



**LFR**

**Regular Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 4th August 2022**

Co-Presidents: Ashley Harwood (AH) and Andrew Corti (AC)

Club Secretary: Christos Bitzis-Politis (CBP)

Club Treasurer: Roger Kennedy (RK)

Membership Secretary: Geoff Hicks (GH)

Races Secretaries: Denis Gorman-Zennaro (DGZ) and Francis O'Callaghan (FC)

Publicity & Communications Officers: Stephen Tomaszewski (ST) and Gareth Fletcher (GF)

Social Secretaries: Eva Kucich (EK) and Charlie Abrines (CA)

**Agenda**

**Financial Updates (CT)**

**Races Update (RS)**

2022 London Marathon Club Place Revision

**Publicity Update (P&C O)**

**Social Activities update (SS)**

**Membership Update (MS)**

**Club Secretary**

## **Co-Presidents**

### **AOB**

Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: FC, EK

## **Financial Updates (CT)**

Discussion on the Lisbon Event refund

After having had a meeting with MW, there are several options that we can choose to try and have the amount due to LFR refunded. There has been no major update on the communication part of the issue, and the option that currently seems to be the only sensible and the only available is as follows:

to send them a formal letter claiming the refund in legal writing, thus in the hope that this will have the desired effect, making them understand that we are going to pursue this legally and if not anything else then at least in the hope of getting a response. What currently needs to be found is a member who works for a legal firm and who is willing to put their firm's heading on the letter, making it seem like an official request. LFR could have naturally done this differently, by properly hiring a solicitor experienced in litigation over such matters but it would have been very costly. So we are looking for a member who will be able to do this favour to the Club pro bono and initiate this mediation in what would appear to them to be an official request. There

are many lawyers who are also Club members but not all of them are working for legal firms.

During the last RCM there was also discussed the option of going through the Small Claims Court; in the meantime we have been informed that in order to initiate the process the Club will need to get a lawyer involved and the whole procedure is complicated, and ultimately it is for sums above £10K and the cost to the Club of such a procedure is not something we would want to pursue.

On the other hand, their company seems to still organise events, they are apparently very good and able to fulfil their commitments with small groups but they are still getting a lot of complaints when it comes to larger groups.

We will be keeping the Committee updated but if there is an important lesson to learn from all this affair, is that the Club needs to be much more careful in the future and definitely avoid any kind of large payments upfront. One of the most infuriating and at the same time most absurd things is that there has been no acknowledgement at all and whatsoever on their part, no one has responded to any of our emails, there has been non real engagement on their side, so writing and sending them a legal letter could hopefully bring some results.

Suggestion by CA

**Action to be taken:** CA is kindly requested to please converse with DF and check whether they are in the position to help LFR out in what was described above as the only option currently available.

## **Races Update (RS)**

Some updates from the track event of yesterday at Willesden, there were seven of us, two women and five men, as we had two dropping out at the last moment, it was a really well organised event, members seem to have enjoyed it very much and it is just a start, this is the first time that we have organised to attend something similar as a club and we are hoping that there will be a larger number next year. We are starting small but I think this is something that it's going to grow in the future, and anyway, as said, this was the first time and there is no harm in trying new and different things. Eight members have already registered for the next event, the Ladywell 10K, and we are very hopeful that it is going to be equally well organised, although it is going to be a harder event, due to the distance.

In regards to races, we are very much looking forward to the Big Half, and we are searching for a 10K event for the Club Championships, as mentioned to take place during the winter months

Coming now to the revision of the Club Places criteria that was discussed during the last RCM, Francis and I have decided to completely scrap the old policy, and have come with some suggestions, to which CBP has made some remarks, so we have updated these suggestions as well. What we are trying to achieve is to reward and acknowledge the contributions of long serving Club members, such as the Committee, also acknowledging other important Club volunteers such as the Pride 10K Committee, the GBR organisers, the LFR coaches, the Tri team leaders, etc. We have all agreed that the present criteria are not ideal and we would like to introduce some flexibility when it comes to the Club Championship events, as often members are not really able to do all of them during the season, for personal and various other reasons,

so we are thinking that if they have completed about 75% of all the Club Championship events over two years, they should not be penalised for this and they should be accrued an equal amount of points with others, if they also happen to fulfil the rest of the criteria. It is important that we encourage members as much as possible, showing flexibility and understanding if they cannot participate at some of the events, in addition there is a marked need to recognise long-serving Club volunteers, among which also the contribution of the Club Committee.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to incorporate the new suggestions by FC and DGZ into a document, which needs to be circulated among Committee members in due course and in view of the September RCM

Discussion on various sections of the document.

