



**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)

**Monday 11th December**  
**Agenda**

**Financial Updates (CT)**

**Races Update (RS)**

London Marathon Club Places Discussion

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

**Social Activities Update (SS)**

Christmas Party wash-up

**Membership Update (MS)**

**Club Secretary**

EA transgender eligibility FR Clubs Outreach Updates  
Coaching Updates & Future Plans

**Co-Presidents**

Clapham Common Run, updates, discussion & next steps

**AOB**

Chair: AH

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: GH, RB, NW, DB

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

The current Account Balance is at £44,032, the total outgoings during the previous month amount to £8,560.07, whereas the total income in the previous month comes to £4,538.76.

There have been some significant outgoings, mainly paying The Anthologist £7099.44, whereas the Club has spent £900 on the Meal Ticket subsidies.

Overall the main financial activity in November was the Christmas Party and the only significant income made was from the Christmas Party Ticket Sales which came to £3040.05.

In regards to the Coaching Coordinator Proposal, just a note to say that I personally would support sponsoring up to 12 members to get into the coaching training. It makes absolute sense to invest the Club's money in the membership and build out our capacity to provide important things like coaching.

I requested and was very generously offered by the Committee the amount of £245, with the consent of the Club Treasurer, to be spent on festive presents for the LFR venues and some volunteers. I have been a really good and judicious boy this year and out of the £245, I effortlessly and nonchalantly spent £189.16 on what I was expected to provide, in addition to saving the Club £20 overall by using Francis's employee card during my purchases. I would like to ask for the Committee's consent to spend £40 out of the £55 which still remains from the above amount towards paying the fees for the venue where the vocal workshop will be taking place on the 20th of January and the remaining amount of £15 to go towards buying presents to be given out to volunteers at the Club Championships Event in March (CBP)

The Committee kindly consents to both the above, with the condition that in case the vocal workshop becomes a regular event, efforts will then be dedicated towards procuring a venue for this outlet for free of charge.

There seems to also be a very small profit from the International Trip, I wish I would have been able to share with you the exact amount but we are not going to be able to know the amount as the IT subcommittee still needs to pay back the amount of 10k to CT, who has paid entirely and out of his own pocket the expenses for the accommodation, so we first need to get back the receipts from them in order to be able to refund them in due course, because there is an absolute urgent necessity to close all the accounts by end of this year. Hopefully this is going to be resolved very soon as the Club still owes the same person the amount of £400 pounds from the Isle of Wight trip in June. (AH)

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

London Marathon Club Places Discussion

There have been 13 applications this year, whereas there were just ten last year, but it also needs to be said that two members from those who have responded were not eligible to be considered according to the pre-established requirements.

There have been some very strong candidates this year, although it also needs to be mentioned that there is a great difference in points scored between those who have made the final cut and all the rest of the applicants. The four candidates whose names I would like to present to the

Committee for confirmation as the next beneficiaries of the LM Club Places are all prominent Club members that have contributed and have been contributing to the Club regardless of the points they have scored. But as this is a procedure based entirely on points scored, all four of them are incredibly high scorers, with the points accrued being split very much and almost equally between volunteering activities and racing. The highest scorers among all the candidates for the 2024 LM are Michael Rutherford, Andrew Wood, Gwen Wright and Heath Rose.

The Committee checks the eligibility criteria and the scoring and confirms the recommendation by the RS.

The successful candidates of this year are an integral part of the Club and they will also continue being part of the Club, and they will continue contributing towards the Club, as none of them is the type of member that will just get their Marathon place and then abandon the Club and move on.

Discussions on how to encourage those of the members who have been unsuccessful this year, by encouraging them to continue on the same pace and to apply for the next year, making them also understand that the reason the scoring is based on points accrued from the Club Championship races and from volunteering for LFR, is because the Committee would like to offer an extra incentive to everyone and encourage members to both volunteer for the Club and at the same time become majorly involved in participating at the Club races.

There is currently the need to update the chart with the Club Championship positions, first of all because if there are any miscalculations we definitely need to address this now as we do not want to leave this for the last moment and secondly because it obviously makes members much more keen to participate and to compete, especially when they realise in which position they might be and how many points is the other runner ahead of them, and now is the right time to do it as there is just a handful of races left.

