

# On your marks for The Meadows Marathon 6th March 2011

✖ The Meadows Marathon will take place this Sunday. The Reporter is not running, but was interested in how this is all organised by a volunteer body of students. So how did it all start? We asked Jenni Hagan who is the Press Officer for the event. She agreed to write an article for us to explain...


“In 2007 two students from the University of Edinburgh created a half-marathon event for charity. It was attended by 250 runners, and raised £10 000 for Sport Relief. Now, 5 years on the [Meadows Marathon](#) has grown to be an event firmly placed on the Edinburgh calendar, and last year attended by 1000 runners.


The marathon, like any event of its scale has a team of ✖ organisers behind it, who solve every problem from measuring out the track to sourcing prizes for the winners. However, unlike most other events this team is made up entirely of student volunteers working alongside Edinburgh Students' Charities Appeals (ESCA). ESCA is well known in Edinburgh for holding a multitude of charity events, and the Meadows Marathon has grown to become the biggest. The team is made up of 12 members, and this is the inside track of what exactly goes into the preparation leading up to Marathon Day.

The team behind this year's event came together in September, some, like the Project Leader Rachel Shaw, and Charities Manager Ben Simmons were returning members who had been involved with the Marathon in the preceding years. The majority however were new to the Meadows Marathon (and some were new to university altogether – there are 5 1st year students on the committee).

The year started off well for the Committee – the Launch Night for the Meadows Marathon held in November was well-attended,

and offered a good opportunity for charities and runners alike to meet up and discuss the event.

But it's no easy ride to Marathon Day. The complexities of  organising an event on this scale – especially a running event, where health and safety come into serious play – are easily forgotten about in the excitement on the day. Logistically, the Marathon poses quite a problem; how do you get enough water to supply potentially over 1000 runners, how much IS enough water for 1000 runners? Luckily, the committee have managed to keep on top of things, and everything is running smoothly (pun intended) for the Marathon.

 So that's the logistical side of the Marathon which has to be tackled annually by the committee; however the team have also been concerned this year with the continuing development and evolution of the event. A new team event has been added to create more of a fun competitive element in the Marathon – so now rival football teams can also challenge each other on the track! The publicity campaign for the Marathon has also stepped up a notch, resulting in the event being promoted widely by Bannatyne's Health Club and ESPC; and the committee are keen to continue partnerships with sponsors, to ensure that the event can continue to be a key fundraising event in Edinburgh.

In the last few weeks, the focus of the Marathon committee has moved outside of the weekly meeting, to more interactive publicising of the event. It is because of this that any keen observer in the past weeks will have spotted committee members handing out flyers on Princes Street, at sporting events, around the Meadows and perhaps even chasing after running groups in a bid to get their attention!

Another key focus for the team at the moment is the timetable for Marathon day. Traffic cones and barriers need to be laid out around the course on the morning of the race, which involves coordinating bleary-eyed volunteers at 6am, before an

extra briefing on health and safety procedures and the opening of on-the-day registration at 9am.

✖ So a busy day awaits the committee, and numerous plans for each individual are created, changed, scrapped completely, created again, improvised on the day, all in order to create a fundraising platform for Edinburgh that is fun, creative, energetic and altogether an entertaining day out for both runners and spectators.”