



**LFR**

## **Regular Committee Meeting**

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**

**Thursday 14th October 2023**

Committee Financial Updates (CT)

Races Update (RS)

Publicity Update (P&C O)

Social Activities update (SS)

Membership Update (MS)

Club Secretary Updates

Co-Presidents Updates

AOB

Chair: AC

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: AH

### **Committee Financial Updates (CT)**

There are currently £69K of reserves, with all processed EA affiliations been already paid, the Kentish Town Sports Centre been also paid, mainly what I am saying is that everything which needed to be paid has already been paid and the Committee should seriously consider whether it would prove profitable moving a portion of the LFR surplus into a savings account. A large portion of the reserves would still be kept as active, in order to be able to cover any further payments, such as for the International Trip and the LFR Christmas Party, and any other smaller payments in the meantime, but at the same time a portion, let us say of about £33K could easily be moved for a certain period into a savings account with a higher interest.

This is a pretty straightforward process and it is also a very safe one.

The question that the Committee needs to consider above all is, as these funds which will be moved out of circulation will not be in use for a certain pre established period of time, how much time do we think that we would need to recover these extra funds in case of an emergency?

The fact is that the Club has never had such an issue before, we have never needed to have access to funds in case of an emergency, as there has never been any such emergency within the Club. In addition, the Club's monthly financial needs are established well in advance and not variable at all, what we basically paid last year for a specific period of time, we would be paying it again the next year over that same period, naturally with some minor differences, due to inflation, with launching a new run and having to pay for yet another sports centre, but nothing beyond that, which would require an immediate and dramatic withdrawal of funds.

If some calculations are made in advance and a specific amount is set aside for any unexpected contingency in relation to the International Trip, which is the next large enterprise the Club will be taking forward in the following month, then some funds are set aside for the Christmas party, then the rest of the expenditure is what it is, minimal and exactly the same as in previous years, there aren't expected any major financial surprises in the foreseeable future.

The suggestion is to have the amount mentioned above being put aside initially for a period of 90 days.

**Action to be taken:** The CT is kindly requested to please formulate the above as a proposal, calculating all potential parameters, and share it with the Committee for discussion and approval

Short discussion on the practice of asking for a refund on behalf of the Club from any runner whose fee registration has been paid by the Club and they have not shown up at a Club race.

This is a practice which has been in place for the past two years and which should be reinforced and continued.

It is a wonderful opportunity for all members that the Club has been offering to pay for their fee registrations at certain Club races. The Club has covered completely all registration fees for all Club members that have shown interest in participating at the Battersea Mile relay and the Kangaroo 5K but members who fail to show up to these events, should refund the Club the amount of their registration fees.

The same applies and will apply for the 2024/24 Cross Country races of the SEAA.

### **Races Update (RS)**

There has been a very healthy attendance to all Club Championship events until now, we are very much looking forward to having this continuing with the forthcoming Cross Country season. In regards to the Club Championship results, an update to membership is being currently prepared, we are also planning on sending to various members the individual results that we have collected for them, in order to make sure that they are accurate and also give members the opportunity to correct these results, as we wouldn't want to leave such a time-consuming procedure taking place at the very last moment. So this update is being prepared and will probably be sent out sometime next week.

As it was mentioned, we are very much looking forward to the forthcoming XC season and the last thing which is still pending would be for us to finalise the 10K race, which will probably take place sometime between February and March.

Discussion on the London Marathon Club Places.

We have checked the existing document, we would just simply like to make a few additions to the document here and there, just minor additions, and we are currently working on these, in the hope that they will be communicated promptly and well in advance. The point where we think that there should be introduced a change this year is in order to prioritise members who have never had the possibility of running the London Marathon over members who have raced the event before. (ER)

It is slightly unclear to me as to the reasons why this request is currently being made, as Club places are strictly allocated based on the points accrued by each candidate. If a Club member has accrued enough points for them to be eligible for a Club place, whether they have had the opportunity to race the London Marathon before or not it should be completely irrelevant fact, unless running the event was again through a Club place entry and this has happened in one of the immediately previous years to their last application, a there is a period of time between two applications for a Club place, which needs to be respected(CBP)

What we are suggesting is prioritising the candidate that has never raced at the London Marathon over a candidate that has raced at the London Marathon before, only if these two candidates happen to accrue the same number of points (ER)

I understand what you are trying to say but then this should be explicitly phrased in advance, something along the lines of: in the event of two applicants having accrued the same number of points, preference will be given to the applicant that has not ran the London Marathon before (GH)

Changing the London Marathon eligibility parameters has been an extremely controversial subject at the last AGM, it has been obvious from the reactions at the AGM that the spirit under which the previous document was overhauled was not appreciated, whereas the only thing which Francis and Denis tried to do was make the previous document much more fair and much more inclusive for all members. Although this might have not been fully understood during the AGM, in the meantime, and since then, members had ample time to review the current document and voice any concerns but no one has come forward to make neither a complaint nor a suggestion. (AC)