In my opinion, it is important to establish as one of the most basic criteria that only members who have been with the Club for a minimum of three years can actually apply for one of the Club Places. The prerogative of being with the Club for three years offers members the incentive to commit with the Club, it also offers them the necessary time to participate at the Club Championships and accrue the points needed for a Club Place, whereas two years is too short a period of time for all the above to happen. New members need some time before they can also commit to become volunteers, as it is not always so simple for everyone to acclimatise with LFR; it is important to encourage members and give them the incentives and the space to enjoy their time with LFR and to participate at Club events, without though making them feeling under the pressure of having to accrue all these points in two year's time, three years seems more sensible to me (CBP)

Something else that FC and I have been discussing is creating a celebration of the birth of the Club, and in order to be able to mark and celebrate the LFR birthday

event, we need to have a specific date, as to when the Club was formed, so that we may create and launch this new celebration that marks the LFR birthday and celebrate it accordingly.

The Club Committee is very enthusiastic about this proposal and unanimously agrees to the above suggestion.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please research and find the LFR date of birth

### **Social Activities update (SS)**

We are again going to pick your brains with choosing between the last two contenders for the Christmas venue, between The Fable and Fare. The Fable is the new contestant to consider, close to the Holborn Viaduct, it is not far from Farrington station, again a very central location, where the food might be more exciting, though the venue as such is not that exciting and in addition it is a bit more expensive than our first choice, which remains the Fare. The Fare is across two floors, there are two bars, everyone will have to buy their own drinks, and the overall cost is pretty low, the only requirement is that for every hour after midnight we will need to pay £500 extra, but the minimum spend agreed is £7000 plus VAT, of which they will require a 40% deposit on the above, so it is much more economical than all the venues which have been previously considered. There were 125 seated members at last year's Christmas event and we had about 77 members who came afterwards just for drinks, so we need to calculate about 200 people give or take for this year as well. The numbers will work well for Fare, there will be the £35 or £40 option for food, the options are mostly

vegetarian or vegan, so they will work well with almost everybody and at the end of the day with canapes plus half a pizza, there will be plenty of food going around. I will liaise and prepare a budget with RK and tickets will be sold to members at the cost price of the menu. Additional negative point for Fable is that they will require LFR to pay for security after a certain time and there is also the possibility where we may not have an exclusive use of all the venues, as it is a large venue. We don't expect that there will be another party of people but we cannot exclude this either, and their facilities and loos will be shared, as they will be used by both LFR and the other party. From a location prospective Fable is closer to Farringdon Station but Fare is just 10 minutes away from Farringdon. There needs to be some very clear communication to membership in regards to the closing time, the bar will close at 1.30 am, as we will need to clear the venue by 2.00 am. The date has been set as Saturday the 26th of November.

**Action to be taken:** CA is kindly requested to please send the P&C Officer a Save the Date blurb and to liaise with the CT regarding the Christmas Party budget

The LFR picnic and rounders event is coming up in two weekends time, more than forty members have already signed up to attend so we are expecting a decent turnout, I have also messaged The Cock Tavern to inform them that we are coming later, so it is all set. In regards to the following three months, September, October and November, we do not have already set a precise event calendar. We could still attend the visit at the V&A, EK has suggested organising a Treasure Hunt, it would be great to organise again a Busy Lady Bingo, as they were really great fun, there is an event at the RVT where members can get discounted entries as kindly offered by Shane, I am still looking into getting LFR some BFA discounted tickets for March next year, so there are still several options but nothing has been really set. The next few months are

anyway going to be quite busy with the Cross Country season starting in October, so it is probably for the best that we go one step at a time.

### **Publicity Update (P&C O)**

Nothing much to report, very much business as usual. GF has written a new article for the LFR website and related to the Pride 10k Run, it is entitled Ten Reasons to Run the Pride 10k, as we would like to promote the event further. The article has already been sent to JR to be included on the website and will be coming out on the next ebulletin as well.

