



LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Thursday 8th December 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)

London Marathon Club Places

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Social Activities update (SS)

Membership Update (MS)

Club Secretary

Co-Presidents

- Welfare Issue
- LFR Website update
- Meetup update
- Primrose Hill and Royal Parks Survey
- Kit subcommittee update
- D&I Update
- Monday run Route Proposal

- Saturday Long Runs next year
- Alternatives to Hyde Park Thursdays

AOB

Chair: AH

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: EK, ST

Financial Updates (CT)

Just a very short update from the Lisbon financial saga, the solicitors in charge would like to pre-authorise the further payment of £600 for creating and sending a pre-action letter, as was established and discussed during the previous RCM. Just to remind you all that the Club has already paid to the solicitors £500 so far for their initial consultation. As I have pointed out in all our previous discussions, these actions could lead to something but they might also be an utter waste; nevertheless, it is my belief that at least something has to be done towards recuperating the amount that is being owed to LFR and both a consultation with solicitors and the pre-action warning letter are deemed as the best and more sensible ways to go with. The Club will have paid £1100 towards this aim, the sum owed to LFR amount to about 8200 euros, so is it worth trying to get back the amount of the 8200 euros by spending some more money towards this, though we need to think and establish very soon where the cutting point will be, as we don't want to be spending too much of the Club funds in the hope of getting back something that is ultimately not guaranteed.

The Club Committee agrees to the above, votes positively to what is being suggested by the CT and the motion is approved.

I agree with what is being suggested by RK, both that something has to be done towards recuperating the amount owed to the Club and to the solicitor's expenses being currently in the area of £1100, though I am not sure I would feel very comfortable spending much more above what has already been spend, unless there is some guarantee of regaining the 8200 euros (CBP)

A second subject which I would like to share with you is that because of an admin mishap LFR hadn't paid any fees to the venue in Greenwich for a whole year which meant that £1200 had to be paid in one go for the use of the facilities. Now the issue has been clarified and they will be charging us normally and monthly from now on.

The Club has recuperated £6500 from selling tickets to the LFR Christmas party, so currently the Club is again back to having more or less about the same amount of reserves as previously.

Discussion on the Club reserves

The Club currently has a surplus fund of about 20k. I would like to see if we can use some of the reserves to perhaps drive down membership costs for members in the next Club Year given the cost of living and the general financial situation. It is just an idea but considering that everything else is going up, a reduction in the membership fees would be appreciated by all the Club members (RK)

I happen to categorically disagree. First of all, I do not think that having financial reserves in the area of 20K is a lot of money, compared to the financial reserves of other running clubs. Having financial reserves is a well established practice by all athletic clubs and it should not be frowned upon nor be looked at as something despicable. Having financial reserves does not mean a greedy accumulation of money while everybody else around the world is starving. It means confidence in being able to run all Club activities from one month to the next, paying all the required fees at the changing facilities and having the potential on top of everything else which is being paid for to make plans and organise something for any special occasions or pick up the pieces and continue after any mishaps.

The reserve of 20K happens to be continuously used, it is an active reserve not a stagnant reserve, large parts of this reserve are being continuously used for LFR advance payments such as the IT and the Christmas Party and then, when after these events are over, the funds are being recuperated. But the money that is recuperated after each payment is never the exact same amount, there is always a small loss compared to the initial amount, as there is always something extra that has not been thought of and needs to be paid. If the Club did not have any reserves, then we would have struggled to make these payments in advance and pay all the extras.

As you all know we need and are almost always requested to make these payments in advance due to the fact that the bookings we are making on behalf of LFR are always very large, and in the Club's long life some financial mishaps are bound to happen, such as the Lisbon fiasco, with the Club being currently £9k down, adding the solicitor's fees and there is no guarantee that any of this money will ever return to LFR. All it takes is just another similar incident and the Club will be almost financially ruined.

The Greenwich Centre by their own negligence and misunderstanding of communication had not charged LFR for a whole year, so if there hadn't been any reserves, LFR wouldn't have been in the position to make that bulk payment upon the Centre's request. In addition, we now seem to have a stable financial relationship with all the changing venues the Club is using. The rates we are paying are quite good value, after having brought down Seymour Saturdays from £70 per session to £28. Who guarantees us that the fees the Club is currently paying are not going to go up in the new year? Everything is going up, as Roger pointed out, so one would naturally expect the changing facilities fees to also go up as well. Again, having a reserve of funds is useful, as it guarantees a relevant stability and the financial viability of the Club. And we definitely want to continue providing changing facilities for our members, as having changing facilities improves the whole experience of a Club run for everyone.

