



LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Tuesday 11th January 2022

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)

RCM Agenda

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Financial Updates (CT)

Races Update (RS)

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Social Activities update (SS)

Membership Update (MS)

Proposal regarding the Pro-Rata membership fees

Temporary Membership Secretary assistant

Club Secretary

Updates

Co-Presidents

- IT update
- GBR update
- Spond - decommissioning decision
- Diversity and Inclusion plan
- Regular run review / updates (VP changing, Greenwich changing / social, Thursday numbers, any feedback from the walking group?)
- Committee & other positions 2022/23

AOB

Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: JL, JH, EK, DB

Financial Updates (CT)

Short update on the discussion GH and CBP had with the CT over zoom..

JH is planning on stepping down though before doing so there are two specific subjects which have been discussed and which they have been asked to bring to completion:

a. abolishing PayPal and b. launching the Auto Renewal function.

In regards to the latter, all members will be informed prior through the ebuletin and through a specific email which will be created by GH and which will be sent out through a specific function of WebCollect, thus being able to capture everybody, including those who have not consented into receiving the ebuletin.

WebCollect already offers the option of continuous direct debit and with the function being already in place, what simply needs to be done is setting it up by ticking the box relevant to this function. Subsequently every members' WebCollect membership data will be exported and every members' box for auto-renewal will be automatically ticked as accepting auto-renewal; in consequence all membership will be informed of this action, being naturally offered the possibility to opt out. In the end members who do not consent to auto-renewal will have to untick the indicated box at their own WebCollect account. The above will be lead mostly by JH and GH, with CBP in a supportive role. The essential requirement is to make everyone understand in advance why these changes have to be implemented, for the benefit of the Club and for reasons of practicality, thus being also prepared in advance to answer all the questions that we will undoubtedly come across (CBP)

Discussion on the Pro Rata feature, as membership fees at this point are barely just covering the EA costs. Runners who happen to become full members from January onwards have the opportunity to be paying just £4.50 for three months, which is a wonderful deal, considering all that the Club is offering, mainly changing facilities. Accordingly something ought to be done in this direction as such a massive discount is not in the Club's best financial interests, regardless of whether we are planning into reverting to the previous levels of membership fees as we had before the pandemic. According to my opinion the wisest thing would be if we could retain the graduationof fees for the period of the initial six months and then we establish a cutting-off point, after which new members will have to pay the full amount of membership. In support of this proposal, it needs to be known that EA never change their own fees and other running clubs do not offer the pro rata mode of payment at all (GH)

Suggestion to the P & C Officers, that the financial changes which are to be implemented should be broadcast to membership mostly or even exclusively through the ebuletin and as GH has suggested through the webCollect feature. In case the Committee is planning on having these appearing on FB or are at a certain point requested to have these being also

communicated through FB, then the comment feature for these should be turned off, as based on previous experiences, such topics always prove to bring forward a lot of controversial animosity among members and secondly, and much more important in my own opinion, members should be reminded that they can always send their queries in written and address them to those of the Committee pertinent to provide the correct answers to them, such as JH and GH for example, and not just throw a couple of comments out on FB, simply to stir a bit the waters (CBP)

The Committee jointly and fully agrees to what has been mentioned above in regards to the cutting point of the pro rata feature and the motion passes as approved by all those present.

Action to be taken: GH is kindly requested to please contact and liaise with JH, as to add the above into the actions to be completed in the next two months of the Club Year.

A lot of the membership fees is being getting eaten away, but the possibly positive news is that we may end-up the Club Year somewhere around breaking even point, which is naturally negative in itself but not terribly bad, considering all the previous predictions which have been made, according to which the current Club Year would have ended with a loss of about two to three thousand pounds (AC)

There has been a number of runs that have been cancelled around Christmas, due to the outbreak of the Omicron Variation and to the fact that many members were self-isolating at the prospect of their imminent return to their home for the holidays, and although it was sad to have to cancel so many of the runs, on the positive side this also saved the Club some money too (FC)

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please contact JH. The CT needs to prepare the budget for the 2022/23 Club Year, in order to be able to recommend a membership fee for the forthcoming Club Year, which the Committee suggests that it should be around the previous membership fees, before the pandemic. In addition, the CT will also be requested to create a specific budget for coaching expenses.

