



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 Secretary: Stephen Tomaszewski (ST)
Social Secretary: Andrew Harrison (AH)

Friday 7th March 2025
RCM Agenda

Financial Updates (CT)

Financial Report 2024/2025
LFR Annual Budget 2025/26, discussions & approval

Races Update (RS)

Publicity Updates (P&C S)

Social Activities Update (SS)

Membership Update (MS)

Club Secretary

2025 AGM (finalisation and details adjustment)
Short updates

Co-Presidents

AOB

Chair: WP

Minutes: CBP

Apologies: ST, TW, DB

Financial Updates (CT)

With the current state of financial affairs being what is is, not showing any significant signs of an immediate pickup, with the economy being in a recession and with many people around us struggling, it makes it even more important for an organisation such as LFR to be able to show understanding and support towards its members and to be able to actively

demonstrate a financial inclusion by planning to keep the membership fees frozen to the already affordable last year's rates for this coming club year, thus enabling and ensuring that members may enjoy the services the Club provides regardless of their financial background. The standard waged membership is £56, which could be calculated as a pound and about seven pence per week, and we are able to offer a reduced membership coming at £35 for those unwaged. This is a responsible and sustainable financial practice that at the same time does not financially damage LFR as affordability and accessibility have always been two of the values that the Club has been endorsing since its inception.

Over the past few years LFR has been very lucky and has had the privilege of enjoying some astutely and skillfully negotiated rates with most of the venues that LFR is currently using as changing facilities. Such negotiated fees have allowed the Club to continue using these venues weekly at an affordable rate, which has undoubtedly contributed to the Club having been able to maintain, and to a certain extent increase, its financial reserves at a very healthy level.

The Club reserves have currently been distributed between a number of different accounts and, depending on the account, they can be withdrawn in circumstances of emergency giving a specific notice in advance that is different for each of the accounts.

It is absolutely great that the Club has the financial potential to meet emergencies though it might prove much more prudent to have most of the subsidies planned to take place throughout the following year to become based on an ad hoc Committee decision. By all means let us endorse a calendar of events, races and activities spread throughout the coming club year and the relative subsidy for each of them, though it would make me and potentially many of our members feel much more comfortable if every subsidy were to be considered, discussed and in particular confirmed closer to each of these events, and above all based on the Club's financial circumstances at the particular moment that the subsidy is being discussed.

I agree with the above suggestion and I also think that the Club subsidies should come forward as more general financial projections and not always that event-specific and in advance. There are throughout the club year a number of events that have been favoured with a historic subsidy and these represent milestones in the races and events calendar. Nevertheless the question which should always be asked before each of these events is whether the Club is able to afford a subsidy for each of these event at that particular moment in time.

The Committee discusses further on the subject and finds such suggestions as very sensible and agrees to the principle discussed and suggested above.

In regards to the general end of the year accounts presentation, the CT is still working on them, as it is a very time-consuming task and although not an overly complicated one, it nevertheless presents its own intricacies.

In the meantime the Committee has reviewed the provisional budget that was circulated in advance of the meeting and certain modifications have already been suggested to the CT; these changes will be assessed and confirmed in due course.

Action to be taken: The Club Treasurer is kindly requested to please consider the changes suggested by the Club Committee and come back to them in due course.

A summary of the accounts for the club year that has just gone is as follows:

The total amount of the LFR reserves is £98,555.14. In details, the Current Account Balance is £53,493.98, the Instant Access Saver Balance is £19,762.76, the 32 Day Notice Saver Balance is currently at £15,149.15 and the 95 Day Notice Saver Balance is £10,149.25.

The total outgoings during the previous month come to £21,391.60, with the most significant outgoings being as follows:

£5405 to Champion Systems for the new vest bulk order.

£6796.01 to Michael Rutherford for International Trip expenses.

£2743.17 to Ashley Harwood for International Trip expenses.

£2694.62 to Chris Tibbett for International Trip expenses.

£500 to Ellis Tustin for the Queera Lynn drag performance at the LFR Birthday Party.

The total LFR income in the previous month has been £12,732.09

Just for clarification purposes, the International Trip subcommittee funds all of the IT activities from the money that members are paying out for each of the IT, the IT finances are entirely based on the revenue coming from the IT ticket sales.

