



LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Tuesday 6th July 2021

Co-Presidents: Naseem Allmomen (NA) and Andrew Corti (AC)

Club Secretary: Christos Bitzis-Politis (CBP)

Club Treasurer: James Handerson (JH)

Membership Secretary: Geoff Hicks (GH)

Races Secretaries: Erika Kulikova (EK) and Francis O'Callaghan (FC)

Publicity & Communications Officers: Jonathan Lissemore (JL) and Gareth Fletcher (GF)

Social Secretaries: Daniel Brittle (DB) and Charlie Abrines (CA)

Agenda

Financial Updates (CT)

- Discounted Offers Update
- Club Budget & Annual Income versus current membership numbers

Races Update (RS)

London Marathon Club Place

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Social Activities update (SS)

Membership Update (MS)

Fee Waiver Policy/ LFR members living abroad

Club Secretary

- Meeting with B&H Frontrunners
- LFR changing facilities
- Monitoring Mile End Track Session
- Big Half Update (entries & volunteering)

Co-Presidents

- Member information on Excel
- Diversity and Inclusion (female membership, trans/non-binary)
- Lockdown easing: the next steps
- GGHK update
- Coaching applications update
- New member feedback forms/new members on Spond
- Say It Loud Club Update

AOB

Chair: NA

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: CA, EK

Financial Updates (CT)

Club Budget & Annual Income versus current membership numbers

There have been three potential scenarios in regards to the Club budget for the current Club Year and relative to LFR using the changing facilities they were using prior to the pandemic, all of them proposed and based on the assumption that the current Club Year will end with 450 members.

The Club has already set aside the funds for sending to coaching three volunteers at the cost of £420 per person.

CD has also ordered new Club vests on behalf of the Club, which come at £800 and which have already been included into the yearly budget.

For the time being, and although very often WebCollect seems to take its time in regards to updating membership numbers, the Club is currently and officially at 413 members.

In the meantime the MS has been contacting members from the past two years, who have in the meantime not renewed their membership, reminding them that the Club is now back into running and that there have been added two new running options in Victoria and Greenwich Park respectively, so in consequence we are very confident that we are definitely going to make it to the marker of 450 members, long before the end of March 2022.

In addition, and starting from the 28th of May there have been added 90 persons as new runners on Spond, so perhaps it would be worth following up with them and explore their intentions further of whether they wish to sign up with LFR.

In conclusion, the Club is going to unavoidably have a deficit this Club Year, but it will be a financial deficit which has been predicted and expected, and there is a sense of general conviction that the Club will be able to overcome the changing facilities expenses, for the next six months, more or less, as it has already been calculated. This refers to the habitual changing facilities of Kentish Town, Seymour Centre and The Castle. In terms of other potential facilities, such as ones for the Victoria Park Club run, the expenses will have to necessarily be met from the Club reserves.

Races Update (RS)

London Marathon Club Place

Four Club members have applied so far for the 2021 London Marathon Club Entry, these being DG, AH, ES and AMY.

Discussion follows relative to the calculation of points for each of the applicants, based on their Club Championship participation rates at races and their volunteering contributions to LFR. The Club Entry for the London Marathon is historically being awarded to the first claim LFR member that has completed the most events of the Club Championships in the previous year and has also offered their time and dedication as a volunteer to the Club. In particular, this latter requirement has always been considered as an essential condition.

The Committee hears and agrees to the recommendations of the RS. Accordingly there is a consensus of opinions and the 2021 London Marathon Club Entry is awarded to ES.

Action to be taken: The RS are kindly requested to please share the relevant Club Entry applicants points spreadsheet with the CS.

Action to be taken: CBS is kindly requested to please make all the necessary actions as to contact ES, inquire of their intentions as to whether they agree to represent the Club to the event and accordingly process their registration.

In regards to the 10k race for the Club Championships, the Race Secretaries are suggesting that any 10k distance completed within the next two months by any of the Club members will qualify towards their points in the Club Championships. Accordingly the 10k race will not take place on a specific date over a weekend, as in previous occasions, making it much more simple for Club members to participate, and without feeling any pressure relative to a specific date, at the same time being able to compete without necessarily coming into close contact with members of the public, as they may choose to do it on a weekday.

