



LFR
Regular Committee Meeting
Tuesday 13th September 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)

LFR
RCM Agenda
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LFR D&I Champions (SM & AS)

Updates and D&I Survey

Financial Updates (CT)

Races Update (RS)

LM Club Places Criteria Document (voting and sign off)
Non Binary Club Championships Awards

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Social Activities update (SS)

Tri Coordinator Updates

Membership Update (MS)

Club Secretary

Co-Presidents

Second Club Vest Decision (voting)

New Vest SubCommittee Discussion

MeetUp updates

AOB

2023 Gay Games Short Discussion and LFR plans for the event

Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: AH, CA

LFR D&I Champions (SM & AS)

The update has been postponed for a forthcoming RCM

Financial Updates (CT)

The Club finances are generally going well, the only updates which I would have to share with you all are relative to the Lisbon Refund saga and the money that is owed to the Club by Drag Taste. I have been in touch with Lloyds and at this point had to launch a fraud case on behalf of the Club, as this fact also needs to be documented on our side to the bank. I also thought that it would have proved useful to initiate some communication with the bank of the opponent side and check whether their account has been frozen. The bank used by the opponent side and to which LFR paid the advance fee is based in Lithuania. There is a "chat function" but I was not able to get into contact with them in a direct way nor was I able to obtain any information which would have helped us with the process of trying to have the amount owed being refunded to LFR. Apparently and as you may or may not know, the business Drag Taste has folded and according to what is being communicated through their website, the company is in the middle of selling their assets to cover refunds. My personal opinion is that I very much doubt that to be true, simply because they continue not to engage with us on any mails sent to them. With Drag Taste not trading at the moment and apparently trying to sell their assets, it has become obvious that there are many other customers like us who are in the same position, who are requesting to be refunded for services not provided. In all honesty, the whole situation looks very dodgy and I need to let you know in advance that the Club might not be able to get anything of what is owed back, in the end. There is a sort of form on their website which needs to be filled-in in order for one to be refunded, and from the comments left in regards to their services it seems that there are lots of other disgruntled

customers who have lost various amounts of money, some £2000 some less, with LFR being the largest creditor.

From research and personal experience it is quite a normal practice that there is a request to pay the full amount in advance, LFR paid back in February and then an additional amount was paid in May, for another 15 members, who in the meantime had also signed up and wanted to attend the event as well. We also need to bear in mind and understand that it already constitutes a major problem for every IT Committee finding venues for such large numbers of attendees and so it also becomes natural to expect that venues would require a full payment in advance.

My personal suggestion is that someone will have to compose a letter in English, translate it in Portuguese and then send it out to them, so that they know that LFR has not given up on their claim and that the amount owed is still being chased by us. This should be a formal letter, looking very professional and stating the facts in a very clear way of what is being owed to LFR, why, and that the Club is chasing the money. If we ever decide to follow an official process and ask officially for a claim of money through a solicitor, then this needs to be documented, so something like a letter needs to be sent now.

The whole process is both time-consuming and could potentially become very expensive if the Club ever decides to follow an official way and hire a lawyer.

I completely agree with what RK is saying, that this is a very time-consuming case but we also need to add some additional diligence, there needs to be one person who is almost exclusively working on this case, as it requires a lot of time and effort and not everyone on the IT Committee has the time to follow this. The Club needs to check with a local lawyer, if they would be interested in helping LFR in locating the drag artists and in reporting them, we do not know where we stand now and so we having to resource into using acquaintances in order to try and find a local lawyer, who is available and who is also competent in this particular sector. Having a lawyer sending Drag Taste an engagement letter could prove the best way to start with and to have this formally documented as well. (EK)

When we find a lawyer that fulfils all the above, then the Club needs to proceed with this lawyer diligently and carefully so as not to end up having an incredible amount of fees to be paid in the end. That said I think it is worth stating the case to a solicitor and at least getting a letter sent from them to Drag Taste. If Drag Taste decide to not reply, we need to be careful also in this case, as they may just be stalling for time and in meantime LFR could rack up legal bills with no outcome (RK)

If Drag Taste are already stating publicly that they are selling their assets to pay their debts, then as a priority, LFR needs to get on the list of creditors. There should typically be a court submission which declares them bankrupt and in consequence to this, all those who are owed money by the company, including LFR, will have to be included on that creditors list. It could

potentially take lots of time to get the money owed back, if any at all, as this depends entirely on how many assets they may have got left, but at least we should be exploring all available options (EK)

The upper amount limit for taking this case to a small claims court is £5000, so it is not possible to go down this way. We need to make sure that the LFR claimable amount is included among all the other creditors and is in the line of creditors for all future actions. This could be done by launching a request with the Portuguese authorities. The Club needs to act and deal with this carefully but also without losing any more time, as mentioned before this is a case that needs lots of attention and a great investment of time, otherwise it will not move forward by itself. At this point, it might be worth waiting to hear back from the bank and accordingly more forward.

