



LFR

Regular Committee Meeting

Co-Presidents: Geoff Hicks (GH) and Wojciech Panków (WP)

Club Secretary: Christos Bitzis-Politis (CBP)

Club Treasurer: Derwin Brennan (DB)

Membership Secretary: Gwen Wright (GW)

Races Secretaries: Eliot Rees (ER) and Tom Watson (TW)

Publicity & Communications Secretaries: Stephen Tomaszewski (ST) and Chris Swift (CS)

Social Secretaries: Nick Warner (NW) and Andrew Harrison (AH)

RCM Agenda

Wednesday 15th May 2024

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Co-Presidents

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AOB

Chair: GH

Minutes: CBP

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Financial Updates (CT)

The largest part of the cash flow for this period, between our last RCM and this one, has been naturally provided by the membership renewals, where the Club has had about 30k from the

membership renewals, £32,192 to be more precise. Naturally there has been payments of around 20k on the other hand, most of which are relative to EA membership invoices, paying for the accommodation of the GBR attendees, and about £2k in advance for the LFR Devon trip accommodation, but which amount will be repaid back to the Club. The LFR closing cash balance is very close to 100K, £97,688 to be more precise. There have also been some administrative expenses but as all other expenses, these were budgeted and calculated in advance, so they have no real impact on the general financial situation of the Club.

Races Update (RS)

Thank you to all for your comments on the London Marathon Parameters Document. They have been taken into consideration and been answered separately, and the document has now been reviewed, so it is ready to be published on the next ebulletin.

I still need to find a moment of time to publish the full results of last year's Club Championships, naturally for the sake of transparency and clarity, and again for the sake of transparency and clarity it is also part of our commitment, both of Tom and myself, to be very consistent in publishing race results regularly this club year. This is something that we want to pursue with greater regularity (ER)

2024 Vienna Eurogames

For the time being there are 12 members who are certain and who are planning on attending the Vienna Eurogames and there are a couple more who have shown interest but have not made a decision, so there could finally become 15 runners, in the end.

Discussions on what the Club can do to support this initiative.

The Registration fee for the discipline of running is € 60 for EGLSF members and € 80 for non EGLSF members and this registration fee only applies, if running is the only chosen sport for a participant but there is an additional fee of € 20 a second sport. Most of the LFR will go for either the 10 or the 5K but there are also track and field events at €90 and €120 and another €20 for any other event that one is entering after that, exactly like with running. We were thinking of what could be done as an incentive to make members sign up for the event, and instead of signing up with EGLSF, the governing body, have all those interested in going to Vienna to register as non-affiliated athletes but donate to the cause as Club £40 per runner instead, as a sort of subsidy. If there are going to be 15 LFR athletes participating and the Club decides to subsidise them with £40 per person, that would be £600 overall, which is

more fund towards every individual runner and this amount is also less by £40 from what LFR would have paid for the the affiliation cost to EGLSF.

Although it would be great to show some practical support towards this initiative, as we are very happy to be able to finally send a stronger LFR representation than we did in all other previous games, it would be best if this subsidy was based on an amount that matches the LFR subsidy of other similar events. For example, LFR is subsidising the LFR women's event in October and the Committee has decided to partially subsidise each participant's registration fees with the amount of £20, with the Committee having also recommended a cap of up to 25 participants, maximum 30 for that event. The Committee is very open in hearing and supporting such initiatives as long as they are financially sensible and there is a comparable equivalent.

I am of the opinion that £40 is a very generous subsidy for such a small group of members. I also appreciate what the Club is trying to achieve in terms of representation but still. The GBR is also an event that is receiving a Club subsidy but it is an established Club weekend away and this year there are 55 Club members participating.

