



The Doynton HARD HALF Marathon

20 January 2019

Emersons Green Running Club



The environmental impact of runners and races (not just this one)

People run for different reasons; some like a challenge, others use running to de-stress, some people use it to maintain general fitness and others use running to justify the obscene quantities of cake and beer that they use to fuel their bodies. One of the many fantastic things about running is that it takes us out into the great outdoors, which can help improve our general wellbeing, as well as our appreciation of the natural world. Broadly speaking, runners are a decent bunch when it comes to environmental awareness, but let's not collectively pat ourselves on the back just yet.

Race events and attendees can have a significant environmental impact, whether that be carbon emissions from transport, over-reliance on single-use plastics (such as cups, bottles, goody bags and gels), physical damage to the countryside (e.g. trampling/erosion of soil) or an increase in methane emissions due to pre-race nerves***. Everything you see at any race event was manufactured somewhere, and had to get there somehow.

****we made that one up to lighten the mood a bit, but it seems plausible.*

What are we doing to reduce the DHHM race footprint?

- Our “water stations” are mini-pubs, lovingly **constructed from old pallets** (destined for the bonfire or landfill before we saved them) which are re-used each year. In answer to your question, **yes, there will be (alcohol-free) beer**.
- We have some leftover stock of **plastic cups** that will be making an appearance (sorry about that) before they're collected and **recycled**. Moving forward, we have sourced some **plant-based “plastic” cups** to replace them, which will happily rot down in the compost heap after use. Yay!!!
- We offer **cups rather than bottles of water** at drinks stations. This reduces the amount of water wasted and discarded. While water is quite plentiful in the Doynton countryside, imagine the associated carbon emissions of the production, transport and disposal of 2000 x 500 ml water bottles.
- You may remember having your effort rewarded with a **paper goody bag** last year. This will continue in 2019 – perhaps you could re-use them for Xmas gift bags, scrap paper, novelty hat making...
- We aim to **avoid pointless nonsense going to landfill**. Your biodegradable goody bag will contain items that we hope are useful (on the day and in the future) and not single-use disposable nonsense.
- We work with the local community and **use local suppliers** for the vast majority of aspects of the race. This reduces the associated carbon emissions of long distance transport.
- Our 100+ volunteers get a lovely packed lunch on the day. We try to **eliminate as much plastic as possible** from this, and we encourage volunteers to bring their own drinks bottles and bag.



- **We're all going vegan** for "[Veganuary](#)" That one's probably not entirely true, but the Emersons Green Running Club kit does look vaguely similar to Vegan Runners kit. Weird eh?
- Make do and mend! We're **repairing and re-using** race equipment such as stakes and signs.

What can runners/volunteers/spectators do to reduce their impact on race day?

- **Car Share.** Doynton Airport isn't quite finished yet, so we anticipate that most of you will arrive by car on race day. Yes, we know, we don't like speaking to strangers either (especially muddy ones), but if you car share you'll be **reducing your carbon footprint** on race day, saving money and you might even **make some new running pals**. Bonus points will be awarded for electric car sharing, though we can't offer charging facilities.
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- Why not **bring your own cup/bottle/Camelbak bladder thing**? You can refill it at the on-course ~~water sta...~~ pubs, or use it at the end of the race for a nice dehydrating coffee or beer.
 - Don't be wasteful. If you're a thirsty soul, and would like to drain a few litres at a water station or post-race then that's great, but please **re-use the cup provided rather than taking multiple cups each time**.
 - **Stick to the race route.** This is more of a strict rule than a suggestion, but it has environmental benefits too. If runners decide to cut corners, jump fences *etc.*, then this inevitably damages more of the countryside than if we all follow one neat line (obviously that neat line will be temporarily damaged by our footfall, but it's much less damage than if we all charge 17-abreast across Mr McGregor's cabbages).

I'm a cynic and doubt that small actions can have far-reaching positive outcomes

Most people are a bit cynical, and it is healthy to question what you read/hear, but in this case, we respectfully disagree! If the 500 runners at DHHM collectively use 2000 less (4 each) plastic cups then that is just one example of a measurable positive outcome.

If this happened at the London Marathon, and the 40,000 runners managed to avoid using 200,000 single-use plastic bottles/cups/gels then that'd be pretty cool too. Every weekend of the year there are hundreds of races across the country, and things start to add up rather swiftly. Recycling is alright as a last resort, but it's not the answer, as it avoids the root cause of the plastic pollution problem; overconsumption promoted by capitalism... but that's probably a debate for elsewhere!

Your suggestions

We acknowledge that there is always more that we could do, and are not suggesting that DHHM '19 is carbon neutral or has zero negative impact on the environment. Our goal is to deliver a memorable, safe and (most importantly) *fun* event for all. We would love to be able to do this while minimising our impact on the environment, and still giving you good value for money. Your suggestions are warmly welcomed to help us achieve this (please keep it polite/clean/constructive!). Get in touch via the Facepage or email. Please *don't* get in touch via post, as the stamp will cost you money, and is a waste of planetary resources.

Many thanks, and kind regards

Chris Hemsley

2nd Assistant to the Chief Environmental Advisor DHHM2019

on behalf of

The DHHM Race Team

Emersons Green Running Club

07793 619684 / dhhm@emersonsgreenrunningclub.co.uk