Based on the fact that the Club could potentially break even at the end of this Club Year and noticing that there might be the opportunity of not going into great deficit, it would be wonderful if we could also be in the position to subsidise some more exciting non-alcohol related social events, as a lot of our members would like to see us organising something outside the usual pub environment, and having the support of some extra cash this could be easily achieved (CA)

Action to be taken: GH is kindly requested to please check and monitor the EA website in regards to their intentions on whether they are planning to increase the membership fees for this coming Club Year

Races Update (RS)

The Cross Country season is coming to it's end, there are two more fixtures with the Met League, we have the Wormwood Scrubs event coming this Saturday and the Cross Country, Championships for Saturday the 29th of the month.

Not much to report, the only enquiry on our part comes from AT, who has enquired whether the Committee would like to consider revitaslising the Park Run of the month, and they are also happy to take the lead on this initiative and to volunteer on behalf of the Club.

The Club Committee fully agrees to the proposal, considering this as a great initiative and a great opportunity for creating another LFR fun event.

Action to be taken: The RS are kindly requested to please liaise with AT in regards to the above suggestion

In regards to the race results, the RS are being send the results and they are then subsequently sending them out for publication on the ebulletin, though sometimes results have been missed from certain races, as for example from the last Cross Country event, as the RS were not sent any race results and have to go into the website and get them out one by one, and in the process some of the LFR runners how participated at the event were missed and their result did not appear on the ebulletin.

Publicity Update (P&C O)

The main and most important event of this week is the email for the tickets for the international trip, which is going to be a one-off separate ebulletin. The IT has shared the content and they are also meeting today in order to have a last minute review of things. There are going to be 120 places, 100 of them will be offering the possibility of a three nights option and 20 of them for just two nights in Lisbon. From the 120 tickets, 20 of them have been reserved for those identifying as female and non binary. The one and only different thing compared to all the previous IT is that there are not going to be offered flights meaning that flights will not be included in any of the packages, simply because there are numerous options from various London airports, so it is going to be really simple for members to purchase their one flights, as they wish. There is also a cancellation policy and the guidance to have travel insurance, with the suggestion to have one for all those intending to participate. So, we are all naturally very excited about this event.

JR has been very collaborative and helpful by putting together some template pages for the LFR website, including the content for these pages, and we are hopeful that we will be able to launch these changes this month.

The Races FB Poll has been drafted and it currently looks completely different from what it used to look before, mostly because in the meantime FB has also changed the aspect and format of numerous of its own features, but this is something that membership has always found very useful and there have been some very welcoming remarks, so we are happy to be able to offer it again to the Club.

When it comes to Social Media, there should be a more strategical thinking of uploading things on the LFR instagram account, as during the last year this has been done a bit ad hoc, it needs a bit more strategy that also displays the Club's diversity. It could prove useful to include the social events after the runs, include many of the triathlon events, meetings of going to the pool, show to those which are not entirely familiar with the Club, what we are doing, all the activities that the Club is offering, and also show more staff of what we are doing as a club, besides all the running. It is paramount to be able to increase visibility, so we should make a shout out to members, please send us your race photos, etc, as the photos taken by DB at the Big Half, besides being great photos themselves, got us great attention. Ultimately there needs to be a thought of whether the Club could use a dedicated volunteer for the instagram account, someone who is already used to posting photos on instagram such as CH.

