



## WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 4 April 2022

**LEAD OFFICER:** Steve May

**SUBJECT:** SURREY HALF MARATHON

**AREA:** WOKING

### **SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Surrey Half Marathon has successfully taken place in the Woking/Guildford area since 2014. The event organisers, AAT events, are seeking approval for the next three years following the completion of the final previously approved date in 2022, (2023, 2024, and 2025) to hold the Surrey Half Marathon event, 5km race and kid's race annually in March each year in Woking.

The event has fortunately been able to take place in both 2020 and 2021, although in 2021 it was moved to September due to the Covid-19 national lockdown in March. The event returned in March in 2022 and it is the intention to keep it at this time of year going forward.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **Woking Joint Committee is asked to agree that:**

- (i) The Surrey Half Marathon, 5km race and kids race can start and finish at Woking Leisure Centre on Sunday 12 March 2023, Sunday 17 March 2024 and Sunday 16 March 2025.
- (ii) That unless there are any major operational issues of concern or significant requests by the Event Organisers to modify the event following the 2023 event, that subject to a full event debrief, the Woking Safety Advisory Group give approval for future events to take place in 2024 and 2025.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

There are significant benefits to the event organiser if approval can be provided for events in 2023, 2024 and 2025, increasing entry numbers and allowing forward planning.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

### Background

- 1.1 The aim of the Surrey Half Marathon event is to provide a safe, community-based mass participation sports event for Woking and the surrounding communities. The running events will focus on being fun and family-friendly whilst also catering to more serious runners looking to complete the course as quickly as possible.
- 1.2 2022 was the ninth edition of the Surrey Half, a closed road half marathon run starting and finishing at Woking Leisure Centre. The route follows the roads to Sutton Green and Jacobs Well, through Worplesdon and Mayford and back to Woking Leisure Centre. 1587 runners took part in the Half Marathon Event, all of which were aged 17 years plus. 268 runners took part in the 5km event, participants were aged 10 years plus, a further 473 runners took part in the kids race, ages 6-16 years. The event was supported by 120 volunteers from the local area.

40% of runners in 2022 came from the immediate Woking area (GU21, GU22, GU23, GU24), with a further 35% coming from the wider Surrey area.

An average of 4,800 people registered for the Half Marathon each year from its inception in 2014 to the last pre-Covid event in 2019. Numbers have subsequently dropped, but the event has already doubled its participants between 2021 and 2022. The aim is that numbers will return to pre-pandemic levels from 2023 onwards.

- 1.3 AAT events were acquired by The Race Organiser Group in 2020, with the event has now been managed twice by the new team. The previous event owner, Toby Jenkins, was fully involved in the planning in 2021, as well as returning with several old hands to manage the course and other aspects of the event in both 2021 and 2022.

### 2022 Event Feedback

- 1.4 The 2022 Surrey Half Marathon was another successful event. Two resident complaints were received directly to the organiser following the event (both referencing the inconvenience of the road closures). The roads were re-opened on time and in some cases ahead of schedule. This was due to a robust marketing and communications plan for local residents, the event becoming a regular fixture for the local area and keeping a consistent route, so residents are fully aware of exact road closures and timings.
- 1.4 The proposed 2023 route is intended to remain the same as the 2022 route (Appendix 1). However the organisers will be reviewing the course to make sure it is still the best route for runners, residents and local businesses.
- 1.5 The event received a Gold award from Racecheck, the equivalent of Trust Pilot for mass participation sporting events
- 1.6 Feedback from Hoe Bridge School, who took part in the kids race:

“Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to you all for hosting such a fantastic community event that brings local children together and provides an opportunity at such a young age, for young children to begin to experience a love of competitive and fun sport.

Here at Hoe Bridge School we regard sport as a vital part of children's health and wellbeing and therefore we encourage as many children as possible to take part in this fun annual event.

This was the second year we have had so many children from Hoe Bridge attend and I have certainly seen an increase in our number of participants compared to last year which increased from approximately 50 to 65 plus entries this year.”

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

- 2.1 The Borough Council is confident that the event organisers can successfully deliver a Half Marathon event that benefits local residents, local charities and underpins the Council's Health and Wellbeing aspirations. AAT events has evidenced this by delivering a successful event, which have greatly improved year on year. Therefore, subject to any major incidents, the borough council are supportive of seeking approval for the event to take place in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

## **3. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 3.1 Consultation has taken place with various Surrey County Council departments including the Mayor's office:
- 3.2 The Mayor, Cllr Liam Lyons: “I always look forward to the Surrey Half-Marathon each year, as it brings together the best spirit of running; those who want to run as fast as they can, whether to win a prize or to beat their personal best, along with the many hundreds of people who run to raise sponsorship funds for worthy causes, often running in memory of a loved one. As a keen runner myself, I am proud to see so many people come together to make the Surrey Half-Marathon such a popular and successful event.”
- 3.4 Alan Morris – SCC Emergency Management & Resilience team: “From our teams perspective we are happy with the way the event is being run. The new team running the event have engaged with the Safety Advisory Group process and are continuing to work with partners to ensure inconvenience to residents is kept to a minimum and the event runs safely. We have no concerns with the event continuing.”