The Club Committee offers its sincere thanks to the RS for the very thorough presentation and for successfully delivering the LM CP procedure.

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

The first Ebulletin of 2024 is probably coming on Tuesday the 2nd of January, and it is going to be a reduced version one, simply with some reminders of the events which have already been announced, whereas we will be starting again regularly from Monday the 8th of January.

There are quite a lot of people who have now registered on WhatsApp to be part of the unofficial Festive Period running group, it is an initiative which has proved to be very popular and we could also ask these members to send us some photos from these unofficial runs for the ebulletin. We are very happy about this initiative, it makes great sense to have it, there is a much bigger group than we anticipated and the great thing about it is that nobody risks being left alone during the festive period.

## **Social Activities Update (SS)**

### **Christmas Party wash-up**

In regards to the ticket Sales, there have been sold 74 Drinks Only Tickets and we have had 121 Meal Tickets. Almost everyone has already paid except some of those who purchased drinks-only tickets, though some payments may have come in since Derwin last checked. There are currently ten members who have not paid for their DO tickets, so there is still £90 as outstanding payment due to the Club as of this weekend

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please liaise with the Club Treasurer and chase up this outstanding payment.

There has been a short feedback survey sent to members. We have had extremely positive comments on the survey, as members really enjoyed the food and the format of the event, many members also really praised the fact that Club funds were used to subsidise the Christmas party and said that this was a really great idea.

The Club paid £900 more than had been scheduled to pay but this has indeed been a really good idea, trying to make the event as affordable as possible for everyone, so it was a really good evening and we have had very positive feedback overall.

The price of £900 is indeed a really small price to pay in an attempt to try to become even more inclusive and to make members happier by this subsidy.

As part of the feedback to the SS, it might be worth considering creating a bit more engagement among members during the Christmas Party evening, probably to take into consideration for the event of next year, by launching some group activities to partake, such as creating a Best Dressed prize, at least something that will create a bit more engagement and will bring members together even more.

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

The Club currently has 643 fully paid-up members, one social member, and one member whose registration is pending and hasn't come in yet. We may well be at 650 members by the end of the calendar year, but if not, then certainly by early in the new year. On the less positive side of membership, two members have decided to leave the Club over completely different issues.

In regards to what has been suggested earlier, I very much support the investment of funds in training some more coaches for the Club.

On the volunteer additions, I broadly support this, but I think it should come as the precursor to a wider re-think of the Committee structure in the light of our massively expanded membership. This might be a job for next year's Committee, rather than this year's. It's certainly not a subject that should be hurried, but it would be worth tabling it for discussion at a future meeting.

## **Club Secretary**

### **EA transgender eligibility FR Clubs Outreach Updates**

In regards to the EA Trans Eligibility issue I have reached out to the following FR and non FR clubs: Brighton & Hove, Newcastle, Aberdeen, Blackpool, Belfast (the person in charge is also the Northern Ireland Sport in Pride representative), Dundee, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. I have appealed to the above LGBTQ+ running clubs regardless of whether they happen to be EA affiliated and regardless of being or not being part of the FR family, more so as the CS of a running club that reflects its local LGBTQ+ community and wishes to support all its members.

The aim of reaching out to them was to canvas thoughts on the subject and other the club's intentions of whether they would be open on uniting their voices to LFR, in the hope that a single collective voice could majorly influence EA.

The first outcome is rather mediocre in numbers as not everyone has responded to my email. I would say that the number of those who have not responded is three times larger than the number of clubs that responded. In principle, clubs are very supportive of collaborating with LFR and other FR clubs on a joint statement. It needs to be mentioned that from the clubs that responded none of them has a fully developed position on the subject yet but they are very keen to take a progressive stance on the matter.

Certain clubs feel that they have to go through a thorough membership consultation first, thus making sure everyone of their members has a voice on the subject, and this is most probably one of the main reasons for other FR clubs not having already taken a clear stance on the subject. Certain clubs also believe that they could conceivably be looking at coming to a decision over this subject which would need an EGM/AGM approval from membership, so this might require even more time. I have the feeling that nobody wants to rush into this matter without consulting their members first and foremost.