Question on whether there is an e-mail group set up for the International Trip in the LFR Gmail domain, because if there is indeed, then the International Trip email redirect does not seem to be working

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

Social Activities update (SS)

Although January is always what seems to be a rather quiet month, we are already planning a pub quiz to take place sometime in February, most possibly on a day where there will not be any runs nor any races and which is socially pretty dead otherwise, like a Sunday afternoon. Besides the pub quiz, of which we have organised many and which are a well tested and successful type of events, another idea for organising something slightly different is to organise an evening of bowling, and we could like to hear whether there are any more ideas for some social events from other members of the Committee.

Short discussion offering ideas on what type of social events membership would like to attend in the forthcoming year (hijingo, which is Japanese bingo in Shoreditch, axe throwing, where attendees are not allowed to drink any alcohol while participating at the event there and which promises to be very fun, although a bit more expensive than the general type of events we regularly organise, ping pong, the BFI Flare film festival, etc.) As mentioned it would be really great to be able to invest some funds in seeing and experiencing together something different this coming year, besides the usual pub events.

Support members of LFR who are themselves artists and present various types of cabaret spectacles such as GHJ (CBP)

Membership Update (MS)

The Club is currently at 541 members, the period over Christmas and New Year was completely lifeless, but seven people have already signed up since the beginning of the year. In addition and from what I happen to know another 15/20 people have been in touch with the Co-Presidents in the meantime through the info account, so there is definitely going to take place an expected influx of new members, possibly signing up to the Club as part of their New Year's resolutions.

We have already discussed the subject of having in place the pro-rata feature for the first six months of the new Club Year and then take it off for the remaining six months, the other issue which I would like to discuss is the possibility of engaging a temporary assistant, in particular somebody who would be able to assist with the EA membership. This is the most time-consuming task for me, and although we would be looking forward to getting the auto renewal through, there is no auto renewal feature on the EA registrations and all of them have to be done one by one manually. So it would be extremely useful to be able to engage a volunteer, someone who would be willing to do that at the beginning of April, for about three to four weeks, most possibly a month. It would also be wiser to ask for someone sooner than later, in all honesty the whole process is reasonably swift but as mentioned it is time-consuming, and it certainly is not the most exciting part of being a MS.

As an incentive for the person who would be willing to volunteer, we could offer them a couple of points that would be going towards the general amassing of points to be used for the Club London Marathon Places

Discussion on the email which will be sent to all new members from the beginning of the next Club Year through the Comms team, on how to make it more inclusive and also containing the most of useful information.

Club Secretary

Update on the Christmas Donations, the Club has amassed the amount of £177 and has spent £198, so only £21 have been spent from Club funds on Christmas presents. In the £198 one has to also add the presents bought for the Cross Country Captains (bottle of prosecco and box of chocolates for each), so it has been an economical expenditure, all things considered.

To the questions of whether we would like to invest in medals for the Club Championships event, the answer is positive.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please liaise with JH and request the funds necessary for the purchase of the medals.

Discussion on the Club awards being divided into male and female categories and how is this going to be brought forward in order to be able to include non-binary members.

Update on the Victoria Park changing facilities and the proposal of organising a race between LFR and VPH

Action to be taken: CBP Is kindly requested to contact the VPH and liaise with them in regards to the changing facilities

Short update on the AGM venue

Co-Presidents

International Trip update

As you have heard, tickets are to go live on the next ebulletin, there are three and two night options, and the great difference between this and all the previous International trips organised by the Club is that there is just hotel accommodation and race registrations but not flights included in the package. In addition, it is not the Eco Race anymore, as this one got cancelled but it is the Lisbon Half, which not only it did not get cancelled but it is also less hilly. We are fully confident that the number of members likely to sign up is again going to surpass the offer of 120 available tickets, although the cancellations on the hotel rooms are a bit tricky this time on. There are certain clauses relative to refunding members and everybody who signs up has been strongly advised to take travel insurance out the minute they book their tickets.