Incidentally and on a more or less similar subject, the deposit for the LFR Christmas party has already been paid and this time it has been paid using the CT personal credit card, so that the Club, through RK, may claim the amount back later, if in the meantime something goes wrong, hopefully not. At least we all learn through some of our experiences and what we can do is try not to repeat the same errors twice.

Races Update (RS)

There is still one more race left to be decided upon, organised and then included in the Club Championships, that is the 10k race, which as we have mentioned, we are not in a hurry to make a definite decision now, as it will be a race for much later in the year, with the XC Season that will be starting very soon and there are still lots of other running events going on, so we have not decided yet on a specific event.

TC has been volunteering in keeping up the scores for the Club Championships and updating the relative spreadsheets over the past seven years and he has shared with us these spreadsheets, with the intention, as he has clearly expressed, that he would very much like to step down from this duty. In regards to these spreadsheets, there is definitely lots to do, and DGZ is planning on involving RK in trying to come up with an easier calculation on the points for the Club Championships, to make this simpler for everyone. In addition, we are working on updating the Club Archives, which were left in a state of abandonment but this is a task that does take lots of time. We are confident that we will be able to share with the Committee some results in the near future.

LM Club Places Criteria Document

The document has been read by the Committee, two new suggestions by GH have been included, the Committee agrees and unanimously votes in favour of the document.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please liaise with the P&C Officers in regards to the above document and have it included on the next ebulletin.

Discussion on the LFR Birthday Celebration

CBP has been liaising with MF and based on information provided by MF the LFR Birthday has been established on the 11th of February, as this is the date the first ever LFR run took place back in 1995.

The Committee is very much in favour of launching the 2023 celebration with a party at The Two Brewers. The XC race in Trent Park also happens to take place on the same date but having a separate celebratory event is much more preferable for the occasion rather than celebrating the Club's Birthday just at the XC post-race pub.

In addition, there should definitely be a promotion of the XC event on the same day but also a wider promotion of all Saturday the 11th of February Club runs, with members being encouraged to attend every Club run and the XC race on the day, to take as many photos as possible and then to share these photos with the LFR and their own social media.

TTB manager has been contacted and kindly agreed to reserve the back-room of the venue for LFR as available for the Club to use from 6pm until 10pm on that evening, free of charge and with no requirement for a minimum spend, for Saturday the 11th February. A drag queen could potentially be available on the same evening and the price of the show will be confirmed within the next couple of days. (DGZ)

An entertainment, such as having a drag queen, will definitely encourage Club members to come along and participate at the celebration on that evening. In order to keep costs down and minimise any complexity, having an event that does not involve any food is definitely recommended (AC)

The Committee is excited over the above suggestions and expresses warmest thanks to DGZ on having proactively initiated the cooperation of LFR and TTB for the celebration of the Club's birthday.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please contact MF and inform them of the above celebration, extending them the invitation to attend the event, in addition to making the introduction of MF to the P&C Officers.

Discussion on the need of a more active collaboration from all Committee members so as to start searching for a suitable venue in view of the LFR AGM in March.

Consideration on the potential of using TTB for the above.

Non Binary Club Championships Awards

Last year's Committee already had the intention of doing something similar to the NYFR and launch non-binary trophies and awards but in the end it was decided to leave this subject to be discussed and decided by the following Club Committee, which is us, now. My personal suggestion is that LFR should purchase four more trophies (XC, Senior, Veteran, Club Champion) as correspondent to the existing binary ones, then to have four medals accompanying the above trophies each and every year at the presentation of the trophies during the Club Championships and the AGM event, and to decide over a short exchange of emails among Committee members what in our opinion needs to be inscribed on each of the trophies. This can probably seem as the most costly solution in terms of finances but I feel that it is necessary, as the Club should be giving equal status to the non-binary members and the relative awards need to reflect this, also in terms of celebration and acknowledgement. The trophies could cost something between £80 to £90, without the engraving, as I mentioned before, this is not an inexpensive solution, and we may have one non-binary member winning more than one trophy, or there may be a Club Year when there will be none not be inexpensive, but it is the right thing to do for LFR and this is how in my opinion we should proceed (CBP)

The Committee feels positively on what is said above and agrees on passing the motion.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to liaise with the RS in regards to purchasing the trophies and having them engraved.