It would prove useful for the future to be able to extend some generosity in support of this initiative, as this is the very first time that the Club is putting a much greater effort towards the promotion and organisation of an international event, and after all there has been a very strong demand to spend more funds on races at the AGM, completely unjustifiable but nevertheless this was an opinion expressed at the AGM and it was apparently endorsed by others present there. This initiative could be considered a bit like a marketing promotion for the forthcoming events, as the Club needs to be thinking ahead when it comes for example to the EuroGames event being hosted by Cardiff in 2027, so it would seem as an investment for the future, we build on it now, though it is obviously not just for the sake of this year's event, as through this subsidy we are hoping to be able to incentivise members for the forthcoming ones.

On the other hand we also would wish to avoid creating a precedent, where members are expecting a subsidy every time they register for a race. I don't think there should be a subsidy for the Cardiff event, for example, considering the proximity to London. It is wonderful that

members are focused on running and racing and our role is to encourage them but the Club can't and will not sponsor every race, even if it becomes LFR endorsed.

Do these members who have already signed up for the event are actually expecting a Club subsidy or is this going to be a really nice surprise to them?

There are actually no expectations on behalf of those who have demonstrated their interest.

It makes sense to offer a small subsidy, as all participants would have gotten a discount through the EGLSF affiliation and this affiliation would have been paid by LFR. This was discussed and decided a few months ago by the 2023/2024 Committee on whether the Club would be willing to pay for the Club affiliation to EGLSF, and if there would have been a fair amount of interest from membership, and the Committee agreed to pay for this affiliation, which would have gotten members the same discount of €20. Accordingly, I would be very much in favour of the opinion that has already been mentioned, of suggesting a subsidy of £20 per person, as this amount is also much more justifiable and easier to defend to membership.

If we offer every member interested to attend the event a subsidy of £20, we are saving a great amount of money as a club and it is also preferable then paying the EGLSF affiliation because we are subsidising each member individually, so it feels much more personalised.

Discussion on the logistics, creation of a WhatsApp group, recommending to members to start booking their accommodation, etc.

Discussion on the Big Half Entries

As we are still discussing races, just to let you know that this year LFR has received the smallest number of community entries compared to all the previous years that we received entries for the event. We started with 250 entries five years ago and the number of entries has been progressively diminishing ever since due to the huge general interest in running and to the number of other clubs that benefit from the community entries scheme, which has also increased. There is now a cap of 100 entries per community group and only after a lot of discussions and several emails putting pressure from my side did the organisers decide to allocate LFR another extra 20 entries. This year it was a sort of blessing in disguise because the International Trip is taking place on the same weekend, as this means that another 120

members or so can race in Budapest as part of the Club Championships but next year we may have an issue. I am already predicting and assuming that we will not be able to share any entries with other FR UK clubs, as there will not be enough entries for LFR in the first place and it will be a stampede among LFR in trying to secure an entry. So I am just letting everyone know more than a year in advance, and in particular the RS, in case you might consider coming up with a plan B (CBP).

Even if we manage to get 100 entries for next year, it will still be among the largest numbers of participants for a Club Championships event, if not the largest, so it will still be good. I can see your point of view and accordingly entries will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and members are naturally welcome to get their own entry, as in a regular paid entry, of which I am sure there will still be enough. There is a specific number of community entries but this does not exclude members from buying a regular entry.(ER)

It's just that there is a huge financial difference between a community and a regular entry and frankly I do not believe that members will buy one just so that they may participate at the event as part of the LFR Club Championships..

Publicity Updates (P&C S)

Just one reiteration on our part to please respect the Saturday deadline for the ebulletin. The deadline is closing every Saturday at 5pm and we would very much appreciate it if we would all try and stick to the guidelines. There is just a short window remaining open specifically for race results, as some events take place on a Sunday, but this is just an exception to the rule and just for the race results. Everything else should be reaching us within the deadline, unless previous one-off arrangements have been taken and agreed.

Social Activities Update (SS)

In regards to the post Pride social, we have already placed a booking on behalf of LFR at the Crown and the Two Chairmen, from 2.30 pm.

