



LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Thursday 20th October 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

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Apologies: EK

LFR D&I Champions (SM & AS)

Updates and D&I Survey

SM and myself have been working behind the scenes, and incidentally this roles reflects a lot of the work that I do professionally, and as a start we would very much like to get a current state of things in the Club, we do not assume that certain things are not functioning or that they are bad as they are but what we would mostly like to check is what is already working for Club members and through this uncover opportunities, give Club members a voice, and see how they can be better included and integrated in the culture of the Club.

For these purposes we both think that the survey will prove to be a very good first step. After going through the survey I can say that it is not ready yet, as it feels a bit more generic whereas we are looking to receive more of a running club type of feedback, but I am going to look at it again. The whole intent is not to ascertain what currently works now within the Club but how best can we emulate inclusive best practice, in addition to how we can make underrepresented Club groups become more represented. I have been a member of the Club for quite some time to know that we need to explore the diversity part of the Club further, without making any assumptions, as the Club has members with extremely diverse cultures and backgrounds and affinities that we are simply not aware of.

Discussion on a plan of action and a potential date for the survey to come out.

It is important to have a realistic plan of action in mind and when would be the best time to have the survey coming out, we definitely want to make sure it comes forward in a positive way, encouraging positive contributions on behalf of members.

It would be good if we were to try having the survey coming out before Christmas (AC)

Realistically there is not a lot of time between now and Christmas and based on the latest developments, it seems that I am going to be entirely on my own, as SM does not feel that she would be able to commit the energy and the time to the role at this stage. Accordingly, I can try and have the survey ready within the next two weeks, then send it out to members before Christmas and then have a plan of action ready

in the new year. It is going to become very important how we decide to introduce the survey to membership, explaining with clarity the reasons of why we are doing this survey and then based on the results, build an action plan of inclusion and diversity. I can commit to get the survey ready in the next fortnight, that's where we are at the moment.

Discussion on whether it would be useful to have another person joining AS and how long could it take to obtain some results from the survey.

There has been another Club member who has mentioned that they would like to get involved in a consulting capacity on the project, on an if and when needed basis, as they do not wish to assume an official role in the process but they are again a male white cis person.

We cannot say to a white cis volunteer not to volunteer, simply because they are who they are. I am very conscious of the fact that this is my day job and after sending out the survey we will get some criticism, why is another cis white person doing this, etc. We certainly need to listen to feedback and understand where this type of feedback is coming from, but we also need to think whether we would want to have a second person on board and who that other person could be. In my opinion we should not invite specific Club members to be part of the I&D team as this might seem a bit tokenistic. Having instead an open cast calling is a much more elegant way to do it and much more in the interest of fairness as well. So if we are going to have a call for another volunteer as an I&D champion, then we need to move fast as this needs to be done rather quickly.

Needless to say that we are not the only LGBTQ+ sports club that has been having such issues of diversity, a very large number of other sports clubs are sharing our general concerns on I&D as well (AC)

The whole diversity and inclusion notion has a number of complex nuances, there has been an over-rotation of the diversity question and of trying to enhance inclusivity in our culture, but the starting point or at least a good point to start with is mostly our own Club behaviour, how inclusively are we thinking, how inclusive are the Club runs on each running day, and how can we make these more inclusive. For example there are no pacers in any of the runs, this could potentially be a very good point to bring forward, there are small touch points such as this in general which will help us sort the diversity issue in the Club.

Having pacers at the weekly runs is something that has been extensively discussed over a number of meetings and the Committee has come to the conclusion that although the existence of pacers might initially seem a really good idea to embrace,

it has been proved that it is not a feasible one, it is a suggestion that can have a practical application and become a solution (CA)

I would also tend to very much second what CA has just said, pacers have been tried previously by the Club but sadly it is not something which has caught up, and on the contrary, having pacers, or at least for the time that we have had the pacers at the runs, it has proven to be much more complicated for the Club volunteers and apparently also for members, especially for new runners who did not know their pace as a start. In any case, all new runners are always buddied up during their first runs with the Club and then they tend to find their own pace (GH)

With AS being a professional in this field, there is the possibility that what a successful Club structure looks to you and what a successful Club structure looks to us might be two different things (CA)

Having a successful strategy in place, a strategy that works should be our primary aim, regardless of how long it takes, this is the nature of the beast, we need to commit over a long term and see how we can make these changes, and where can we implement these changes, be it the Club runs or the social events.

The Committee has demonstrated a great sense of commitment to always operate within best practice and to very high standards. As Club Committee we do a lot anyway, there have been constitutional changes which were aiming at improving inclusion, we are trying to make our races become more inclusive, we want to move forward with a Club kit that feels more inclusive, there is undoubtedly still a lot to do, but at the end of the day we are a bunch of volunteers, we should definitely try and explore all the possibilities and all the potential which is being offered to us but we should also be very careful in not putting too much effort into something that ultimately we might not be able to deliver.