The main concern as expressed by the club who have responded was whether LFR has already started drafting a proposed position statement to which clubs could consult on and then contribute to and whether there is a specific timeline suggested for the above. They were informed that LFR has nothing of the above for the time being and that we are still in the phase of discussions on how to best tackle this subject and on how to make sure that LFR takes into consideration as many of its members as possible, giving everyone a voice on the subject.

These are my questions to the LFR Committee, formed as a result of my outreach to the other FR and non FR running clubs:

- Is LFR planning on having a membership consultation on the matter?
- Is LFR planning on having a statement circulated just within EA or/and will we go public with it? In case of the latter, what are the reactions/repercussions expected and how are these going to be managed? Could we possibly anticipate certain reactions and thus make them part of the LFR strategy on the matter instead?
- How will a FR collective position be perceived by local trans women's groups and/or feminist groups

This is obviously a very important subject, and one where different people have very different sides, and as there are Club members who are holding diametrically opposed views, the issue is how do we approach this, by trying to include everyone or at least to try and have every opinion on board.

Holding mutually exclusive views on such an important matter does create some issues, I feel that we have to step very carefully and move forward one step at a time.

I am of the opinion that we can have two approaches: we target EA's wording and help them increase their flexibility at an amateur level, which would require a split in competitions between elite and amateur level which doesn't currently exist. The EA transgender policy is neither welcoming nor friendly the way it has been phrased and it would be best if we were to initially engage with EA trying to influence them in the wording of their policies. Alternatively, we come up with a policy about where we think EA should be with regard to female trans participation full stop, and only with regard to female trans athletes participation as male trans participation isn't really an issue.

Ben Humphrys was of the view that we should start with the soft approach and tackle the unfriendly EA policy wording which is a lot worse than the BTF wording, and urge them to get a move on in doing more research in order to be able to come to a long term solution. This tactic also avoids us having to take sides.

The problem with coming up with an overall position is that we will need to consult with membership as there is no female representation on the current Committee, nor is there any trans or otherwise representation, which makes the Committee coming up with a position even more problematic. And by trans, I mean trans female representation.

I am also of the opinion that there should be a meaningful change implemented on the amateur-grassroot level.

If we decide to follow a more radical all-encompassing position in one go, I think we'll run into problems as we are already aware that there is a mutually exclusive divergence of views. There are cis-female members who oppose trans-female participation and we have, or at least at this point in time we should probably say we had, trans-female members who thought those first members were bigots and should be thrown out of LFR. Most Club members who identify as cis-gender gay men are at one end or the other end or somewhere in between.

From this it is more than obvious that the Club membership is divided in two, in the best of possibilities, and there seems to be no absolute direct and fast way of winning this issue completely and in one go and if we were to choose this approach then we would end up angering both cis-gender and trans-female groups.

EA should realise that there shouldn't be the same rules as applying to both elite and amateur athletes as they are completely different sides of the same coin, they should have shown much more leniency with the amateur side.

It also needs to be mentioned that the Committee is not considering disaffiliating from EA as a viable reactionary measure in the near future, there have been lots of arguments in other FR clubs and the Manchester FR had a massive fall-out as the majority of the Committee refused to consider a disaffiliation whereas some of their members were pro disaffiliation. Also, if one wishes to contribute towards changing an organisation for the best, then it does not have any impact when one is on the outside of that organisation, as their opinion will not matter anymore to the organisation. If we want to implement a positive change in EA, then we have to be part of EA and work towards this cause from within and in collaboration with them.

In the meantime LFR has also been contacted by two other running clubs, who are not part of the Frontrunners but who happen to have transgender members and have been having the same type of issues as LFR, of not knowing where and how to start tackling this subject.

We have come to the conclusion that this is not a straightforward issue. I think we should try moving forward by taking one step at a time, first of all by bringing the subject to the attention of membership, as surely there are still members who are completely unaware of this whole affair, while at the same time communicate to membership that as Committee we do not agree with the way this policy has been worded by EA, that we have been in communication with other FR clubs in the UK and that we are planning to take some further action but we do not communicate anything further until we have something concrete that we have to share.