Publicity Update (P&C O)

This has been quite a busy month of publicity for the Club, with great coverage considering that it has also been our Pride month. There was the article relative to the Club and its activities from the Big Half organisers, which also launched their We Run as One section, then the London Marathon videos with at least five Frontrunners, which will also add to the positive publicity for the Club and finally the podcast from the Vitality Half with an informal chat where AC and the Co-Presidents were invited to participate.

Spond has also announced that they will be coming down to film the LFR training session on Wednesday, footage of which is going to be used on their communication channel. It would be really good to know whether the Club may also have the permission and rights to subsequently use such footage as well, for Club publicity purposes.

If the Spond crew is planning on posing any questions to the participants of the Wednesday coaching session, then it could prove to be useful to know such questions in advance, in order to be able to come across as better prepared.

As it has been already communicated, the Club has made a prompt application to Pride, in view of participating to the Pride March in September. Nevertheless, we have not received any answer from them, so for the time-being our application is pending and we are hoping to receive some positive news very soon. We are also hoping that the Pride March will also go forward, in general, instead of getting cancelled as it happened last year.

We would finally like to launch the suggestion of creating a short video for LFR. This will be relative to the reasons why members support LFR and what the Club brings to members in return. We would naturally try to include as many and as diverse aspects of the LFR demographics as possible. When it comes to creating such a video it will be very useful to ask for the technical assistance of all those members who have experience of working with videos, and each member could create a one minute maximum video with their message and then put them all together. It is very important to take into consideration what are the key messages that we want to put across and what are the key elements that we would like to put forward, as this could become an LFR promotional video. In addition it would be really great to have such a video on the LFR website. Also the Co-Presidents message, at the end of each RCM could be used for promotional purposes among Club members, in order to support cohesion further, but also as an idea to show the report in a new, more interesting light and thus attract much more attention to the Committee and promote the work of the Club's volunteers.

Social Activities update (SS)

For the time being all the Club social events on Spond seem to be oversubscribed, we have the South London event this coming Sunday and then the North London event which is at the end of this month. It would be useful to pencil down into the social calendar the Pub Quiz social which is being organised for August at the Cock tavern, and which is going to be a chargeable event. Events on Spond can be made to be chargeable, and the Spond commission is 2% of the ticket price plus 20p, but we could also organise this event on a different app, that charges a much smaller commission. It would be good to also pencil down the 14th of August for the Summer Picnic in Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, where we hope that there will not be any limit to the number of attendees. Nevertheless, we will continue to use Spond and Spond will be used also for this event, just to know how many people are going to attend. In September there is the Reading pride, following the Club tradition to support a pride smaller in size and preferably outside London, and then there is also the London Pride March, where members will need to sign up for having wristbands. We are planning to have a post Pride social at the Crown and Two Chairmen in Soho, as we did in previous years and then there is going to be the post London Marathon social, in the beginning of October. So there are still several occasions for members to socialise and in the meantime we will start thinking and searching around for Christmas venues. It may seem a bit early but if there are not going to be any lockdown restrictions in the near future, then people are really going to be looking forward to celebrating the festive season and there will be many Christmas parties, so it becomes important and necessary that we think of this well in advance. Of course all considerations are being made having in mind the best case scenario, which sees all restrictions being lifted and not having any cap on numbers of participants.

Membership Update (MS)

Fee Waiver Policy/ LFR members living abroad

At the moment the Club has 413 registered members, or 415, as it was mentioned earlier, that WebCollect does not update its numbers with the same pace the registrations normally come in. We have been trying to keep in contact with the members who have not renewed over the past two years, in a non intrusive way, naturally not asking them why they have not renewed, but something along the lines of "we notice you have not renewed, we would love to have you back, the Club has restarted with the weekly runs, etc", where each email is sent individually, from the membership email account and not collectively, through WebCollect.

In regards to the fee waiver policy subject, a brief recap, the Club has two members who are living overseas and they pay half the yearly fee, based on what we thought was an unofficial agreement agreed many years ago, about eight, between them and the Membership Secretary. AC has managed to discover in the President's files a Club policy which is relevant to this case, or which may have been created because of this particular case, where it is written that this agreement is at the discretion of the Club Committee.

DB: One needs to bear in mind that Club Policies are what they are, they are made to clarify, accommodate and facilitate certain situations but they are not included in the Club Constitution, so they are not binding and are not to be followed compliantly and to the letter. In addition this particular policy was apparently created before the Club Constitution, which was created and put in place about six years ago, so it shouldn't be considered as having the same validity, if any at all.

