



LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Tuesday 2nd November 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

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Co-Presidents

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SB

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Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: FC, DB, CA, JH

International Trip Sub-Committee Updates (CC)

Before any relative communication was made public, the Club Committee thought it useful to have a conversation first prior to having the latest plans for the IT announced to the rest of membership. Accordingly the designated location is still on the cards for April, getting responses for the accommodation is getting a bit slower than the IT Committee had expected and the actual race has not been able to confirm it will go ahead, the race organisers will make a firm decision about it in early December.

The race organisers are generally very slow in coming back and responding to inquiries, based on experience with all previous communications. The accommodation is a very nice hotel of four stars, to be rented on a two bed basis, as in double rooms, and the positive of this whole affair is that they can accommodate all 120 of us in their hotel. For the moment we have requested them to put our request on hold but the longer we leave it the harder it will become to keep this availability. The IT Committee wishes to run the trip as in all previous circumstances and naturally include an organised run if that is possible, but there is the possibility of taking it in the end as a social trip, if the race will not finally go on. In order to be able to find out whether members will be willing to come to a trip, even if this proves to become an IT without a race, the IT Committee wishes to launch a survey to find out what are the member's opinions on this point. There is naturally the possibility of leaving the IT to next autumn as one of the options, but in the same period there will be the London marathon, the Isle of Wight races and the cross country after that, so this is naturally an option but it is not as simple as it might look at first and there are several challenges which need to be considered. There is the specific advice from the race organisers not to book a spot on the race yet, meaning one can register individually on the race website but they are not taking any payments for the moment, as they don't really know either whether the race will go on in the same period of time as announced.

There are basically three options for the Club to follow at this point, one would be to defer the IT entirely to 2023, then another option would be to take some risk and do what we can, and organise the trip which could be with or without the prospect of a race. The advantage of opting for a deferral means that we will have a clearer picture of the whole situation as we move further in time and this is what the HKGG organisers have decided to do, and then

there might be plenty of other advantages deferring the trip but then we need to find the perfect slot in the year to have it and autumn does not seem ideal.

Discussion on the three possible options

LFR is not a travel agency and I don't really see the point why an international trip that does not include a race, or the certainty of a race, as it is still very uncertain at this point whether the race will take place or not, should be officially organised by LFR. Club trips are always organised around a race, as this is the main purpose of a Club trip and LFR is after all a running club. Surely members can decide among themselves and organise a social trip on their own and with their own friends, choosing their own destinations, without the Club having to become involved in any way (CBP)

An IT ideally would include a race and this would have been the IT Committee's principal aim and priority but in the past two years many things have changed and although a race seems to still be a possibility, there is no way that this race could be 100% guaranteed at this point (CC)

What is the financial liability if the Club decides to go for the two travelling options, with the race taking place and as a purely social trip? (JL)

We have been requested to provide an upfront payment to the hotel which would be 15% of the total accommodation expenses. The hotel will be offering though a complete refund in case the situation of the pandemic changes and the country then enters into a lockdown. The IT Committee has considered the possibility and the most potential complications with reselling tickets and with refunds. Members will get a full refund if and only when their ticket has been successfully resold to another Club member. If a Club member has already bought a ticket but then catches Covid in the meantime, they will also receive a refund. As you may all see there are certain restrictions and the race is uncertain, but we cannot go ahead without paying a deposit to the hotel and we certainly do not want to be deprived of the possibility of using this particular hotel, as it is also extremely well located and able to accommodate all Club members. The more we let the time go by without making a decision, the more the whole situation with the accommodation will become more and more complicated. There are things which can be done and some which cannot, and if membership decides to go forward with the trip, then the IT Committee has thought of all the possible scenarios and are willing to go through with organising it (CC)

There are companies which do events-timing for running clubs and if the IT goes on without an official race, then we could always organise a timed race just among Club members (EK) Naturally If the Club decides to go on with the trip and this proves to become a purely social trip, without any official race included, one could reach out to local running clubs and organise a smaller running event among local clubs and LFR, as to enhance some competition and make a running event a bit more interesting for everybody (CBP)

This of course will depend entirely on the then situation of the pandemic, because if the local athletic authority will have decided against holding an organised race based on the situation of the pandemic, then it wouldn't be wise for LFR to hold a race with any other running clubs and possibly not even to travel (AC)

The official race, if it goes forward, will be organised by the local athletic authorities, so any race event, even an unofficial one organised amongst us could be affected by covid restrictions (CC)

In regards to the IT Survey, it would be best to have it published first on the ebulletin and then on FB as not everyone of the LFR members uses FB nowadays. In addition, you have to be extremely clear on your communications, what will be asked on the survey, how to formulate the questions and to be very clear upfront. There should be a definite and short

deadline, about a week but not more than that and members should be also asked how committed they happen to be in taking this trip. Coming to the clarity mentioned earlier, this should be along the lines of: there are three different options, the option to defer the trip, organising it as a social trip, having the trip including a race and if this trip goes ahead, how committed you happen to be (JL)

I agree that we should make all communication relative to the trip and to the survey as clear as possible, and make it evident from the very beginning why are these questions being asked (AC)

Logistics relative to the survey and the timescale: using Google forms, send it to the P&C Officers before the end of Saturday, offer LFR members a week to come back with their responses, request from the hotel for a period of two weeks before coming back to them with a definite answer and if after the survey, you receive a positive answer, then arrange to have a deposit paid upfront to the hotel (JL)

The IT Committee is of the opinion that having a survey will provide a good indication of what membership thinks about the IT. Naturally it will not be possible to get everyone's opinions on this, and people do change opinions so very often but the survey will still be able to shed some light on what the general mood is.