Discussions on collecting the wristbands and on following the pre-march meetings scheduled by the event organisers.

Discussion and allocation of different tasks among various Committee members.

Suggestion to engage Daniel Brittle, who has always been extremely helpful and is very efficient in terms of organisation and who has had previous experience in organising the event for at least two years.

It is formally acknowledged and minuted hereby that the Club Committee wishes to express their most sincere thanks and genuine gratitude to GH for having contacted the Pride organisers and apologised to them for having missed the Pride registration deadline and for having thus saved the Pride March for LFR this year, by having been able to obtain an out of deadline registration and a further allocation of wristband to the Club.

In view of not having been able to promptly register LFR for the Pride event this year, and in view of the fact that this is not the first time that the Pride registration deadline has been missed by a Committee officer, it is suggested that the event should come from next year under the responsibility of the Co-Presidents, who will be the LFR officers responsible for timely making the application on behalf of the Club and also responsible for the collection of wristbands and for attending the on-line briefings relative to the event.

The Committee is in full agreement of the above very sensible rationalisation, as the event's organisational aspect has certainly not benefited by being split in between the SS and the P&CS. There will be an action to initiate the procedure of the 2025 Pride March at the February 2025 RCM and the organisational side of the event will also be coordinated by the current Co-Presidents, who are still going to be in office at the time of the application for all walking groups.

There is going to be through the ebulletin and well in advance a crystal clear communication to all LFR participants of the 2024 Pride March that every person participating at the March with LFR will have to be a paid members of the Club and also of being required to wear the Club's existing red vest, for reasons of uniformity and visibility. Members will not be allocated a wrist band if they do not fulfil the first requirement and they will not be able to participate at the March on the day if they are not going to fulfil the second obligation of wearing the official Club vest.

Discussion on the proposal of the LFR Walk

As it was mentioned during the inaugural Committee meeting, the proposal is to launch a monthly social walk. This is going to be a no-alcohol involved event, as very often there is an increased use of alcohol and addictive substances to manage anxiety and depression and members of the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to develop and have mental health problems in combination with the above. The suggestion is to launch this initiative starting from Sunday the 30th June, which is the day after the Pride March, meeting at 2pm at Embankment and from there go for a walk of about one hour and then go and have a coffee somewhere, so that participants may have the opportunity of some more socialising. The idea is for new runners to come and meet LFR members informally and for LFR members to get to know new runners, who could become potential Club members in the near future, without having to run, as there will be no run involved. This walk will be providing a soft start to the Club, members who happen to feel lonely on a Sunday, or may have nothing better to do, or are injured and going through a period where they can't run and they feel that they are not participating to the Club events, they will naturally be very welcome to join the walk.

It is my understanding that we are going to be using the ebulletin to reach out to Club members but have you considered how you are going to reach out to those who are not members yet and do not have access to the ebulletin? (GH)

No, but I was thinking of using the LFR website. (AH)

If I were to make a suggestion in regards to the above, I would like to suggest using Meetup, as it is a simple and free platform and gives one the possibility to monitor numbers and also to have an idea of who is planning on attending an event, as people have to have registered with the platform in advance of attending an event and thus have to create profiles and share their contact details with an event organiser, which could prove useful for reasons of safety, of monitoring number and also for following up after the walk, if they wish to become members. Meetup also sends automatic reminders and such, so it is overall a useful platform for such a purpose. I am happy to support AH in this and help to create an event together on Meetup and then take it from there. (CBP)

There will be a trial period, naturally, as with all new LFR events, and if this is successful, then it will become a regular occurrence, taking place on one Sunday per month, where members and non-members will be meeting for a walk and a coffee afterwards (AH).

GH officially welcomes GR to the Committee and to her first RCM.

Membership Update (MS)

Thank you for the warm welcome, it makes me very happy to be able to join this Committee meeting. It needs to be mentioned that taking over the role of MS has been a daunting task which I have only been able to bring forward thanks to the excellent handover provided by GH and his constant support and advice.