Something else which I would like to point out is that having membership fees at £54 per year, is probably not what one would call cheap but it is also not a lot of money, when compared to what members are getting back for this amount. The Club is holding activities for 50 weeks per year, as we remain closed for two weeks over the festive season, the Club is providing changing facilities, it is in today's Agenda and we are definitely going to be making new plans for substituting the Thursday run, so there is going to be this expenditure to consider as well, the Club is paying for race registrations, all the Met XC events are being paid for, we are holding affiliations with EA and British Triathlon, among else, the Club always chips in some

extra cash for the Christmas Party, so asking £54 per year for membership fees seems quite fair for what members are getting back.

Last but not least, all Committee members need to think in terms of time about the future of this Club, we are all elected Club Officers and we have been elected to preserve and guard the sustainability of the Club in the long term and make sure the Club remains viable and solvent for the future. We are going to be celebrating the Club's birthday on the 11th of February and in three years it's the LFR 30 years anniversary, everyone will be naturally expecting that some funds will be spent towards both the above. So in my opinion having a healthy reserve means that the Club is able to provide relative financial stability and security to all its members for the future.

If there is a moral issue about LFR currently holding some financial funds in custody for its members and using these to run the Club from one day to the next, then there are two suggestions which I am more than happy to follow through: invest in the future of the Club through further membership engagement, through different types of training, such as coaching for members to become new coaches, training Circle volunteers in the diversity training provided by England Athletics, etc. as training is an incredible investment, as we are investing in human resources, we are making members feel further engaged, making them feel valued, offering them new set of skills, there are incredible benefits to be gained from training and all the benefits are then restituted to LFR.

The second suggestion on my part is to potentially start considering and discussing the possibility of LFR becoming a charity. Numerous other FR clubs around the world happen to have assumed the status of a charity, I have already looked into the matter and the relevant application on how an athletics club can become a charity is not really that complicated and for LFR becoming a charity will create some extra security in regards to how the financial future of LFR is protected but it will also offer the Club the opportunity to use some of the Club reserves differently.

I would also be extremely open to showing consideration and being attentive to the current financial situation by offering some type of sponsorship to members who are unable to pay the 2023/24 membership fees and to examine this case by case, but I completely fail to see the reason for reducing the current membership fees in general. In my opinion the Club offers really good value for money through the services provided and I would feel much more comfortable having the membership fees being frozen at the current amount for the next year and potentially for the year after that instead of a decrease. (CBP)

I think it would be really useful if the CT could present at the next RCM the income and expenditure position of the Club against the annual budget, as this will allow us all to clearly see where we are at the moment (AC)

Action to be taken: The CT is kindly requested to please act as per above and if necessary to please liaise with the previous CT AD

We are expecting a bit more new members coming to the Club in January, as this has always happened in all previous years, as part of people's new year's resolutions. So there are potentially more funds going to be coming into the Club.

It would also be very useful to know and to make a distinction what amount belongs to LFR as part of the Club reserves and what amount belongs to the IT as part of their reserves.

The reserves of the IT are actually part of the Club reserves, the IT finances are separately dealt with from the other Club finances as it would have been too much for the CT to deal with the IT finances as well, but the IT is organised by the Club, it is entirely a Club event, they have separate finances and a different person dealing with the IT financial aspects for practical reasons but the IT reserves actually belong to LFR.

Although at this point, we are not very much sure how much of these IT reserves are still around, after the Lisbon incident. But it was great to have these reserves, and this was actually the reason for which they were created in the first place, to act as a buffer in case of an emergency.

This is exactly the reason why the Club should continue to have healthy reserves, because there may come again the time when these reserves will have to be used as a buffer. At the end of the day it all comes to thinking about LFR in terms of the future and as it was mentioned we also need to think about the 30 years anniversary.

