



# ORWELL PANTHERS A C

Affiliated to UK Athletics, England Athletics, Suffolk County AA

## Management Committee Report 2009

This year's report has to start with recognition of the untimely death of Jerry Everett. Although only a coach with Panthers for a very short period of time, Jerry was both in love with Panthers and loved by Panthers. He committed himself tirelessly to our members despite terrible health problems. He volunteered to be our Vice-Chairman and was elected as such this time last year. Sadly his ill health got the better of him and even then, he died having taken the positive approach to give himself the best chance to get better but it wasn't to be that way. We miss him greatly and our thoughts go out to Michelle his partner.

As we move ever closer to that great day in 2012 when London plays host to the world of sport and in particular to the world of athletics for people with disabilities, I have to report that I believe that Orwell Panthers AC is equipped to play a role in that momentous occasion. Already we displayed our abilities to the Foreign Secretary Mr Milliband when he visited Northgate to assess the suitability to host a visiting nation's training. Our athletes have been making their mark on the national scene and we have welcomed others from within the region who most certainly will be competing in 2012 at the Paralympic Games.

The number of athlete members has increased slightly over the year but I still feel the club would be stronger if we had a wider range of classifications among our members. I do hope that those reading this might give some thought to becoming more involved. We need new ideas and new enthusiasm to be able to continue the wonderful work that has been done by so many up to now.

This is our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and what has been achieved in those years is both amazing and humbling. We all need to pat each other on the back and to commit ourselves to going forward towards 2012 with determination and pride.

### **Competition:**

Panther athletes have been fully engaged throughout the year in Sportshall athletics, Cross Country Running and Track & Field athletics.

Panthers have been seen in Suffolk Cross Country League, Suffolk County Cross Country Championships, Suffolk Sportshall League, Suffolk County Track & Field Championships, Metro Championships for the Blind and Visually Impaired, DSE Regional Championships, DSE National Championships. The club won the Harlow Challenge Trophy and then lost the Panther Challenge Trophy to Warren School. We held our own Panther Pentathlon Championships and declared Ollie Minns our first winner. There was the 2009 Indoor Panther Challenge and our athletes performed brilliantly but were overshadowed by an outstanding team from Stevenage and North Herts. We presented the Jerry Everett Memorial Trophy to the athlete who had given the most of himself as both a competitor and club member. The winner who displayed outstanding spirit and care was Stephen Foulger. Finance has put a delay into the process of Special Olympics Suffolk but there is a commitment within the County that it will happen.

**Social:**

The committee thanks the ladies of the Social Committee for their sterling work over the year, running Discos, Car Boot Sales, providing refreshments for officials and generally being great supporters of the Panthers. We need you all. Thank you so much.

**Awards:**

It was great to learn that Ollie Minns had been chosen as Disability Sports person for Suffolk Coastal District in 2009. Then came the news that Paul Rutter was England Athletics' "Official of the Year". The club itself also achieved runner up in the Team Ipswich, Club of the Year awards. Well done to everyone.

**Development:**

Our coaches and officials continue with their personal development and this will continue into the future. Most clubs in Suffolk and North Essex have subscribed to an Athletics Network which has secured a large amount of funding to assist in training and development of athletics in the area. We are part of that Network and hope to see much benefit from our membership.

**Profile:**

The club continues to broadcast itself via our web site: [www.orwellpanthers.co.uk](http://www.orwellpanthers.co.uk)  
It is acknowledged that "The Panther" has been noticeably absent for much of the year. Is there a budding Editor out there?

**Sponsorship:**

Throughout the current credit crunch", it has been difficult to obtain sponsorship but we have been extremely fortunate to have the best fundraiser in the world in our corner. I refer, of course, to Ann to whom we all owe a huge debt of gratitude for never missing the chance to find some money from somewhere. Thank you, Ann. We have also to thank Michelle who very kindly asked that at Jerry's funeral, there should be "No Flowers" but donations to Orwell Panthers. This proved to be a most generous offering and the very large sum raised will fund the Jerry Everett Memorial Trophy well into the future.

It is hard to think of new things to say at the end of the Annual report but I really am very proud of Orwell Panthers. Thank you for everything you all do. Don't fall from the high road that you have taken so far. Let us go forward towards 2012 in good heart and determined that the red and black of Orwell Panthers will be setting the standards for all to follow.

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Mike Oakley  
Chairman, 4/11/2009