You will be pleased to know that the Club currently has 579 members with valid subscriptions, which is a very good number to start the club year. There are about 95 ex-members who have not responded to any of the emails that I have sent out to inform me whether they are planning to actually renew their memberships with LFR or not, so I am a little bit hesitant on how to proceed in this case.

I have been also able to renew the EA memberships and there are 579 members who have been registered with EA for the new club year, I have had the opportunity of processing some really large payments, on the EA portal are 635 names and there are still about 117 members showing as outstanding, but it naturally depends on whether these people will decide in the end to join LFR or not.

Committee is enormously appreciative of GR's incredible efforts, as being only a month and a half into the new club year she has managed to be way ahead of the game and to process with such speed and efficiency such a huge number of memberships.

Discussions on the use of WebCollect and on the use of the EA portal.

It needs to be mentioned that WebCollect and the EA portal are two non-compatible systems and the best way to describe any interaction with either is a nightmare. I completely understand that this is not the right moment to bring this subject to your consideration but something definitely needs to be done, in terms of improving the registration process, the Club needs to take the responsibility of implementing some measures which will facilitate and alleviate the registration task because as we are going ahead in time, the Club will become even larger and the difficulties are not going to evaporate but they are just going to be multiplied. In consequence, we all need to have a proper discussion at some point on how to move forward and there will have to be taken some relative measures.

Co-Presidents

D&I Sub Committee Update

The D&I SCo currently consists of Paul Gorczynski, Stephen Turnock, Tom Holmes, Emma McEwen, Eva Kucich, Hazel Reade, Kat Forrest, Sarah Flanagan and Anish Wickremasinghe.

The Committee wishes to thank AH for doing such a fabulous job in the meantime acting as the liaison person between the D&I sco and the Club Committee and also in facilitating and hosting the introductory meeting of the D & I SCo, after which meeting the subcommittee will be continuing on its own and will report from time to time to the Club Committee on its progress.

The D&I subcommittee had their first meeting yesterday, Tuesday the 14th, and they happen to have four questions for the Club Committee.

These questions are as follows: What level of autonomy does the subcommittee have to make and implement a change? Does the subcommittee have a budget? How do the Committee see the Club, as a community or as a competitive entity? and finally, What is the capacity of the subcommittee?

There are first some clarifications given in regards to the questions above and the Committee discusses on the subcommittee's remit and offers responses to the above questions and further clarifications on the role of the subcommittee to be taken into consideration.

Action to be taken: GH is kindly requested to please undertake the task of responding to the D&I SCO on behalf of the Club Committee and answering the questions above.

Financial Management Report

Hopefully you have all had the time to go through the document which has been circulated in advance of this meeting, so I would suggest that we all discuss each point separately and finalise a decision on that specific point before moving on to the next one, as this seems to me the simplest way of dealing with the subject.

We have already discussed and agreed to Recommendation Nr. 2, and we had an initial discussion regarding Recommendation Nr. 1. which is relative to the dual authorisation, requiring the knowledge and consent of two Committee members to sign off all payments over a certain value. In order to improve this further, at least three Committee members should be considered as signatories, in order to speed up the authorisation process, in case one of the other Committee members happens at the time to be unavailable. This has been

discussed and agreed that it should be applicable for all large payments over a certain amount, though not for all LFR payments, as it becomes a time-consuming process, requesting Committee authorisation for every single Club payment or for every time small funds are released for a certain LFR purpose.

The above is also relative to Clause 34 of the Club Constitution, according to which cheques have to be signed by and electronic payments need to be authorised by the CT or by one of the two co-Presidents. The Club is rarely if ever using any cheques nowadays but there is already the implication that the two Co- Presidents are involved as responsible and may be best placed to action this, so instead of having the CT and one of the two Co-Presidents we will be having the CT and both of the Co-Presidents becoming aware of any such transactions.