Would it seem rational to you all and appropriate under the circumstances if the Club Committee were to ask the IT subcommittee to please send us from time to time some more information on their finances? After all, the Club is reimbursing members of the IT subcommittee that have paid in advance and on behalf of the Club for various IT expenses, thus the Club is in all the above cases acting as a much needed safety net. And given the amount of money that is being spent and reimbursed, it wouldn't seem irrational to wish to regularly see some more detailed accounts of the IT.

The Club Committee is indeed under the right to know the financial situation of the ITSC, the ITSC is not an independent entity such as the Pride Run is and when there is an unfortunate incident in which something goes financially wrong, as it happened with the IT to Liisbon, it is the Club who has to pick up the bill, so it is important that the Club Committee actively demonstrates a major involvement and interest in the IT finances, as we actually happen to be fully responsible for each one of the IT as well.

I am under the impression that many of the current IT subcommittee members are planning on stepping down after the Elche IT, for some of them this is going to be the third IT in a row that they have organised and coordinated, and it takes more than six months of preparations to have a successful IT outcome, so it could prove extremely helpful and useful to ask from those standing down if they could create a document of their role responsibilities and duties. Each member of the IT subcommittee is assigned to a different section of the trip, someone does the accommodation bookings, another person the race registrations, etc, so there are different roles covered by different people and having a document that describes certain organisation details for each of them could prove incredibly helpful to those who will be inheriting the roles in the future.

In addition to having a series of documents ready for the handover and before everyone steps down, it would also seem reasonable and advisable to have a detailed as possible report on the IT finances as well.

The Committee fully approves both the above.

Action to be taken: GH is kindly requested to please liaise with the ITSC in view of what has been discussed and agreed above.

Races Update (RS)

We are currently in the process of compiling the majority of the Club Championship races, which will be presented at the Club Championships event in April.

Social Activities Update (SS)

Everything is ready for the post AGM social, the venue has been booked for this coming Friday from 8.30 pm onwards and I will leave the AGM a bit earlier to make sure everything goes well, though as mentioned at the previous meeting, everything concerning the event is under control.

Again to confirm that Comptons has been booked for the post London Marathon social event and there is a £800 minimum spend, which although confident that is the Club is going to reach it, we should nevertheless make sure that both LFR and visiting IFR are aware of this and thus place their drink orders at the bar upstairs and that their expenditure is going towards the LFR minimum spend.

Action to be taken: The Co Presidents are kindly requested to please follow up with the Crown and the Two Chairmen for the post Pride March social

Action to be taken: CBP is kindly requested to please follow up with the price and further info on the suggestion of having large balloons attached to the LFR members marching at the Pride March.

And as we are sorting out some items relative to the Pride March, it is also worth mentioning, in addition to making membership aware in due course that both the new and the old LFR vest have been registered with EA, they are both official LFR vests and that both can be worn regardless at the 2025 Pride March.

Membership Update (MS)

You will be pleased to know that there are 710 registered members at the moment, with some more payments currently pending confirmation and which will be confirmed in the following days.

In addition and as you might have all seen and hopefully received, the renewal email was sent out five days ago and as you might have noticed there was also a reminder to everyone that it is the members' responsibility to ensure that their fees are paid and that all members who haven't renewed their LFR membership by the end of May will be unceremoniously deleted from WebCollect, FB and the ebulletin.

There will naturally be lots and lots of relative payments that will be going through in the following weeks, and members have been duly admonished to check their WebCollect details if they are up to date, whether their bank details have changed, to double check if the auto renewal is still on as a function, to disable the auto renewal if they have already and unnecessarily paid, but there will always be members who have not changed their status from waged to unwaged and so forth, some others which they will have never received the

auto renewal email and several other issues, so I am already prepared in advance for a couple of busy months.

It could also be possible that between 50 to 100 members may and will cancel their direct debit without bothering to inform the Membership Secretary of that, the emails that I receive informing me that members will discontinue with LFR are extremely sporadic, as that's not something that's generally prioritised among LFR members.