### **Membership Update (MS)**

Membership numbers are currently at 494 paid members, and there are six more whose payment still needs to be processed, so we are at the exact milestone of 500 members.

There has been some necessary purge on WebCollect.

I would like to ask all Committee members to please become a bit thoughtful of others when using the Committee WhatSApp group chat, as I feel that it has been overused lately. There are things shared which we do not need to be seen and read by everyone and in addition I would like to ask to please not include sending important subjects on the WhatsApp chat and to use the email instead, as important matters tend to get lost in the plethora of messages. Also, important matters are better discussed via email.

### **Club Secretary**



A short update on the Vitality Big Half: the registrations are now closed. There are about 160 LFR members who are going to be running the event in addition to 15 entries offered to BHFR.

Clarification on the Limelight Events volunteering. My personal contact with Limelight Events is not Julian Gregory but the Limelight Events Community and Volunteers Manager. Limelight Events were obviously approached at the same time and from two different directions, by AC and myself. My reason for approaching Limelight Events was the same one as when I happened to approach London Marathon Events four years ago, to be able to obtain free or discounted entries to their events, such as the Oxford Half, the London Triathlon and the Asics 10K event. Through volunteering for their events, LFR will get a financial donation and some free or discounted entries to their future events, which will be distributed among Club members and volunteers, just like with the LM events. This is the very first time that we are collaborating with Limelight Events, they seem really lovely and very cooperative and we will explore the possibility of both promoting the Club and obtaining some benefits for members.

## **Co-Presidents**

### **Update on the Tri Subject**

There has been a very productive conversation between CA and AC in order to establish a constructive way forward. Due to the increased amount of responsibilities, AC has lost the passion for the administrative part of the role but both EC and AC would like to continue doing what they are doing best, promote, encourage and help new members getting involved with triathlon and remain as part of the coaching team. In order to be able to deal with all the administrative parts of the tri section, the best thing would be to create a position for a tri coordinator. This would be an entirely new

position, that will deal with ordering the tri kit and the distribution of it, which is in itself a great and burdensome responsibility, requiring lots of effort and time, while EC and AC can focus on training and development. They would naturally keep doing what we are doing now but there would be less work for them. There is already a role description and there are some requirements for the role, as we expect the candidates to have an understanding and a certain interest in triathlon.

**Action to be taken:** CA is kindly requested to please send to the P&C Officer the description for the Tri Administrator role.

In addition AC has asked to come up with a way of editing the Tri FB group. The Tri WhatsApp group is more reliable than the FB group, as on the Tri FB group there are people who are supporting the tri section by being in the group but who are not active triathletes nor have an interest in ever doing a triathlon, whereas those communicating on the WhatsApp group are more active, in the sense of participating at events. Among the tri section there are members who are only doing triathlons, or people who are only doing duathlons, as among LFR are just members who are just doing running, and there needs to be a bridge built between the two groups.

There needs to be a way to get the FB numbers and cross-correlate them with the WhatsApp group (GH)

**Action to be taken:** CA is kindly requested to please do a bit of research and inform how many triathletes included in the group are currently active

It would be useful to give the tri component of the Club an equal position and potentially include the Tri Administrator in the Committee, or invite them to attend Committee meetings (DGZ)

What could be done as a start would be to include this new role as part of the Club Roles document. There is a specific official document that contains a description of each of the Committee roles and of other Club volunteering roles, which is on the LFR website. The role description that CA read out to us a few minutes ago, could be included into this document, thus making the role official. (CBP)

I don't think the Tri Administrator role needs to be or to become in the future a Committee position. Committee members are elected officers and they are often in the position of handling subjects of sensitive nature and members personal data (AC)

I would also agree about not making the Tri administrator a Committee position, and neither can they be participating at Committee meetings, as they do not have the right to vote. It has often come to my attention especially from meetings in the academia, where there are many relevant participants at a meeting but not all of them are entitled to vote, and it becomes a very awkward moment when there needs to be a decision made through voting and some of the persons who have been present and attended the debate do not have the right to vote. (GH)

The Club Committee is very grateful for CA contribution and great efforts into the communication with the tri section of the Club and are looking forward to a very productive and non acrimonious collaboration in the future.

