



C&C Strategic plan 2021-2026

June 2021

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1. Summary

As with any planning exercise, there are always more worthy and valuable things to be done than we have resources to achieve. Prioritisation is required. We would like to make some changes in 2021 and then start the next ones as soon as suitable resources become available to pick them up, take ownership and move them forward.

For immediate action

- 1) Creation of a Track and Field working group led by the portfolio holder (currently Steve Green)
- 2) Creation of a Junior Academy working group led by the Young Athletes portfolio holder (currently Ric Park)
- 3) Creation of a C&C Trust process document to cover to describe how the fund will be managed from now on.
- 4) Recruit a Disability representative for the main committee
- 5) Structure the main committee meetings into an annual timetable of major topics
- 6) The Orbis donation spending plan

For action once ownership emerges

- 1) Creation of Athletic and Volunteer pathway plans
- 2) Create an inclusion framework and plan
- 3) Create at least 2 community clubs for pre-U13s with financial opportunities for willing coaches; partnership with other clubs and organisations as part of outreach
- 4) Create an additional services plan



2. Club Purpose

Cambridge and Coleridge Athletic Club, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), is for the benefit of the public and, in particular, the inhabitants of Cambridge and its surrounding districts.

The club purpose is (derived from the CIO Constitution of 2017):

- to promote community participation by providing facilities for athletics (see note below);
- to promote healthy recreation and improve quality of life for all involved;
- to welcome members regardless of an individual's circumstances.

NOTE: Athletics includes track and field athletics (running, jumping, throwing), as well as sports hall athletics, cross-country running, road and endurance running, race-walking, fell-running, wheelchair racing and other disciplines suitable for athletes with physical or mental impairments.



3. The intent of this plan

The club undertakes a review of its significant activities and initiatives every few years in order to update the club's priorities based on the prevailing environment of the time. The review considerations and output are written up in a "club plan" which guides decisions for the next few years. The last such planning activity ran from 2016 into 2017.

This document records the major "inputs" to the planning process, for example the major trends affecting the club, some of the ideas discussed and considered, and the major "outputs", that is the agreed priority areas of focus for the club in the next few years.

The document should remain valid until the next Strategic planning process is undertaken which is expected to be in the 3-5 year timeframe.



4. The process and member engagement

A sub-group drawn from the committee were the main contributors to this plan. The team included:

- Keith Clarke (Chair)
- Neil Costello (President)
- Chris Hurcomb (Endurance Chair)
- Ric Park (Young Athletes co-ordinator)
- Mo Park (Trustee without portfolio)
- Vashti MacDonald-Clink (Volunteers Co-ordinator)

The contents have been reviewed with the main committee as of 1st June.

The next stage is to engage with the wider membership.

The goal is to adopt the plan formally and release the document by the end of the summer 2021.



5. Current Context

Membership

As of April 2021, Cambridge and Coleridge Athletic Club is a club of around 600 members, of whom approximately 60% are road/cross country runners and about 40% track and field – of which approximately three-quarters are under 18s. Although we have many members who do both activities at different times of the year.

The year April 2020 to March 2021 was an exceptional year with around 7 months of shutdown where we didn't have access to the track and weren't allowed any face-to-face training. However, in the year prior we had a healthy number of young athletes joining the club such that the rate of joining was similar to those leaving.

While we have endeavoured to welcome as many new members as possible to the club, we have often been limited by coaching staff availability to give new joiners a good experience. We also started to take steps to improve the likelihood of young athletes staying at the club for longer. We feel there was evidence of this being effective before the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March 2020.

The total number of members has continued to drift down from its peak after the 2012 Olympics. We believe a membership of between 600-800 is sustainable, however due to the pandemic we are currently at the lower end of this and need a period of rebuilding.

SWOT - Current Status (April 2021)

Strengths:

- Big club by national standards with a wide range of needs catered for and healthy, balanced finances;
- Use of the University of Cambridge's facilities, indoor and outdoor;
- Our relationship with the University of Cambridge is open and strong;
- A large and varied committee representing many parts of the club;
- A well-established Endurance working-group;
- Committed and capable coaches for many disciplines;
- A large dose of good-will from members and volunteers;

Weaknesses:

- Many of the administrative tasks for the club are undertaken by too few people leading to some unsustainable roles;
- Insufficient coaches to cover all the Track and Field activities and progression in all events;
- Inconsistent support for progression for young athletes to senior (Some good, some poor);
- Mediocre results in the Senior Track and Field league caused by lower availability of senior athletes than desired;
- Communication with the members is challenging and not always successful;
- Volunteer recruitment and retention is difficult and unsustainable for many positions;



