

LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Thursday 7th October 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)

Races Update (RS)

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Social Activities update (SS)

Membership Update (MS)

Club Secretary

ODL

Six Months Marker

Cross Country Gazebo

SB

Indigo Hotel

Co-Presidents

1. Out for Sport - Eurogames 2025 bid
2. Spond joiner stats
3. Walking group
4. Website updates
5. Pride 10k MoU
6. Club records page
7. Collaboration with Manchester FR

AOB

Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: JH, CA

Races Update (RS)

The First Fixture of the Cross Country is in about ten day's time and judging by the number of runners who have already registered on Spond, we are expecting a good turn-out. There is still the last race of the Club Championships which has actually been scheduled for this month: it is going to be a 5k race and we are eager to have this race taking place now, as in the following months there is a lot going on in terms of races and social events, so, in a way, it is better to do it now and get it out of the way. We are going to be offering members the possibility of doing this 5k race over two separate Saturdays, on the 23rd and on the 30th of the month, by attending any of their local ParkRun and then sending us their results.

We are planning on doing a separate celebratory event for the Club Championships, probably sometime early in March, definitely after the last fixture of the Cross Country and before the AGM.

Discussion on the LFR results from the London Marathon, as the result of many LFR runners did not come up on the system under the search per club, and this happened with some of the virtual runners as well. It was probably due to a glitch in the system or to the system being overloaded.

Publicity Update (P&C O)

No updates

Social Activities update (SS)

Discussion on the LFR 2021 Christmas party. This is a very busy period for us, the next thing coming up is that the tickets are going to go on sale this coming Monday. There will be a link for purchasing the tickets on the next e-bulletin, with a password to use. Coming to numbers of attendees, there is going to be an availability of 130 persons seated for dinner and of about 50 people joining for drinks afterwards those already at the venue. We would like to encourage every Club member to buy tickets, even those who are coming just for the drink afterwards, as it would be really good to be able to have an idea in regards to numbers of attendees. We are positive that we will manage to sell out our dinner tickets, as in all

previous years the tickets were sold within some hours from the moment they were made available and many members have already expressed the wish that they would like to be part of the Club celebrations this year, as there wasn't an LFR Christmas party last year. It will be good to remind members at the Circles that the tickets are on sale and as not all the new members have opted to be on the e-bulletin, we are going to put out some further notifications on FB and on Spond.

We would like to ask Committee members to please test the tickets-link sometime tomorrow, before it opens to the Club members and please come back to the SS with any issues which you may encounter and any feedback. It should be quite straightforward but then one never really knows.

Action to be taken: The SS are kindly requested to please email the ticket-link for the Christmas party to the LFR Committee at their earliest convenience.

In addition to the above, in the event description there has been included the possibility to buy a ticket for another member as a gift, and we will be messaging on FB to encourage Club members to do that, buy a ticket for those who are not in the financial situation to buy one themselves. We have also tried to present the procedure as discreet as possible, the person for which one is buying a tickets can remain anonymous but not the person for whom the ticket is being bought, those buying tickets as a gift need to provide us with at least a name or an email address, as we need to contact them afterwards and let them know that someone has bought a ticket on their behalf and the receiver of the ticket as a gift need to let us know in the end their own food preferences. Naturally all anonymity will be preserved and members have the possibility to ask any questions which they may have also through the tickets link.

Membership Update (MS)

We are currently at 487 members. There has been a very thorough purging on WebCollect, where there were kept lots of old records, which also seemed pointless to keep, and there is also a specific entry for LFR Co-Presidents which is a different entry from the Co-presidents personal and individual WebCollect account. WebCollect access rights are individual to just one person and this account should probably not be there. This account might need to be deleted along with a number of other information, as the Club shouldn't preserve any data on members after a certain amount of time. The question arises of whether this Co-Presidents dual account should be deleted and the answer to that is affirmative, as the Club needs to get rid of a lot of clutter.

In regards to WebCollect again, we will be reaching the 500 members marker not long now, as we have had a number of rejoining members, we will possibly reach the 500 marker by the end of this month. WebCollect has some functions which are still to be revised and there is still plenty to be done but this requires a lot of time. Overall I would say that we are at an extremely good place with the WebCollect purging and at an extremely good stage with the number of memberships.