For example, introducing pacers, which was mentioned earlier, this is something that has been discussed, tried and it is not going to be worth trying it again.

We should be making adaptations to what has already been going on, small steps, nothing more than what is being done currently, just differently, small things that can and will be added on top of all the rest.

The same way the Committee has come together and assembled a number of points which could be practical and useful to use in the near future as potential guidelines by the forthcoming new kit subcommittee, it might be worth doing the same in the present case, each Committee member could send a very short email or a number of points to AS, not as guidelines but as simple suggestions, how do we, the current

Committee members see this project going forward and thus potentially offer AS some further paths to explore (CBP)

The whole Committee is currently much more aware of what type of images are being put out on the Club's social media, we are more aware now that the images we are putting out represent a broader amount of members and hopefully a broader spectrum.

Small adaptations are always necessary when it comes to introducing inclusivity to a group.

Discussion on the expected number of participants of the survey.

The more members we try to capture, the better it would be, in trying to capture the opinion of as many members as possible.

In terms of the survey, how much response do you think you may need to collect in order to be able to get a feel of what is going on?

This is a common challenge with any survey. Naturally the more the merrier, the more opinions we are able to capture the better it would be, the more the results will be representative of the Club, and a lot depends on how we decide to announcing the survey, we may put it on the ebulletin and on social media, we may put some periodic reminders, but capturing a minimum 20% of the membership would be good and it would be considered a success.

20% of 550 members is about 110 responses (CBP)

We are not at 550 members yet, but we are slowly getting there, more on membership numbers will follow later (GH)

There will naturally be more members coming forward and saying I don't like this, I don't like that, the feedback will be more negative than positive, this is something that happens more often than you may think, but having 20% of members participating at the survey, I would consider that a success.

One important factor relevant to the success of the survey could be how much time will the members have to set aside in order to complete it.

From what I have managed to see, a lot of things contained in the survey are already not relevant but as you are saying, it will be really good if we could try to get it down to not more that ten minutes. On the other hand, we want to make it as

comprehensive as possible, it is a great opportunity to collect as much useful data as possible.

In regards to trying to make as many members as possible to participate at the survey, how about if we were to incentivise members to respond by offering them a year of free membership, members can provide their names and be put in a ballot.

This sounds like a really good idea. The survey is going to be 100% anonymous, at the end we could have a paragraph saying, if you would like to be considered for the draw that will see three Club members being offered an LFR membership free for a year, then please provide your email address.

Action to be taken: AS is kindly requested to please review the survey and share it with the Club Committee by the end of the first week of November, in order to get it signed off as soon as possible.

Financial Updates (CT)

My financial updates are almost exclusively connected to the ongoing drag-fest drama. The bank did come back, I have shared this with you all and there is nothing further that we can do on that side, the solicitors have now been engaged, which is another step forward, CC and the portuguese lawyers will have a meeting, Andrew will be attending this meeting, we will see what comes after that, and whether the Club may have a viable legal standing to pursue further. On the other hand I wouldn't expect that a liquidation of any of the assets held by the company will be getting any of the creditors any of the money they are being owed. As I have mentioned in previous meetings, I am of the opinion that even this latest action of engaging lawyers is not going to get us anywhere, but it is better to take this step anyway than not doing anything at all.

Races Update (RS)

As it has been mentioned in the previous RCM, the Club Records have been updated, and as this is an ongoing process, I would suggest that any updates should take place regularly and quarterly throughout the year.

TC after so many years updating them, understandably does not want to be any longer involved, bringing them all to date is a process that requires time but it is ultimately very rewarding for the Club members and important for the Club in general, as a statement of the Club's progress.

We still have not decided on the 10K race which is missing from the Club Championships calendar, and we are very excited and looking forward to our first ever XC relay, LFR is sending out five teams, one female team and four male teams.

One proposal from me in regards to the medals the Club is giving out along with the trophies at the Club Championships. I would like to suggest to the Committee to

consider abolishing some of the medals we are giving out, for the categories that members are already receiving a trophy as well. I think it does not make sense from the point of environmental impact and in order to reduce the carbon footprint to give out medals as well as the Club trophy. In many big and long established races, participants are nowadays asked whether they would like to opt out from receiving a finisher's medal. Accordingly I would suggest to abolish the medal for Park runner of the year, the Cross Country male, female and non-binary medals and the Club Champion male, female and non-binary medals. The medals the Club is giving out are very presentable but they are not personalised with the winners name, they look very attractive but nothing more. They just end up somewhere together with all other medals, only these are sort of anonymous, as there is nothing written on them, nothing that connects them with the Club anyway. (CBP)

How much is the Club spending on these medals?

It is not really a sum worth mentioning, I think it's about £40 to £50 for the ones I am suggesting to abolish. Last year Erika and I recycled all the medals we had received from previous Club Championships, and we did this for sustainability and environmental reasons. In addition, I am not suggesting abolishing all the medals the Club is giving out. We can still give out the medals for first, second and third place in the Senior and Veteran category.