Opportunities:

- Become a regional specialist in Frame Running while increasing our overall disability athletics provision;
- Increasing both the inclusivity of the club and developing (inter)national standard athletes;
- Increasing the use of technology to simplify administration, training, competitions, volunteer recruitment, etc;
- Early engagement with parents at induction events
- Increasing the services available to members;
- Increasing the social dimension of the club;
- Greater Cambridge is increasing in population;
- Road and trail running has a growing interest amongst the wider population;
- Partnering with schools or village groups to provide athletics in their location;
- Partnering with other new clubs as they form, e.g. Saffron Waldron Athletic Club

Threats:

- Fewer parents with time available to volunteer for the club;
- Fewer athletes becoming coaches of the future;
- Increased competition for people's time and energy;
- Insufficient succession options for the larger volunteer roles;
- Track and Field Athletics as a decreasingly popular sport in the UK according to polls;
- School / village athletics using out of school clubs to make money;
- Other sports paying coaching; personal trainers; etc.

Governance Review

The main committee is composed of:

Chair, President, Treasurer, Membership secretary, the Portfolio holders, Welfare Officer, Volunteers Coordinator, Coaching coordinator, a member without portfolio and 1 or 2 co-opted members.

There is also an Endurance Committee whose Chair is the Endurance Portfolio holder from the main committee.

In March 2021, a subset of the main committee reviewed the document: "Charity Governance Code – for smaller Charities" (<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/pdf>) which is not specific to sports clubs but is relevant to our type of club which is run as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

There are 7 principles against which we reviewed our current governance and the items we considered worth pursuing were as follows:

Principle 1 – Organisation Purpose

- (1.3.1) We should re-look at our objectives to make a more accessible version of the CIO constitution. For example as part of the plan document – they are like our Vision statement



- (1.4.1) Need to clarify who are trustees and the different responsibilities of trustees and co-opted members
- (1.5.3) We should clarify our responsibilities towards community stakeholders and wider society

Principle 2 – Leadership

- (2.4.2) Consider plan to have a separate ‘board’ to deal with higher level things on rotation. And then deal with more operational issues separately. Could be in delegated committees if they exist.
- (2.4.5) We should create Role definitions for the major roles and review of skills needed.

Principle 3 – Integrity

- (3.6.3) May need to be explicit about Chatham House rules/ collective responsibility?
- (3.7.2) Who should have a DBS in the club? Just officials and coaches, or board members too, for example

Principle 4 – Decision making, risk and control

- (4.5.2) We should formally say what the delegated responsibilities are of the endurance committee, for example. Are we delegating to a TnF committee too?
- (4.5.3) We should also be clear on why we co-opt and review the existing co-opted roles
- (4.5.4) Be clear on who we’re paying and why
- (4.7.2) Have we got our investment portfolio right, for example. Risk appetite is also relevant under 3.7.2 above i.e. to decide if portfolio is correct, we need to be explicit about how much risk we’re comfortable with
- (4.7.3) We should perform a risk review once a year

Principle 5 – Board effectiveness

- (5.5.2) Making the minutes capture decisions clearly and how they will be communicated. E.g. when we set precedents.
- (5.7.1) Should we be seeking key posts via advertising formally around the club?, e.g. as we did when replacing the chair previously

Principle 6 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- (6.4.1 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion) Need to review this regularly. Do we need team training, for example? We should have a review of our plan which might include:
 - Reaching out to under-represented demographics.
 - Ensuring we actively plan for the ‘participative’ athletes too.
 - How do we advertise ourselves?
 - Do we consider a co-opted member who is a non-athlete who has knowledge in this area?

Principle 7 – Openness and accountability

- (7.5.3) Publish the minutes when signed off
- (7.6.1) Find a method to gather feedback and input from the membership and beyond.
- (7.7.1 Member engagement) And beyond the members too. Do we plan to market ourselves better to people who might say: “I’m not good enough to join a club”.



Priorities agreed at Committee after the Governance review (March 2021)

1. Review and agree the club purpose and vision.
 - ▶ First section of the 2021 plan
 - ▶ Make a more accessible version of the CIO constitution
2. Structure
 - ▶ Clarify roles and responsibilities of trustees and co-opted committee members
 - ▶ Propose delegated board and committee structure
 - ▶ Define a charity board membership with timetable of yearly reviews, e.g. risk review, finance review, etc
3. Culture and Values
 - ▶ Put an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion plan into the 2021 club plan
 - ▶ Put a member (and beyond) engagement plan into the 2021 plan



6. Inputs: Ideas for Consideration

During the early 2020 committee discussions before the March lockdown, there were a few themes discussed which are included here along with the more recent discussions on governance. Not all of these points are covered in later sections of the document. They represent a list of possible areas for exploration now or at a later stage. **As such they should be considered inputs for discussion and not an indication that they will be actioned.**

Therefore, many of these questions remain unanswered.