Club Secretary

ODL

This was a moment of great serendipity, when AC and I were discussing last week after the Victoria Park run, only to realise that we have both been on the same page, thinking about the same thing but independently, about introducing a walking group to the Club. In addition to that, AC was in the meantime approached by a member who was enquiring whether the Club has a walking group and they have already had a discussion on the same subject with NA, so maybe the time has come for us to launch a walk. Wishing to take things a bit further I have already taken some contacts with Opening Door London, which is an LGBTQ+ charity that caters for the needs of those in the community above 50 years of age, and I have exchanged some correspondence with the Director of Finances and their Community Engagement Coordinator and they were both very open to the possibility of a future collaboration with LFR, in unison with the health and wellbeing plans which they are planning to launch for ODL sometime in the beginning of the new year. Regardless of any potential collaboration, it would be useful for LFR in my opinion to anyway create a walking group which will naturally cater to the needs of Club members, as we have a number of members who have running injuries every year and who need to remain physically active and may still want to come and join us for a walk, as many of those who are injured feel somehow being cut from their fellow runners and from the Club activities in general. These LFR walks will offer injured Club members the opportunity of keeping active and of socialising with other Club members during their period of convalescence. LFR would very much like to also engage with ODL on an already existing LFR walking programme and see how we may include them on this, how and if we may cater for their own needs and the possibility of a potential partnership. One thing which we need to keep into consideration is that we need to find volunteers who will be willing to lead these runs, unless they can be somehow organised by ODL, in which case it will be good for us as we will not have to employ any extra LFR resources though it would be good to have at least one other LFR member being present to any of these walks. I am going to have a second meeting with the ODL people in the week starting from Monday the 18th of this month and I will be keeping Committee members updated.

When are you considering being able to launch this programme? (AC)

If we will include the walking group as part of our running group, which I think would be the best thing to do on a first phase, so that both runners and walkers may mix afterwards and socialise together at brunch, which again I think we are going to be able to have from next week, then I would think that a potential date for a trial walk could be Saturday the 6th of November. Naturally, as with all new things in the Club, we keep this as simple as possible and we will let this programme run for some time, see how it goes and then review, and we will take it forward from there. In the meantime, I expect to be contacted by ODL, discuss with them and see what their intentions on the subject are (CBP)

Six Months Marker

We are currently at the six months marker as Club Committee and the following three to four months are going to be the most crucial ones, where most Club projects which are incomplete will need to be attended and completed, as by the end of January we will be going steadily towards the end of the Club Year. Every change in the Club Constitution needs to be presented to the Club Committee in the next two months, discussed and approved by the Committee and then presented to membership for further feedback and discussion, for about two to three weeks, before being presented to be voted at the AGM. Although six months seem like a lot of time, the truth is that they fly past very very fast, so please make a list of all the projects which you may need to complete, individually per role or in collaboration with another Committee role and please start preparing your plan of action in relevance with the months still ahead of us and how to best deal with what needs to be done for the Club. Also if there is anyone who would like to step down from their role, they need to start proactively engaging with members in search for potential candidates. This is not something which can be left to the very last moment and , depending on the role, usually one month in advance is not enough to find a candidate.

Cross Country Gazebo

Have contacted CD, who has very kindly offered to volunteer and help the Club out with the transportation of the LFR gazebo, and although CD will not be doing any of the Cross Country races this year, they have still very generously offered to drive the LFR gazebo to some of the fixtures. CD will be travelling abroad sometime over December and January, so we may need to search around and find a different volunteer who has a car and who will be willing to drive to the Cross Country venues.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please contact the LFR Cross Country Captains in regards to the above

Indigo hotel

We have resumed our attempts of trying to restore our collaboration with Indigo Hotel and this time they seem much more positive to the idea of having LFR back, as they have completed the renovation of their premises. The renovated venue is now called Bella Italia but the important fact is that there is a very good probability that we will be having the brunch-buffet back and at the same price as pre-pandemic. So at this point, we are almost approaching having back most of the services which we used to offer to members before the pandemic, with our Wednesday changing venue and post-run social in place, our Monday run venue back and the Monday social at The Three Stags, The Seymour Centre on Thursdays and Saturdays, and the brunch at Indigo Hotel. I have also re-approached the Prezzo at North Audley Street and discussed with them the possibility of using the venue for our Thursday post-run social, as some Club members are going directly for drinks at The

City Of Quebec immediately after the run whereas others might want to enjoy the possibility of having some food before going for a drink and it would be good to have the option of offering members a venue that serves food. I believe that further in time many more members will become more positive to the possibility of having some food after the run as the weather worsens and becomes colder. The discussions on the Thursday venue will also be finalised in the coming week and the Committee will, naturally, be kept updated.

