

Nomination form

Group you are nominating

I nominate the following volunteer group for a Queen's Award*

Marshall Milton Keynes Athletic Club (MMKAC)

It is important that the name is accurate and spelt correctly, as this will appear on the Award certificate if your nomination succeeds.

What makes their work excellent?

What is the work of the group? What makes it excellent?*

MMKAC volunteers manage the track, carry out grounds maintenance, raise funding, organise road races, track meetings and cross-country meetings and manage successful teams. MMKAC has excellent qualified volunteer officials and coaches. It provides coaching for over 400 youngsters, is nationally recognised for its coaching structures and has one Olympic Champion.

Eligibility

How long has the group been operating?*

Since 1885

Is the group a branch of, or affiliated to, a larger or national organisation? If yes, please give the name of the organisation:

Yes, England Athletics

How many people are actively involved in the group's work?

To be eligible for an Award, more than half the group members must be volunteers.

Number of volunteers*

150+

Including unpaid trustees/committee members

Please explain where the group's beneficiaries (i.e. the people it helps) live

The club provides coaching and competition for all its members, who live in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas. It has a satellite club in Buckingham.

Do at least half the volunteers have the right of residence in the UK?

Work of the group

In this section you should give brief information about the group, its main area of work and its volunteers and beneficiaries. Please see the guidance notes for more information about which groups are eligible for an Award and answer each question in no more than 50 words.

Please tell us about the group's volunteers.*

MMKAC is managed by a committee of 22 volunteers, more than 50 qualified volunteer coaches, 40 qualified officials and over 700 athletes. Volunteers manage the stadium, organise large numbers of events, manage teams and communicate with members. Many MMKAC volunteers also make an impact regionally and nationally.

For example, age, gender, how long involved with the group, the type of work they do for the group.

Who benefits from the group's work? And how many people have benefited in the last 12 months?*

5000 runners enter the MK Festival of Running. Over 6000 athletes attend other fixtures organised by the club. Over 400 young athletes and over 100 adult members receive coaching. The total number benefitting is well over 10000, from schoolchildren to masters athletes, and from beginners to elite athletes.

You may give an estimated number.

Has the group's contribution been recognised elsewhere?*

MMKAC was the UK Athletics Club-of-the-Year in 2005 and 2006. Two coaches have been awarded UKA's Coach-of-the-Year in the last 15 years, one was Official-of-the-Year, and one was Volunteer-of-the-Year. Club Members win many Sport MK Achiever Awards and one was recognised for his 60-year contribution to Sport in Milton Keynes.

For example, in the media, by local government, by other awards.

Your recommendation

In this section, please explain how your nominated group has made a significant contribution in its area of activity. We are looking for groups that have given excellent service to their beneficiaries and communities; have delivered their service in innovative ways; and have shown other examples of selfless voluntary service that distinguish their work. Please answer each question in no more than 200 words, explaining what achievements make the nominated group stand out from others.

What social/economic/environmental need is this group meeting for individuals, groups or the whole community? How is it doing this?*

Sport is widely recognised for its health benefits and athletics is particularly recognised for developing youngsters with skills, confidence and a disciplined approach to training. Coaching groups provide opportunities for making friends and supporting each other. Organised teams travel up and down the country to compete.

Over 40% of 700 MMKAC athletes are female, 60% are under 18.

MMKAC is sensitive to those with financial hardship and membership fees can be adjusted, so that no member is excluded on the grounds of cost.

MMKAC has a disability group that meets once a week throughout the year. Other athletes with disabilities train with the able-bodied athletes.

MMKAC has a substantial number of BAME athletes who are well integrated within teams and coaching groups. Three BAME members serve on the Committee.

Club Coaches work with teachers to develop youngsters and enhance their coaching skills.

MMKAC supports local primary schools organising cross country events in the winter and athletics meetings in the summer.

For secondary schools, MMKAC officials help organise cross-country meetings and the county schools' championships.

Club athletes attending education courses away from home receive £150 bursaries to help them with their additional athletics expenses.

MMKAC strives to provide a welcoming environment, a great sense of community, and a pride in its activities and achievements.

How has the group generated a high level of good will and respect among those it serves and the whole community? Please give examples.*

MMKAC has produced four Olympic Athletes over the last 12 years, including Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth Long Jump Champion, Greg Rutherford. Two members won medals at the Rio Paralympic Games.

MMKAC manages its own track and field facility, clubhouse, changing facilities and storage containers, and manages bookings from sports groups.

MMKAC has pioneered the Athletics 365 Coaching structure which focuses on developing skills in young athletes. One coach travels widely to promote the scheme.