Athletic Progress

Currently, it is felt that progressing from a junior to senior athlete is a rather hit-and-miss affair. For some coaching groups this works very well but for others the steps are incomplete or missing altogether.

- What can we do to create clearer pathways for junior members?
 - Those pathways should include volunteering too?
- Do we need a more structured approach to coaching?
- Should we use some of the prior Orbis donations or the C&C Trust to subsidise training camps to encourage continued participation and development?

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

It is felt that the club should revisit the way it operates to ensure we are truly equal, diverse and inclusive, for example:

- Should we have training for all committee members, coaches and other key volunteers?
- Should we communicate this area more actively to the members and to the wider community of prospective members?
- Should we be actively targeting some additional demographics in the wider Cambridge area, for example from less affluent backgrounds?
- Should we be creating hardship funds to offer low or zero fees for those in real need?

Volunteering

- Are we a friends and family club where people are expecting to join in with the organisation of activities, or are we a service for the community where only a few ever volunteer?
- Should we put more onus on new members' parents/carers to volunteer to support the young athletes training and competition?
- How do we create a better volunteering experience for all?
- How do we increase the number of volunteers?

Other Services we could offer

- Should we provide better mental health support?



- Should we provide more active health and wellbeing services?
- Should we provide more injury prevention and assistance services?

Revise the governance structure

We have options for how we structure the meetings and decision making.

- A) Do we keep most decision making at the main committee with limited delegation?
- B) Do we create a Track and Field sub-committee similar to the Endurance sub-committee and delegate more?
 - a. If so, what is left for the main committee and who are the members?

Member and community Engagement

- How do we engage the membership regarding this planning exercise?
- How do we get more engagement with the membership on an on-going basis?
- Why and how do we engage with the wider community beyond the club members?
- Do we create more explicit partnerships with related organisations? E.g. General Practices, Schools, Parish councils, other sports clubs, etc
 - And why would we do this? What's the purpose?



7. Outputs: The club plan 2021 onwards

The club is very fortunate to have no existential crises to deal with at the current time and is endowed with a number of key assets including:

- Assess to excellent Track and Field facilities maintained by the University of Cambridge;
- A relatively large membership making us one of the larger athletic clubs in the country;
- A very healthy set of finances;
- A membership with a very diverse and strong set of skills;

In building the forward looking plan we aim to build on this strong platform and evolve the club significantly in these key areas over the next 3-5 years:

1. To improve the sustainability of the club's organisation and operation to ensure there is strength in depth in all areas of need; reducing dependence on a very small number of highly dedicated club volunteers
2. To enhance the positive impact of club membership focussing on the power of athletic sports to improve people's fulfilment, social and emotional engagement and their physical and mental well-being;
3. To extend the impact of the club out into the community to reach out to individuals and communities that have historically been left behind by sports clubs;

Governance Structure

The main committee of the club will continue to comprise of elected positions as well as include a small number of co-opted members who can bring additional skills as needed. This committee will be accountable for the operation of the club as per the constitution and rules.

We propose to extend the delegation of certain aspects of the club's operation to key working groups each led and sponsored by one or more of the elected committee with appropriate volunteers from the membership and beyond as necessary. This model has worked well for the Endurance committee in recent years and has been used in an ad-hoc basis in other areas in the past too.

We wish to establish/continue the following standing Working Groups:

- Endurance: led by the Endurance portfolio holder responsible for the organisation and operation of road running and cross country competitions (and any other endurance activities as deemed appropriate), budget management, and liaison with other working groups as required;
- Track and Field: led by the Track and Field portfolio holder responsible for the organisation and operation of the track and field competitions, budget management, and liaison with other working groups as required;
- Junior Academy: led by the Young Athletes portfolio holder with responsibility for the organisation and operation of Monday night junior athletics training, along with junior athlete induction and establishing development pathways for the young members (e.g. to officiating, coaching and/or older group training groups)

The main elected committee's accountabilities remain unchanged, but the delegation will allow the main committee to spend more time on:



- Evolving the club strategy;
- Ensuring the club organisation is fit-for-purpose;
- Reviewing and setting out mitigation plans for major risks;
- Reviewing and setting out plans to take advantage of major opportunities for development;
- Managing the C&C Trust fund