In my opinion and in order to avoid any controversy, the best thing to do would be to have any small addition, regardless of how small they might be, being made public to all members well in advance and as soon as possible, even by next week, as giving members enough time to review and fully understand why such changes are suggested, will potentially minimise the possibility of these changes being misunderstood, on the reason why the Committee seeks to implement any additions and thus avoid any consequent reactions. Such suggestions and amendments do not necessarily need to be discussed in person and at the next RCM, they can easily be discussed and approved online, through a short exchange of emails among Committee members, in order to save time and just to reiterate,

the sooner this takes place and any amendments to the document are made public to all Club members, the better for all those concerned (CBP)

This is not an amendment to the eligibility criteria, this is just an addition to the document, between two candidates that happen to have accrued the same number of points. Nevertheless I see your point of view and will have the changes communicated to all of us in the forthcoming week, so that we may share them timely with all Club members (ER)

Just to mention that the weekend on the Isle of Wight has been extremely successful, many thanks to GH and to Kai K for organising (FC)

Have received stellar feedback from first timers on the Isle of Wight races and they spoke highly of the event, having absolutely loved the whole experience(CBP)

I would also like to thank DB for having being extremely accommodating and for having sorted promptly and with great efficiency all financial challenges relative to the organisational aspect of the trip, as there were some complications with some of payments but he has been brilliant (GH)

Many thanks to CBP for having secured for the Club and for yet another year the Community Entries for the 2023 BH (ER)

Discussion on organising a Handicap Race

Clarification on what a Handicap Race is: the whole idea of the Handicap Race is to give runners of different abilities the chance to compete equally. The slowest runners start first and they are then followed at regular intervals by the faster runners, with the fastest runners in the team starting last, so that everyone will finish at almost the same time.

Discussion on the East London Queer Running Club

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

No particular updates

### **Social Activities update (SS)**

Discussion on the 2023 Christmas Party.

#### **Option 1**

Option 1 is to have the event organised by the Thistle Hotel and there are two different venues available. The first one is the Thistle Hotel, which would be available from 18:00 to 00:00, with guests required to leave by 00:30 due to guest rooms being directly above the event venue.

The second venue is the Cumberland Hotel (6 Bryanston Street), which is available from 18:00 to 01:00, and this venue ha[[ens to have a later finish as the venue is located below ground floor and tucked away from guests.

According to the recommendation of NW, the Cumberland is a much better venue to choose from the above two, not just because it remains open for one hour longer but because it is also a larger venue. In addition, this venue tends to become very busy with corporate events and almost exclusively throughout the week whereas it seems to be free during the

weekends, and with LFR wanting to hire it on a Saturday, this could prove to come very handy and practical.

Capacity and Seating: Both venues can comfortably seat 150 guests for a sit-down 3-course meal with music afterwards.

Additional tickets can be offered and made available for those wishing to attend just for drinks and the number of these would be around 50, although the number of only for drinks guests needs to be further confirmed.

Cost per Person: The cost per person is £79.

Based on a capacity of 150 guests, the total cost would be £11,850.

Additionally, 50 free tickets will become available for guests who only want drinks.

Deposit: The initial deposit is £1,185.

Included in the price of the package is the following:

3-course dinner

Private function room

Glass of sparkling wine on arrival

Festive novelties and crackers on the table

Half bottle of wine per person

Half bottle of mineral water per person

Alternative Deposit Option: There is an option to pay a larger deposit of £6,000 and make up the rest with a minimum spend. However, the exact figures for this option would need to be reworked by the organiser.

DJ Availability: A DJ is available upon request, as we have seen the amount of £300 was paid for a DJ last year.

In summary, two venue options with slightly different timing, and both can accommodate 150 guests for a meal and further entertainment. The cost per person is £79, with an initial deposit of £1,185. There's also an alternative deposit option and the possibility of having a DJ. The deposit from last year for a similar event was £3,360. The Thistle organiser will need to rework some of the figures if we choose the alternative deposit option.

## Option 2

The Anthologist: Available from 19:00 to 01:00, with guests required to leave by 01:30

Capacity and Seating: 130 for meal and 70 tickets to join for drinks after

Cost per Person: The cost per person is £59.50.

Based on a capacity of 130 dinner guests, the total cost would be £7,735.

Additionally, 70 free tickets are available for guests who only want drinks.

Deposit: The initial deposit is £1,000.

Minimum spend for the whole evening is £15,000 + 12.5% service charge on the pre order.

