



The Fell Runners Association Limited
Minutes of 2022 Annual General Meeting
Chapel Stile, Langdale, Cumbria | 8th October 2022



Preliminary matters

References below to "articles" refer to the FRA's articles of association ("the Articles") which are linked from the 'Documents' page on the FRA website (<https://fellrunner.org.uk/>).

Attendance and apologies

The annual general meeting ("AGM") of The Fell Runners Association Limited ("the FRA", "the Company") for 2022 was held on the afternoon of 8th October 2022, chaired by Charmian Heaton, outgoing FRA Chairman. The format followed that prescribed by articles 13-21.

The meeting was attended by sixteen (16) members of the FRA. Apologies had been received from 27 other members; the majority of those had submitted a proxy voting form, of which a total of nineteen (19) had been received and verified. The meeting was therefore quorate under article 13. The Secretary thanked all those in attendance, in particular those not otherwise involved with the FRA Committee.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The previous AGM had been held on 9th October 2021 in Langdale Village Hall, Cumbria. The minutes had been circulated to attendees shortly thereafter and had been available for inspection on the FRA website, with no queries having arisen nor amendments made.

Resolution: The motion to approve the minutes of the 2021 AGM was passed unanimously.

Ordinary resolutions

Chairman's report

The Chairman briefly summarised her annual report on FRA matters, which had been made available in full on the FRA website prior to the AGM. With the meeting immediately following the Langdale Horseshoe fell race, the final race in the English Championship season, she particularly emphasised her delight in the return to relative normality after the COVID-19 pandemic which had seen full English Senior and Junior Championships take place.

Amongst the events marking her final year in post, the Chairman mentioned the reunion of founder FRA members in November 2021 and the completion of the FRA's anniversary "50 @ 50" race series as particular highlights. She was pleased to report that the FRA had recently welcomed its 9000th member, who would receive a £100 prize voucher kindly donated by Pete Bland Sports. The Chairman also noted that the FRA finances remained in solid shape despite recording a deficit in 2021, as recorded in the Treasurer's report.

Resolution: The motion to approve the Chairman's report was passed unanimously.

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Treasurer's report and 2021 accounts

The FRA's accounts and balance sheet for 2021 had been made available on the FRA's website prior to the AGM with printed copies being available at the meeting. The FRA Treasurer, Andy Watts, had additionally published a report in the summer 2022 issue of the *Fellrunner* magazine (#133, p18-19).

The Treasurer explained that the FRA's net expenditure for 2021 had been around £12k. This was a significant reversal from the surplus of £32k in 2020 which was largely due to decreased outgoings during the pandemic; some of the 2021 deficit could be ascribed to FRA initiatives to support the return to fell racing. Printing and postage costs for FRA publications had also increased in addition to the one-off costs of producing the tribute supplement celebrating the remarkable life of Pete Bland. The Treasurer additionally reminded the meeting that there had been two major one-off investments in 2021, being new fell coaching modules and the new FRA website, the costs of which together almost amounted to the year's deficit.

Despite recording a deficit, the Treasurer was pleased to report that the FRA maintained a healthy reserve and that there would be no need to raise membership fees for 2023.

Resolution: The motion to approve the accounts for 2021 was passed unanimously.

Appointment of an auditor

The Treasurer explained that owing to the size of the Company, an independent audit was not a legal requirement but nonetheless good practice to ensure financial stability and transparency. Following the retirement of Mike Welford, the Treasurer proposed that Claire Calverley of Northumberland Fell Runners, a trainee accountant and active fell runner, be appointed as auditor of the FRA's 2021 accounts.

Resolution: The motion to approve Claire Calverley as auditor was passed unanimously.

Establishment of co-opted roles

In accordance with article 24, the Chairman proposed to extend by a further year the co-option of James Lowe as Communications Officer and Ian Winterburn as First Aid Co-ordinator, and to co-opt Charmian Heaton into a new role of Commercial Officer. The role of COVID Co-ordinator, previously held by Jamie McIlvenny, was to be discontinued.