At this point it would be worth waiting for the CT report at the next RCM and based on that see what projections can be made on the future

I think, and based on negative experiences and lessons learned, the Club Committee should be applying in name of the Club for a credit card, this would be a very sensible move to go forward with and it could facilitate payments but also create a certain guarantee for all future payments, and especially large payments (RK)

Action to be taken: The CT is kindly requested to please make all the necessary enquiries as to the above and report back to the Committee at the next RCM

Races Update (RS)

LM Club Places Discussion

This has been a fantastic experience, for both Francis and myself, we have had lots of fruitful discussions and I know that I can speak on behalf of Francis when I say that we have both enjoyed this, and also that it was a long process and a more complicated one, then what we had anticipated. We would both like to thank CBP for all his incredible support, he has been very helpful from the very beginning, with the parameters document and all the way through and we are extremely grateful for his effective input. I would also like to suggest that as both FC and AH are members of the current Committee but also candidates for a Club place, they should both refrain from participating in any voting tonight as there could potentially be a conflict of interest. So in my view all applications will be discussed in their presence as Committee members but they should not be allowed to vote. In addition there is something else which I would like to share with you and ask for the Committee's approval before we move forward. There has been an applicant which sent us their application after the deadline, the reason for this is because that member had a serious health condition, and I am allowed to disclose so much at this point. This person, although applying after the deadline, went right up the top and scored really high, especially through their volunteering contributions. If I am not wrong, they have accrued 30 points for volunteering and ten points through their racing. This late candidate has naturally changed the positions of all the other candidates and another applicant that was already on the list for receiving a Club Place will now very probably have to

be taken off the list. What I would like to know at this point is whether the Committee is willing to accept that person and their application? (DGZ)

Is their reason for making a belated application a legitimate reason? (GH)

Yes, their reason is a legitimate one, they have had a serious health condition and they have had to be hospitalised, hence missing the deadline.

How many applicants are there in all?

There are ten applicants in all, including the belated applicant. Theoretically their application should not have been considered but because of these emergency and unexpected circumstances they were late and this is the reason that I am asking before we move forward whether the Committee is willing to accept the application of that member.(DGZ)

The Committee is requested to vote, with the exception of AH and FC as per above.

The Committee agrees to accept the belated application and candidature of the member in question.

Thank you so much for your vote, Francis and I have done this procedure with great attention and trying to be as fair as possible and we would like to continue to do this with absolute transparency and naturally with the Committee's consent and support. Just also to let you know that an initial scoring had already taken place long before the belated candidate came forward and based now on the Committee's approval, one of the previous successful applicants will have to be removed from the list and the late applicant will be taking their place, and in consequence a Club Place for the LM.

Discussion on the scoring process

If the whole process and all the applications had only been scored based exclusively on points accrued by races, then only one applicant would have had a CP and that person would be FC. The percentage of Club Championship races the applicants have done throughout the year is almost the bare minimum, hence their scoring numbers are really low on the racing part, most of the points accrued is almost entirely based on volunteering. Without wishing to diminish at all the importance of volunteering, at the end of the day LFR is a running club, and we should try and make members become much more engaged with the Club Championship events.

If I am also allowed to add to what DGZ is saying, based on the points accrued through the athletic part of the scoring, all previous LM applications have been much more competitive, meaning in all the previous years candidates had raced an incredible amount of events compared to the number of events which has been raced by this year's candidates, also notwithstanding the fact that this is the first year that LFR can offer six LM places. If I recall well back in 2019 there were 18 applicants competing for just four CP, so eight more members competing for less CP, and the competition was fierce, as almost all of them had raced about 90% of all Club Championship events, so the volunteering part had a really secondary role in the scoring, although it was a catalyst factor on who got the CP in the end. (CBP)

Although only one applicant has done all the racing events, five more of the ten applicants still remain on the scoring list as successful, although they have done much less of the Club Championships, some of them not more than three. For example one unsuccessful applicant has raced more events than AH but had to be dropped out because they have scored less through their volunteering. If they have had one or two more points through their volunteering, then AH would have had to be dropped out, as he only has five points from the racing part. This is actually the principle that has been used for the final scoring, we have counted all the points from the racing, all the points from the volunteering and then we have added them together. The LMCP have been allocated based on the final scoring point of each applicant (DGZ)

Having said that, there are two things which I would like to say, first of all, regardless of the slightly discouraging racing points from all applicants, what we want to do is to recognise individuals for all the efforts they have put in, be that in racing, in volunteering or both. This experience can be used as an example for the future, in order to make members understand that if they would like to have a LMCP then they should be doing more races, not races in general here and there but races from the Club Championships portfolio, because these are CP they are applying for and through their participation to the Championship events they are supporting the Club. The second thing which I would like to point out is that we would like to encourage this commitment further, encourage members to continue helping the Club out, to continue offering volunteering services to the Club. We do not want members to come to the Club, apply, get a LMCP and then leave the Club, we really want members to continue being involved with the Club in the future, even after having obtained a LMCP (FC)

