Athletics Report 2025-26 – *Tom Druce, Guernsey Athletics Development Officer*

My annual report includes three sections which I wish to highlight as current areas of satisfaction for the club. There is so much work that goes into 12 months of activities and much of this happens in the background. Rather than attempt to share all of this – I only wish to thank everyone involved in the running of the club and supporting me in my role. This includes the Board of Directors and other supporting volunteers, as well as our team of coaches and officials. Without their selfless commitment, we would not be able to achieve anywhere near what we have been able to over the past decade and beyond.

Day-to-day club activities

I noticed a video that club stalwart Alun Williams recently posted a video on social media that he'd taken during the evening, he captioned "we have a lovely facility… we also have a cracking club." His video captured the various training groups all getting stuck into their sessions overseen by a dedicated and enthusiastic coaching team.

Alun's positivity encapsulates a feeling that has been growing over the past couple of years or more whereby the training environment in the club has subtly evolved to be the most positive and motivating that it has ever been. This does not happen overnight and is not just the result of putting structures and pathways into place and it is a credit to all coaches, volunteers and athletes that we currently have involved.

The setup that we currently have certainly appears to be working for us, but where reliance is upon volunteers who have other priorities alongside their role in the club we are always vulnerable to change and limited somewhat in how we evolve. However, we have shown over a number of years now that we have a good balance of seeking to proactively evolve and grow whilst being ready to be reactive and evolve by necessity too.

Island Games

The Island Games is worthy of a note of reflection as we travelled to a Games for the first time since 2019 – which is pretty crazy to say. What is crazier still was just how much of a positive trip it was for everyone involved and it captured perfectly what the Island Games is about and what it can provide for us as islanders.

Orkney surpassed everyone's expectations in numerous ways, not least the sunny and warm weather which greeted us 90% of the time we were there. Our team was much changed from Guernsey 2023 and virtually unrecognisable from the last away Games in 2019 – and what a group they were. This group was the most coherent and positive team that we've had arguably this century at a Games – no cliques, 'good vibes' (as the youngsters say) only. Following on from similar observations of our day-to-day activities – it is this positivity which I am most pleased to see flowing through the club.

Whilst the results are important – the Island Games provides us with so much more than that in terms of experience and development. I can assure everyone that this particular edition certainly delivered for us and there'll be plenty more to come from the likes of Eloise Scholes, Amelia Hart, Theo Le Tissier and Nic Ackermann. That quartet all debuted in Orkney and I believe came away with enhanced self-belief, engagement, determination and hunger for the next opportunity.

For those who are invested in results and some Channel Island rivalry(!) – whilst Jersey topped the medal table with 6 golds, three of these titles were claimed by recent UK imports to the island, and we arguably showed superior depth with more medals overall with 5 golds and 15 in total.

Athletics events – on and off island

The club continues to provide a competition programme which defies our relatively small size and stature. The events are often long-standing but they all serve various purposes and opportunities for athletes of varying standards, ages and experience. The fact that we are able to maintain this programme and 'keep up' with the changing demands from national governing bodies to keep them officially licensed is a great credit to all involved and offers fantastic value to our members.

Getting off the island to UK competition has always been a mainstay for us as a club. This happens both in the form of centralised trips and individuals taking opportunities as advised by their coaches. The last 12 months has seen a slight increase in the number of trips to compete by our athletes and in many cases engagement in accessing higher level events. The coaches within the club bring a great knowledge of the various competition opportunities available for youth, development, elite and participation athletes and this coupled with the tailored funding programme offered by the club has seemingly led to this greater engagement.

Guernsey Sports Commission Report

Finally – please find below the report which I submitted to GSC 6 months ago. This gives some further information on club activities during the calendar year 2025.

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SDO submissions for Guernsey Sports Commission's Review of 2025	
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Any other social media accounts	Instagram.com/guernseyathletics
Please provide any images you would like to be published as part of your submission *(.jpg of decent resolution – ensure any children have permission to be photographed)*	*Attach to email*
General overview of your sport development activities in 2025 – include any major events or tournaments that took place – *approx. 150 words*	
A busy 2025 saw Guernsey Athletics make some progress on its plans to develop areas such as volunteering, inclusivity and age group changes. This groundwork will lead to some tangible changes and improvements in 2026. The Island Games was again used as a vehicle to fuel positive performance increases and development opportunities for up-and-coming athletes, with Development Officer Tom Druce highlighting the importance of the unique competition's benefits to Sarnian athletes.	

Outline your work with schools in 2025 – *approx. 150 words, include numbers of children and young people or sessions etc if you can*

Athletics as a fundamentals-driven sport is continuing to be delivered in schools by the Guernsey Sports Commission. Guernsey Athletics again delivered two primary school events in the Track & Field Championships and the Zedra X Challenge (cross-country). Senior schools also took part in the latter and the club's development team worked with PE departments to make some small changes to the Senior Island School Sports event.

Outline your work with the wider community in 2025 – *approx. 150 words, include any participation figures if you can*

Many of the club's endurance events, in particular the Butterfield Half Marathon, served the wider community with excellent opportunities to set a goal and test themselves in highly organised but welcoming settings.

The club also ended the year by hiring an Inclusion Development Officer to lead in areas such as improvement of opportunities for disabled athletes in 2026. This demonstrates their commitment in this area following some isolated success over the past 18-24 months.

Outline your sports performance highlights of 2025 – *approx. 150 words, try to be as inclusive as possible and don't just highlight any elite/top level performers*

Alastair Chalmers was again the leading athlete, he lowered his best to 48.30sec for the 400m hurdles which means he's the sixth-fastest Briton of all time. He also made the World Championships semi-final.

The Island Games as usual provided many highlights, with gold medal-winning performances from Nic Ackermann, Darcey Hodgson, Vicky Hancock, Chris Bain and Rhiannon Dowinton. Bain's 5,000m win was arguably the highest quality of those, with Dowinton's noteworthy as it was her third consecutive 100m Hurdles victory. Amelia Hart (400m) and Gian-Luca Robilliard (800m) both won bronze medals in high quality track events.

Bain was in good form elsewhere for the rest of the season, securing spots in various races in mainland Europe over 1500m and clocking 3:45.18. He was the highest standard of performance by a Sarnian aside from Chalmers. Youngsters Amelie Van Heerden, Emil Friedrich and Theo Le Tissier led the way in terms of promising junior performances.

Highlight any Coaching/Workforce Development/Training delivered or undertaken in 2025 – *approx. 100 words*

Beth Powell was the most active coach for the club in terms of climbing the qualification ladder. She progressed from 'Coaching Assistant' to 'Athletics Coach – Throws' within the England Athletics coaching framework, putting in a significant amount of work in the process. Many of the club's volunteer coaches continued their CPD using online resources from trusted sources, reaping the benefits of this age of accessibility through virtual means.

New technical officials were recruited and shadowed the existing team at the club's local track and field events.

What we are looking forward to in 2026 – *provide up to 5 short bullet points of events or activities planned for the coming year*

A major change in athletics for 2026 is the change of age groups that is being implemented by England Athletics. This process is more complex than it first appears, this being due to technical changes such as hurdles and throwing implement specifications as well as racing distances and overall competition formats. This will mean important work to ensure smooth changes in local competition delivery as well as the training of youth athletes. Both will need to fall in line with our own existing youth development philosophy and that of England Athletics.

Inclusion development will be a big part of 2026, with the appointment of Caroline Barby into a formal role to oversee this. It will include para athletes and also adult female athletes as a focus.