

5K Weekly Challenge

End of 2020 – Summary

During the lockdown periods and coronavirus restrictions in 2020 Hardley Runners and some of their friends and family took part in a weekly 5K run challenge, in the absence of parkrun events at the time. A total of 58 runners took part and submitted a time and as a group we ran 669 times in 2020.

Runners witnessed periods this year the likes of we will rarely see again such as, running flat out down the road without a car in sight. In the first lockdown period it was so easy to plot a course, eventually traffic returned and many runners had to alter their course to suit.

This was a challenge that adhered to government guidance and in many instances, these runs were carried out in complete isolation without anyone to chase and without the sound of foot steps coming to get you.

To keep spirits up there was the odd show of fancy dress; we had a Batman & a Robin, a Sunflower, a Corgi in Union Jack Shorts, a Mad Hatter, then there was Halloween and of course Christmas. We also had an Off-Road Special week and when permitted some runners paired up and paced each other.

Runners were encouraged to beat their own time and improve upon their Age Grade Score. Of course, some runners already had very good times coming into the start of this challenge so improvement was harder for some than others, but we all rose to the challenge and 37 runners were able to improve their 2020 Personal Best. You can see the full results here (Excel spreadsheet so you can sort them to your heart's content)

<http://www.hardleyrunners.co.uk/documents/Isolation-5K-2020.xlsx>

The runners that made the most improvement were:

- Mike Fitton – taking his 2020 PB from 27:55 to 22:06 – a 15.47% improvement
- Vicki Clarke – who ran through and after pregnancy from 29:00 to 23:13 – 12.81%
- Jacqui Healey – 28:44 to 25:18 – 8.85% improvement
- Mary Corbett – 29:01 to 27:13 – 7.88% improvement
- Maxine Robbins – 61:00 to 49:06 – 7.36% improvement
- Julie Swainston – 26.20 to 23.19 – 7.24% improvement

The Highest age grades recorded were:

- Jane Hodge 87.78%
- Alice Rudd 78.38%
- Mick Anglim 78.05%
- James Clarke 77.18%
- Tim Anetts 75.67%
- Dan Latham 75.19%

The Fastest times recorded were:

<p>Ladies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alice Rudd 18:48• Karen Denham 21:26• Poppy Tanner 21.30• Jane Hodge 22:06• Kelly Anetts 22:13• Vicki Clarke 23:13	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tim Anetts 17:03• James Clarke 17:23• Callum Johnson 17:38• Dan Latham 17:38• Ben Andrew 18:29• Simon Ibbotson 18:35
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Some runners really committed to this challenge; Jeremy Barber ran every week for 40 weeks carrying out a “garden parkrun” and an outside 5K, so 80 runs in total. Terry Earney, Sarah Fitton, Jane Hodge and Dan Latham ran every week for 40 weeks. Ann Brucelow 34 runs. Simon Ibbotson 32 runs. Karen Denham 30 runs. These runners really committed and offered a lot of support to the challenge.

There were also a couple of other standout achievements worthy of note:

- Jacqui Healey achieved her best 5K time in 7 years.
- Sarah Fitton had a hard time to beat but persisted and after a good number of weeks she beat her 2020 PB six times in fairly close succession.

The community throughout was great, runners pulled together and pushed each other on and we had a lot of fun in a strange time.

The challenge will continue for 2021 until Parkrun can recommence, we’ve made a few adjustments to help us score improvement on a more even field and we look forward to the best running and community in 2021 until we can hopefully all compete and run together.

This is some of the feedback and lessons shared by some of the runners:

“Running the same course in a succession of weeks really helps you achieve a PB, you realise where you struggle and which parts you need to dig in at”

“We learnt it was counterproductive to try and run faster every week, to keep feeling fresh and to avoid injury we soon realised we had to take it slow some weekends, and we learnt that that was OK, give yourself a couple or five minutes extra every 3-4 weeks or so, you need the rest and your legs need to run at different paces every now and then”

“Races are great and we missed them massively but having something to aim at each week, has kept us disciplined and focused and we have seen some great personal improvements”

“More so than missing races, we've missed the team atmosphere at the events, but having regular contact with our running buddies has given us some form of team spirit in the meantime, until the events return”

“We've all enjoyed the challenge, it's kept us sane, and it's been great having something to aim for”

“Some of us have been fortunate enough to run with others which has been great”

“Seeing peoples Garden Run courses and some of the mad fancy dress efforts was great fun to hear about and take part in”

“There's a skill in finding a great course and we've had fun exploring routes to find the flattest course, the least corners and shelter from the wind etc”

“We were all struggling with enthusiasm in the first week of lockdown and it's been great sharing our running which has given us back some mojo”

“We realised training sessions were also important, and it was a great time for us when club training was resumed”

“A couple of us felt fitter than we have ever been in our lives”

“The regular 5K combined with the club training has definitely improved pace”