After the trophies are purchased, a relative ebulletin blurb should go out to membership potentially sometime in late November, informing all members of what action has been taken by the Committee. With this being actioned, the practical side of the subject has been, for the time-being, dealt with. The more important part, which is using gender-inclusive language in all Club communications, and not perpetuate gender stereotypes will have to be dealt gradually, with the aid and support of the D&I Champions (CBP)

Discussion on the Cross country relay and the ebulletin communications.

There is a form which is already out on the ebulletin, as to make all new runners register their interest in advance and avoid having the new XC Captains requiring registration information at the very last moment from the MS.

It needs to be mentioned that the form is just again completely binary dividing runners in male and female, but this is not an issue about which LFR can do something about it at the moment, as the Club is obliged to follow the rules of SEAA, who are among the least progressive athletic associations anyway, as they have not even endorsed the equalisation of racing distances.

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Nothing new to report, business as usual.

Social Activities update (SS)

Tri Coordinators Updates

It has been obvious that a separate admin person was much needed for the LFR Tri team, as there were so many things which needed to be done throughout the whole Club year, and it was great that AC has agreed to the concept of delegating the administrative responsibilities to someone else. AC and EC can now potentially focus much more on continuing to do what they enjoy most, which is coaching, supporting tri athletes and preparing them for events, and at the same time they can still continue to support the new administrators, if some extra support is needed. The Club Committee wishes to maintain a strong relationship with the Tri team, LFR feels really privileged as a club to be able to have an LGBTQ+ tri section and having this alternative channel of communication, it will only improve the existing relation with the Club Committee and make it a much stronger one.

The Committee is truly thankful to CA for having agreed to act in the meantime as an intermediary and to have successfully facilitated the connection and communication between the two sections of the Club. In addition, it has become apparent that three people are actually necessary to manage this section of the Club and CA has already informed the Committee that the new Tri Coordinators are FH and BH; WP will also be part of the Tri Team administrative team, being from now on responsible for the social media engagement. Committee officially supports the decision by a simple voting and warmly welcomes the three new volunteers on board.

It would be really useful to have all the above communicated officially to membership through the ebuletin and including a photo of each administrator would also be extremely practical, as WP has now been with the Club for almost a year but both FH and BH are very new to LFR. This blurb would not only introduce the two new Tri Administrators but will also empower all Club members to approach FH and BH, promoting a further engagement in triathlon (CBP)

Action to be taken: P& C Officers and kindly requested to please get in touch and liaise with WP, as to coordinate the tri social media requirements and brief WP accordingly.

One person from the tri team needs also to be appointed as the liaison person with GH and together collaborate to keep sorted all membership issues and who is allowed into the FB group etc, as the tri administrators need to know who is an actual Club member and who isn't.

Action to be taken: One of the new tri administrators is kindly requested to please get in touch with the MS regarding membership issues .

We are very happy to announce that the LFR Christmas party has been sorted, the venue has already been booked, an advance fee has been paid, the dj and the drag queen show has also been booked, there will be entertainment from 9.00 pm to 2am with music, we are currently working on the menu and according to our calculations, tickets will need to be released around the beginning of October.

Question on the service charge.

Action to be taken: The SS are kindly requested to please provide some clarity on the service charge of the venue and whether it is included in the agreed payment.