This is a very important point that is being made. Accordingly I would suggest that we accept the current situation as it stands for this Club year, as it is still compliant with the existing LFR policy, though we strongly recommend that the policy is thoroughly revised and that the process is definitely reviewed, by removing this specific allowance for Club members living abroad.

Instead of taking this forward, it would make more sense for the Committee to please consider and vote whether they think that this policy should be completely abolished or thoroughly reviewed, as it is also very poorly written, and then kept in place.

The Club Committee unanimously votes to have this policy completely abolished and removed.

Club Secretary

As you know, or as you may not know, as part of the plan for LFR fostering more close collaborations with other Frontrunners clubs around the UK, and starting from those who are geographically closer to London, we have been trying to organise a social outing with the Brighton & Hove Frontrunners, in addition to the Brighton Out To Swim section. After having dedicated lots of thinking to the date, and at the same time wanting to take advantage of the good weather and trying to avoid having this event clashing with any other social Club event, this outing has been arranged to take place now on Sunday the 15th of August.

There is a section of the LFR Triathlon that is planning on cycling from London to Brighton on the morning of that day and then be there around 1pm. In the meantime LFR who would have travelled to Brighton by train, and B&H Frontrunners will have already done a short run, of about five to seven, potentially going up to ten km, which will have to take place without the LFR triathletes and before their arrival, as they are also going to be too tired to run at this point. With the LFR Picnic the day before, we are not planning on starting any of these activities very early the next day, so we were considering meeting somewhere in Brighton around 11 am and potentially having the run starting around 11.30am. These times are to be confirmed closer to the date, together with several other important details, such as the meeting point and the route of the run. Then we will all go to the beach and spend the afternoon swimming and socialising, all three clubs together.

Naturally all these activities are very much subject to the weather on that day and I will keep you all updated in due course and closer to the event, as there are some details which need

to be further discussed. We will be considering some alternatives as well, in case the weather is not ideal for spending the day at the beach. AC is going to be leading the cycling triathletes and ES is our main contact on behalf of the B & H Frontrunners.

Short update on the LFR changing facilities.

First of all, I would like to make the suggestion of starting going back to the LFR changing facilities gradually. In consequence, I would propose to have us starting with the Wednesday run in Kentish Town and with an organised social after the run at The Oxford, then after a week or two of monitoring the situation continuing with going back to the changing facilities of The Castle, and with having an organised event at The Three Stags, and then finally ending with our return to the Seymour Centre. The reason why I am proposing this is because first of all we need to have a smooth return into all the changing facilities and to monitor how the situation evolves in relation to other patrons and the respective situation in each venue, and secondly I have left Seymour Centre at the very end, because they are being quite obstinate in their demand, wishing to charge £2.80 per person. In the meantime, and finding this demand out of the question, I have contacted in writing two Westminster councillors asking them to please investigate this issue on our behalf, as in my opinion a grassroot volunteer-led LGBT+ running club such as LFR should be benefiting from a "community rate", if there actually is such a thing, definitely nothing in the exorbitant range of £2.80 per runner. The Kentish Town leisure centre is the most economically convenient and understanding, followed by The Castle, so I have naturally left Seymour Centre as the very last, as in the meantime I am expecting to hear back from the Westminster councillors. Naturally all this is going to be implemented sometime at the end of July, if not later, in the first week of August, as it is only reasonable to try and go back into the changing facilities after the 19th of July, when hopefully most of the current restrictions will have been lifted. The changing facilities have also requested a bit of time on their side and once the restrictions have been lifted, because they also need to sort out certain things before admitting us back into the facilities as a group.

In addition, I would like to inform you that today on my way to the meeting I stopped at the Kentish Town leisure centre to renew the contact and check on the situation and they have informed me that they are still not allowing any use of the lockers, not just only to patrons but also to all members of staff. One of the main reasons that we are planning on returning to the changing facilities is because we are hoping to benefit from the presence of functioning lockers, so for the time-being, an immediate return appears to be out of the question. Overall, I would say that the response from everyone has been positive and the LFR changing facilities and venues are willing and eager to see us back.