Resolution: The motion to approve the three co-opted appointments was passed unanimously.

Election of Officers for 2022-2023

Nominations for Committee positions had been posted on the FRA website along with the meeting agenda, in accordance with articles 22 and 23. The Secretary stated that since all named Committee roles had exactly one nominee (or, in the case of Membership Representatives, three nominees, fewer than the maximum of four), these would be elected unopposed. The full FRA Committee for 2022-23 is included at Appendix 1.

Vote of thanks for outgoing officers

The Chairman thanked everyone that had served on the Committee during her four years as Chairman for their support. She paid particular tribute to Andy Watts, who after ten years' outstanding service was to step down from the FRA Committee in accordance with article 26. The Chairman explained that Andy had held a wide range of FRA positions during that time including Treasurer, Liaison Officer to Athletics Bodies

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and Website Officer, in addition to offering significant assistance with the secretarial and magazine roles and leading several major projects including the new coaching modules and new FRA website. To mark Andy's retirement, the Chairman presented Andy with a wooden bowl hand-turned by the FRA Equipment Officer, Steve Wathall, made of wood taken from a cherry tree in Joss Naylor's garden.

The Chairman also thanked the other departing Committee members, Ricky Parrish (Membership Representative) and Wendy Dodds (Liaison Officer to Athletics Bodies); Wendy was presented with a painting to mark her contribution to the FRA and her long and illustrious fell running career. Wendy reciprocated by making a presentation to the Chairman to thank her on behalf of the Committee and the FRA membership for her immense contribution over the previous four years.

The Chairman concluded by offering her best wishes and support to the new Chairman, Stuart Ferguson (Northumberland Fell Runners), and his new committee.

Informal discussion

Following the AGM an open discussion about fell running took place between all those present, in accordance with article 16. A record of this discussion is published at Appendix 2.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next AGM will be published in due course on the FRA website and in *The Fellrunner* magazine but is likely to be in or around October 2023.

<original signed>

Neil Talbott
FRA Secretary
8th October 2022

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Appendix 1: FRA Committee 2022-23

Following the resolutions passed at the AGM, the FRA Committee for 2022-23 will comprise the following personnel:

Chairman	Stuart Ferguson (Northumberland Fell Runners)
General Secretary	Neil Talbott (Ambleside Athletic Club)
Treasurer	Simon Long (Saltwell Harriers)
Membership Secretary	Patrick McIver (Howgill Harriers)
Fixtures Secretary	Andy McMurdo (Pennine Fell Runners)
Magazine Co-ordinator	David Littler (Bowland Fell Runners)
Race Liaison Officer Lead	Pita Oates (Bowland Fell Runners)
Website Officer	Jamie McIlvenny (Trawden AC)
Environment and Access Officer	John Rawlinson (Dark Peak Fell Runners)
Junior Co-ordinator	Gareth Hardcastle (Mercia Fell Runners)
International Selection Committee Chair	Duncan Richards (Helm Hill Runners)
Coaching and Education Co-ordinator	Nicky Spinks (Dark Peak Fell Runners)
Championships Co-ordinator	Nic Barber (Helm Hill Runners)
Welfare Officer	Ed Gamble (Cheshire Hill Racers)
Liaison Officer to Athletics Bodies	Nic Barber (Helm Hill Runners)
Membership Representatives	Ben Abdelnoor (Ambleside Athletic Club) Scout Adkin (Ambleside Athletic Club) Kelli Roberts (Helm Hill Runners)
Commercial Officer (co-opted)	Charmian Heaton (Cumberland Fell Runners)
Communications Officer (co-opted)	James Lowe (Dark Peak FR)
First Aid Co-ordinator (co-opted)	Ian Winterburn (Dark Peak FR)

Appendix 2: Open discussion about fell running

Land access problems

Edmond Jackson (Ambleside AC) asked about the situation with land access permissions in FRA races. He reported local problems with Box Hill Fell Race on an area of land owned by the National Trust but on which some paths had become overgrown during the COVID-19 pandemic and had not subsequently been cleared. A section of the race route was now impassable as a result which, if not addressed, was likely to lead to re-routing or (more likely) a shortened course. He further commented that the National Trust had said he should not have taken his own initiative as to clearance but have not since performed any maintenance themselves.