Three members have served as Regional Councillors for England Athletics.

One member is Secretary to the Southern Athletics League, results secretary of the Chiltern League and the East Midlands Road Race Series.

Club Officials have officiated at the highest levels, with two working at the national level, and one at the London Olympics.

Teams have competed with distinction. The U13/U15s have qualified for the national top seven final for the last two years, the seniors will compete in the National Athletics League in 2020. The Veterans have won the Eastern Masters Final several times. The club won the Chiltern League overall in 16 of the last 22 years.

Over 100 MMKAC volunteers organise the MK Festival of Running, signpost the course, marshal, man feeding stations, registration, baggage and officiate.

If there have been significant obstacles to the group's programme, please list them here and say how the group has overcome them.*

When the Club took over the management of the athletics stadium in 1992, it had a 6-lane track and no clubhouse. The club, with help from the council raised £500,000 to build a clubhouse and another £600,000 to refurbish the stadium and upgrade the track to eight lanes. The club lacks indoor facilities and a stand.

The club's coaching structure, with Head Coaches for each area, and multiple coaches working together within each coaching group has helped to overcome the problems of busy people finding it hard to turn out two or three times a week throughout the year.

The club is sponsored by Marshall Amplification and it uses this funding to support elite athletes, pay for coaches and officials to attend courses, and provide free transport for teams attending league meetings.

There are never enough volunteers in any sport. The club has been very successful in encouraging its members to volunteer to take on roles in a variety of areas from the clubhouse kitchen, grounds maintenance, management of the facility and so on, that would normally be provided by a local authority. Many of these volunteers have been operating for more than 25 years.

How has the group achieved, or how is it moving towards achieving, some or all of the examples of high standards of excellence in volunteering?*

MMKAC is taking part in the England Athletics Games Changer Scheme that encourages young people to volunteer. This includes in-house training and development plus vouchers to attend external courses.

England Athletics provides a structure for the education and training of coaches and officials, to encourage the development from beginner to national level. Club members are at various levels in this structure depending on progress and ambition.

MMKAC is working with England Athletics to pioneer the use of Funetics, aimed at 4-11 year olds, and Blast, a short-form competition format.

MMKAC regularly bids to host courses provided by England Athletics, with two members tutoring such courses, to encourage parents, members and friends to take up voluntary roles.

MMKAC was awarded the 2019 England Athletics 5000m Championships, which brought some of the country's top runners to Milton Keynes.

Two MMKAC members are fully qualified physiotherapists who offer free advice on club nights to athletes who have injuries.

MMKAC communicates via the excellent website, comprehensive newsletters, and regular press reports.

Volunteers manage the athletics equipment owned by the club, repairing or

replacing equipment as necessary. This response to replacing or repairing damaged equipment is much quicker than can be achieved by most facilities.

Please answer all the following:

- Are there opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills and receive appropriate training or learning?

Volunteer coaches and officials are encouraged to attend courses and improve their skills. The club pays the fees for attending all such courses. Mentoring schemes are in place to support new volunteers.

- Do volunteers receive support and guidance?

The club has a coaching secretary and an officials' secretary to work with volunteers and to support them. Volunteer Coordinators recruit and support volunteer marshals, and briefing notes are provided for people who help marshal road races organised by the club.

- Can volunteers give feedback on what they are doing and how they would like to develop their roles?

UK Athletics records of attendance for officials, for example, encourages self-reflection and feedback for each meeting where they officiate.

- Are there ways for the group to recognise volunteers' contributions?

At the clubs Annual Awards Evening there are Awards for the Development Coach, Specialist Coach, Official of the Year and Clubman of the Year. Officials and Coaches are often put forward for Sport MK awards for achievement in Sport.

- Are health and safety procedures in place?

Risk assessments are carried out for all events organised by the club. Medical cover is provided at all meetings hosted by the club.

- Are volunteers reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses?

Members who purchase goods or services on behalf of the club are reimbursed. The club does, for example, support coaches attending warm-weather training overseas, with groups of athletes, by paying 50% of their expenses.

Volunteers at meetings organised by the club are provided with refreshments; marshals and those who man feeding stations are given t-shirts to commemorate their role.

- Does the group satisfy requirements to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, if appropriate? These requirements may include Criminal Records Bureau checks.

The club has policies in place for the welfare and protection of children and vulnerable adults, and two welfare officers are members of the club committee. All officials and coaches are required to undergo CRB checks in order to renew their licenses every three years.

- If needed, does the group have public liability insurance?

The club has public liability insurance via UK Athletics.
