



**LFR**

**Regular Committee Meeting  
Thursday 6th July 2023**

Co-Presidents: Ashley Harwood (AH) and Andrew Corti (AC)  
Club Secretary: Christos Bitzis-Politis (CBP)  
Club Treasurer: Derwin Brennan (DB)  
Membership Secretary: Geoff Hicks (GH)  
Races Secretaries: Eliot Rees (ER) and Francis O'Callaghan (FC)  
Publicity & Communications Officers: Stephen Tomaszewski (ST) and Sam Palmer (SP)  
Social Secretaries: Nick Warner (NW) and Robin Budin (RB)

**Agenda**

**Races Update (RS)**

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

**Social Activities update (SS)**

**Membership Update (MS)**

**Club Secretary updates**

Brief Updates for the Club Treasurer & the Coaching Coordinator  
Brief update on The Big Half

**Co-Presidents updates**

Thursday Run updates

**AOB**

Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: AH, DB, FC, NW, RB

**Races Update (RS)**

There were 42 Frontrunners in attendance at the Eltham Park 5 event, the Club did really well by winning second male and second female position overall, with a pretty strong presence of runners, so it was a very successful event in general.

24 Frontrunners have signed up for the 1 Mile Battersea Relay, it would be good if we could have some more coming forward, so I was wondering whether we could please have some further publicity on this and potentially mention it also at the Club Circles. There are a number of very interesting races which are taking place in the following months but unfortunately these

races cannot be publicised further by LFR as they happen to clash with other LFR events, so unfortunately they are not going to be publicised through the Club platforms as we would rather boost the attendance for the LFR races, one of these events clashes with the Pride 10K and the other with the International Trip, so it is just a matter of bad timing as we would naturally prefer supporting Club events, perhaps we could look further into them next year.

In regards to the launching of the new Thursday Club run, I have drafted a couple of potential routes on Strava and I am planning to run them on a Thursday evening at 7pm, as one would have normally done the Thursday run, starting from the changing facilities and so on. These routes will become available to be shared with the Committee so that they can be put to the test by all of us together. I just want to test these routes first on my own, just to make sure that they are correct, as in they don't end up against a wall or anything similar, and once this is done, they are good and ready to be tested by the rest of the Committee. When all this is done and over with, then we can have a trial run with members as well. These are a 5k and a 10k route, as it's good to have these at least two options at the beginning, with both routes starting from the Clapham Sports Centre, and there is also a spot large enough to hold the Circle. Part of the route is borrowed from the Clapham Chasers route but they happen to do this specific route on a different day, so their runners will not be clashing with one of the Club runs.

Short discussion on having a banner or an LFR flag at all Club races, as this could enhance both visibility and attendance, and it would just be nice to have it also for those who are supporting and/or volunteering at an event, as a way to encourage members further.

The Committee finds this as an excellent suggestion and fully supports the idea of having a banner.

**Action to be taken:** ER is kindly requested to please undertake a relative market research, cost the item and share the fruit of his research for Committee approval

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

This is simply an issue which I would like to reiterate, as you are all aware there is a 5pm Saturday afternoon deadline for all articles for the ebulletin, and Sam and I have been and are quite flexible in regards to this deadline but late appearances, as in sending us blurbs at the very last moment on a Sunday evening or even worse and expecting them to be on the immediately next ebulletin, should not be happening, it just makes it more difficult for us to do our tasks properly and creates lot of unnecessary pressure. As mentioned we are both very flexible, but the general rule that applies to everyone should also be followed in principle by Committee members. Some of you have been very good in following protocol and some less attentive to this rule. It is nothing more than an issue of good communication and understanding among Committee members, if for example you let us know in advance of an important Club event that is meant to be taking place on a Sunday, then we can be prepared and organise ourselves and create the necessary space on the ebulletin and in advance for this last minute event, but requests send to us at the very last moment unexpectedly, and when the ebulletin is already prepared just makes us work double in order to be able to accommodate this belated arrival, so if you have something which you are expecting to have publicised on the ebulletin, then this is a gentle reminder to please follow protocol to the best of your abilities (ST)