BFI Discounted Tickets

The BFI London Film Festival will be taking place in October, and we will try and get some free tickets or discounted tickets, let us see what we can get, the organisers are used to work with corporates but surely we will get some discounted tickets and entries to events or to special presentations (CA)

On my side I also talked to the Spinder organiser, we could have some more indoor events, followed up by socials, as this is an important reason for organising this in the first place. It is important to keep some of the Club events as more social and much less formal, so that members will feel happy to bring their own friends, so that they can see in person how we all look and realise that we all have very different body shapes, running club does not necessarily mean that everyone is super fit and super fast, and have the opportunity to talk to others, and step by step get to know the Club. In addition it would be good to have the two new tri administrators attend one of the Committee meetings, get to know who else is on the Committee, what are their roles, and work together (EK)

We did not have a massive request from FR for coming to London from the Pride 10k, there was only one email that we received from a runner from Newcastle. I am not sure whether this was followed up (AC)

AH send me an email in regards to the above request, to which I emailed back to AH, adding as attachment the list of Club members who were available and had offered to put up any visiting FR over the Pride 10K weekend (CBP)

I should probably follow up this with MP in order to check who else has registered as a FR, though for the time being, the only other FR that have expressed an interest in the event are

the BHFR, apparently and regardless of all the emails which were sent in advance, no other FR clubs are coming to London for the event.

Discussion on the London Marathon Club Event and on the Club trophies

Action to be taken: EK is kindly requested to please book the Retro Bar for the LFR post London Marathon social, from around 14.00 pm onwards.

Action to be taken: The RS are kindly requested to please contact AT and MC in order to retrieve the Club trophies for the London Marathon awards event

The Club has been using Mile 21 of the marathon route as the LFR official Cheering Point, which is a convenient spot opposite The White Swan in the area of Limehouse, and I suggest that we use the same spot again as an official cheering point for this year as well (AC)

Membership Update (MS)

The Club is currently at 517 members, 519 to be more precise, as in the meantime some payments have not been yet processed, I have been gradually but steadily getting through those who have not renewed, based on the last count there are 52 female identifying members, it's the 10% exact. We have not had more female runners this year, it seems that the number of female identifying runners have been quite similar to the ones of last year.

Club Secretary

I would like to offer my sincere apologies to everyone for having been a bit paranoid lately in my emails in regards to the length of the RCM. It is important that we all try to keep our regular Committee meetings as short, as productive and as positive as possible. If Committee members are going away after each RCM feeling exhausted and with a sense of relief that the meeting is actually over, then all Club members will immediately realise what is going on and pick up on this and in consequence this perception will have very negative repercussions to the Club as a whole, and in particular in trying to recruit new candidates for the Committee. No Club member, or very few, will want to come forward as candidates for the next Committee, when everyone is under the impression that all Committee meetings are unnecessarily long and potentially very tiring.

London Marathon Volunteers Update

The only communication on my part is that we have recruited 60 members as volunteers for the London Marathon, which means that LFR will be getting two extra Club Places through volunteering. In addition, the London Marathon organisers have decided to launch a new initiative call the Pride Mile, this will be a section of the route which will be dedicated to the LGBTQ+ community, it will be decorated with rainbows, there will be festive atmosphere all around, and LFR has been requested to volunteer for this section as well. I am not sure at this

point what the celebrations around this area are going to be but I shall keep the Committee updated closer to the date.

Co-Presidents

Discussion on the Second Club Vest

One of the main reasons for being against having the tri vest as a second officially registered LFR vest is that it is the result of one person. Without wanting to diminish the efforts which have been put into this, a Club vest should be the fruit of a collaborative effort and at the same time it should also somehow reflect the opinion of Club members. Having already taken the decision to launch a sub-committee just for the purpose of creating a new inclusive Club vest, a sub-committee whose members are not going to be Committee members, but who will work collaborative both with the Committee and with the tri coordinators, we will be able to capture some of the membership opinions and more specific requirements into the new Club vest.

Another main reason for which Committee members are not positive into having the tri vest officially recognised as a second Club vest is the potential confusion which will create, which of the two vests to wear on which event, the fact that it does not create a sense of unity among Club members. It is more about having one identity as Club members, which can only be achieved when everyone is representing the Club wearing the same type of vest.

Members can still wear the tri vest at tri events and other non-Club events, or even at the weekly runs or the coaching, there is no intention of withholding any member from wearing the tri vest, as long as it is not a Club event such as a relay, where there is the possibility of being disqualified for wearing a different type of vest.

Discussion on rainbow visibility and LGBTQ+ pride and examples of other FR clubs which happen to have included the rainbow on their own club vests.

Discussion on what applies to EA events and relative to team events where all participants have to wear the same vest. Under England Athletics rules, a running club can have two vests and the Club Committee definitely agrees on the compelling need of urgently updating the current official vest, not necessarily though offering the tri vest as an alternative to the existing one.

Second Club Vest Voting

The Committee votes on the above subject and the motion passes with the decision to not endorse the tri vest as an official Club vest.