I think it might be worth trying to emphasise to members the direct correlation between the Club Championships and the LMCP, we could try and stress the fact that if you do more races from the Club Championships, then you increase much more your possibilities to get a LMCP. We could try and use the e-bulletin and call attention to the forthcoming events by including a line that connects these events to the LM and to the CP (GF)

How about if there was a line that explicitly states that this specific Club Championships event will get you this amount of points? (CA)

This could prove a bit too complicated a task, to calculate with precision how many points a member gets from an individual event, and it could lead to misunderstandings. I think it might prove more practical to remind everyone who is interested that all the point system is clearly set out in the relative document and to use this document as a standard point of reference for the future (CBP)

Coming back to what FC mentioned, it is important to make members realise that the LMCP are offered as a reward for showing dedication to the Club, and for continuing to show commitment, there have been quite a few number of people who have had a LMCP in the previous years and who are still members of the Club and are also still energetically supporting its activities, NC is an example and many others members' names come to mind as well. (DGZ)

It is important that we continue to trust members and that we have faith that they are doing all they are doing with good intentions. And in order to make sure that they don't just get a place and then they go, we have introduced as a necessary requirement that they have to be a Club

member for three years in a row, I think this is a very important step towards this goal, as it shows their commitment to the Club (GH)

I think that the new scoring system is much more fair and opens many more opportunities for members to get a LMCP, and based on the new scoring system we can now also reward members who have contributed to LFR for a long period of time, which is one of the reasons we wanted to review the scoring system in the first place. And it is also important to encourage unsuccessful candidates further, you have not been successful this year, but if you continue and you race some more events in the following months or volunteer some more, then in all probability you will get a CP in the next year. (FC)

I think Francis has a point here, as this should not be considered as a failure by the unsuccessful candidates, as it isn't really. In my opinion the wording we are going to use has a very important part in making this message being registered and becoming fully understood and the P&C Officers could prove really helpful in how this is perceived and on how this is communicated to membership (CBP)

Also one other important subject is that the Club has a successful female applicant, and this is not a female identifying applicant that got a CP simply based on their gender but through merit because they have raced many events from the Club Championships and this should be celebrated and used in order to potentially attract other female candidates for the next event (DGZ)

The points accrued by each successful applicant are examined by the Club Committee, the names of the successful applicants are revealed and the Club Committee confirms the 2023 successful candidates for the LMCP 2023 event.

I would like to ask you all to please keep this as strictly confidential, definitely until this comes out on the e-bulletin on Monday, which will give the RS and myself the necessary time to communicate this, until the successful candidates are notified. The results need also to be communicated to those who have not accrued enough points this time, it would be extremely inconsiderate, indelicate and callow for applicants to be notified of the results through first seeing them on the e-bulletin nor by hearing about them on the grapevine. So please give us some time until Monday, until the next e-bulletin comes out to communicate this to everyone in the appropriate manner (CBP)

10K race

We were very much considering doing a 10k race in Regent's Park which was organised by the Mornington Chasers and which CBP had discovered for us. We asked CBP in the meantime if he could get LFR a discount for this event but as they have not come back and we needed to set a date, CBP has not only found LFR another race but also got the Club a 20% discounted entry for all members. So again we are very much indebted to CBP. This is going to take place on Saturday morning on the 25th of March in Battersea Park, and as this is the last event of the Club Championships, we are hoping that we are going to attract lots of members.