Discussion on the individual athlete EA membership and the Club EA membership

The main benefits for an England Athletics club affiliation is access to club support services, such as free legal advice for certain subjects and free resources for certain EA programmes, plus the coaching training and the welfare training they deliver. The most important is of course the benefit of public liability insurance for all the Club activities, not just the Club runs and training sessions, for example the Committee meeting that we are holding at the moment as Club officers is considered a Club activity and we are covered up to fifty million pounds for any occurrence. The annual club affiliation fee is completely different and separate from the individual athlete registration fees, which is also annually renewed. The club affiliation is for LFR as an entity, as a running and triathlon club, and this comes at £200 for the whole year, the individual athlete EA registration fees are £20 for the 2025/26 club year.

Can someone be an LFR member and not pay their registration to EA?

They definitely can but then they will be considered as a social member, meaning that if they are not individually registered with EA then they will not be able to compete on behalf of LFR at EA affiliated events, such as the XC for example. And there are certain other small perks such as the Ea races affiliation discount.

Will they be able to compete at non EA affiliated events?

I guess they would as in most events there is the registration option for those having the EA affiliation, which always include the £2 discount, and the non EA affiliated athletes.

But if someone is a Club member and is not affiliated to EA, will they be covered by the EA insurance policy?

The will be covered by the general club insurance policy, as an LFR member. Coming back to the question that I was asked before, the individual England Athletics membership which is paid every year by the individual athlete is not strictly necessary for an insurance cover, as all LFR members are covered by the general EA club insurance policy, if that makes sense.

That means that there could potentially and hypothetically be two different LFR memberships, EA registered and non EA registered?

Correct, there potentially and hypothetically could. If an LFR member does not want to be personally affiliated to EA, then they could opt not to be personally and as an individual affiliated to the organisation but they would still be indirectly affiliated to EA through the LFR club affiliation.

I was under the impression that the individual athlete fees of £19, which this year are going to be £20, are being paid towards EA for insurance cover.

The insurance cover could be provided by the LFR club insurance. The fees paid by all of us individually allow each LFR member to have a URN, which is needed for entering events,

allows access to races and allows registered runners to receive discounted entry to affiliated events

I feel that the Committee will need to revisit the EA insurance cover issue and whether there could be a separate offer of Club members not being directly affiliated with EA.

Action to be taken: CBP Is kindly requested to please share with GR and GH the EA insurance cover documents

Club Secretary

London Landmarks Half

LFR has been invited to become part of 2025 LLHM finisher t-shirt reveal.

The race organisers revealed their new t-shirt design at the end of February and now they wish to follow up with some photos of the t-shirt being modelled by one of their community groups. And this is where LFR comes in, as the aim is to show the t-shirt in action, on actual runners, and also to highlight the community partnership with LFR and the work of LFR. This has been scheduled to take place on Saturday the 15th in Victoria Park and the Committee will be kept updated.

London Marathon

LFR has been invited to become part of the team on the Stride with Pride stand at the 2025 LM Show at the London Excel from Wednesday 23 to Saturday 26 April and to help coordinate an evening 5k shake-out run along the river for LGBTQ+ runners coming to the show. I have already contacted Matt Hass in regards to the shake out run and we will also try to coordinate a number of LFR runners attending the event, in order to be able to make a positive impression and represent the Club at the expo.

In addition I made some suggestions to the LM organisers in an attempt of trying to improve Rainbow Row with some posters in order to be able to transmit to bystanders some important LGBTQ+ messages as having just rainbows is absolutely lovely and obviously helps in terms of visibility but having the opportunity to communicate some important messages that are very much related to current LGBTQ+ issues could be much more empowering to the community.

Also, I am in the negotiating process of adding LFR to the LM human-focused short film series and will keep you updated on that. It will be a short film involving those who have volunteered at the London Marathon over the past years.

Motiv Sports

Motiv Sports loved my suggestion of having LFR volunteering together with the Queer Club and we will be stationed along Aid Station 1. There is going to be a social event of the two clubs together after the race and as there have been lots of difficulties in securing a venue in the area, we might go for a picnic, which is very egalitarian and uncomplicated and some more details on that will follow.

FOTY & NOTY

The Committee goes through the individual recommendations as have been emailed by those of the members that took the trouble to vote for the two awards and accordingly confirms the 2024 FOTY & NOTY.