GBR update

Based on the payment which LFR has effectuated with the GBR organisers in the past year, LFR is allowed to have five teams entering by default, though there is not going to become an issue if the Club feels that we want to reduce this to four teams this year. The event organisers are quite flexible with the number of teams and it is for LFR to consider the number of teams we will manage to send, as the event takes place after the IT. Naturally some members will try to do both events but not a lot of members will be doing both, as they are so close to each other. Accordingly we will determine what teams we will form based on the available number of members and on how many we will manage to get in the end. We need to show some flexibility, so the LFR teams are going to be a mixture of competitive

and non competitive teams. We will definitely try and have a reserve list, though based on previous experience, people at a certain point pull out of the reserve list as well, based simply on the fact that they do not get a place in the first place, so they change plans. We should make members aware that if there is a reasonable change based on which you will not be doing the event anymore, then please pull out if necessary but do not do it at the last minute, as this may have a serious impact on our teams, as we always turn with someone who ends up running two legs on the same day instead of just one.

The Club will be covering the team entrance fees and then there are just the hotel and transportation costs, who will be covered by the participants. The costs have been calculated and are going to be in the range of £120 to £125 per person and the hotel which has been booked is the Holiday Inn in Brentwood.

Spond - decommissioning decision

The Spond people have been duly contacted for one last time but based on their previous responses and the time it takes for them to come back, we shouldn't be probably keeping very hopeful for a response which could be offering a satisfying solution to the issue. Many other solutions have been taken into consideration, among them the one of splitting membership between two groups, though this could prove to be a nightmare, at least from a logistics point of view, as then every event will have to be duplicated and these two groups are not going to be in direct communication with each other.

Short discussion on the Cross Country and Spond and the possibility of maintaining Spond just for the practical reasons relative to registering runners before the event.

The Committee does not see any other alternative but to agree to the decommission of Spond which will coincide with the end of the current Club Year, at the 31st of March.

The event will take place then, giving us all enough time to announce it to membership.

Diversity and Inclusion plan

The most important thing is to try and do some small things which have not been done. AC has created a very useful spreadsheet which encompasses the state of the facilities we are currently offering and how inclusive they happen to be.

Action to be taken: AC Is kindly requested to please circulate the above mentioned spreadsheet to the rest of the Committee

Discussion on pronouns and the various difficulties this could present, the challenges of trying not to misgender one of the members, etc. The Club Committee is going to try and resurrect the use of pronouns at the Circle, if the CL and CLA feel comfortable to do it then they should also use their pronouns, but the Committee should be leading on this by example.

It could also mean something very important to all the new runners, and we can inform them that when you introduce yourself to the group for the first time, then please feel very comfortable to say out loud your own pronouns. This would be a very good moment to be using pronouns and it makes more sense to new runners at this point.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please write to the LFR Circle Volunteers, reminding them about the use of pronouns during the Circles.

In addition to what has been said, the Committee page on the LFR Website needs to be updated and everybody's pronouns added.

Feedback from the LFR Walking Group.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please contact Opening Doors and inform them of the walks LFR has been organising.

Discussion on the Thursday Run number of attendees

There may be some suggestions which could be made in order to be able to slightly revitalise the Thursday runs: we could organise once per month a Duke of Wellington Drinks, which would attract a number of runners, but many on just this particular day, so this could be a temporary solution. Then we could try and change the venue for the social afterwards, as many members would be much happier if we were to switch from Prezzo into into a pub, which means that we may need to find a pub around the area.

In addition the Thursday Run could become a seasonal run, stop having it from around the beginning of November until about the end of February and restarting afterwards, though naturally this is something which we may want to consider from the next Club Year.

Last but not least there is an LGBT venue in Poland Street, the Kings Arms, which could do nicely as a point of attraction of runners to Thursday, especially now that the City of Quebec are not actively part of the LGBTQ community, by having changed management, taken down the rainbow flags and having completely changed atmosphere.

From Marble Arch to Kings Arms in Soho is exactly one mile, it's about 20 minutes to walk, so we may need to find a venue to sit and eat halfway between Marble Arch and 23 Poland Street (W1F 8QJ). They close at 11.30 on a Thursday and they organise a karaoke, which could also be attractive to many of our members (CBP)