After the Eltham 5 miles really generous discount and TBH which comes at just £10, I thought getting another discounted entry would be a really positive thing for LFR, and I'm delighted to

have succeeded in my efforts, always more than happy to support the RS in their role, as supporting all Club officers is part of my own role, but it is also very important to try and provide for LFR as many free or discounted events as possible. Racing has become terribly expensive, a well organised 10K race is about £25 plus booking fees, and such a price could be considered as prohibitive, especially for those young at age who often do not earn so much, and we want to encourage members to race, we want to inspire more young members to thrive through racing, and with the XC events being entirely paid by the Club and these three races being offered at such a discounted rate, I think LFR has managed to offer to all members a very alluring racing portfolio at a really low personal cost (CBP)

Having thus set the date of the last of the Club Championship events, we can now set the date for the Club Championships on the 31st of March, which is a Friday, and which we are planning on hosting at The Two Brewers. I have contacted Jamie, one of the managers at The Two Brewers, they will be expecting us for the LFR birthday party on Saturday the 11th of February, there will also be a drag queen for the celebration, they have very kindly offered to give LFR the back room on a Saturday, and it will be free entrance from 6pm to 10pm, and the drag queen is free, and there will be nothing to pay for the venue, no booking fees or anything of the sort (DGZ)

This is great news and the Club Committee is extremely grateful to DGZ for having secured the venue on these dates for free.

Accordingly and to make sure that we are all on the same page, we will be having the last of the Met XC events and the LFR Birthday on Saturday the 11th of February, followed by a celebration at TTB, the last of the Club Championships event on Saturday the 25th of March in Battersea and the 2023 Club Championships event on Friday the 31st celebrated again at TTB (CBP)

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to ascertain that all the above events are on the LFR Events Calendar and that are announced to membership through a Save the Date blurb

As the Club will not be spending any money on booking fees or any money for hiring a venue, what about if we were to make this a bit more special for everybody by hiring out a professional photographer for the evening? This could also help promoting the Club further (CA)

We could even find a photographer among our members, a photographer who is a club member and still pay them a fee

The Committee finds this as an equally great idea and agrees to what is being suggested.

Action to be taken: the SS are kindly requested to please liaise with TTB management and confirm with them the above dates and then follow up on the suggestion for hiring a photographer.

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Discussion on strengthening the link between the London Marathon Club Places and the Club Championships.

Now that the names of the six candidates have been confirmed, it would be great if we could try and engage with all of them and involve them into the whole process, through all the period of time leading up to the LM. We could have some lines sent from all of them and have them out every week, have a profile of each of the candidates, asking them to share their tips for their nutrition, how is their training coming on, and through these blurbs keep hammering to membership, you will be able to get your points for the London Marathon through volunteering as these successful applicants did and by racing in this event and on that event. We had a very similar blurb coming out for RD at the last event and it proved very successful, this time we have six candidates and about three months ahead of us, so we could space this out and balance it well and at the same time pass the message that this race gives you a number of points and this points will go towards your LM application if you volunteer for this or that event.

ST has already started doing a cleanup of the mailchimp, removing people from the e-bulletin mailing list, all those people who are no longer Club members, there was a really long time since the last cleanup and there have been 222 people who have been currently receiving the e-bulletin without them being members, so this is a very time consuming procedure but an absolutely necessary one but Stephen is progressing steadily and we hope that he will be able to finish with the procedure by the end of the year.

There are two more bulletins coming out until the end of the year, one will be coming out next week on Monday, this coming Monday, and then there is the very last one, coming out on Monday the 19th of the month.

Social Activities update (SS)

Nothing really to report, or at least nothing new. The format of the Christmas party caused a lot of stress, both to Eva and myself, to the venue and probably to many of you as well, and it finally proved that the way the food came out and distributed was not very successful. Eva and I have been approached by a lot of disgruntled members who had paid for a ticket and who wanted to have more food, and I am sure other Committee members have had to deal with lots of complaints, and it is true that the way the food was served was not ideal for anyone involved.

There was a number of complaints, that much is true, but it is also important to see this for the successful event that it actually was, a lot of people have had a really great time, we had secured a venue just for the Club, there was good music, members had the great opportunity to meet with each other and have fun, I think it went really well. And also all those who have happened to complain about this thing or that thing, I don't want to say that they shouldn't complain, but they should also make an effort in trying to understand that not all negative situations depend entirely on the organisers and that if they think that they could have organised such a large event in a much better way, then to please come forward and do so next year, by applying to be the next SS. (CBP)

It is impossible to please everyone, even at the most successful event there will always be someone who will make a complaint, and it is simpler to complain from the safety of complaining without doing anything about it and this is something which we have witnessed again and again, as Christos said if you think you can do better, then please come forward and support the Club by becoming a SS. Or even if someone does not want to become involved as a Committee member, there is still plenty for them to do in order to support LFR.

Discussion on the challenging behaviour of a Club member towards one of the venue's members of staff as reported by other LFR members.