Co-Presidents

General discussion on the ebulletin

How is the ebulletin used by membership, how many of the Club members actually read it, how much of it is it read, is it fit for purpose at its current state, how does the ebulletin length and the plethora of items impact members' interest and attention.

Discussion on the potential of using other platforms of communication in support of the ebulletin.

A more detailed discussion on the ebulletin, the current communication issues and current extremely limited Club visibility when compared to other running clubs that have much smaller membership, will take place once the new P&C secretary has been elected.

Action to be taken: WP is kindly requested to please consider creating a social media strategy, in coordination with the new P&C Secretary

The Club definitely needs to increase its visibility, not because LFR needs to attract more members but it needs to increase its visibility in terms of promotion and because the Club should showcase all the wonderful activities and events that are in place and are regularly being organised. This is about drawing positive attention to the Club for the sake of the Club itself and its existing members, as it doesn't really feel at all that we are Europe's largest LGBTQ+ running club.

The Club has 710 members and there could be some hidden talents among these members that we don't happen to know about. It would be good to start looking for members who are knowledgeable, experienced and passionate and above all else are willing to take on a new social media promotion role that would be focused on exploring and using social media towards achieving further visibility.

Would the Club be willing to invest any Club funds in having an outside consultant, a professional hired to provide specialised expertise and advice?

The Committee has never really declined any suggestion a priori and we are always open to new ideas. Having said that, I would rather explore first what the Club itself might be able to offer in terms of resources before hiring an outsider, as often members understand in a different way the Club dynamics.

Discussion on the LFR Twitter Account

There are currently valid reasons for wishing to deactivate the LFR twitter account. Many LGBTQ+ organizations are deactivating their Twitter accounts due to concerns about the platform's safety and the rise of hate speech and misinformation, particularly after Elon Musk's acquisition and policy changes. There have been discussions on that subject among the other UK FR clubs, most of the CS that participated in the exchange of texts on the issue mentioned that their respective club account is there, still existing but completely deactivated, and displaying a message that is directing people to obtain information on their other platforms of communication; if there is a good moment to deactivate the LFR twitter account, then this is it.

The Committee unanimously agrees on the above suggestion.

Discussion on D & I

The Committee reflected on the specific question of women's participation in LFR, and discussed the issue at some length.

I love that members are very passionate about the issue of increasing the number of women in the Club. I have personally found that the Club has been wonderful to me, from the very beginning everyone has been welcoming and very supportive, I have never felt excluded as a woman to participate in any of the Club's activities, nevertheless I do realise that a reduced female representation might be an issue to some members.

Sorry Gwen for putting you on the spot just because of your gender but do you think that there are specific barriers to gay women in London that prevent them from coming and joining a running club?

This is a very difficult question as joining a running club is not a choice that every woman would be having. It is true that running clubs are often perceived as male-dominated spaces, and there could be some safety concerns, though this is not an argument that could be applied to LFR. Again, there could be some issues of discrimination, as there could be pressure for women to perform at a certain level, and again this is not the case with LFR. I joined LFR about six years ago and it has been one of the best decisions that I've made but many other women would have probably preferred registering either with their local running club or with a female-only running club instead of an LGBTQ+ running club. In regards to the current gender imbalance, the Club needs to ask, whether we want more women in the Club because this would make the LFR women feel better about themselves, or do we want more women in the Club because this is something that would make members feel better about themselves.

Based on how well launching about two years ago some focus groups has worked for the New Kit Subcommittee in terms of being able to gather a rather representative opinion on how members would like to see and visualised their new vest, it might prove equally beneficial in terms of results in holding informal focus groups with female runners at Regent's Park and in Victoria Park and see where that goes. This is something very important as the Club does need to first check on how women see diversity and what they would like to see within LFR from their own point of view, an LFR female perspective.

I appreciate all these conversations that have been going on lately and all the concern and I appreciate the fact that some members are very passionate about increasing the number of women in LFR but fact is that no one has actually ever asked us, the women in the Club, and sorry for speaking on behalf of all the LFR women at the moment but I happen to be the only woman in the Committee, and no one has ever asked us what we really want for ourselves within the Club and how do we really see ourselves as members of LFR.

Based on what Gwen has just said, do you think that holding some kind of informal verbal survey among the female members of the Club would serve the purpose of getting to know what the LFR women actually want from the Club?