Some members will have a more clear preference whether they are willing to travel or not, and from the sixty double rooms available, we are confident that we will definitely be able to sell 40 of these, so probably we will not be at capacity, but still have a good number of participants, as the IT Committee is trying to do the best under the current situation.

Financial Updates

There has been a rather steady trickle of new members which has been very positive and which has brought about some money slightly over the income which had been budgeted for this year, but there will be some expenditure relative to ordering lots of kit, as we will be spending £300 more on Club kit but then the Club will eventually get all that money back. The most challenging cost is the one relative to the changing facilities, as these costs come with the greatest uncertainty (AC)

Discussion on the Pride Run Donation

The Club Treasurer has made the recommendation that the Club should not go forward with the Pride Run donation for this year, given the definite uncertainty over the Club's future expenses, in particular those relating to changing facilities.

MP has signed the DoU between LFR and the Pride Run, according to which the Club has the yearly obligation to provide the Pride Run with a donation, the point is that the Committee will currently have to consider very carefully the extent of this donation (AC)

Committee officers have been voted by members to safeguard and promote what is in their and the Club's best interest, and as such it is important that the Committee prioritises what is in this moment best for the Club. Naturally the Committee and the Club has fully supported and still continue to support the Pride Run, we enthusiastically encourage members to take part at the event, we promote the race through all the Club official communication platforms and Circles, it is an event which is much loved and an integral part of the Club, it is an event where every year a huge number of our runners participate, a great number of LFR members are involved as volunteers, and naturally this is an amount of money which at the

end is going to go towards an LGBTQ charity, which is an important issue as well, to be able to support our community also in this way. Ultimately though we do not have the luxury of demonstrating a charitable largesse while we are accountable for the Club's best interests and the Club is currently not in a particularly robust financial situation. We know that we will end this Club Year with a deficit and this deficit will only become a deficit increased by £600 if in the end we decide to donate £600 to the Pride Run (CBP)

Fact remains that we give Pride Run an amount of money to be given then again away as a donation. In addition to this, LFR members have always paid for their entries to the event as we do not get any entries for free, whereas for example with the Big Half, we get all the entries at a very discounted rate and we also get a number of other perks through them (EK)

Discussion on what are the benefits of Pride Run to LFR and how much publicity does LFR actually get from the Pride Run and how many of the new runners then join LFR as members as a result of the Pride Run.

The conclusion to the above discussion is that the number of new runners which then join LFR after the Pride Run is minimal, as most runners which have been asked in person or based through their own answers on WebCollect join the Club as a result of having searched for an LGBTQ running club on the internet.

We have 127 new runners who have joined LFR since the beginning of this year and there is absolutely no evidence that any of these came to join LFR as a result of the Pride Run (GH)

There is a new runner, who is currently not a member and whom I have spoken with yesterday and who is currently coming to run with us after having seen Club members running at the Pride Run and chatted up one of our runners, and this is the only person of which I know of and can refer with certainty as having come to LFR after the Pride run (CBP)

One important benefit that the Club gets from the Pride Run is the association of LFR with the Pride Run, that Pride Run is the Club's official race and that LFR is a Club that is able to organise a large and successful running event (AC)

Proposals as to the amount that the Club Committee feels comfortable to donate to the Pride Run, based on the Club Treasurer's recommendations and the uncertain financial situation that the Club is going through this year.

The Committee votes unanimously for the amount of £250 to be given as donation to the Pride Run, with the condition that the Club Committee may revisit this decision at the end of the current financial year and then add any additional amount to the donation which the Club intends making to the Pride Run the next year.

Action to be taken: AC is kindly requested to please communicate the above to MP

Races Update (RS)

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to communicate to the Circle Volunteers to please remind all those interested to participate to the remaining Met League events to sign up on spond as soon as this is possible, so they can become pre-registered or to please email Hazel and Neil as much in advance as possible

DG Championships Request

The Committee hears the motion presented by EK and agrees to pass this motion in favour **Action to be taken**; EK is kindly requested to please communicate the above positive outcome to DG

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Membership Survey

Put together a short survey and run it in the new year with no more than 20 questions, the topic being what is membership thinking about the Club, as to have an overall idea and then present the results of this survey at the AGM as part of it. This survey will naturally be anonymous, it will include demographic questions, questions such as are you considering leaving the Club and if you are considering leaving, then why.

Discussion on the suggested survey.