This is an affair which should be further investigated. We appreciate that there could have been some anger, frustration and disappointment from members which may have wanted more food at a certain point but this is not the appropriate manner to deal with the issue. It is extremely important that members come to understand and realise that when they are participating in a Club event, their behaviour has repercussions on the Club's reputation and reflects very much on the Club as a whole. If the allegations are found to be true, I find such behaviour abhorrent and entirely unacceptable and a relative note with the appropriate excuses should be sent to the venue and to the member of staff in question (CBP)

Communicating with the venue is already on my list of things to do in regards to wrapping up the event (CA)

Further discussions on the subject of this incident and on how this should be dealt with.

Action to be taken: CA is kindly requested to please diplomatically investigate the above allegedly having taken place incident with the venue and report back to the Committee in due course.

Besides what was discussed above, we are planning to organise something for January, as January is a grim month, it is most probably going to be a pub quiz or something else but of a similar nature, a relaxing and fun social.

I am also planning on doing this properly this time by asking BFI if they will be able to offer LFR some Flair tickets for free, as they have a lot of corporate sponsors who do not occupy all the seating, there have been viewings which had a huge amount of unoccupied seats, so I am going to see what I can do on that front.

Membership Update (MS)

This has been a slow month for membership. I think that the website being down has had an impact on the numbers of new runners who would have wanted to sign up, but it is also December and this is a difficult month for people to commit, we are expecting an influx of new members with the new year. For the time being the registered members are 449.

The Club has lost some members in the last year but before the end of the Club Year we will have been able to recuperate the numbers, finishing again around 600 members.

Club Secretary

Action to be taken: the P&C Officers are kindly requested to please create an event invite for the trail Run on FB as a priority for Friday, kindly reminding everyone that there will not be a bag-drop and attendees should come ready to run. All those interested should also declare whether they would like to have a pub lunch, so that some previous booking arrangements could be made.

Have contacted the New Bloomsbury Set, as this was the venue chosen for the social after the AGM, and I can only share some very disheartening news with you, that after 11 years of

serving the Community, the venue will close down and cease being an LGBTQ+ venue. Sadly yet another venue lost to the Community, but this still leaves us with the issue of not having secured a venue for the post AGM social.

Suggestion of the Marquis Cornwallis in Bloomsbury (GH)

Discussion on whether LFR could have an event in Soho or at the Zodiac like last year, depending on the distance members will have to walk to get there.

Action to be taken: CA and CBP are kindly requested to please liaise and find an ideal venue for the AGM social

TBH is meant to take place on Sunday the 3rd September, 2023. I have already started contacting the organisers for guaranteeing the Club sufficient community entries, as there are lots of new runners this year, and lots of runners who have improved and would be ready to race a half at that point in time. In addition I have enquired if LFR could potentially get a number of Relay Community Spaces. If my request has a positive outcome, this will be a novelty for both the organisers and LFR, as they have never given out community Relay Entries, but I think it would be a very positive thing to have, as not all LFR members are willing to run a half for a number of valid reasons, and it is important to include as many members as possible, making them feel part of the event, as so many LFR runners do race it anyway. It is supposed to be a community oriented event, and encouraging different segments of the running community, and different demographics, so I shall be keeping you all updated. I have a meeting with them in the new year, on the 12th of January, and hopefully I shall be able to report back some positive news.

I have had a discussion with the manager and the Wednesday team of the Kentish Town Sports Centre, on how to make LFR trans members feel more included, while not being challenged both by members of staff and of the public.

Co-Presidents

LFR Website update

The website, you will be pleased to hear, is back on, Julia has been nothing less than brilliant in this, the delay and the whole issue was due to the previous hosting provider, who allegedly sent out an email informing LFR that one of the systems was going to get cancelled but they send it to the wrong email address. Anyway, the website is now back on and running, but all the information needs to be updated, as the current data are relevant to the last time the system did a backup, which was sometime in May, so now most parts of the website need to be updated. This is slowly taking place, Julia is again going through the emails received in the past months and updating as much as possible. Potentially everything will be back in order by the end of this year. (AC)

One thing which could prove very useful and it is of practical nature is to create a new page specifically for the Long Runs. Currently the Long Runs are listed under and as part of the Training page, but having a separate page just for the Long Runs could prove useful, also into attracting new runners to the Long Runs, together with attracting new members to LFR. The Long Runs page will be under the general Runs section. (AC)