The Seymour Centre was offering to have us back already at the end of June, offering us until the end of July what they were calling an "extremely discounted rate", so that they would be charging us from the 1st of August the "normal rate" which for them is £2.80. And regardless of what in their mind seems to be making us a favour,, the situation at Seymour Centre is still quite complicated, as they have a one-way system in place, entering from one door and exiting from a different door at the back of the building, so it would have still been a bit complicated in terms of logistics for us to handle, as we would have had to have in place three persons around, one welcoming runners at the entrance, one person guarding at the bag-drop room and one person at the exit of the venue. So it is much less complicated to wait and see what will happen.

Committee will be kept updated sometime around the end of this month or as soon as an update will be available to discuss.

Big Half Update (entries & volunteering)

For the time being we have had 170 race registrations and seven referrals to the 2022 event, mostly because the race is now coinciding with their booked holidays.

On the other hand we have had only four members who have come forward as volunteers, the deadline for registering volunteers is in about ten days and I have written to the organisers as I am waiting for the link to register these four volunteers. As I said the deadline for volunteer registration is on the 15th of July, unless there will be an extension offered. In consequence I am not very confident that the Club will be able to receive this year the monetary contribution/donation we used to get from the Big Half race organisers, as this time we don't seem to be able to gather the number of requested volunteers.

Finally this is about an email which I have received only this morning from England Athletics, and which is relative to the Regional Volunteer Awards, nominations for which are now open. These awards are awards for which every club member may nominate other members of their club who are offering voluntary work to the club itself. Among the numerous awards on offer, I would like to draw your attention to the Club of the Year Award, for which I would like to suggest LFR as a potential candidate for trying to win this, and also the Unsung Hero of the Year Award. The former is about recognising the efforts and achievements of a club, who has shown commitment and passion through the opportunities given to everyone involved in the club over the last 12 months, whereas the Unsung Hero Award is about recognising the efforts of one specific volunteer and I would like to suggest and nominate SC for this latter award. S. has been offering voluntary work to the Club for more than 12 years, it is very possible that it is more than twelve years now and actually there hasn't been a single year during which the Club has not benefited from an event organised by SC. Their organisational skills are immaculate, they take in mind large numbers of membership and they organise such events without even being asked by the Club to do so, on their own initiative. So in my opinion SC is a really worthy candidate to suggest for this award. The deadline for these awards is in about a month and two weeks' time, so we really need to figure out the process of presenting this to membership and energetically ask for their support and commitment to thus cause.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please share with the Committee the EA document on the Regional Volunteer Awards

Co-Presidents

Membership information on Excel

Have managed to download all members' info from WebCollect onto a spreadsheet, which could have a very practical outcome, if we were to have a look at the responses the members have given to the questions LFR as Club is posing on WebCollect. As the MS mentioned earlier we have 413 members, two of which are not identifying as binary. The collection of information is very important for the Club in order to be able to identify who is trans, from the questions that are being asked. There are two practical things which we need to bear in mind in regards to these questions on WebCollect, the first concerns the GDPR aspect of it, and what is reason for which we are collecting any data or any more data, because if we are requesting membership for data, we need to have a valid reason for doing that. The second reason is what we are planning to do with the collected data.

The Membership Secretary functions also as guardian of the Club data and besides agreeing to what is being said above, we need to point out that the options offered by WebCollect to

some of the answers asked are very limited and outdated and they need to be urgently reviewed. There are cases when one feels that it would have been much better to offer members the possibility or the option not to answer at all, then having such stereotypical options in place, through which the Club comes across as rather limited and just binary. Also there is not an option of opting out of answering these questions, as answering them has been made mandatory. The WebCollect aspect of the membership secretary role is a section that I would still need to discuss further with SM and explore, and I certainly feel that WebCollect could definitely benefit from a thorough update and decidedly needs to be improved. (GH)

I think that the option of leaving the gender identity box completely blank is not ideal. England Athletics is still giving the option to choose genders between male and female, which again is just antiquated and far from ideal and understandably this whole procedure puts both the Club and the MS in an awkward position. It is important that we put in place a procedure on how we are planning to deal with this, as we are already aware of the issue, so we need to make something about it and rectify the current situation.

This is not an easy task but it is neither an impossible one. There have been very similar situations and people have led very successful campaigns in order to be able to change an antiquated status quo, LFR as an LGBT+ club should be leading in this. When the Club happens to be asking a member for a piece of information relative to their personal data, then there definitely must be a purpose for which this question is being asked in the first place. Currently we have no info nor any data available which will allow us to know which of our members identify as non binary. We do have the relevant question where members may declare a disability, so this is information that may be used to improve their existing relation to the Club.