Recommendations 1, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 are essentially for the consideration of the Committee as a whole, to be discussed amongst us and to make a decision on the long-term accounts-management policies, whereas Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 are essentially for the consideration of the CT, but for the Committee to discuss and in the end also to approve.

The Recommendation Nr 2 is relative to an important update due to take place each year and at the beginning of the new club year so that all access and admin rights to the Lloyds Club accounts reflect as responsible and co-signatories the Co-Presidents and the Club Treasurer of each year, and this has been actioned for this club year and we should make sure that only officers relevant to the each year's Committee have access to the LFR account.

Recommendation Nr 3 admonishes that the bank reconciliation is performed monthly and reconciling items cleared in a timely way. The Committee discusses and agrees on this recommendation.

In regards to the Club kit and relevant to Recommendation Nr 7, which is about reinstating the accounting management for LFR kit costs, this has already been reinstated. Historically, stock or inventory accounting has been used for all kit sales, and when kit is bought for stock it is not put through costs in income and expenditure but into the inventory on the balance sheet. When a vest is individually sold, then the income comes in and a cost is released from the balance sheet to the income and expenditure account, so that the cost of the vest reflects what has been sold. This has the additional benefit in that a stock count can be conducted and compared to the value of inventory in the accounts, which guards against any kit theft or loss.

This was not meticulously followed for the club year 2023/24 but it has been implemented now and we all need to consider that when the new Club kit design process has come to an end and the new kit is ready and outsourced, the above process will not be required, so this recommendation is valid until the existing kit has been sold.

The CT agrees to the above and the Committee approves.

Recommendation Nr 8 is about writing an accounting policy for the Club and I happen to be in full agreement of the fact that creating an LFR Accounting Policy is nothing but an excellent idea as it will prove a useful document, setting out how different transactions are to be recorded, so that every CT goes through it and knows what needs to be done every year throughout the whole year and that this policy is also updated accordingly, as a number of things change over time and also new things are introduced in order to make a lot of the financial processes as simple and as practical as possible, so creating a flexible document would be to each of the CT and to the Club's benefit. It would be useful to start creating a draft by putting things together and recording some of these processes, then send it to Andrew Corti, Warren Swart and Alex Darsley for their consideration and whether they may have something to add and then finally share it with the Committee for any discussions and the final approval.

It would also prove enormously useful if we may have the May balance sheet circulated around among Committee members and also if we were to have the monthly balance being shared before each of the RCM, so that every Committee member may attend the RCM better informed on financial matters.

Action to be taken: The CT is kindly requested to please take into consideration and action both the above.

Recommendation Nr 11 requires that the Committee should give thought to whether ideally each CT should have book-keeping or accountancy qualifications and / or experience, and if not whether to source some qualified and / or experienced support from an off-Committee volunteer. Considering the fact that volunteers are anyway difficult to find and especially for the Committee, I feel that although it could prove useful for a CT to have some qualifications, ultimately it should not be considered as a necessary requirement. LFR has not had an issue in finding an appropriate candidate for the role of CT, and it has always been taken forward by volunteers that have a financial and accounting understanding, members that have an

interest in finance and some relative experience are those that usually come forward to cover the CT role, so making it a specific requirement looks a bit of an overkill.

The Committee votes against Recommendation Nr 11.

Recommendation 12: The Committee should ensure adherence to clause 34 of the Club Constitution in regards to the payment of large sums. This has already been discussed and to my knowledge has also been followed. Sometimes, when it comes to the obvious, such as the large sums paid to England Athletics for example, where there is a perfect correspondence between the invoice to be paid and the payment, it's still important to have the above followed and implemented, so at this point there is no decision to make but more of a recommendation for the Committee to take note of this.

The Committee takes note of Recommendation Nr 12.

