

Congleton Harriers hosted the 33rd 'Sting in the tail' half marathon on Sunday morning, in perfect conditions 399 runners gathered at the start line where town Mayor David Brown presided over starting duties and Lottie Carey twin sister of Becca whose charity will be this year's main beneficiary of the race sounded the horn for the race to begin.

The undulating course run on nearly entirely rural roads keeps runners coming back year after year and with 52 different running clubs represented from as far afield as Worcester and Sheffield the race is a firm favourite within the running community.

The title of the race gets its name from the climb at miles 11 to 12 as athletes must negotiate their way back up the hill on Chelford Road before the final mile stretch down Black Firs Lane to the finish on the green at the junction with Longdown Road.

At the front of the race there was a clear winner in the men's event with Vale Royal runner, Stuart Doyle taking first place in 1:14:39 which was a new course record after the route changed in 2015. Second place went to Craig Vernon 1:17:22 and third in 1:19:35 was Chris Bannister from Steel City Striders.



Race winner Stuart Doyle

photo Bryan Dale

In the women's results it was much closer with the podium positions covered by just sixty seconds, Michelle Buckle from Newcastle (Staffs) was first over the line in 1:28:16, Sarah Wilson was second, the South Cheshire Harrier finished in 1:28:56 and third from Trentham running club was Kristina Defries 1:29:16.



Women's winner Michelle Buckle

photo Bryan Dale

All runners returned to nearby Congleton High School to collect their goody bag and finishers t-shirt, it was also where the prize giving and presentations took place with Olympic medallists Ann and Robbie Brightwell.

All proceeds from the race will be benefitting local charities with donations being made to Helping the Needy in association with United Reform Church and to the Congleton Education Community Partnership. The main charity for the 2016 race is Becca's Wish to Walk and in a few weeks the final figure will be known. The whole family were in attendance not just to see Lottie start the race but to see dad, Tim, complete the course, his preparations hadn't been going that well, but three days before the race he made a massive progression by finding his running shoes! A fantastic effort from Mr Carey saw him finish in 3:07:08.



Tim Carey on his way in the 2016 Congleton Half Marathon

photo Bryan Dale

Congleton High School provided great facilities for the runners and played excellent hosts to the pre-race registration and post-race goody bag collection and the club are very appreciative of the race sponsors and to 1964 Olympic medallists Ann & Robbie Brightwell for their attendance and prize giving duties.