I am not sure I would agree with this, as we are trying to celebrate members' achievements, and the trophy that they will be given will then be taken back, they have to keep it for a year and then return it, so how are we to acknowledge and celebrate the winners if not with giving them these medals which they may then keep? (DGZ)

Well, the winners will be mentioned during the Club Championships, their names will appear on the next ebulletin and they will also be included in the Club Archives that you have recently been updating, as such their names will remain in the Club Archives for ever, so this is also a way to acknowledge them and celebrate their achievements too (CBP)

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please send an email to the Committee relative to the above proposal, so that the subject may be discussed and finalised at the next RCM

In regards to the purchase of the LFR non-binary trophies, I have already send a detailed email to the Race Secretaries on the 9th of October and the subjects now sits under their responsibilities (CBP)

Discussion on the celebration of the Club Championships and the search for a venue.

The Club Championships will take place in March, on either the first or the second week of that month, as the last of the Cross Country events takes place in February and the LFR AGM is habitually scheduled for the third week of March.

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Our main task from the last RCM was to communicate the Club vest decision to membership, which we did through the ebuletin, and many thanks to Committee members for your feedback on the messaging.

We'll get the call out for the new vest co-committee in the next ebuletin and it'll have pride of place in next week's announcements.

New web content

We've just published a story with TK who recently did his first triathlon. What's nice is that TK started as a runner, so his story could help encourage more runners to take an interest in triathlon. We'll get this out through the usual channels.

We're also doing a piece with RD about his London Marathon. We're looking to get it out in time to coincide with applications for the 2023 Club places.

Finally, CBP put us in touch with MF about doing something on the history of London Frontrunners to tie in with our birthday celebrations in February. There could -hopefully- be some good photos to go with this. Depending on what comes in, it might be worth pitching this more widely. February, it turns out, is LGBT history month, so there's a potential tie-in there.

Social Activities update (SS)

Update on Christmas Party Numbers

For the time-being we are having 133 paying members, and accordingly £6000 in the bank for the relative payment, we are aiming to get the numbers to 150 paid attendees, and I think that we are doing great, we have engaged a really cool dj, there is going to be an enormous quantity of food, we will be asking Committee members to start arriving from 6.30pm, 7pm is for the members to enjoy some welcome drinks and dinner is being served from 7:45pm. The only issue is that the venue is going to have sparse Christmas decorations and I was wondering what we could do to brighten up the place a bit. Perhaps bring a poinsettia or two. The doors will open for all members at 7.00 pm, there will be drinks, then there will be nibbles, at 9.30 will start the drag act, then dessert will be served, and they are also planning to bring some pizzas later in the evening, as anyway lots of people may get hungry later. The venue will then open at 10.00 pm for the non paying LFR member, there have been 170 confirmed members in all, the venue is able to accommodate 300 so there is still enough space. There is going to be a limit to the cocktail options to just

three different cocktails, and there is going to be wine and beer, and all alcoholic drinks will be served in two different bars.

Membership Update (MS)

The Club is currently at 535 paid members

Co-Presidents

New Vest : Next Steps

It has been agreed to call out to membership in order to have a specific vest sub-committee formed and created and the moment is now ripe to start the process, AC has replied to the email which was sent on why the suggested tri vest was not possible to become adopted by the Club as the second official Club vest and he was incredibly understanding. What needs to be done is also to engage the new tri coordinators, as this is meant to become a common endeavour for all sectors of the Club and potentially set out a timeline. It will come out on the next E-bulletin and if members do not wish to be part of the sub-committee or they do not have the time to fully commit, there is still a call for members who may have some other specifications, such as being a graphic designer, or other specific and useful skills to offer to the project.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to enquire the Vegan Runners info on their vest provider

The emails which were sent by Committee members is regards to creating some parameters and some guidelines for the appearance of the new vest, it might be worth sharing them with Farrah and Ben and ask for their own suggestions as well (CBP)

AOB

The International Trip committee has had a meeting and there are three vest which we would like to run past the Committee, each of these three dates corresponding to a different IT destination. The three dates are 22nd April, 26th of May and 21st October.

The date of 22nd April is probably to be excluded as the London Marathon reverts to the month that it used to take place previous to the pandemic and this year it takes place on Sunday the 23rd of April.

The 26th of May is two weeks after the Green Belt Relay so you may have to relay mostly on the 21st of October as a potential date for the IT.

Discussion on how accessible is the Christmas venue chosen for the 2022 event and how should the toilet signs become more inclusive. The Committee came to the

conclusion that the most inclusive designation would be to have outside each facility what each facility contains such as cubicles or cubicles & urinals.

Discussion on using MeetUp as one of the LFR platforms of communication, the request to be refunded and their inability to have certain technical issues becoming resolved. If these issues will finally manage to become resolved, then we are good to go and adopt MeetUp, otherwise MeetUp will be dropped as a potential candidate.

Action to be taken:CBP is kindly requested to send out the Doodle Poll in order to establish the next RCM