

Minutes of NWOA Club Delegate Meeting

Saturday 1st October 2016 Caton Village Institute

Present. Miriam Rosen (SROC) - Acting Chair, Judith Holt (BOF), Dick Collins (SROC) – Hon. Sec, Steve Round (SELOC) - Treasurer, Caroline Barcham (SELOC), Mark Edwards (SROC), David Maliphant (BO/LOC) Dave McCann (MDOC), Jean Payne (DEE), David Rosen (SROC), Ian Smith-Ward (LOC), Eddie Speak (MDOC), Graham Watson (WCOC), Angela Whitworth (BL), Dick Whitworth (BL) and Hamish Willis (PFO).

Apologies for absence

Richard Tiley, Pete Owens, Sue Butterfield, Sue Roome, Roger Smith.

The Acting Chair welcomed the BOF Chair, Judith Holt, to the meeting.

1. Minutes of CDM held

These were accepted as a correct record, prop HW, sec ME.

2. Matters arising

HW reported that World O Day had been a success and would be repeated.

3. Presentation by the BOF Chair / BOF EGM

JH began by outlining her personal involvement in orienteering and the path which led her to the Chair of BOF. She accepted her present post as she was concerned that the sport needed to be re-focused as “Sport for All” and that we need to address the problems of an ageing population. She was particularly keen to emphasize the competitive aspect of the sport but accepted that not every event could cater for everybody. She talked about the BO EGM financial proposals. There were three options, these being a £10 (senior) membership fee with a £1.50 event levy, secondly figures of £7.50 (fee) and £1.70 (levy) and thirdly the status quo. The background to this proposal concerned the £80k shortfall which BOF will suffer this year if nothing changes. JH emphasized that British Orienteering needs to act as a conduit for any funding which might be available and that there might be situations where combining with fell-running or mountaineering might be beneficial.

JH pointed out that BOF undertakes a variety of tasks which would not be apparent to most orienteers. BOF does not put on events but provides a central group of staff who can work with club volunteers for their mutual benefit. There are various “negotiated relationships” which make things happen. An example would be child protection issues which require BOF initiation and oversight, but with action by clubs.

In losing Sport England funding there will be a £120k shortfall in core funding. In the past employees have come with infrastructure money to do a particular job. Sport England will in future only give money for specific projects and this will have a major impact on staff employment. BOF have saved money by moving the office and there have been staff cuts. However, more cuts will be needed. A particular problem is that the EGM will take place before the details of Sport England cuts are known. Final staffing structure decisions cannot be made until the Sport England situation is finalized. Membership income has been fairly stable for a decade but it will be necessary to ask the membership to increase membership fees and/or the levy. The amount that BOF is hoping to raise is less than that asked for at the BOF AGM and so it will be necessary to use some of the reserves. These would be used for specific projects.

There was considerable discussion about these matters. There was concern that an increased levy would impact adversely on level D events where clubs are trying to attract new members. There was some support for a differential levy system to protect level D events but JH confirmed that this was not part of current proposals and that the levy would be the same across all levels of event. ISW felt that there was a need to make it clear that orienteering is not a cheap sport and that we need to improve the quality of the experience at events. DMcC felt that a proposal that the senior membership fee be increased to £15 would be approved. GW was concerned that the “4th event requirement” at which a non-member would cease to be covered by insurance might also be having an adverse effect.

MR asked what BOF regards as its core functions. JH replied that BOF had ten main areas, these being events, membership, talent and performance, development, major projects, finance and admin., governance, training and support, marketing and commercial activities. She emphasized that the Strategic Plan has three main thrusts – a) increasing participation, b) competitive orienteering and c) podium success. The latter means systematic and sustained success at senior and junior level. The three thrusts are underpinned by i) developing and supporting our volunteers, ii) raising the profile and public image of orienteering and iii) collaborating and working with our partners. Added to this there are the “values” of pride, integrity, inclusiveness and diversity. SR asked how one puts all of this into practice. JH replied that it needs clubs and associations to try to support and fulfill these strategic ideas. With reference to these aims, a number of members expressed concern about the small take-up of orienteering in schools, often due to the fact that teachers don’t orienteer. If orienteering was on the GCSE curriculum, then numbers would be higher. JP mentioned the gap which occurs in the 16 to 25 age range which needs addressing.

PFO are going to try 1) a team event as part of a Christmas League and 2) a (team) venture race involving a “task” at each control. There was some concern that BOF are employing an event company to do a pilot event (possibly with help from DEE) but that the company seems to have little idea of what mainstream orienteering is all about. The finance for this is being provided by BOF (i.e. members’ money).

4. BOC/BRC 2017

Organisational details are progressing and the discussion was concerned primarily with financial factors. DR mentioned that there was evidence that entry numbers to some events (e.g. British Middle and Sprint) had suffered due to high entry fees. He felt that runners expect to pay more for a “prestige” event but that there seems to be a cut-off at £20 above which entries are limited. Entry fees have increased faster than inflation over the last few years. JP felt that we should utilize “expectation management” i.e. we should let people know what our costs are and the fact that we are not trying to make a profit. This led to a discussion as to whether we can risk making a loss. Various views were aired relating to this, including the idea that BOC events should be for experienced orienteers and should not be aiming at newcomers, that BOC events should always be held on top quality areas and that British Championships might be held in alternate years rather than every year. The general view was that we could survive a loss but that we should not be aiming to make one.

5. Grants policy

SR circulated a document showing his latest estimate of expenditure to be met from reserves over the remainder of the four-year funding cycle until the next Lakes 5 Day event in 2018. This showed that around £11k could be available to spend at the discretion of the CDM. No proposals for region-wide projects had been received, so the likely use was further grants to clubs. He recommended that these be at a slightly lower rate than previous years until uncertainties around the potential loss on BOC2017 and costs of L5D2018 were clearer, which they should be by next year’s AGM.

After some discussion it was agreed that:

- a) Grants to support orienteering-related courses (e.g. First Aid, coaching) should be reduced from 100% to 50% with immediate effect.
- b) No general grants should be made to clubs in 2016/17 financial year but clubs should be encouraged to apply for grants for specific projects with a development theme, to a ceiling of £750 in the 2016/17 financial year.

This was approved by the meeting (prop. SR, sec. HW)

6. Lakes 5-Day 2018

RT was proposing dates which would avoid JWOC, World Vets and the O-Ringen. The suggested areas were Sun - Askam Fell, Mon - Angle Tarn Pikes, Tue - rest day, Wed - Harrop Tarn, Thurs - rest day, Fri - Silver Howe, Sat - Graythwaite. These would be Long events apart from Saturday which would be Middle Distance. This would aid early departures on the last day. There could be permission problems with Harrop Tarn (GW will investigate) and confirmation of Silver Howe has not yet been received.

Adverts for a co-ordinator are going out on the NWOA and BOF web-sites.

7. Any Other Business

DR reported that the NWOA website is being maintained by DR, MR and RT, that various items have been uploaded and asked clubs to create links from their web-sites.

Date of next CDM – Saturday 11th March 2017