Greenwich Park Changing Venue

In regards to the Greenwich Park run, it seems that the majority of attendees is local and most runners prefer to go home after the run or to stay back without the need to use any changing rooms. MC has kindly intermediated with the local LGBTQ+ Venue The Rose and the Crown and they have accepted to have a room on their first floor to be used as bag-drop for LFR. And although this might have seemed as the perfect solution on the other hand, I was approached by a Club member on the other hand and they were enquiring on whether the Club has any intention of providing changing facilities for the Greenwich Park run. This seemed to me as a fair request to take on board, as although the Rose and the Crown seemed a viable solution, I can't help feeling that it looks much more of a temporary solution. In addition, it is only fair to want to offer to the Greenwich Park runners the same as the Club is trying to offer to all other runners. Accordingly, I have taken contact with The Gym Group, who has a venue in the area, and the University of Greenwich Campus Gym. Both venues have replied to me and both are a bit concerned in regards to numbers, as the former has some considerations as the time we will be using the gym will also be the peak-hour for them whereas the latter is concerned that the venue might not be able to accommodate any large number of runners. I have not been to any of the above venues in person, so all discussions and negotiations are conducted by email. I am a bit in the dark on the outcome of this, as it is not always as simple as it seems to communicate effectively with others from a distance, but I think that an approach on our side was definitely required. I hope that in the end one of the venues will be positive and that we will be able to offer a changing facility to our Greenwich runners. For the time being, and until we have been able to move a bit forward on this subject, I would appreciate it if you were to please be discrete, as I wouldn't want to raise any expectations which we will not be able to fulfil in the future.

We have also made some initial approach to the Victoria Park Harriers in regards to their ClubHouse for the LFR Victoria Park run, so we have also started to actively searching for a venue for this run too (NA).

Marathon update

I have been approached and contacted by the London Marathons Events, who are the people organising the London Marathon and the Big Half and asked to offer feedback on the event from the point of view of our group of volunteers. Although many things were not as perfect as one would have expected them to be, the feedback was very positive overall and from all our team members, so my feedback was also positive. I am going to pursue this

forward now that I have had the opportunity of sticking my foot in the door because I see this as a wonderful opportunity for the Club to be able to offer through volunteering one more London Marathon spot to LFR members. The London Marathon organisers mentioned that they were going to contact me on the phone sometime within the next two weeks, so I am going to keep the Committee on the loop, based on what will be discussed with them over the phone.

Discussion on SB

Action to be taken: All Committee members are kindly requested to please read the LFR Code of Conduct and then report their feedback on the above subject by the middle of next week

Co-Presidents

Out for Sport - Eurogames 2025 bid

As you may all have heard or read, the OfS Network is preparing to place a formal bidding candidacy for the 2025 Eurogames 2025 for London. At the moment, the two cities running for the 2024 Eurogames are Birmingham and Vienna and in the meantime there is a soft launch for the 2025, with three cities as candidates, Lyon, Vienna again and London and the organisers of the launch have about three months of time to put together a formal bid, on what are the different sports going to be etc. So the OfS is leading the bid and has reached out to us in October this year as the London Frontrunners are going to be the club who will be responsible for organising all the running events for the London Eurogames, if London wins the candidature for 2025. The results will be known at the end of December this year. Each sport that will be represented in Eurogames is delegated to the respective LGBT+ sports club individually, so LFR is naturally in charge of the running events.

Whether London may be one of the candidate cities for 2025 may depend on whether the 2024 candidature is won by Birmingham, after all, as I don't really see two English cities winning to host the Eurogames two years in a row (CBP)

I think that on this occasion we will have to act as on all previous similar occasions, by asking around for volunteers among Club members and by creating a subcommittee who will then get involved and organise these running events on behalf of the Club. There is also one point in which LFR may also have an advantage, as LFR volunteers have been organizing the Pride Run, which is a large running event, so we could ask whether any of the past volunteers from the previous Pride Run committee members would like to get involved with this new project.

Spond joiner stats

I have here to present you the statistics for the period of four months, from the 28th of May until the 28th of September. During this period there have been 296 new runners on Spond, with the intention of trying the Club runs out. Out of these, 185 have then signed up,

especially after they were proactively informed that they will have to join or that they will be taken off Spond, so there remain 105 who did not finally join LFR. In regards to receiving any feedback we just had about ten to 12 entries. We were expecting to receive some more feedback, in terms of numbers, but not all runners contacted us back. We have had all sorts of feedback, there was one runner who mentioned that they did not feel that they were included in the social afterwards, which we may completely understand, as the lack of structured social events at the time may have not helped very much in making new runners feel integrated, in addition to some members who may have gone and done their own thing after a run without thinking of including a new runner, and also within a large club it is very possible that people may not feel included or that it may take some time for them to feel more included, when existing members may be primarily engaged among themselves. There were a fair amount of people who expected the LFR runs to be more structured when it comes to the running aspect of a run. The Club does offer more structured options as the coaching and the track sessions, but our runs are essentially not structured, members run on their own or in small groups, haphazardly, not necessarily nor always based on a specific pace. Runners have naturally different expectations when they approach a running club for the first time, and although we would definitely try to take into consideration everyone's expectations, it is not always feasible. For those who are new runners and feel that they are left behind, we do announce it at the Circle, that they shouldn't be speeding off on their own especially if they are unfamiliar with the route, as we will always make an effort of trying to buddy them up, or that they may stay behind and run with the CL and the CLA.

