

West Suffolk Athletics Club held its annual awards ceremony last Friday and the members welcomed as their special guest, Heptathlete Louise Hazel, who only a month earlier had triumphed at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi where she won one of England's track and field Gold medals, setting personal bests in 4 of the 7 disciplines in the process.

The presentations began with the award of Athlete of the Month trophies for August, September and October to Andy Ridley, Beth Wade, Steve Smith, Emily Cross Euan McKie and Peggy-Mai Norman.

Then followed mementoes to those athletes who had broken Club Records during the year.

These were won by Under 13s, Georgia Allen, Sophie Tooley and Harry Hughes, Under 15 Chelsea Wade, Under 17 Jake Allen and Jack Anthony, Under 20 Andy Ridley and Seniors Sarah Colson, Christine Anthony and Luke Allen. Particular mention was made of two of these, Harry Hughes whose Javelin record took him to the very top of the UK Rankings and Chelsea Wade's Triple jump which hoisted her to number 2.

West Suffolk AC had decided this year to replace awards under the "Shine" system, which they had used for a number of years, with their own Gold, Silver and Bronze performance certificates. Virtually everyone qualified for these at some level and they serve as the club's recognition of and thanks for the efforts of all their members whatever the standard they reach.

Emily Baker and Emily Rogers representing Under 20 members of the Club Committee presented trophies and certificates on behalf of the athletes to their coaches to thank them for their commitment to them throughout the year, and a new award was given by The Club Volunteer coordinators to Dave Spurling for his selfless work during the year particularly in the renovation of a new Club Hut. Tania Spurling was also rewarded for her tireless work both in bringing much needed grant money to the club and in leading the Club through the long process towards ClubMark accreditation. The plaque confirming this success was officially presented to Tania and Club Chairman Ray Radley by Louise Hazel.

The Age Group Trophy winners were as follows:-

Notley Cup, Senior Men, Luke Allen; West Suffolk AC Trophy, Under 20 Men, Matt Wake;

Abbey News Trophy, Under 17 Men, Jake Allen; West Suffolk Cup, Under 15 Boys, Cameron McKie;

Bury St Edmunds Trophy, Under 13 Boys, Harry Hughes; WSAC Trophy, Under 11 Boys, Jamie McKie;

Stradishall Cup, Senior Women, Tania Spurling; TSB Shield, Under 20 Women, Emily Baker;

Burton Shield, Under 17 Women, Emily Rogers; Abbey News Cup, Under 15 Girls, Chelsea Wade;

Haverhill Cup, Under 13 Girls, Peggy-Mai Norman; WSAC Trophy, Under 11 Girls, Lilly Wade;

The Multi Events Trophies were presented to Chelsea Wade for her performance at the English Schools Pentathlon competition which the guest had won some 10 years earlier, and to under 13 Euan McKie for winning the Club Minithon Championship.

Cross Country awards went to under 20s Alex Dunbar and Emily Baker (Highland Shields); Under 17s Simon Dawson and Holly Archer; Under 15s Macaulay Delo and Sam Carson (Sliderobes Trophies) and under 13s Cameron McKie and Sophie Tooley (Gosling Trophies). Sophie Tooley also took home the Road Runner Trophy.

The Ron Muttock and Margaret Muttock Cups for the most improved young athletes were awarded to Alex Parkinson and Chelsea Wade, and the Jo Jennings Cup for over 17s to Matt Wake.

The Most Promising Young Athletes were judged by the Club Committee to be Under 17s Jake Allen and Emily Rogers.

The Callard Cup for the best performance by a Senior was won by Andy Ridley for a fine race at the Crystal Palace Grand Prix, when he smashed the Club record in the 3000 metres in the invitational race for under 20 athletes. The junior award for females, the Johnson Shield, was awarded to Ellie de Wild who equalled her personal best of 1.57 metres in high jump at the English Schools Championships. The Emery Cup was given to a team for the first time. The under 13 boys team had won West Suffolk's first cross country medal when they placed 3rd in the South of England Championships in January. The squad was Michael Bartram, Cameron McKie, Seb Anthony and Ben Eames.

The official relay cup, The Ray Wells Memorial Cup, was won by the under 15 girls team of Ellie de Wild, Favour Osuchukwu, Leah Mapston and Chelsea Wade for their performance at the EYAL competition at Bedford in July.

The Team Managers' awards, The Ensors Trophies, went to Steve Smith and Grace Waters, both much deserved after a season in which both showed tremendous loyalty to the club and their teammates, always competing in their team's best interests more so than their own.

After all the awards had been given out Louise Hazel enthralled her mainly young audience by reliving for them her experiences and feelings throughout each phase of the competition, from standing on the start line of the 100 metres hurdles to crossing the line at the end of the 800 metres. In a lively question and answer session after presentation of the trophies Louise enthused her listeners with her main message, urging the young athletes to do as she had done by working hard in training to make the most of their talent. Louise also brought with her a surprise gift which after a series of elimination questions was gleefully received by under 11 athlete Jamie McKie.