**Action to be taken:** AC is kindly requested to please write a draft as per above and share it with the Committee in due course.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to reach out to Susie O'Connor and establish whether Susie happens to still be part of the UKA Pride Network

Discussion on the possibility of expanding the Committee roles and on the support each current Committee role will need in the future, in view of the increased membership numbers.

As I have mentioned before, and was also made clear by the document circulated in advance of our meeting, the only way of moving forward for the CS role will be a sharing of the current responsibilities with other volunteering roles, which I don't think that these new volunteering roles need to necessarily be part of the Committee. The current Seymour situation is further and clear evidence that there should be a volunteering role dedicated to the venues, as sort of LFR Venues Coordinator who will be the designated liaison person between LFR and all the venues the Club is using, changing facilities and eateries, at the moment. The Club is currently using ten venues and we are all working towards launching the Thursday run in Clapham, which will only bring the number of venues to 13, including The Two Brewers. This is already a lot to be responsibly and successfully brought forward by one person who is also the CS at the same time. The role of CS needs to be radically scaled down, otherwise the Club is going

to be facing some serious problems, as nobody will want to come forward for the role or the person that will be voted as the next CS will immediately become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of tasks and the amount of time required to go through them.

Discussion on whether the venues should return back to the Co-Presidents role.

In my opinion the Co-President's' role should not be encumbered by such administrative issues but they should have the time to be able to focus much more on creating a strategy for the future and of actually leading the Club, instead of being daily consumed by the often petty issues that require their attention and time. I have been a member of the Committee for eight years now and this Club has never had a long-term plan of let's say five or ten years in the sense of strategy. The Club is surviving from one year to the next based on its own infrastructure but without any specific long-term plans for the future. We are going from one year to the next, trying to accomplish certain projects, which after being accomplished are not brought forward by the new candidates on the role to the next club year, and this is not just happening with the Co-Presidents. Yes, the Co-Presidents should continue maintaining the info account, as a first point of reference and first point of contact for all new runners but they should gradually become more leaders and less administrators. The Club needs guidance, the Club needs direction towards developing further. A volunteer that is able to make sure that both the LFR venues and the LFR members are kept reasonably happy by resolving any issues is all that is needed. It is not that complicated a role, it's mostly about receiving and giving constructive feedback and becoming the first point of contact between the Club and all the venues LFR is using, in case of any cancellations. But it is a lot to ask from a volunteer who is already covering another Committee role at the same time.

I believe that there should be a future inclusion of the Tri Coordinator who should become a Committee member, as this will contribute to a major inclusion of the triathlon activities and will bring the tri section closer to the general LFR activities.

The Committee is very much in approval of the above suggestion.

Fact remains that Club members do not want to have further complications when they join the Club and they do not look at the prospect of becoming a Committee member with excitement nor anticipation. They don't want problems, they don't want to be part of the AGM and not being part of the Committee is probably what makes a volunteering role all the more attractive to members. The Club has a huge number of volunteers at the time being and the majority of them are not on the Club Committee, which is an ulterior proof that members enjoy contributing as volunteers when and if there is a need but do not feel the same about a volunteering role that implies so many duties and responsibilities.



Conversation on the current Committee roles and on how to proceed forward in a more productive way for the Club.

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please send every Committee member their respective role descriptions, in order to have these revised and discussed at the next RCM

The creation of the ebulletin should also become a non Committee position, this could be done by a small group of potentially three volunteers, which could alternate following a rota and then have the P & C Officers doing all the actual publicity and reaching out to other clubs and to donors.

**Action to be taken:** AC is kindly requested to please check the Club Constitution in regard to the Committee roles and subjects such as gender balance, etc.

Alasdair Scott has had to step down as the Club's D & I Champion due to a very heavy professional schedule. He has done a really good job and it would be useful if we were all to read the Survey and potentially save something from it and present it in a smaller version and under a different format.