I think that we have a lot of running options per week, we now have two more runs, and as it was said, we always try not to leave new runners on their own but buddy them up, and sometimes it is very difficult for new runners to realise that although we may try to find someone who has the a similar or the same pace to their own, it is not always as simple as that. When it comes to LFR I think that members enjoy very much the fact that people may run at different speeds (NA).

The Club has repeatedly tried many and different buddying options over the years but it has not really worked well. We have tried having pacers, we have also tried having official running buddies but none of these has really been successful (AC)

The Club encourages feedback which is very good and we have tried to collect some more feedback which is also very good, the fact remains that we can't connect with everyone and at the same level. How about if we were to write in a bit more explicit way on the Club website that we are not having structured weekly runs, as the main point of our runs are to provide the opportunity to be active and to socialise but that we do offer structured sessions and these are the Wednesday coaching and the track session on Tuesday? (NA)

Discussion on the couch to 5K based on the fact that a number of new runners approached the Club without any previous running experience and thinking that this programme would have also been on offer, as it is with a number of other running clubs.

The Club invested a lot of great effort into the Couch to 5K programme about six years ago but it had no results at all, or at least not the expected results. There was one Committee member who then took it entirely on their shoulders and with great enthusiasm and put into the project a lot of personal effort, and many of the Club volunteers also assisted and supported the project, offering their time and valuable advice but the results were rather disappointing in the end, as from the initial number of participants only five finished the whole programme, of which only one then decided to become a member and register with the Club. So I would not consider the Couch To 5K an option to introduce for people who do not have any previous experience with running, as the Club does not have the necessary human resources to run such a programme and the results are minimal compared to the effort (CBP).

I think that we may again need to be a bit more specific on the Club Website as to reduce the disappointment new runners may have, it could be useful to signpost them to the NHS site for the Couch to 5K programme, so as not to have this expectation from LFR (NA)

Walking group

NA and I have had a chat with the Edinburgh Frontrunners who also have a walking group and we think it might be a really good idea, as there seems to be an obvious need for creating such a group. MB who is also a member of the Milan Frontrunners mentioned that of the club members who would come to their sessions, half of them would do the run whereas the other half would do the walk. I think we can give it a try and see how it can go.

Website updates

All references to Spond have now been deleted on the LFR website, as it makes no sense to inform new runners on the existence of Spond nor to point new runners to an app of which they will be unable to become part of. In the meantime there is another app that NA is looking at. The discussion that follows sees all Committee members keen on continuing to use such an app as spond for its numerous practical uses

Pride 10k MoU

Time has come to formalise the agreement between LFR and the Pride Run, as there is no formal relationship existing on any type of document. The Pride Run is not a dependant section of LFR, it has its own Chair and Committee, its own funds, naturally there has always been a harmonious collaboration between the two entities, with the Chair of the Pride Run always being an LFR member, but it is not a clearly established relationship. Without an MoU there is no formal confirmation of this relationship. LFR by making a donation to the Pride Run would be one of the events main sponsors, we would always make all that is possible from the Club's point of view to publicise the event to membership, expecting also that the Pride Run would also advertise the Club to its participants.

The Committee needs to make a decision on the donation. In previous years, when the Club was much more financially robust the donation would be £1000, in the previous year the donation budget was of £600.

Action to be taken: AC is kindly requested to please create and circulate to the Committee a draft MoU between LFR and the Pride Run.

This MoU will then be passed around for feedback and comments to the Committee and then sent to MP for approval. In the meantime, Committee members are kindly requested to please consider the value of the donation to the elected charity of the Pride Run.

Club Records Page

The Club Records have not been updated for the past five years.

A discussion follows on the above item. The matter is currently left to the attention of the RS who will update as much of the Club Records as it is possible based on their knowledge of facts and existing data, after which the task will then pass to the attention of TC

Collaboration with Manchester FR

AC has had a long chat with DdV, who also happens to be a member of the Manchester Frontrunners about the possibility of doing some collaborative events together. There was the suggestion of LFR and Manchester FR entering a joint team for Enduro 24, which seems an exciting idea to pursue but is not very inclusive, as such an event requires a lot of commitment. The Manchester marathon has the possibility of entering relay teams, with three runners per relay, and this could be another potential platform of collaboration. The Club can advertise it, to test the waters and check if anyone is up for participating at the Enduro 24, with the intention of entering as many Frontrunners from each club as possible.

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

21.15