WebCollect Wording

When it comes to WebCollect, we are not allowed to change certain things retrospectively, nor make something a compulsory field that wasn't a compulsory field in the first place. Suggestion of removing the ebulletin box from WebCollect and simplify the current situation, by sending a welcoming note to new members when they join, saying thanks for joining LFR, this is what the LFR ebulletin looks like, this is what it is about, and then remove the ebulletin box completely from WebCollect and at the same time be GDPR compliant.

We would like to include four interesting stories in the month of December, this is all about the creation of interesting stories and what counts as interesting Club stories, the creation of interesting Club news to share with members and those approaching the LFR website for the first time, for example DG being selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Masters Cross Country, some interesting content, like having a video from the next trail run though not just as a simple video of members running in the countryside, there should be an element of news and excitement, making something appear as news and make members and visitors to the webpage understand that that's what this is about, there is a n element of a story behind it. (JL)

Question to Comms: is there a specific strategy or a plan on what to do next in the eventuality that LFR wins the National Volunteers Award and on how to take advantage of an eventual win? And shall we have some publicity while the Club is being shortlisted? Shall we inform the International Frontrunners on FB or do you think it is better to wait until the results? (CBP)

Action to be taken: AC is kindly requested to please update the International Frontrunners and the International Frontrunners Europe FB on the Club being shortlisted. CBP is kindly requested to please inform and update the North Europe Frontrunners Representative of the Club being currently shortlisted as a candidate for the Club of the year Regional Volunteers Award.

Membership Update (MS)

There are currently 510 members, with 22 completely new members having registered in October, and 127 completely new members having registered since the beginning of the new Club Year. There are several past members who have renewed as well, at various stages.

Club Secretary

Short discussion on the LFR Walking group

The Committee considers that it would be more useful to have a small pool of volunteers acting as leaders for the first walks, and then when with time this initiative picks up, to have the walk more or less functioning on its own, without having much impact on the current LFR Circle pool of volunteers. The launching of the walking group is then postponed until these volunteers are found. The Committee agrees that the LFR Walking Group will be essentially targeting Club members who are injured or prefer to walk and any potential collaboration with ODL will be considered and discussed accordingly and further in time.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please contact Club members with the proposal to become for a short period of time leaders for the LFR Walking Group

Christmas presents

Committee agrees on the amount to be spent on each volunteer, which comes at £13. The volunteers that will be given presents are the LFR WebTeam and CD.

Short update on Greenwich Park Run venue

The response from the Gym Group has been negative on the grounds of having to prioritise their members during what they consider to be their venue's peak hour. The University of Greenwich appeared to have been very positive in the beginning and wrote back that they were going to have a look into the matter but then they never came back to me. I naturally chased them up but there was no response either and still.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please share the contact details of the University of Greenwich with AC

Update from NA on Victoria Park post-run venue

The manager of Bethnal Green Better Gym said they can't accept any groups of people at the moment due to renovation works taking place in the premises.

The Crown, which is a pub in the area, would have been happy to have LFR but they wouldn't let runners drop bags off unless someone from the Club would have stayed behind to watch over the bags and wouldn't negotiate a brunch deal either.

I've tried contacting Victoria Park Harriers but there was no response at all on their side.

I've enquired with a couple of places and found a post-run social venue for the Victoria Park run, it's called Chambers, they were very flexible, with plenty of brunch options, they will let us use their facilities for bag drop, which is excellent, as members can store their bags there and everybody needs an extra layer after the run these days, they will be offering brunch for £10 plus coffee or tea or juice.

I think that we will follow the suggestion by CBP and use it for the first time informally this Saturday, before announcing it officially through the ebulletin, and then try it out and see how it goes. If we finally decide to go with this venue, then the Circle will have to be moved from Bonner Gate to a different location, closer to Chambers, for practical reasons. The downside of moving the Circle closer to Chambers makes it a little further away from Mile End and Bethnal Green tube stations but on the other side the new location will be closer to Hackney Wick station for runners coming from Northern London.

The Committee agrees with the suggestion of giving Chambers a try from Saturday the 6th of November.

Co-Presidents

Eurogames Bid 2025

The Bid Book is being pulled together relative to hosting the EuroGames in London in 2025, with three venues being proposed to support the bid, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Hackney Marshes, the Redbridge Sports and Leisure Centre and the Royal Docks and UEL SportsDock. The proposed dates for the event are 23rd to 27th July 2025.

The organisers have requested from AC to provide as much information as possible on LFR, along with sending a spreadsheet to be filled, with some of the boxes being already filled by them. AC has requested the specific time-frame for the above but there has not been any reply on the proposed organisers part.

It is as confusing as it looks. Very.

SB

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please share with EK and NA all relevant correspondence

AOB

Request from membership to reintroduce the LFR Races Poll on the LFR Members Only FB page, with the option that allows members to add a new race to the existing list of races.

It proved to be very practical and extremely popular in the past. The races calendar could extend up to three months but very often there were also added races much further in the year and as soon as their respective dates were announced, so that members could plan their participation and travelling plans well in advance.

Action to be taken: The P&C Officers are kindly requested to please search an example of the above and reinstall the Races Poll on FB

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please send out the relative Doodle Poll for the next RCM

21.15