Membership and finances

The club's income has come from the following sources over the last few years:

- Membership subscription fees (and some young athlete induction fees);
 - About 90% of annual income
- Clothing sales (a small profit per item);
- Refreshment sales at home matches;
- One-off donations;
- The Cambourne 10k event;

The club's expenses have been:

- Track and Sports Hall hire (~40% of annual expenditure);
- EA affiliation fees (~25%);
- Match and entrance fees (~20%);
- Coaching fees and equipment (5-10%);
- Admin and misc (~5-10%);
- One off-equipment/facilities purchases;
- Cambourne 10k event fees;

Other background:

In the calendar years 2018 and 2019 the club was very fortunate to receive very large philanthropic donations from the Orbis Investments organisation. An activity started in earnest at the beginning of 2020 to plan how this would be used before the pandemic struck. This activity will restart in 2021.

The 2020/2021 was an exceptional financial year where the club did not receive subscriptions or any other associated income for 7 months of the year. While costs were constrained, a loss was made but covered by reserves.

In the past the net profit from the Cambourne 10k event has been used to donate to partner charities and to give to the C&C Trust fund.

As a principle, the club should plan its finances as follows:

- 1) The annual budget will be set so that as far as possible recurring annual expenses will be covered by recurring income, that is: largely membership subscriptions with small contributions from clothing and refreshment sales and any other legitimately recurring income.



- 2) Any additional income from donations and paid-for events, for example, should be ring-fenced, probably into the C&C Trust
- 3) Any additional activities such as specialist equipment or facilities, training camps, or specialist coach training, medical expenses, etc should be either self-funded or funded by application of special grants from the ring-fenced funds or C&C Trust.

Subscriptions

While we do wish to keep the yearly subscription fees as low as possible to ensure we are competitive with other running clubs and to maintain accessibility, we aim to balance the books largely through subscriptions each year and not rely on “events” or other fund-raising activities.

We believe a membership of around 650 (TBC) would allow us to break even at the predicted expenditure for 2021/22.

C&C Trust

Details of the C&C Trust can be found on <https://www.cambridgeandcoleridge.org.uk/about-us>

It will continue to give grants to qualifying individuals and organisations that fit the charitable objects.

It is proposed that we will continue to put money into the fund from the Cambourne 10k. Furthermore, we intend that the trust becomes more visible and proactive within the club:

- 1) We will contribute profits from any additional events we might run;
- 2) We will create a protocol for assessing and awarding grants;
- 3) Spend 5% (To be reviewed periodically to ensure sustainability) of the fund every year with a sub-group of the committee to recommend to the Trustees what it should be spent on
- 4) We enhance the webpage around the Trust and specifically set up the option for Gift Aid donations on that page

Orbis Investments donation funds

A team started the process of creating a plan to use this money for the good of members in early 2020. After a year on-hold this activity will re-start so that there is a clear plan by the end of 2021. Some money has been spent already on shelters and store sheds for C&C equipment. Some of the potential future uses will involve collaboration with the University of Cambridge and so may take many years to come to fruition.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The club has always had a stated aim to be as welcoming to people whatever their status or situation and to ensure we provide opportunities regardless of athletic ability. However, this needs continuously challenging to ensure we really are representative of the demographics of the greater Cambridge area and that we do live up to our goals.

One area the club has been very keen to promote over recent years is that of disability athletics and we were able to buy some Frame Runners with grant money given in the 2019/2020 timeframe. We also agreed to fund an additional Wednesday evening track session exclusively for this team.

Committee representation

The club has taken the recent step of co-opting a representative of young athletes to the main committee. From 2021 onwards we would like to have a representative from the disabled athletics community join the committee too.



Training and Education

We believe it may be important for the committee to become more aware of the factors which can enhance or hinder inclusivity at the club. We will aim to bring some outside advice into meeting so that we can improve our awareness and take action where needed.

Athletic Pathways

It is important that we realise the opportunity for fulfilment as well as physical and mental well-being exists for athletes of all ages and abilities. The club wishes to retain an ethos of inclusivity and encouragement to train and compete for all.

We also wish to ensure that we are able to provide good opportunities for those athletes who are able to perform at a higher competitive level. It isn't always the case that the best athletes can be identified at an early age. All people develop at different rates and only by continuing to enjoy athletics until their late teens/early 20s are we able to find the athletes with competitive senior standards.

We will retain the existing competitive structure which has opportunities for inexperienced athletes to experienced ones alike. However, we acknowledge that some evolution of track and field competition will be desirable in the next few years to increase the participation rates. We will liaise with competition providers on this subject.

