

Chairman's Report for 2021-2022



This has been the fourth and final year of my tenure as FRA Chairman and I am very proud to have been entrusted with this illustrious position. I have been supported by a fantastic Committee from a wide geographical spread and recruitment of a significant number of younger members has given me much pleasure. There is always change at an AGM and this year we thank Wendy Dodds as she steps down as Liaison Officer to Athletics Bodies with Nic Barber picking up the work with MRAG in addition to his Championship Co-ordinator role.

By far the biggest contribution to the FRA Committee in recent years has been from Andy Watts who joined as Treasurer in 2012. Not content with this significant job, he also picked up the Liaison Officer role and, when I joined the Committee as Membership Secretary in 2015, he took me under his wing and accompanied me to meetings with EA Membership Services. Recently, he has managed the development of the new website and been an enormous help with the creation of new coaching modules. The FRA Articles of Association require committee members to stand down after 10 years and so we must say a fond "Farewell" to Andy and allow him to spend more time with his family. I also understand that he has a classic car which requires some attention. Andy is a hard act to follow but we are delighted that Simon Long from Saltwell Harriers has agreed to join the Committee as FRA Treasurer.

A reunion of founder members took place at Barley in conjunction with the Long Tour of Pendle on 20th November 2021 and I was delighted to welcome many legends of our sport for a buffet lunch where they were able to watch a screen-show of some of Pete Hartley's wonderful photographs kindly brought along by Denise Park.

Membership of the FRA has continued to grow and, at the time of writing, we have just over 9000 members. Despite the costs of production of the *Fellrunner* going up by almost 40% this year, we have been able to keep subscriptions at current levels which I believe is remarkable value.

The FRA accounts for 2021 reveal a shortfall of income compared with expenditure of almost £12k as we have invested in the new website and development of the new coaching modules. We also rewarded participation in the re-started 50@50 series and supported race organisers through the transition out of Covid restrictions. Committee meetings have continued on Zoom which has limited expenses.

Website. The new FRA website was launched earlier this year and has been very well received. It incorporates a race organiser interface, allowing ROs to register their races more easily.

Coaching. The new FHMT ("Fell, Hill, Mountain, Trail") LiRF ("Leader in Running Fitness") module has now been rolled out and work will now start on the new CiRF ("Coach in Running Fitness") module. Many thanks to Nicky Spinks who is now leading this project in conjunction with UK Athletics.

Championships. Today's AGM follows the final race in the Senior English Championship series and it has been lovely to see a return to normality following the pandemic. The annual "FRA Do" will be hosted by Dark Peak Fell Runners on 26th November so save the date. The "Junior Do" at Sedbergh celebrated the end of the Junior Championship season and young runners from all over the country came together for a morning of traditional school sports and an orienteering course devised by Vic Wilkinson, before an inspirational talk about Everest and then award of the trophies and medals. Personally, it gave me a lot of pleasure to organise the inaugural Black Combe races and I have agreed to do it all over again next April so I hope to see many of you there.

Looking ahead, Stuart Ferguson from Northumberland Fell Runners has agreed to stand as Chairman and I believe the FRA is in safe hands. I will remain on the Committee as Commercial Manager with responsibility for Sponsorship and Advertising etc.

Charmian Heaton

FRA Chairman