The update from me is equally short: since the last RCM I have taken on board all the suggestions which were made in regards to finding a new all inclusive general Club platform

of communication as an alternative to FB, and especially useful for those Club members that are not on FB, or do not have a FB account. Sadly I have come to the conclusion that all the mediums that have been taken into consideration and checked do not fulfil certain or enough of the parameters which we discussed the last time and which are mostly relative to security and data protection issues. So unfortunately we will have to continue using FB and in the meantime if you happen to have any other suggestions relative to the subject, please do not hesitate to share them with me, as I will be continuing my research to see if there is still anything suitable around (SP)

The Committee warmly expresses gratitude for all the efforts of SP on this issue, appreciative of all the amount of time and of the consideration which he has dedicated to this subject.

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

You will be pleased to know that there are currently 562 fully paid-up members, that the England Athletics renewal of 480 members has already been processed and from now on I will be able to start with the England Athletics registration of new members, which actually dates back to several months.

In the meantime, I have not had any significant number of new members requesting their URN, which has also been a relief, and in cases where there has been an emergency, I have always made sure to prioritise that request.

Discussion on the Code of Conduct, and on how to make all new members aware of the LFR CoC and in particular of the specifications launched by England Athletics this year.

The suggestions are to amend the existing Webcollect form to also reference the England Athletics CoC, adding an active link to the EA webpage, thus ensuring that the Club has made clear that there is a required expectation of new members to read these new specifications. This can be done by setting the WebCollect form to include such updates.

A second suggestion would be to cross reference the LFR CoC to the EA CoC and relative webpage and add a specific statement in the LFR CoC, stating that the EA CoC takes precedence in the event of a conflict between the two.

Arguably by having a member signing up to the LFR CoC, that also means that they have automatically committed to abiding by the EA CoC but the whole procedure just reiterates the point and having this particularly reinforced would not go amiss.

In any case the Club Committee can always change Club policies, if they so wish to and if there is a specific need for that, without any further reference to the membership.

In addition, it would be extremely useful to start a robust publicity campaign via the E-bulletin and to have these additions to the CoC being broadcast at the Circles, so as to make existing members aware of the EA CoC, and in this way existing members are covered as well.

**Actions to be taken:** In view of all that has been mentioned above AC is kindly requested to please update the LFR CoC, as per above and then circulate it to the Committee for further comments. In addition AC is kindly requested to please check how this new EA addition can be included on the WebCollect page, as suggested above. Finally it is deemed as conveniently useful for AC to please liaise with GH.

There should be a specific recommendation, something along the lines of we warmly recommend that is being read, as the EA stipulation is something that needs to be made public on all Club channels, in addition to the update of the Club CoC.

There is a minor outstanding issue with all the suggestions above, what is there to be done with members who have already signed up with LFR in the interim period, will Geoff have to contact them and ask for their consent and signature, will Geoff have to sign for them and on their behalf?

Club Officers are not meant to sign anything on behalf of a Club member, in particular on this specific subject, where individual consent is required and it is relative to an important issue. Under the present circumstances, I would say that the most sensible thing to do would be to treat members who have signed up in the interim period as already existing members, and accordingly follow the procedure as described above, of a reinforced communication to everyone in the Club, which is also the simplest way. In this way, they will be fully covered as included in the communications and with the recommendations addressed to all Club members.

Is there anything that the Committee can do to be of support in registering new members? This is very kind and thoughtful questions but this is very complicated to action and will create more complications then trying to resolve the issue in the first place, as there is a very limited number of people that have access to the EA site, Christos and I are the only Club officers that can do that and Christos has also and already offered to help me out, but I am sure that if I will continue as I am doing now, with the same pace, this will come to an end very soon, there are after all just about 40 new members still to process, so the renewal will take an x amount of time but we will be getting there, in the end.