It might be worth reading it more critically and reducing its size to the absolute essential of one thing in particular which we are all interested to know about the Club members.

### **Coaching Coordinator Updates**

**Updates:** in October, Matt did an autumnal coaching cleaning; with Jack becoming inactive for the rest of the club year, LFR has currently nine active coaches, including Matt. Matt's intention is to increase the above number, aiming, if possible, to double it in the following months.

**Proposal:** after discussions with England Athletics, they have accepted the proposal of delivering a half-half EA coaches training course, half of it delivered face-to-face and the remaining half online, bespoke for LFR, if the in-person part can be delivered in a venue provided by LFR.

The Victoria Park Community Centre has been duly approached and they are very happy to offer us the venue, free of charge.

**Clarification:** the half-day practical session when delivered in person, as it used to be prior to the pandemic, is much more effective as it includes practical activity elements which are delivered and can register better in person than online, hence the reason it has been suggested.

**Costs & Numbers:** for this bespoke course, the fee would be £1920 for 12 coaches (£160 per person), and LFR can have up to 15 members on the course. The £160 fee per coach is the EA regular fee charged by them for every new coach and it is not a price established for LFR. EA available tutors are booked up until the end of this year so we are considering having the in-person session taking place sometime in February 2024.

**For the Committee's consideration**

We are in no position to know at the moment how many members will be interested in taking the course. If 12 members come forward, the Committee is questioned whether it will eventually come to agree to the above 12 coaches/£1920 fees.

Discussion on the above.

The Committee unanimously agrees to the proposal of the Coaching Coordinator to go ahead.

Discussion on retaining the present and all potential new coaches

**Action to be taken:** CBP is kindly requested to please send AC the coaching agreement draft he has prepared for his consideration.

## **Co-Presidents**

### **Clapham Common Run, updates, discussion & next steps**

After we got an agreement and the people at the Sports Center got back to us asking on the dates the Club wanted to launch the run, we immediately replied with the dates and after that they got quiet again and never got back to us at all. The person on their side who ought to have been in charge of this is on leave until the end of this year, so hopefully we are going to be hearing back from them in the new year, with the intention of launching the run in February.

### **Eurogames Vienna/ EGLSF Membership**

The Club has never engaged with some of the big LGBTQ+ sports tournaments, which is a shame. Will Perry valiantly represented LFR at the games in Guadalajara but he was on his own and there has never been an organised LFR representation in any such event. Even at the Paris Games which was about five years ago there was an LFR representation which was small in number and completely unofficial but managed to win a great number of medals, which also shows what the Club is able to achieve on a collective level.

The Club naturally endorses all these events and we are also putting them out on the ebulletin but we don't seem to be doing more than that, at least very little or nothing at all organised. We tend to put out a call for volunteers and this is all it gets to.

The Eurogames in 2024 are taking in Vienna, from the 17th to the 20th of July, Vienna is a reasonably close destination, there isn't much going on in terms of Club Championship events during that period, or any other large races and marathons, so it becomes a very sensible time of the year for the Club to travel, and Vienna is actually a really lovely destination.

Organising to bring 125 members over to Vienna is going to become a really expensive trip as Vienna is per se an expensive destination. We also have to think of the school holidays again, not just for the sake of members who are in education, but because during the school holidays the flight prices are high, we would also have to cater to a large number of people for the restaurants and the rest. The positive thing is that it's not too far to fly there but it all comes down to the cost, as the Club's primary aim is to make the International Trip as affordable as possible and thus as inclusive as possible.

It also needs to be mentioned that from the feedback we have received, members are again very much tending towards choosing or preferring a destination that lies somewhere on the beach, by the sea and in a warm country.

Discussion on the potential of making it an official LFR event without making this trip the actual International Trip, and the potential of making a quick decision, in order to be able to book flights which currently seem to be from £130 to 150£ and there is a reasonable flight availability.

All it takes is some really good coordination, once the decision has been made and the trip is officially endorsed, and one member will bring the other, as it usually happens in all these events.

The Committee will make a decision on whether LFR will become an affiliated member of the European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF) in early January, at the next RCM.

Discussion on welfare issue

**AOB**