And the final Recommendation Nr 13, that the Committee should consider whether the LFR annual accounts should be subject to verification by someone suitably qualified and / or experienced, such as an accountant. I believe that it would prove very useful to have a person looking at the LFR final accounts and also that someone ought to be looking at the Club accounts at least once a year, for all intents and purposes, but I do not really see the point that this person needs to be someone outside of LFR and that this needs to be stipulated by LFR Constitution.

Having an independent reviewer is always something that could prove useful, having someone looking into the LFR accounts from an outsider's point of view means that they could see certain things differently and also make suggestions that certain things could be done differently and in a more efficient way. I am not adverse to the idea but I do not find it as applicable in having this included in the LFR Constitution. This is a serious financial matter but it also requires a certain flexibility, to take place regularly but not on specifically stipulated dates, it does not have to become a formality for us to follow through.

I think that we all agree that arrangements shall have to be made, at least once a year for someone that ought to look at the accounts, as the Club becomes larger, financial amounts follow the number of members, so they are always increasing, it could also prove too much for someone who is a volunteer and acting as the CT, as committed as they may.

I think having someone in support of the CT will prove as something extremely positive in the long terms, to know that someone competent and experienced is available when and if needed, at least once a year, but I do not see how this could be included in the Club Constitution, as we first need to see how to implement this, what is the procedure that is required and then make it formal, and as we want to be more flexible, I agree to the role of the independent reviewer, who could be appointed by the Committee, as they should be independent to the Committee and in particular to the CT, but I don't agree that this role should become an actual role and that it should be incorporated into the LFR Constitution. It could prove too complicated to have it incorporated in the LFR Constitution formally.

The Committee takes into consideration what has been said on the subject and decides accordingly, to exercise the opportunity of a yearly check of the Club accounts by an reviewer independent to the Committee but without having such a role formally incorporated into the Club Constitution.

EA & Trans Eligibility in Races

To those of the Committee who might be new to this subject, England Athletics banned from racing in the female category from the 1st of April of 2023 all athletes which were born male but have transitioned to female, this measure does not affect male trans athletes. If someone's gender is different from the sex they were observed at birth, then they are currently not allowed to compete in the female category. They are able to compete in the female category only if they have been approved by UK Athletics and proven that they are complying with the World Athletics Regulations. The above measure applies to both amateur and elite level runners. This subject has started to be discussed by the 2023/ 24 Committee around November of 2023, we reached out to other FR club in the UK with the intent of writing a letter to EA, some have replied back, others haven't acknowledged at all our reaching out and we are currently at the point of discussing on how to move forward. It is very difficult to have a collective view in this matter on our Club, as we have not had a survey, and also it has proved very difficult for other FR clubs as well. One suggestion that I would like to bring forward at this point is that any letter sent by LFR to EA on this matter ought to be sent as signed by the whole committee, and not just by the Co-Presidents (GH)

I believe that we need to take a position on behalf of the Club which then we need to share with membership on the ebulletin.

The Committee has to make decisions, we are the elected representatives to speak on behalf of membership. We have been elected for this purpose.

If there is a feeling that the Committee should be lobbying EA, then this is also something that we have to do.

The same rules govern both elite and social runners but it is not the same amount of problems for other clubs as it is for LFR; LFR is an LGBTQ+ club and we have a responsibility to our community as well.

EA have never had a N/B category, do you think that we should include this in the letter? Although an incredibly valid argument, it might complicate an already complicated situation. It might be best to arrive at a reasonable resolution first on the trans subject before we decide to move forward on any other relative subject.

Inaction on our part is reprehensible, there is a certain unwillingness among Committee members to make a stand, we were inactive in the past club year and this has led to lots of unpleasantness and to members leaving the Club. So, we need to act differently this year.

I think that at this point we have to be prepared to upset members, we need to accept this as a possibility, almost as a fact, that whichever direction we are going to take, someone from the LFR will be really upset anyway, no matter which direction we go.

Action to be taken: GH is kindly requested to please circulate the existing draft among Committee members

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to send out a DP as to establish the date for the next RCM