Those Club members who have already registered for a race but do not happen to have a URN, if they would simply email me, then I will definitely prioritise them, but at this point, having processed all the renewing members, registering new members it is not a real problem at all.

As Geoff will be proceeding with the registration of new members, in the meantime we will also proceed with updating the Code of Conduct, so both subjects will be resolved at almost the exact same time and we will then be able to make the relative communications.

In addition I would like to add that almost everyone who has not renewed has been deleted from the LFR WebCollect by now, so this is also proceeding well.

During the last AGM Jonathan Lissemore asked whether there is any form of survey on non renewing members, why do certain members prefer not to renew their membership and whether there is any feedback on this. This was actually a very good question and naturally it could prove very useful, the main problem though is that it is extremely difficult to be able to conduct such a research. There are no real means in applying it. When members decide not to renew their membership, for one reason or another, they never feel the need to be in contact with us and let us know why, or at least most of them never feel the need to do this nor to let us know that they are not renewing their membership for a specific reason; they just cancel their membership and in most cases we never hear back from them. In the cases where we do happen to receive some relative emails from members, almost always it is because they

have moved away from London, with the second most common reason being a long term injury, and the third one because they have decided that running is not for them and they are currently following a different sport.

There isn't a way that the Club and the Committee could receive a valuable lesson as a result of this information, as this information is anyway both scarce and sporadic, and it is mostly based on personal reasons, as in reasons that do not have to do with the Club, or the way the Club is functioning. It is not as if there are specific reasons for which runners decide to not renew their membership which could potentially be addressed, measures to take against and things improved, the above are the three main reasons for which members are not renewing their membership, and all of them have very little to do with the Club.

In regards to the last reason mentioned, people do realise after a while that running may not be for them as a sport, that they may have started enthusiastically but in the long term they do not enjoy running as much as they thought they would, and so they move into pursuing a different sport altogether, it doesn't necessarily have to do with the Club, it is a personal choice of moving away from running altogether.

And if they happen to move to a different running club, this is mostly because the other club happens to be much more convenient in terms of geography to where they are located or to where they have moved.

The Club has nearly 600 members and it is not a large number of members who are not renewing, it is a natural thing to have some not renewing members, we have a very healthy membership, and at the end of the day there are many more the renewing than the not renewing members. Had it been the other way round, then this would have been a reason to worry and to conduct a specific research, investigate and address any potential causes, but this is absolutely not the case with LFR, as the number of not renewing members is a tiny percentage compared to renewing members.

It might have proved much more useful in terms of valuable lessons to learn from something if the Club had a better system in place to check those who come for their first run but then never return for a second run, this would have been much more interesting and potentially much more useful.

There is actually a specific feedback form on the LFR website, linked to the New Runners information, asking new runners to leave feedback on why they would never return to run with LFR, but we never got much of results out of this, as runners who decide never to return and run with LFR do not leave any feedback.

Also, not everyone that comes to run with LFR contacts us in advance, so we do not have every new runners' contact details, as to be able to follow up, they just show up and either decide to give it another go and return for a second time or they just disappear.

Overall and from what has been said above, I don't think that examining and scrutinising the number of not renewing members is a pressing issue, as we do not lose that many members per year.

What is the Club's retention rate in regards to membership ?

I could easily work that out roughly for you, 480 members have renewed, we are at 560 members now, but one should also calculate those who are second claim with LFR, as these are a different category of renewals, so we could be at about 500 renewals in all, which I would say is a really healthy amount of members.

## Club Secretary Updates

Just going to read out to you some very brief updates on behalf of the **Club Treasurer**.

The Kentish Town Sports Centre has been paid for the next three months and the amount of £5,423 has been paid towards England Athletics and relative to the LFR members' registration with them in the month of June. More such payments are about to follow and the Committee will be kept updated.

In addition some updates on behalf of the **Coaching Coordinator**.