## **4. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 4.1 There is no direct cost to Woking Borough Council or Surrey County Council.

## ITEM 7

- 4.2 AAT events will meet all appropriate costs for hosting the event on Surrey Highways and event management overall, seeking local sponsors as appropriate.
- 4.3 The event raised an estimated £100,000 for charities, through direct support (charity partners) and runner participation (runners choosing their own charities to fundraise for).
- 4.4 Proposed Entry fees for 2023 are: Kids race £12-15, Adults £38-41, 5km £22-25. Discussion will take place with the event organisers to ensure entry fees are as accessible as possible as well as looking to promote linked opportunities in support of wider health and wellbeing activities. (ie: NHS Couch to 5km to support participants completing the 5km event).
- 4.5 AAT Events Ltd has engaged Surrey University to carry out a study to quantify the local benefits of the 2022 event. They will be looking at hotel stays, purchases in shops, train ticket revenue, car parking revenue and leisure spend amongst other things.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT:**

- 5.1 The associated risks involved with hosting a closed road event is outlined below:

Risk 1: Resource and knowledge to deal with traffic / road closure complaints usually dealt with by Surrey County Council and associated reputational impact on Woking Borough Council.

*Mitigation* – Leisure Services Manager will be responsible for fielding these complaints and will continue to consult with Surrey County Council and event organisers throughout the whole process. Given the number of complaints in 2022, resource should not be a concern, given that the event will be largely the same.

- 5.2 Risk 2: Prevention of adequate social care reaching vulnerable residents within the road closure footprint.

*Mitigation* - AAT Events will put measures in place to provide vehicle access to those who need it and where it is safe to do so. These measures will include, but not be limited to:

- Working with Woking Borough Council Adult Social Care to obtain contact details for all carers, working within the road closure areas, known to the council.
- Contacting care homes, churches and community centres on the route or directly affected by the road closures.
- Road closure information advertised through local means, social media and advance warning road signage with contact details for AAT Events.
- Travel plans offered to those who require access to the road closures including vehicle passes, detailed access points and where necessary marshal escorts for vehicles whilst they are within the road closures.
- Meeting with carers in advance of the event to explain the closures and the access options.

**6. LOCALISM:**

- 6.1 The event as a whole provides an inclusive, mass participation event to the residents of Woking and surrounding areas.
- 6.2 The event also provides the opportunity for local residents to volunteer and spectate at a closed road mass participation event, which is on their doorstep. In 2022 the event attracted 46 local volunteers and 32 paid roles filled by local residents. The 7th Woking Scout Group provided 36 scouts to carry out bag drop and medal distribution roles.
- 6.3 Spectator hotspots along the route allow communities to come together to watch the event and enjoy live entertainment.

**7. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 7.1 By providing the 5km the event is more inclusive, attracting not just regular runners, but also beginners. This, in partnership with the half marathon and kids race provides an inclusive event that could, in theory, be accessed by a number of residents of Woking.
- 7.2 A potential barrier to participation could be the cost of entry, as detailing within Section 4, which will be subject to further discussion with the event organisers.
- 7.3 AAT events completed an Equalities Impact Assessment for the 2022 and will do so for the 2023 event, once agreed.

**8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below
Human Resource/Training and Development	No significant implications arising from this report

Public Health implications

## ITEM 7

- 8.1 The event under-pins Woking Borough Council's Health & Well Being ambitions around providing opportunities for mass participation events. By offering three different distance inclusive events a greater cross section of the local community (i.e. experienced runners, children and beginners) have the opportunity to access an event and increase their levels of physical activity.

### **9. CONCLUSION:**

- 9.1 The Surrey Half Marathon was successfully delivered in 2021, despite the challenges of a shortened planning period and the uncertainties around Covid-19 restrictions, as well as the introduction of a new management team.
- 9.2 The organisers took on board the feedback from the 2021 event and incorporated it into the planning for the event in 2022. Feedback from 2022 will be used to make the future events event better.
- 9.3 There are significant benefits to the event organiser if approval can be provided for events in 2023, 2024 and 2025. It is therefore proposed that unless there are any major operational issues of concern or significant requests by the Event Organisers to modify the event following the 2022 event, that subject to a full event, debrief the Woking Safety Advisory Group give approval for future events to take place in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

### **10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 10.1 If the future years' events are agreed, the event organisers AAT events will promote the 2023 event straight away. Subsequent events will be promoted as soon as the preceding event is completed e.g. 2024 will be advertised in the 2023 post race information sent to runners.

