

Edinburgh Frontrunners Report 2019 - 2021

The last Edinburgh Frontrunners AGM was held in the Regent on Saturday 19 October 2019, with the newly elected committee meeting shortly after.

It wouldn't have occurred to any of us how different the world would be 5 months later...

The committee held an in person meeting on 8 March, and even then we didn't realise how quickly things were going to change. Our last official running session before lockdown was on Saturday 14th March 2020, it was decided to put us on hiatus the following week as communications became stronger and more restrictions were put in and places closed. In April, Kate joined us in with the online meeting trend and started up weekly Zoom sessions on Wednesday evenings, open for anyone who wanted to join her for a chat, often for later and longer than the advertised time of 8 til 10pm. A regular crowd began to form at this (if only to ask when the runs might start again), and Kate also popped up weekly challenges on the facebook group for a while.



The coronavirus lockdown and ongoing restrictions meant our entire race calendar was gone, and instead there were a few virtual races held, in particular Newcastle Frontrunners LGBT 5K in July 2020 and Glasgow Frontrunners' 'HomeRUN' in August 2020, which was repeated in 2021 and some EFR members signed up for these.



In June 2020, with Edinburgh Pride cancelled, a handful of EFR members ran up the length of the Royal Mile to Edinburgh Castle for a substitute Pride Run. The esplanade was empty but the view from the castle was lacking, as it was a very foggy day! It was good to keep a little bit of pride visible, and it provided an inspiration for next year.

It was challenging to work out when restrictions would ease up enough to meet up for runs without the administration being onerous and workable social distancing rules. Kate picked up the sexy role of 'Coronavirus

Compliance officer' responsible for ensuring a safe return to running, and eventually once the rules stated more than 2 people could run together less than 2 metres apart, we got our act together and from 31 October 2020 resumed sessions on Saturday mornings only from Inverleith Park. Glenogle remained out of bounds for visits without an activity in the premises so we had to turn up ready to run, and that is what we did. Numbers picked up as the week went on, and there visits afterwards to DiGiorgio's for a takeaway, and we were able to celebrate Christmas with a tinsel-wearing run around the cycle paths on 19th December 2020, and plans for a Boxing Day run down the Water of Leith.



Then less than a week later we were hastily reviewing our Christmas plans as we found ourselves locked down again.

The Zoom sessions had now been named 'The Zoom Hoose' and continued to keep the EFR flame burning through the winter, along with members meeting up in small numbers personally and keeping up connections in other ways (for instance outdoor swimming, climbing, or even just going for a walk).



We decided to wait until 19 May 2021 to resume sessions, as this was when numbers allowed in one group relaxed to 30 at a time, and this time we resumed both Wednesday and Saturday. Given past issues with getting somewhere to eat after runs before they closed, we trialed an earlier 6pm start on a Wednesday, and eventually compromised with 6.30pm which looks to be staying in place. We also trained two more jog leaders, Pat Blashill and Martin Hocevar when we resumed.

On 19 June 2021 we put on a Pride Run from Inverleith Park to Edinburgh Castle, once again running the length of the Royal Mile. This time 18 people attended, and thanks to a generous gift from LuLuLemon, those people were each given a pair of shorts.

The race calendar in 2021 continued to be quite threadbare, with events starting to resume again in the autumn. Hopefully everything will be back in the usual way and on the usual schedule next year, including a new run of our Learn to Run programme in January 2022.

The committee has found the last two years incredibly challenging and understandably some members decided to step down during the year or take a bit of a back step. I would like to acknowledge all their hard work and contributions to helping keep EFR going at this time. The club is a vital social space for the LGBTQ+ community in Edinburgh and beyond, with a reputation for friendliness that has brought in many and kept our spirits up in hard times. Long may this continue.

Kate Foggo

writing on behalf of...

Committee 2019-2021

President - Hannah Cornish

Vice-President - Kirsty MacKenzie

Treasurer - Kevin Dyas (resigned March 2020), Pat Blashill (since summer 2020)

Secretary - Kate Foggo

Communications Officer - Martin Hocevar

Social Secretaries - Olly Stearn & Cat Lyle (resigned early 2021)

Learn to Run Officer - Jude Halliwell (resigned Summer 2020)

Diversity & Equality Officer - Al Hopkins

Race sub-committee

Pat Blashill, Al Hopkins and Catherine Kwella

Membership 2019 - 2021

It was decided early in 2020 to roll any fees paid for 2020 into 2021, effectively 2 years for the price of 1. Hence member numbers have been a bit sporadic, but at time of writing they are:

Number of members - 53

Our gender composition remains relatively balanced as seen below, something which makes us unusual amongst Frontrunner clubs worldwide.