Another question which is very important, or could be very important if only we were to know how to use the answer, is do you have any illnesses or conditions that you would like to make us aware of.

Having captured that information, there arises the very important matter of what do we do with it. Do we communicate this information to CL? How do we propose to use it? If there aren't any ways of using such information, do we actually need to ask this question in the first place? Naturally for those members who declare that they are in need of assistance, it is a very different matter.

Another question that is being asked is what skills do members have, and based on the answers received what may we do with such info, do we actually do something with that at all. Having the knowledge that someone is a first aider is important and could prove very helpful. It would be a good idea to email all those who have declared on WebCollect that they are First Aiders and ask them if we can share this info with the Circle volunteers as it is a useful thing to know and to circulate, if you need help during a run whom to address. Also besides sharing the first aid info, it would be good to check the various skills of members and see how we may use them in a practical way for the Club.

Diversity and Inclusion (female membership, trans/non-binary)

We have already reviewed several items and changed the wording into women, non binary and/or trans in all the Spond social events.

It might prove to be really useful to contact other Frontrunners clubs that have a good proportion of gender distribution in their membership numbers, and check on what they are doing in a different way and what might we do in addition, as to minimise this disparity.

It would be worth updating also the wording of the New Runners page on the website, stating that the Wednesday run happens to be more popular with the Club's female runners.

This definitely needs to be mentioned on the website, as we have been receiving quite a few emails from women saying that they have been to Club runs and that there have not been any other women. We have also received feedback from one woman who looked into the Club's photos on social media, and she said that she saw no women participating on Club runs and events. This is naturally not true but the number of women in the Club is comparatively very small and sometimes the women happen to be numerically overwhelmed by the sheer number of males around them in many Club events (NA)

Then it becomes even more important to have more pictures of women included on the Club's social media, in addition to reaching out to other clubs and doing research just to see what they are doing differently.

There are no women runners on Monday, in order to be able to attract more women we could have a Monday run and a women's social event taking place immediately after, or organise to have every first Monday of the month a women's social event. This social event does not necessarily need to be tied exclusively to just one run and we could move it around from one to a different running day in the next month, so as to have variety and get the LFR women to familiarise with different Club runs. In addition we could promote Wednesday in a more formal way as a women's run, change the wording and nudge people in a different way (JL)

Lastly we need to make sure that we are using the right language to be inclusive to trans and non binary people, not to make any assumptions and think such things through, before they happen.

Lockdown easing: the next steps

The natural suggestion is to definitely continue with Spond, not only because we are not in a position to predict how the pandemic will evolve in the near future but also because it has become a very practical platform to use in terms of monitoring numbers of participants to runs and events and invaluable to Circle Leaders in getting to know new runners names and how many they are in a run, which makes them be prepared in advance. In addition it is an extremely practical medium for communication purposes, from the Club to its members but also for members among themselves.

GGHK update

The Hong Kong Trip Committee are very enthusiastic and have already prepared or are in the last stages of preparing a survey to send out to all members on the ebulletin, which will include three different options in terms of prices for the trip and they are also keen to have a rough idea on how many members are potentially interested in participating, as to be able to plan and to be organised accordingly.

Coaching applications update

As you all know there are three spaces available for Club coaches and we have had quite a few members applying for them. When it comes to situations such as this, the Club needs to be completely transparent, so what is necessary is to come up with definite and clear selection criteria, which need to be communicated to all applicants.

Say It Loud Club Update

NA has had the opportunity to become more informed on the Issues and challenges the volunteers at the charity are themselves experiencing and if they could share some of their own volunteering experiences, this could be very helpful to the Club. It would be really helpful if they could offer us some type of training, especially on what is best or to be avoided, as simple questions such as where do you live, for example, could potentially trigger awkwardness. In all honesty not a lot of people from the charity seem keen to come out running with LFR, as it seems to become quite a big deal for them to come to the Club runs, not just in terms of geographical distance. We have suggested that there could also be a volunteer from the organisation present and participating in the run, together with the refugees, as a liaison to facilitate the process of integration.

Discussion on the Club Runs Risk Assessments and when would it be the right moment to make members more aware of their existence.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please send the doodle poll relevant to the date of the next RCM.