The above decision is not unanimous but being taken as follows: nine (9) votes have been cast against endorsing the tri vest as the official LFR vest and two (2) votes are cast in favour of endorsing the tri vest as the official LFR vest.

The latter two votes were cast by DGZ and RK, who wish to express their disappointment on how the issue was handled overall and do not wish to align themselves with the above decision.

Actions to be taken

In regards to the above decision, the following needs to be acted upon: a. Co-Presidents are kindly requested to please communicate the above as a priority to AC on behalf of the Club Committee, b. the P&C Officers are kindly requested to please communicate the above decision to membership through the ebuletin in a clear and coherent manner and only after it has been communicated to AC, and c. the CS is kindly requested to please liaise with EA and communicate the above decision to them by withdrawing the second vest as an official Club vest.

Action to be taken: In addition to what has been expressed above, Committee members are kindly requested to please communicate via email to AC anything else which they feel that needs to be communicated in regards to the subject of the vests, as there is an open discussion, with every Committee members's opinion valued as such and there shouldn't be left any great areas.

New Vest Subcommittee Discussion

There is a Committee unison in expressing the opinion that after more than eight years of having used the same current Club vest, time has come for an upgrade. In addition, all Committee members feel positive in their consideration of appointing a subcommittee of members from across LFR to take this project forward and to look into updating the existing Club vest.

This subcommittee should be as diverse as possible, with a gender mix and a representative from the triathlon team, and should work collaboratively across all Club sectors to come up with a single design, that reflects, to the point that this is possible as many requirements of both the running and the triathlon teams as possible. While the subcommittee will be setting up, the Club Committee feels that there should be some specific parameters set beforehand, in order to provide some guidance and facilitate their work. These parameters can be summarised to include the following: a change of the fabric employed to one which is friendlier to the skin, a change of supplier, a vest that is affordable by everyone. The vest subcommittee should thus have to be very mindful of the financial aspect of this enterprise, while they will be considering important areas such as quality and design.

Action to be taken: Committee members are kindly requested to please send to AC a short email containing their personal priorities, when it comes to creating a new Club vest

Suggestion to include on the same ebuletin communication all the different decisions taken in regards to the Club vests, such as not officially endorsing the tri vest as a Club vest, the need for an update of the current vest and the need of setting a subcommittee with the responsibility to work collaboratively and replace the existing vest.

Action ot be taken: based on the above suggestion, the P&C Officers are kindly requested to please create a draft to share with the Committee, assuring that all the above topics have been included

MeetUp updates

The Meetup page has been set up but in the process there have been some functions which were unresponsive. The issue has been escalated to the MeetUp software team but they have not come back with any suggestion on how to deal with this and so I need to chase them up. In addition, and if finally nothing really comes out of this endeavour, we will have to have the LFR subscription money being refunded (AC)

AOB

2023 Gay Games Short Discussion and LFR plans for the event

General issues with the event organisation, while the whole situation in China seems to be extremely volatile, mostly from a political point of view than from a general health point of view. There has been the decision to move the event chronologically to November 2023 and to split the event with the city of Guadalajara in Mexico, and currently the event is duplicated in two different venues, with both venue having confirmed running events, with Hong Kong having included a much publicised trail run, and with neither city having confirmed triathlon any events, so far.

In my opinion, and if we were to consider the cost of travelling to both these locations, and the cost of staying in either even for a week seems to be really expensive and I don't think that we, as Club, should endorse this officially. These trips are obviously not for everybody. It would be great to be able to be represented as Club in such an important LGBTQ+ event but we should do it when the event is closer to home, while in the meantime we should target to participate at the Euro Games (DGZ)

The Committee recognises the above as a fair point to be taken into consideration and an important one to be reckoned with. In addition to the current cost of living and the energy crisis in Europe, the Club should definitely focus its efforts and aim at having a collective representation on a destination closer to the UK.

There are currently three possible options to go with, either continue and pursue with the event being divided between the two cities, take up what DGZ has suggested and send a solid LFR representation to the Eurogames in Bern, or lastly not bother to do anything at all.

The Committee votes deciding for the second option.

The 2026 Gay Games are meant to be taking place in Spain, in Valencia, so this is definitely a destination to aim at, as it is much closer and potentially much more inclusive by being affordable.

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to send out a Doodle Poll relative to the October RCM date.