There have been lots of efforts put into trying to encourage members to come forward and sign up to do a coaching course with EA and become a coach for LFR, it's not only getting enough coaches that is causing the issue, it's the new process endorsed by England Athletics which has become much more complicated and does not really appeal into getting members to become new coaches, as some of the course is conducted virtually, then there is the part that involves filming them while they are delivering a coaching session, then submitting this film for inspection and approval, instead of having a one day course they can go to, as they used to, so such complications have had an impact on the number of those members who would have wished to come forward.

There are three members who are currently in the process of getting their licences: Wojciech, Eliot & Jack. Wojciech has finished all the separate sections, and I am just waiting for him to do the final submission. Jack has done the online course and will do the filming part once his arm is fully healed. I'm waiting to hear how much Eliot has completed and will check up on him next week. Robert Dufton has had some interest in becoming a coach but that's as far as that one has gotten.

There are still some more vouchers for the EA training available if there's anyone else who would like to put their name forward. Hopefully by the beginning of next year we may even manage to have a surplus of coaches.

Not much to share from my side. Have managed to obtain 100 Community Entries for the forthcoming event and the organisers have pledged that they are going to give LFR some more, but naturally I am unable to make any promises to anyone at this point, mostly because I do not want to create any disappointment among Club members.

After being open to all Club volunteers in advance, Community Entries are open on a first come first serve basis to the rest of Club members, and I will naturally try and accommodate everyone who is interested in racing the event, because encouraging members to be active and steering them judiciously towards a healthy competition is what we are meant to do as a running club anyway. This year has been much more complicated getting Community Entries, first of all because there is a new manager in charge who does not know LFR, and I should probably clarify in advance that a great part of the LFR leverage and clout with the Community Entries sector has been gradually built by personal perseverance and a bit of charisma on my side over the past five years, and I am saying this with a certain sense of pride as my efforts to be able to offer such discounted entries to Club members have always been crowned with success. Secondly, and just like the Pride March, the Community Entries scheme is becoming very important among the London communities, the demands for Community Entries have naturally increased over the years, there are currently many more community groups than there used to be two years ago, which is extremely positive from a general point of view, as the organisers are striving for inclusion and diversity as much as this is possible and they

naturally wish to be fair and to be able to accommodate as many representatives of the London communities as possible. There may come a time in the future when there could be placed a cap on the number of Community Entries that are allowed to be allocated per group, but until that day comes I will always argue and fight to the best of my abilities to promote LFR and to get as many Community Entries as possible for the Club.

Was invited by LimeLight Sports to be part of their Pride celebrations, by being the guest speaker to an event relative to the importance of Pride and inclusion and doing a Pride walk with them, and I took this as an extra opportunity to increase Club visibility with the organisation but also to build further on our very promising collaboration with them. It is always important to maintain excellent relationships with these two major organisations, such as the London Marathon and the LLS, not only because they happen to organise between them the most important and the most coveted London racing events, not only because we happen to have established a symbiotic and beneficial collaboration with both of them, with financial donations, free or discounted entries, volunteering opportunities and all the rest but also because both these organisations are instrumental in helping the Club achieve its potential and expand its wings by being engaged with the larger running community of London, and by interacting with important organisations outside of the somehow cocoonish and limited confines of the LFR structure.

### **Co-Presidents Updates**

Discussion on the Thursday Clapham Run.

**Action to be taken:** The CS is kindly requested to please post on FB asking for members to come up with recommendations on finding a venue for the post-run social on a Thursday in Clapham.

The run is scheduled to be launched at the beginning of September and CBP is requested to make a mental note for the Circles Rota in August.

**Action to be taken:** The Social Secretaries are kindly requested to do a research and please try and identify a convenient venue for the post-run social.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please invite a member from the NCKSC to the next RCM for updates.

### **AOB**

Brief discussion on the Out for sport AGM.

Discussion on updating the weekly runs information on the website.

Discussion on the current weekly run routes.

Discussion on new runners and how to best buddy them up.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please contact the Circle Volunteers and to share a reminder in relation to the above