In regards to the Long Runs, one thing which I would like to discuss about, I have had a long chat with MH, and although we all tend to run together as a group, this has changed a bit in the last months, it has become a bit of a challenge to have everyone running together and at the same pace. At the beginning there were much fewer of us, but now we tend to get lots of people. There were about 16 runners during these last sessions, regardless of the cold, who are more or less at a 5 minute pace, but there is also a spread of paces, with some runners being more around 5.45 to 6 minute pace. It has proved very difficult having to wait for runners in order to regroup, especially during the last two Saturdays, as the weather was really cold and we have had some complaints. My suggestion is that we can't really continue running all together as one group, so we should split into two different groups. We should create a slower pace group that starts earlier, meaning when everybody else starts at 9 am, they should be starting at 8.45 am. At the beginning we thought that this could have created some issues, as we would be needing two leaders, one for the 8.45 am and one for the 9am group, but one of the runners who incidentally is at a 6 minutes pace, when asked, said that they would be very happy to lead this earlier group. They are very committed to the Long Runs and they also said that they would be happy to lead every time they happen to run, so this would make things much simpler. (AH)

It would be great to be able to offer members the possibility of having a group running at a slower pace, albeit starting a bit earlier, this will attract more runners to the Long Run, as many members feel that the Long Runs are for elite runners, just for those who are already fast, the important thing would be to try and include all new runners and thus make them feel included in the group. This again will be a question of how this is communicated to members. I have noticed that the group does not have many leaders, and that sometimes the existing leaders are not enough, this could become an opportunity, an extra incentive into attracting more runners in leading some of the Long Runs.(CBP)

Another thing which I would like to ask the Committee, is what do we do with the Long Runs as we will be approaching the LM training period. Do we start again from a shorter distance and we gradually build from nine or ten up to 20 miles, or do we keep doing what we are doing at the moment, having all Long runs more or less between 12 to 16 miles (AH)

I think that most runners who are preparing to run a marathon have their own plan, people always have their own training schedule and they tend to stick to that. If the LFR Long Runs tend to suit them, then they would come along, but if their own training plan is different from the Club Long runs, then in all probability they will not attend (RK)

I think the best solution would be to ask the regular Long Runners what do they think about this, whether they happen to be OK with the majority of the runs being around these distances that you are suggesting, and whether they are still happy with adding some further miles from one week to the next but also whether they would have also liked to include an extra run, like a 20 miler, which could be really useful for their training. As Roger said people tend to have different training plans and then tend to stick to their own plans but the Long Runs in general are supposed to make runners improve gradually, bridging them from one level to the next and making them feel that they can run the whole distance comfortably. It is not always beneficial going up and down between the same range of distances, it may not bring the running results one wishes for.(DGZ)

Action to be taken: AH is kindly requested to please action on the above suggestion

Meetup update

This is not a very positive update, I have messaged them and re emailed, them, and they have acknowledged that there is a technical issue, but besides this, they have not been able to fix it so at this point, and after so many attempts and after so much time wasted it might be better to give it up, I have asked for a refund and they gave us some of the subscription money back, at this point I will ask for the rest of the money back. (AC)

Royal Parks Survey

According to the Royal Parks there has allegedly been a number of anti-social behaviour in Primrose Hill, which started during the lockdown periods but has continued every since, they have responded to this by putting up gates and fencing the place on Friday evenings and during the weekend, in the evenings again, now they want to extend this measure over the rest of the weekdays, and naturally this will have an extremely negative impact to our coaching sessions, as they mostly tend to take place in Primrose Hill. The way the survey has been set does not allow those participating to express their opinions freely, it has a yes/no answer, so the best thing would be to make members understand the reasons of the survey by putting it on the e-bulletin, explaining the impact of closing Primrose Hill during evenings could have to the Club and pointing out that they should support the Club by filing it out and especially filing in the last box on the last page of the survey, stating that we are a community running club and that we have been using the area for our coaching sessions (AC)

The way the survey has been created is extremely biased, it also requests for a postal code, I have used the postcode of The Grafton and have filled in more than one survey with different email addresses, this is nothing but an absolute disgrace on behalf of the Royal Parks as part of the Royal Parks plan to fence the whole site, they are pretending that this is an engagement survey, wishing to engage the visitors into offering their opinions but the surveyors are asking for feedback in a way which will definitely lead to the fencing of the site, there is a deadline, which is before Christmas, so we only have two e-bulletins at our disposal to make members aware of this and we should galvanise members into supporting the Club, otherwise we risk losing one of our most popular weekly runs, and the Wednesday coaching as well (CBP)

