

## **AGM - Another Great Meeting**

After a successful year on trail and tarmac for the club and its members, the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 10th April 2014 was a good opportunity to reflect on what has gone and also to look forward to what lies ahead.

The meeting was well attended as always, with a nice mix of new faces and club stalwarts reflected in the Chairman's announcement that the club has grown to over 400 members. This news brought the first of much applause for the evening, but also a few minor constitutional changes which were voted in without issue. As with any AGM certain bits of essential housekeeping were taken care of including the election of the committee. All sitting committee members were re-elected with the addition of **Rebekah Stephens** as Race Secretary; **Oliver Bell** as Social Secretary and **Desiree Beer** as Welfare Officer - welcome to the Committee and thank you. An explanation of the club finances was made, the most noteworthy points being that we are in robust shape and were able to donate a fabulous £2,800 to charity last year. It was also decided, almost unanimously, to support all four member-nominated charities, a decision made easier by the fantastic amount the club raises through the various races it puts on each year. Therefore this year's beneficiaries will include Winston's Wish, St Vincent's & St George's Association, Cheltenham Animal Shelter and The Butterfly Garden.

With business attended to it was time to recognise certain individuals for their contribution to the club by bestowing the honour of life membership. **June Franks** has been Club Treasurer for many years. As well as completing her role with huge dedication she has also been

instrumental in the creation and ongoing success of the Linda Franks Race, a jewel in the crown of the club's race calendar.

**Steve "Route Master" Adams** was also inducted in recognition of his hard work creating and updating the routes used by the club as well as managing the club's road and offroad race series. We thank June and Steve for all they have done and continue to do for the club and welcome them as our newest life members ... permanently purple!

Whilst the votes were counted for Runner of the Year, it was time to welcome our guest speaker. **Jamie McDonald** has found fame with his adventures and fundraising and has recently returned from a 5,000 mile unsupported run across Canada. Having ridden over from Gloucester to talk to us on the very bike he used to ride from Bangkok to Gloucester in 2012, Jamie started his talk with footage of him cowering, surrounded by flying bullets in the middle of a firefight in Afghanistan. So there was no doubting his adventurer's credentials! From the start in Thailand, through war zones, having his expectations challenged in Iraq and Iran, riding through the city of Batman dressed as Batman ... Jamie recounted his tales with a passion and excitement that was contagious and had everyone in the room hooked on his every word. The story of his world record static cycle ride became the story of how his cousin Kev smeared his bottom in manuka honey and had the attending throng roaring with laughter. When Jamie moved onto tales of his incredible 5,000 mile run there were a few teary eyes as he revealed a motivational message he'd received from the mother of a terminally ill child. The following Q&A session saw a vast array of questions, all of which were answered honestly, humbly and humorously, Jamie leaving us with the message that anyone can be a superhero. It comes as no surprise to announce that the collection

which followed raised £300 for Jamie's chosen charity, the Pied Piper Appeal.

The Chairman then announced the winners of the members' Runners of the Year vote. If the cheers and applause were anything to go by then **Helen Fursman** had the vote of everybody in the room, recognised for her effort and results in 2013 as well as being a very popular and supportive member of the club. For the gents, **Dave Chittock's** incredible improvements and substantial weight loss saw him take the title, and we're grateful he came back from a concert in Stroud to collect his award in person! **Jamie McDonald** kindly presented the trophies to rapturous applause.

With that we wrapped up another incredible year for the Almosts, looking back on success for the club, its members, events and finances and laying the foundations for the next incredible twelve months.

Good luck to all in their running endeavours, whether 5km or 5,000 miles!