The outgoing Chairman, Charmian Heaton, confirmed that problems relating to land access permissions were one of the greatest issues facing the sport. She noted that the dramatic increase in commercial events had led to the marginalisation of fell running in some areas, with both large and small landowners failing to understand the difference between expensive trail races and traditional, non-commercial, fell races. She added that despite the FRA making contributions to causes such as Fix the Fells, communication with major organisations continued to prove challenging, especially in the Peak District, and she stressed the importance of identifying local contacts and fostering those relationships.

The Secretary, Neil Talbott, briefly summarised the discussion on the same topic from the previous AGM. He explained that efforts had been made to liaise with other bodies such as England Athletics and the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) but that relatively little progress had been achieved; it was agreed to renew those efforts and the new FRA Chairman, Stuart Ferguson, offered his assistance.

FRA membership

The FRA was asked whether the continued increase in membership reflected higher participation in the sport or a higher percentage of already active fell runners joining the FRA. The FRA Membership Secretary, Pat McIver, and the outgoing Chairman together responded by stating that both causes were probably partly responsible. They explained that although Race Organisers may be asked by the FRA to provide the member/non-member breakdown for their race, it can prove difficult and time-consuming to obtain accurate figures. Nonetheless, it was felt that the introduction of additional FRA member benefits such as a priority entry window (especially to Championship races, capped at 80% of available entries) and reduced entry fees to some races had certainly contributed to the membership increase.

The Secretary reminded the meeting that the FRA and Race Organisers have an essential duty to ensure that participants in FRA races understand the risks of the races they enter, and to be seen to do so. Failure to achieve this could place the organisation and the sport in a perilous position should a serious incident take place in an FRA race. Evidence from 2018-19 had shown that many runners in FRA races, even those considered amongst the toughest events carrying a greater personal risk, had not even heard of the FRA nor understood the unique nature of the sport. The Secretary explained that this situation had been felt to be unacceptable and that strenuous attempts had since been made to improve matters, with the increased FRA membership reflecting those efforts.

FRA finances

Noting the deficit recorded for 2021, the FRA Treasurer was asked about the size of the FRA's reserve and at what point the Committee would need to consider raising members' subscriptions. In response, the

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Secretary first noted that holding a significant reserve is felt to be prudent to cater for a scenario where the FRA were to face a significant legal case with associated costs and/or where difficulties were encountered with an insurance claim following a major incident.

The Treasurer explained that the last increase in subscriptions had been made when the reserve had declined to around £50k and that in his opinion that remained an appropriate lower limit, possibly adjusted for inflation. He added that the current reserve was in the region of £120k, which was approximately the same as the FRA's total annual expenditure, another useful guide for the size of the reserve. Looking ahead, if the annual deficit were to remain in the region of £10k per year (which was not expected), the Committee felt that a review of subscriptions might be needed in two to three years' time.

Fell running championships

The FRA's Championship Co-ordinator, Nic Barber, was pleased to announce the English and British Championship races for 2023. These were to be announced on the FRA website the following day.

Congratulations were offered to the new English Open Champions, Matt Elkington (Ambleside AC) and Hannah Russell (Helm Hill Runners), following their respective 1st and 2nd places in the Langdale Horseshoe race immediately preceding the meeting.

Cake

The outgoing Chairman asked those present to ensure that the remainder of the tray bakes from Wilf's were consumed. No further restrictions were placed on Wendy Dodds, who, having already been publicly limited to one post-race pie by the Langdale Race Organiser, had made up for this on her arrival at the AGM to the tune of four pieces, though Wendy made it clear that these had comprised just two of each variety.