked to contact. No one contacted with any concerns as a result of this email.

Being as confident in the voting process and outcome as possible the interim result subject to verification was circulated to all members by the club secretary on 30th July 2019.

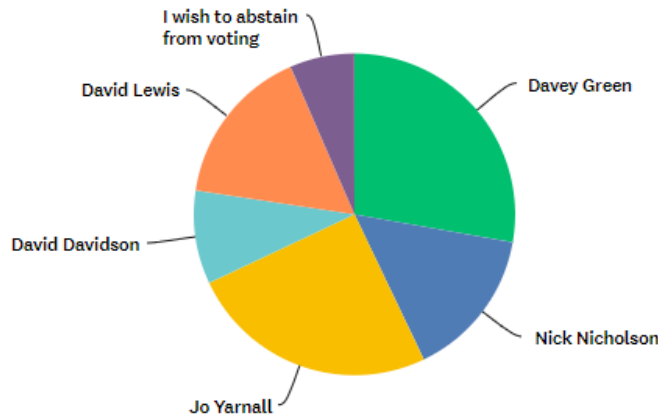
Results

524 people responded to the invitation to vote, representing 71% of those eligible to vote. This is believed to be the highest response rate to any survey or poll the club has ever issued. Two members who responded did not record a preferred candidate.

Mr Davey Green received the most votes cast for any candidate with 145 and is therefore elected as the next chairperson of the 100 Marathon Club.

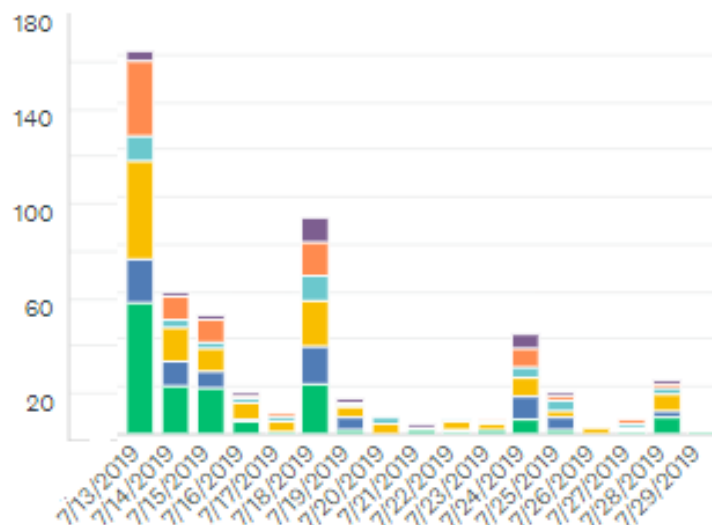
Jo Yarnall came a very close second 131 votes, the other three candidates received a significant share of the vote. 34 members recorded that they wished to abstain from voting.

Answered: 522



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Davey Green	27.78% 145
▼ Nick Nicholson	15.13% 79
▼ Jo Yarnall	25.10% 131
▼ David Davidson	9.39% 49
▼ David Lewis	16.09% 84
▼ I wish to abstain from voting	6.51% 34

The following chart shows the number of votes cast each day during the time the poll was open and the number of votes cast for each candidate by day.



Mr Davey Green will take over as club chairperson when Mr David Lewis's period in the position finishes at the end of October 2019. The election was conducted early to allow time for a period of handover to take place.

Members Comments

Sixty-one respondents chose to leave a comment with their vote. A number of these were to express support for their chosen candidate or to wish candidates good luck (22 comments).

Eight comments were explaining why the respondent had chosen to abstain with most saying that they did not feel that they knew enough about the candidates to be able to make an informed decision (9 comments).

Five comments were either in support of the double handed approach outlined by Nick Nicholson in his statement or asking the club to establish a committee position of vice chairperson.

Eight comments were made thanking the committee for their work on the election process and two from members expressing thanks for being helped to access and complete the voting.

Three respondents complained about the election process stating that the set up of the process would mean the majority of the membership would not feel represented by the new chairperson and that either a system of ranking the candidates in order of preference, transferable votes or a series of elimination rounds of voting until just two candidates remain would have been fairer and more representative. One of these respondents also complained that the questions were poorly constructed and not well worded.

One respondent complained that some of the candidates were unfit to stand for election and that the committee should have vetted candidates more carefully and excluded some from the election.

One member expressed the view that Race Directors should not be allowed to stand due to a conflict of interest as this was a reason cited for a past chairman having to stand down.

Three respondents expressed support for Davey Green and voted for him but felt strongly against his plan to seek the incorporation of the 100 Half Marathon Club into the 100 Marathon Club.

Two respondents felt that the club should put much more emphasis on and encourage participation in traditional road marathons.

One member suggested that committee needs to be revisited and reinforce its roots by increasing the incentives and awards it offers and also to revisit the rules on the number of starters and finishers as with more and more events becoming available this is becoming an issue.

Although professing to be a dinosaur one member would like the club to focus on its stated aims and 'not churn out lots of tinsel'.

Disappointment with the 'politics' and bickering within the club was the subject of four comments with members stating that the club has lost its shine and the achievement of attaining the vest is not as special as it once was.

Thank you to all members who commented.

The committee will review the comments at its next meetings and make full responses at a future date. All comments about the election process will be considered in designing future votes where multiple candidates are standing.

Recommendations for Consideration in Future Elections to Committee Positions

The committee has undertaken to review the process of conducting elections where there are more than two candidates. It is recommended that a system allowing transferable votes, a ranking system or a series of rounds of voting eliminating the bottom candidate until only two candidates be considered.

For future elections the committee should consider producing a prospectus in which each candidate be invited to write more about what they could offer to the post they are standing for and that maybe their photograph should also be included. Members should also be given a clearer understanding of the role of the position that they are voting to fill.

Given the concentration of voting within the first seven days shorter voting periods could be considered.

Conclusion

Thanks to all five candidates who were prepared to stand for election and for the dignified and good-natured way in which each conducted their campaigns. Congratulation to Davey Green who won the vote and will become the next chairperson of the club.

Thank you to all the members who took the time to vote and congratulations to those whose favourite candidate was successful. The committee hopes that the club can now move forward in a positive way.

Finally thank you to the members of the committee who helped design and support the delivery of the election process.

Jon Aston
Treasurer

Independent Verification of Result and Process

Prior to beginning the election process the committee agreed that an independent person be asked to review the election process and verify the results. The committee unanimously agreed to ask Jon Aston to approach Amanda Ellis who has been the most recent person to audit the club accounts.

Amanda Ellis is a senior accountant with a specialist medical equipment supplies company, although she has no connection with the 100 Marathon Club, she is a keen runner and the treasurer of the running club to which she belongs. She aspires to one day join the 100 Half Marathon Club.

Below is a verbatim copy of the statement that Amanda Ellis emailed to me upon completion of her review. Although I am not including Amanda's contact details out of respect for her privacy, I would be happy to pass on questions to her.

Statement of Independent Verifier

I was asked by Jon Aston to independently review the process and associated data used for election of the chairperson of the 100 Marathon Club. I have reviewed Jon's written account of the process used and discussed the process verbally with him, and have also seen the Survey Monkey questions and results live in the Survey Monkey system.

In my opinion Jon has employed a variety of systems and checks resulting in a robust and transparent election process of a standard more than adequate for a non-profit association of the size of the 100 Marathon Club. I am therefore happy to recommend that the results of the election be relied upon.

I wish the Club all the best under its new leadership.

Regards

Amanda Ellis