Action to be taken: AC is kindly requested to please formulate an appropriate blurb relative to the Primrose Hill and Royal Parks Survey, in order to make some suggestions as to mentor membership in their response

Kit Subcommittee Update

The positive news is that the subcommittee has already met, the new subcommittee is composed by Tasos Koutsos, Julian Williams, Will Parry, Nick Jobbins and Farrah Herbert, they have discussed about suppliers and they have already started looking what is out there, and they would like to continue by organising some focus groups, as it is important to get feedback from different people. This will start with the new year and it will engage different segments of LFR by reaching out to runners after the runs, and we are hoping that there will be a further update some time around the end of January, beginning of February.

D&I Update: AS has been finalising the survey, it is going to be sent to the Committee sometime before Christmas, within the following weeks, this will give us the time to consider it and we will be able to share it with members in the new year.

Monday Run Route Proposal

Battersea is open again, and there is the suggestion to start using the new route back, the route will start and continue until Battersea Park as previously, but now people will have the option to return back through Battersea.

You mean that the route has the possibility of becoming literally circular and instead of going back the same way, members now can do a full loop down the south bank of the Thames (CBP)

Exactly, they can go down the stairs and into Battersea Park through the under passage, then to the Pagoda and when coming back instead of going up the stairs and over Chelsea Bridge they will simply continue along the southbank, towards Battersea Power Station.

We should organise a run just for Committee members and for those of the Circle Volunteers who are doing Mondays, so that run leaders get to know the route.

I think before having a trial route the most important thing is to make sure that the new route is safe, so please send me the new route on a map so I may be able to check it and update the Risk Assessment accordingly (CBP)

Action to be taken: AH is kindly requested to please share the route with CBP, as per above

We could pencil down a date just for Committee members and Circle Leaders, members can still do the regular route on that day, while those mostly leading or assisting on Mondays could take the new route and become familiarised with it.

How about we pencil down the 16th of January and do this on that Monday? (AH)

The date is pencilled down as per suggestion above.

International Trip Update

The location of the 2023 International Trip is going to be "Lalalorala" and I would like to ask all of you to please keep the location in confidence (AH)

There is no point in communicating the destination to membership at this point, as this is long before they are able to buy any flight tickets, the IT is more than six months away and one can only buy tickets if they are planning to travel in the next six months (AC)

On the other hand it would be practical to share the dates of the IT with membership, asking them to save the date, this is way ahead in the future but members should know this well in advance, so that they can keep these dates available for the IT, people like to know such dates in advance so that they can block them in their calendars (CBP)

We will be sharing the dates with membership in January and we are planning to start selling tickets from some time in February. A lot of members who are into education have not been able to take part in the IT because they do not have time off but this time the trip will take place at the beginning of Half Term, so members employed in education will also be able to participate. There are two racing options, a 10k and a half marathon, and there are going to be different options of time but the official dates will again be from Friday to Monday, with the possibility of members shortening their stay and leaving on Sunday or staying out longer if they want to. Sunday will be the big activity day, again there will be an option of offering accommodation and flights, there are loads of flights for this destination, but there will also be the option of just accommodation and food, so that members can make their own travelling arrangements independently. We have already found the hotel, and we have already managed to get a really good deal with them. As I said we will start selling tickets from February, there will be 125 tickets including hotel accommodation, which could potentially become increased to 130, from these 100 will be for those identifying as male and 30 for those not identifying as male. (AH)

Alternatives to Hyde Park Thursdays

We have had some relative conversations during our last RCM, Andrew has done a very useful analysis based on the postcode of members, and through this research we have found out that most members live in N1, which is the area around Islington. Another area with potential could be Clapham Common.

Discussion on the potential of the area of Clapham Common for the new Thursday route.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please contact the Clapham Common Sports Centre and liaise with them for LFR to start using the venue's changing facilities

Welfare Issue

Discussions on the welfare issue and all the relative concerns.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please communicate the issue with EA and liaise accordingly, updating the Committee in due course.

Action to be taken: CBP Is kindly requested to please send the relative Doodle Poll for the January RCM

21.25 pm