We could ask the diversity team, or what the diversity team will become in the following months, as I don't really see the team progressing further under its current format, to hold not a quantitative but a qualitative survey, as it is more about the LFR women's opinions and experiences than anything else, and based on that short survey, use the responses collected

to also increase the number of women in the Club, along all else that might come forward from that survey.

Are there any clear indications in improving the diversity team and what actions should we take as the Committee towards that purpose?

In my opinion just the fact that we are currently referring to the Diversity and inclusion SubCommittee as the Diversity Team is an excellent start. We have also tried to avoid using the term committee and subcommittee for the 30th Anniversary Celebrations team and it has worked much better for the team itself, as the informality of the term somehow manages to remove the pressure, thus making all members of the team bonding and performing better. I think that one of the outcomes that came out from Paul's presentation was that the Committee should be directly involved with the diversity team and that there should definitely be offered guidance and stewardship from the Committee through a liaison Committee member in a direct way.

I think this will have to be, by default, either Wojciech or myself, or both, and in consequence I would like to suggest that given the importance of the matter that the subject of diversity should become a permanent or semi-permanent agenda item for the forthcoming Committee meetings, with the Co Presidents presenting to the rest of the Committee an update on the progress of the subject every month or every two months accordingly.

Action to be taken: The CS is kindly requested to please accommodate the above suggestion in the forthcoming RCM Agendas throughout the new club year.

One very positive story to put forward is that LFR is not age-stratified whereas the gay community is very much so.

Another outcome that came as a consequence of Paul's intervention on diversity and inclusion was the need for a long-term well-structured strategy and I feel this needs to be among the priorities for the forthcoming Committee. Although this might seem to many very much like a wasted year in terms of diversity and inclusion, at least certain things have been tried, have been put to the test and have not worked, so now at least we now know what does not work and what we think might work better in the future.

GW emphasised her own positive experience in the Club, but recognised that reduced female representation is an issue for some.

Chair: are there specific barriers to gay women in London that prevent them from joining a running club?

GW reflected that running clubs are often perceived as male-dominated spaces, and there could be some safety concerns, though this is not an argument that could be applied to LFR. There could be some issues of discrimination, as there could be pressure for women to perform at a certain level, and again this is not the case with LFR. GW acknowledged that many women might prefer registering either with their local running club or with a female-only running club instead of an LGBTQ+ running club. GW noted that the Club needs to reflect on the reasons why it is pursuing this issue.

GH noted that focus groups have worked for the Kit Subcommittee in terms of being able to

gather a representative opinion and might prove equally useful in the D&I context.

GW agreed that LFR women's opinions had not as yet been sought. It was noted in discussion that an informal verbal survey among the female members of the Club might also be useful in this regard.

GH proposed that a new diversity team be established, to gather qualitative data and oversee any focus groups. This would replace and supersede the current subcommittee. Also, that the Club should pursue a number of practical suggestions made by Club members.

Chair: How should we proceed?

CB-P noted (1) the comparable strengths of the 30th anniversary team, as opposed to subcommittee structures, (2) that one of the proposals from the D&I subcommittee's earlier presentation was that the Committee should be directly involved with the diversity team and (3) that guidance and liaison should be offered directly through a Committee member.

GH suggested that (3) should be the Co-Presidents' responsibility.

Action to be taken: Co-Presidents to liaise with relevant Club members on gathering LFR women's perspectives and pursuing practical initiatives.

GH proposed that diversity should be a permanent agenda item for forthcoming Committee meetings, with the Co-Presidents updating the Committee on progress.

Action to be taken: The Club Secretary was requested to accommodate the above suggestion in the forthcoming RCM Agendas throughout the new club year.

GH noted the need for a clear long-term strategy and that it should be among the priorities for the incoming Committee.

Noted also that 2024-25 was not a wasted year in terms of diversity and inclusion: certain things have been tried, put to the test and have not worked, so now at least we know what does not work and what we think might work better in the future.

One last thing that I would like to request is to have formally minuted as the last action of this retiring Committee, the Committee's thanks to Andrew H, Stephen T and Eliot R for their services to the Club over the past year.

Action to be taken: Doodle Poll to be sent out for the April meeting