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#### **Contact Officer:**

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#### **Consulted:**

Surrey County Council Traffic Management  
Surrey County Council Emergency Planning  
Surrey County Council Adult Social Care

#### **Borough Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Colin Kemp

#### **Annexes:**

Appendix 1 – Surrey Half Marathon 2021 Route Map

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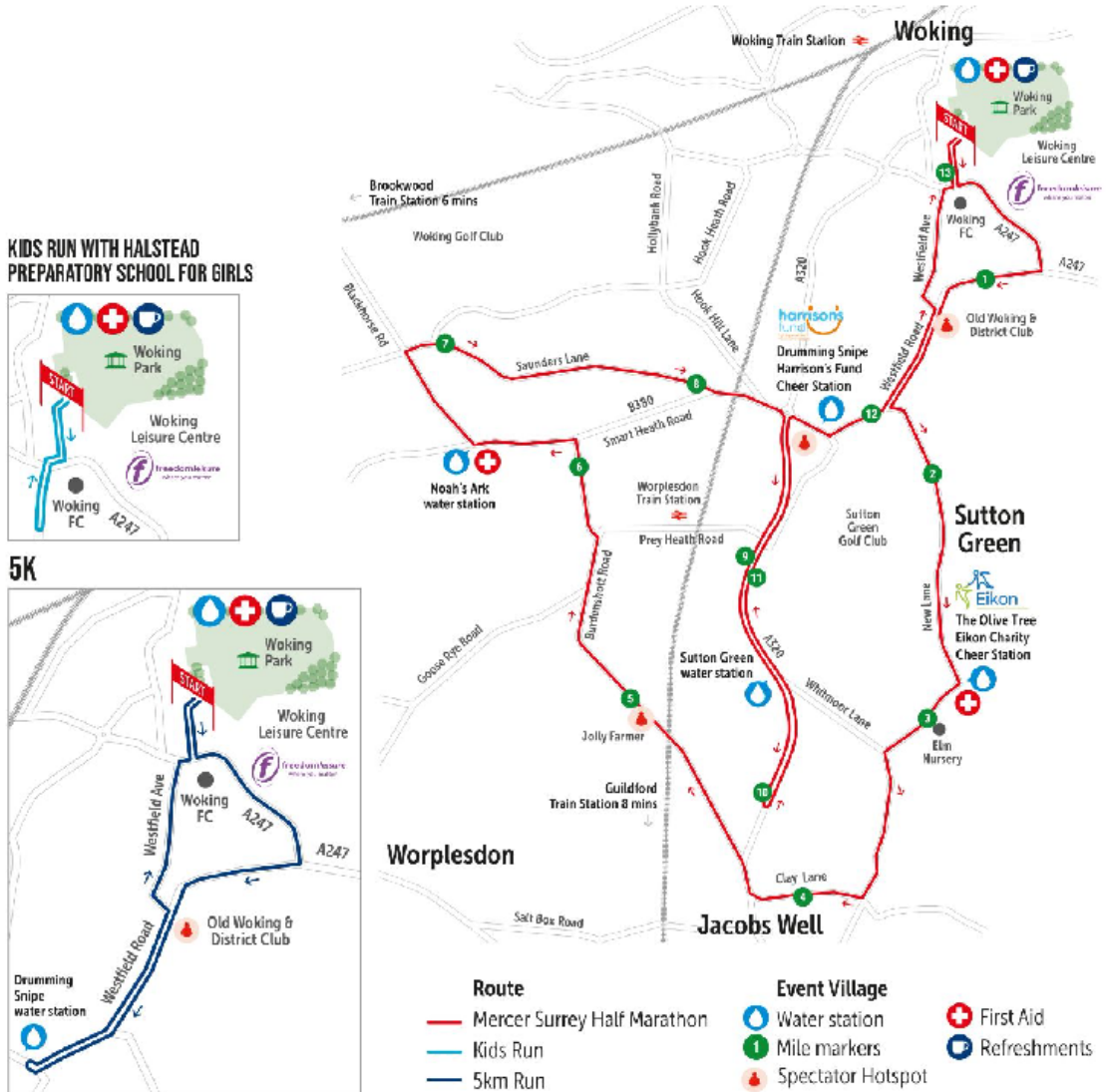


Appendix 1 – 2022 route map

**Mercer**  
**surreyhalf**

half marathon | 5k | kids' run

Sunday 6 March 2022



For more information please contact [hello@aat-events.com](mailto:hello@aat-events.com)

[www.surreyhalfmarathon.co.uk](http://www.surreyhalfmarathon.co.uk)