The person responsible for The Anthologist advised that we'd need to complete the minimum spend two weeks prior to the booking,

We would like to gauge opinion/experience in order to find out how this has gone down in previous years as this point is a bit confusing for us.

Running order

7pm – Arrival time

7pm – Drinks reception

7.30pm – Seated dinner for 130 guests

9.30pm – Party starts, 70+ guests arrive

1am – last orders

1.30am – venue close, all guests depart

DJ Availability: A DJ is available upon request.

The Committee has examined the above options and there are several issues which need to be clarified in advance with The Anthologist.

First of all, there needs to be an explicit written clarification on the whole Anthologist package whether the service charge is included in the above price.

Secondly, there needs to be a specific clarification, what is the exact leaving time and this also needs to be fully respected, as last time LFR used the same venue the leaving time was also 1.30 am but the venue did not respect this.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please communicate with the Thistle and try to work out a lower price for the per person seated dinner package.

One thing which makes the Committee feel much more confident in regards to the Cumberland option is that the Club can put a substantial amount of money behind the bar.

In addition, the Club has already been to The Anthologist twice for celebrating the Christmas Party, it is adequate for what it is but there is not a definite certainty that we would have liked to return at the same venue for a third time, unless we really have to.

Is there the possibility of having a third option to choose from, a third venue?

I feel that given the period of time, as we are already in the middle of September, it would seem in my opinion a much wiser step to try and concentrate on what is already on offer and try to make the best deal out of what we currently have. It has always proved an extremely difficult task in the first place finding a venue for so many social secretaries long before the current occupants of the role, finding a venue with seated accommodation in central London a month before Christmas and with a practically non-existent budget is nothing short of a miracle. Continuing towards the direction of searching and trying to come up with yet another venue just for the sake of having to choose among three, would require a lot of time and effort and take a great yet unnecessary toll on both Robin and Nick and in my opinion it would be tantamount to a waste of precious time, at a stage when we cannot afford to lose anymore time (CBP)

There should be a Save the Date blurb on the ebuletin with the date of the 2023 LFR Christmas Party being Saturday the 25th of November.

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

We are currently at 601 paid members, actually at 602 members to be exact as one member had not paid their registration fees on time and was duly deleted, but the day that they were deleted they also happen to register with the Club again, it was a bit of a complicated situation but nevertheless I just want to point out that we currently are at 602 members, we have reached the 600 members mark, and to my understanding this is the very first time that the Club has reached the 600 members mark, so this is an achievement which needs to be celebrated.

In addition, another subject that makes me even more happy is that we are currently completely up to date with the EA registrations of all new members. Just to remind you that if a new member asks about the URN and EA registration, please kindly ask them to be patient, this is an ongoing task, and if it happens to be an urgent case because of a race, then please let me know, I am always happy to prioritise urgent cases with the EA.

There should be a relevant announcement on the ebulletin in regards to having reached the 600 marker.

We should also put something on the International Frontrunners FB page.

I will update the Club numbers on the International Frontrunners webpage (CBP)

### **Club Secretary Updates**

Pride March Feedback updates and discussion

TBH LFR numbers

For the record, 152 LFR have registered with the 2023 event, along with 26 BHFL and two Bristol FR. One LFR member never processed their registration, and although having asked for a spot, they just did nothing about it, have tried to contact them several times and through various mediums, email and whatsapp, though to no avail.

I believe about 12 LFR decided not to race the event in the end, mostly due to running injuries.

In regards to the Pride Run, on Saturday the 16th run I have actioned the following cancellations:

- Julia has been asked to please upload a notification of the cancelled Saturday run due to the Pride 10K on the Homepage of the LFR website.
- Thistle Hotel were reminded of the Sunday the 17th brunch at 11.30 am (and a good thing I reminded them about the swap from Saturday to the day after, as they had completely forgotten..
- Victoria Park Community Centre, St Margaret's Cafè and the Seymour Centre have all been notified of the Saturday the 16th run cancellation. The Club Treasurer was copied in the email to the latter, as this cancellation should be reflected in the forthcoming invoice.

LFR Gazebo at the Pride Run 10K

Have liaised with Robert D, who is driving the gazebo to Victoria Park, and who has been overall extremely helpful and supportive.

AC is assisting with setting the gazebo up and GH will be sitting with me for a little while, in our joint efforts to bring in some potential new members. In case there is someone else from the Committee that would like to join Geoff and myself under the gazebo for about half an hour, from around 10.15 to 10.45 am, they are extremely welcome and in case there is someone else from the Committee that could potentially help us with setting up the gazebo, as it probably needs more than three people and then to close it down at the end of the event and to put it back into Robert's car, an extra pair of hands would also be very much appreciated.