### **MeetUp update**

A shell of an LFR MeetUp group has already been set up, many thanks to the P&C Officers for providing the photos, and some mock events have been created. As there is the option on whether it is preferable to launch this group as an open or as private group, before taking the decision, and although I know that everyone will agree on the

need to have this as a private group, nevertheless I would like to bring this to your decision, so that we are all on the same page and in unison.

The Club Committee discusses the benefits of launching the LFR MeetUp group as a private group and decides in favour of it as private.

Among the main requirements as discussed during the last RCM is to be able to see who is a paid-up member and who else is coming to the Club runs, as we all know that so many of our members prefer running and/or meeting up on the runs with friends or members they already know. When someone wants to join the group, the LFR administrators will not have access to their data, apart from their username and their email address. The Admins can access the name, but we it will not be able to cross-check membership lists, as usernames are not always guaranteed of being their actual and/or real names, the same applies for the email addresses used, in addition to not being always simple to identify someone just by their email address. In consequence to this, every person that wishes to become a member of the LFR MeetUp will have to go through the procedure of being asked a number of joining up questions, a specific question that will allow the Administrators to identify them as members of LFR. One of these questions could be their own LFR membership number and the email address which they have registered on their WebCollect account. Accordingly, we are thinking that the most plausible questions to use are: a. are you a member, b. what is your full registration/membership number with LFR and c. what is the email address you are registered with the Club. There is an option of five joining questions, we don't think it is necessary to exhaust all five of them, two indicative questions, when answered properly, will be able to help us with the identification of the member. As mentioned above, the Monday event has been set up, this will be used as a template for the rest of the other Club runs.

To the question of when we expect to have it rolling out and functioning, the answer is in about three week's time, if all other parameters do not prove to be more complicated than anticipated.

## D&I Update

Discussion on promoting Club events as female/ trans and non binary or just simply female and non/binary.

Most trans members, at least as far as I know, identify with either one or the other gender and both from personal experience and from snippets of discussions I have had with other trans Club members do not wish to attend events promoted as “female, trans and non-binary”. (ST)

Also nothing guarantees that non-binary Club members would definitely wish to be associated with a “female event” and fact remains that we cannot be 100% certain on any of the above if non-binary Club members are not given the opportunity to have a saying on this subject.

As an example of the above is the wording to promote the tickets sold for the LFR Christmas Party of last year, where there was a category for those identifying as male and then a category that included female, trans and non-binary. I can appreciate that the greatest majority of Club members are cis-gendered gay men, and female identifying members, trans persons and those identifying as non-binary are a numerical minority but nevertheless I don't think that they should be all included in one “minority” category (ST)

I think the issue is much more important of whether we are organising and promoting events as female only or non-binary and female events. As ST mentioned

there are very few Club members that identify as non-binary and we should be giving them a voice, they shouldn't be made to feel like a minority.

These are very important subjects and we will have to let the D&I Champions pick up some of these issues, but there is definitely a need to be much more clear and more consistent on our communications, on what events we are setting up and for whom, as we want to do this right for the sake of our members and for creating a safe space for them, we definitely do not want to upset members unnecessarily.

The Pride March tickets are a very good example to use on how to handle certain situations and how we may use these situations to learn. Instead of having a pool of tickets for trans and non-binary members, very often with female members somehow included in the same category just for being a minority and then a second very large category of entries for cis-gender male identifying members, it would be best to start allocating tickets in a different way and from the other way round, meaning have a pool of tickets for trans and non binary first, and women second, and then give the opportunity of entries to the gay men. In this way, those non identifying as male are not treated as a minority and they have an assured representation to all LFR events (DGZ).

#### Discussion on the relative members survey

The D&I Champions would like to have an initial email through which they are introduced to everybody, then send out a water-tight survey, while in the meantime get other people involved in D&I. The members survey has been created with the idea to make it as inclusive and as open as possible. There are going to be a number of demographic questions, age, gender, etc. but the rest of the questions have been constructed in such a way as to be able to obtain data more pertinent to specific requests. We want to make LFR more diverse and as diverse as possible, we need to

potentially start targeting different sections of the community. To all this, receiving feedback from membership could be invaluable, and anyhow, we have to start from somewhere.

## **AOB**

Discussion on a potential transition from using Gmail to Outlook. There could be a possibility of using the outlook way of emailing while still continuing to use Gmail as the Club provider.

**Action to be taken:** CA is kindly requested to please ask EK in regards to the above subject