



BHAM Runners: #zero2hero

Background

Bower Hinton, Ash and Martock (BHAM) running group was set up by Neil in the summer of 2016. After a renewed love of running and realising that his best runs were always with other people - strangers, friends or family, Neil wanted to start a group for his local villagers. With only two on the first session, it was back to the drawing board for Neil to do some more research. After chatting to the local parkrun and people in the surrounding villages they decided that a Couch to 5k was the biggest need, so in October 2016 they launched their first beginners programme called **#zero2hero**. The name is due to the fact that it's no mean feat to pull on a pair of trainers and join a running group, and all of those people who turned up at the park on the first night really were superheroes!



The Group

There are currently **89** members (28 male and 61 female) of BHAM Runners, with **38** people having completed one of the three #zerotohero courses that have taken place, the latest in November 2017. Once the 'graduates' have completed their #zero2hero course they are encouraged to join the club as a member. There are currently two qualified run leaders, Neil and Nic (whose course was funded



"The best thing about people running together is the banter, support, encouragement, friendship, competition, empathy - but most of all the feeling of being part of something. Running can be a bit solitary at times but running in a group adds a whole new dimension".

Neil - BHAM Founder



by a community crowdfunding campaign) and they have plans to train additional leaders in the near future. The group are now Association of Running Clubs (ARC) affiliated, but still 100% free to join and run with. This year they have seen dozens of members finish their first 10k races, eight members run their first half marathon (some have gone on to do more), two members have completed full marathons, there are six new triathletes, and one completed Ironman Wales. There really is no stopping this lot! The group are also part of England Athletics' **RunTogether Groups** which they find a nice and simple interface for creating sessions and booking online. The online registers are also a real help which can be accessed with the free app.



Community Cohesion

Members of BHAM use a very active Facebook Page and Group to keep up-to-date and share information, a great asset for their rural setting. They also receive a fantastic monthly electronic newsletter which is shared with all the members, highlighting races and events that they have taken part in. There is BHAM branded kit – running vests, high-vis vests, bandanas, hoodies, key rings and wristbands that give the runners a real sense of belonging (and certainly a talking point of the villages). They have introduced trail runs as well as themed runs, whether it's for Christmas or Halloween the BHAM Runners like a costume! The runners often take part in parkrun and to show their support they have given back by volunteering at the event. It's not all about the running though with regular socials bringing the group together.

"I'm finding it great to have a group to join and help keep me motivated on my journey to fitness, it doesn't matter what level you are the group is very supportive. Six weeks ago I never thought I would be able to run for 5 minutes, I'm now running 10 minutes nonstop and aiming for 3k next time".

BHAM Runner

Going Forward

The fourth #zerotohero course is planned for April 2018 with four runners already signed up and there will be a Junior section of the group starting in April for 12-15 year olds. The Group have also organised their first trail race for March which has completely sold out and will see 120 runners heading to Martock to run the local footpaths and farmland. This trail race along with local business sponsorship of medals, the finish line and goodie bags will

www.bhamrunners.org the club for the next year
[@bhamrunners](https://www.facebook.com/bhamrunners) and pay towards the training of more leaders.
[@bham_runners](https://twitter.com/bham_runners)