Wellness Workshop

The event was cancelled due to low attendance numbers; there were just three members who showed interest in attending. Such events are naturally not organised to attract large numbers but having a three hour session with just three attendees could have proved a bit too much for some of them. In consequence have already asked these three members which showed interest in participating whether there is something specific that they are aiming to obtain from this workshop and based on their answers, I will contact the organisers and try to reschedule the workshop, making it come across as a bit more concrete in regards to the content and potentially much more relatable to the LFR needs, perhaps also under a

different format, splitting the three hours in two sessions to be held on two different Saturdays.

V&A DIVA exhibition. We have been given 25 free tickets and were thinking of organising a visit and having them being used sometime around the beginning of February 2024, as part of the LFR 29th birthday celebrations; considering setting the date for the visit on Saturday 3rd of February, if there is no objection from the Committee.

#### I, D & E Survey

Alasdair S has been contacted and has been politely requested to please respond to the Committee feedback and in addition to please set a timeframe leading to a potential launching date for the survey.

#### Pacers for London Marathon Events

Have contacted and liaised with the Pace Team Coordinator for LME. There is in place a rather strict application process for joining all the pacer teams for every LM event, the requirements are several and the standards are apparently high, nevertheless LME are welcoming applications from all types of runners for pacers for their 2024 events (LM, Brighton Marathon, TBH, Vitality 10K, Royal Parks Half, etc). One needs to send them an email and they will contact the person interested with the opening date for applications for the 2024 London Marathon.

Runners that have never paced before are required to successfully complete a third-party 4 week online pacing course which includes activities and tasks.

Pacing is completely voluntary and pacers also have to pay their own entry fee to all LME though for some of the events this entry fee may be reduced. Pacers are required to be within one minute under their target time at the finish line. For example, a 4:00 marathon pacer must finish between 3:59:00 and 3:59:59 and there are also target time windows to reach half way. Finally, prospective pacers will also be asked to sign a code of conduct agreement previous to the event.

My personal opinion is that although this might seem very appealing, particularly for the 2024 event, when we were expecting to have six Club places and now we are going to have just four, to my simple mind and innocent eyes the whole LME procedure looks much more complicated than the process on how to become a pacer set in place by LimeLight Sports. The LFR members which races as pacers for the 2023 Hackney Half didn't have to pay an entry fee for running the 2023 event and in addition they got a free entry to the 2024 event, plus all the Hako freebies (pair of shoes, pair of shorts, two t-shirts, one running vest, pair of socks and a cap) which they got, there were available showers for all pacers after the race and pacers also enjoyed some extra snacks and some drinks as well, so they were treated with great generosity overall.

I am naturally going to suggest the LME pacing programme to LFR members and let them decide for themselves whether they would like to pursue it or not.

#### 30th Anniversary Celebrations

I know that this does not sit entirely under the current Committee's responsibilities and competencies but it also happens to be a subject which cannot possibly be left at the very last moment. We cannot expect newly elected Committee members in April 2024 to take upon themselves the whole task of organising the celebrations for the 2025 events, as in my opinion this needs to start much earlier. When we start about six months ahead for organising a Christmas party for about 150 people, it will definitely take longer and a larger team to organise and coordinate a series of events for the whole Club for the 30th



Anniversary. There are still about 18 months but some decisions need to be made by us, the 2023/24 Committee, in particular on the type of the events that we would like to organise and on the time-frame, as several and different events could be scheduled to take place throughout the whole year, depending on the nature of the event and based on the weather/season, meaning that not everything needs to take place on the 11th of February 2025. Picnics can take place during the summer months whereas indoor events could take place during the colder months.

I would suggest to please give some thought to all the above, come up with some ideas and then have a brainstorming session, discussing any suggestions and their feasibility at the October RCM.

**Action to be taken:** Committee members are kindly requested to please wear their respective thinking caps and come up at the October RCM with some feasible suggestions for the 30th LFR Anniversary celebrations

Wednesday the 18th is going to be a slightly problematic evening for the Greenwich Park run as there are no leaders available at all on that date.

AC saves the day and the date, coming forward to become the CL on that evening.

Discussion on the dates and on when to hold the Club Championships event and the AGM, the dates pencilled down are respectively Friday the 15th of March for the former and Friday the 22nd of March for the latter

### **Co-Presidents Updates**

Revised and updated Code of Conduct communications discussion

The revised LFR Code of Conduct, including the new additions as requested by England Athletics has been approved by the Committee and duly uploaded on to the LFR website. In addition and in order to comply with EA revised guidance, we have now updated the website as well.

Discussion on how to share the above with members.

### **Clapham Run Updates**

Currently the Sports Centre has ceased to communicate despite sending follow up messages. The whole situation feels at a bit of a stalemate here as this issue is the bit that is holding us up currently and needs to be urgently resolved. I will try and reach out to the guy from the council again next week.

AOB