We want to ensure that as many athletes as possible are able to learn and enjoy their chosen discipline at the club. For a young athlete that will mean progressing from the Monday night Junior academy to one of the main training squads. For an older athlete joining the club it will mean finding an appropriate training squad to join and develop with.

The club cares about performance as well as participation and we will continue to seek out and encourage new coaches to ensure there are motivating training groups for as many athletes as possible. We are aware there are some gaps currently. Although we do occasionally have new coaches join the club from outside, many of our long-serving track and field coaches joined as young athletes and have continued into coaching as they progressed. We will proactively seek out and encourage new coaches from within the existing membership and their parents.

We will also investigate ways we could use C&C Trust money to enhance the athlete experience, e.g. specialist training camps, subsidised warm-weather training. We will also look at the opportunity to pay for the occasional higher-level coaches to visit.

Finally, we will endeavour to hear the voices of our young athletes to seek ways to enable athletes to enjoy continuing with the club as long as possible.

Volunteering Pathways

Some young athletes enjoy the challenge of becoming officials at competitions or coaching assistants.

When someone is more involved, they get to know more people and tend increase their attachment to the club and their fulfilment. This is a win-win for the individual and for the club.

We would like to create clearer pathways for young athletes so that they can be encouraged to participate more fully in the club's activities.

Additional Services

We will investigate what services are available that could be of positive benefit to members and what the financial model might be. It may be possible to incentivise an organisation to be on-site during training occasionally or at competitions.



Additional events for engagement

In early 2020, we ran a Monday events evening in place of the usual Junior Academy training and asked all the parents and carers to volunteer to help run the event. It was very successful but sadly happened just before the Covid-19 Lockdown. We were unable to follow-up in the way we had hoped. We will aim to run a similar event at the start of the outdoor Junior Academy season each year.

We will also investigate running special “festivals” for particular event types to encourage more people to take part from the club as well as those outside the club. We would charge a reasonable fee and make the event feel celebratory. By restricting the events to one or two main disciplines, we would reduce the officials required and give the opportunity to train additional people. Any surplus could be given to the C&C Trust.

Community Out-reach activities and coach opportunities

Community clubs and younger athletes

Several years ago, there were 2-3 community clubs running for school years 3-5 (i.e. pre-club age) around the greater Cambridge area. They acted as a feeder into C&C and provided a source of income for the coaches willing to devote their time to running them – usually just after school. Unfortunately, it proved hard to find coaches available at that right time of day and after some of the organisers retired, they disappeared. As a community outreach, this had been very effective and we’ll like to get these going again.

The England Athletics “Funetics” programme is designed to appeal to this younger group and comes with a financial model too. We will encourage coaches to look at using this programme, again as an outreach from the club into areas we might not normally reach. The critical difficulty will be finding coaches who have availability at the right times of day on a regular basis.

The club can consider a pilot scheme funded by our Orbis money to kick-start our learning.

Partnerships to extend athletics’ reach

Another area of consideration is whether partnership with other organisations might help extend the reach of athletics into the wider community. One such organisation that the C&C Trust funded was “Run for your Life” (<https://groups.runtogether.co.uk/RunForYourLifeCambridge>) which has some C&C members acting as leaders for very small groups of people, many of whom would not consider themselves runners – and certainly not “club runners”. There may be other organisations and opportunities which can be used to extend the benefits of activity on people’s physical and mental well-being.

Other Athletics Clubs

A new Saffron Waldron Athletics club is likely to be formed in the coming year and there is an opportunity extend a partnership, for example by providing competition opportunities for their athletes as second claim.

There are discussions regarding a track being created at Cambourne and again a partnership may be appropriate.

C&C will consider all these opportunities in the context of the CIO’s purpose.

Coach payments

A few years ago, a working-group looked at the issue of coach payments. In summary, the agreement was that we shouldn’t be paying coaches except for reasonable travel expenses for attending certain competitions with C&C athletes.

The current financial model of the club does not support paying coaches for the C&C training sessions. However, the club needs to be aware that there are a new group of coaches who would like to make a living from providing coaching and training services. This area will need revisiting to ensure that no athlete is forced to pay additional fees



Cambridge & Coleridge Athletic Club
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A Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Charity Number 1169959

beyond the normal club fees, but those that are able and willing to pay for additional services with a coach outside of C&C sessions can do so.

We also need to investigate whether additional fees for the junior academy could be used for small coach payments on that evening alone, e.g. expenses. It could be used to encourage more helpers to assist on Mondays, for example.

This area will need to be investigated and discussed widely before any decisions are reached. In the meantime, the current position of paying expenses for certain competitions only will be the policy.