

NORTH WEST ORIENTEERING ASSOCIATION

Club Delegate Meeting (CDM): DRAFT MINUTES

Saturday 26th September 2026, following the AGM
Victoria Room, Caton Institute, Caton

Chair: Duncan Archer (DA)

Present

Iain Bell (DEE & NW exec)
Richard Tiley (LOC & NW treasurer)
Duncan Archer (LOC & NW chair)
Jon Eaton (WCOC & NW exec)
George Crawford Smith (PFO & NW fixtures)
Hannah Dabinett (PFO & NW secretary)
Iain Smith-Ward (LOC)
David Wathey (MDOC)
Sue Birkinshaw (GMOA & MDOC)
Martyn Roome (SROC)
Fraser Dixon (SROC & NW exec)

Apologies

Stella Lewsley (BL)
Sue Roome (SROC & NWJS)
Andy Robinson (LOC)
Paul Turner (SELOC)
Andy Ellis (PFO)

Attendance and apologies are as recorded for the AGM held earlier the same day.

Following the tribute paid at the AGM, the meeting noted Jean Payne's contribution to the sport, to DEE and to NWOA.

1. Welcome and apologies

DA, as newly elected Chair, welcomed delegates to the meeting. Apologies were as recorded above.

2. Minutes of the last CDM (18th May 2026)

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record. All actions from that meeting have been completed.

Proposed: Iain Bell

Seconded: Jon Eaton

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Lakes 5 Days (Richard Tiley)

As reported at the AGM: the Lakes 5 Days was a success, with over 1,300 daily competitors, and made a surplus. £21,000 of the surplus is being distributed to clubs. The AGM also agreed that the results / SI service should be a contracted, paid-for service at future Lakes 5 Days, and noted the difficulty of getting firm landowner agreements.

There was nothing further to add at the CDM. Points of learning from the event will be recorded and passed on in the usual way.

5. Development Grants (Richard Tiley)

The full schedule of grants is available in the meeting pack.

5.1 Decisions from the last Exec meeting. The bid deadline was 31st August 2026, which brought a number of late bids. The early September Exec approved further grants to MDOC, WCOC, DEE, PFO and BL. Details are annexed to these minutes.

5.2 Progress on the action from the AGM three years ago. The 2023 AGM mandated £50,000 to be distributed to clubs as development grants over three years. This mandate has now ended, with close to £43,000 spent.

5.3 Grant awards process going forward. Development grants are being wound down while the Association focuses on pan-regional initiatives, and the 2026/27 budget contains nothing specifically for them. DA confirmed that the Exec will still consider grant applications above a set threshold. DA proposed a threshold of £1,000, and this was agreed by all.

There was a general discussion about clubs using their own funds for asset purchases rather than applying for grants; in practice this generally happens already. All clubs in the region have very healthy accounts. WCOC noted that they spend significantly on their juniors, including subsidising the JK and Relays, as do most clubs, at either 100% or at least 50%.

Decision: The Exec will continue to consider development grant applications of £1,000 and above.

6. Individual Grants Policy (Duncan Archer)

DA raised the NW Individual Grants Policy and how it compares with the policies of other regions; he also has knowledge of IOF policies. The NW currently supports individuals at 20%, which appears to be below average.

DA proposed raising support to 50% for all juniors and senior (21) competitors, and ceasing support for veterans. Very few veterans claim, and the total amounts to less than £100 a year.

After further discussion, the following was agreed:

- Support is set at 40% for juniors and senior (21) competitors.
- It applies to the Senior Home Internationals and Interland, representing Great Britain.
- Support for veterans will cease.
- The policy is extended to include Trail O. MBO is excluded.

7. NW Coaching Working Group update (Iain Bell)

The 2026/27 budget agreed at the AGM ring-fences £12,000 for pan-regional development, starting with the coaching initiative. The working group aims to create an accessible and predictable programme of NW skills coaching for both newcomers and existing orienteers. For further information, see the NWOA Coaching Development paper in the CDM meeting papers.

IB reported that the working group is growing, now including Richard and Lynn, and there is a lot of enthusiasm to get something going. IB thanked everyone for their feedback, with particular thanks to Peter Brooks, whose comments and suggestions were echoed by many in the room.

The group is grateful for the budget that has been ring-fenced. Two main issues were identified:

- How to recognise the preparation time coaches put in, including whether to offer financial compensation.
- How to persuade people to come along.

IB noted that further questions remain about approach and target market, and the group expects to have more answers in 1.5 to 2 months.

Discussion followed on who the sessions should be aimed at first. The aim is to encourage newcomers, but existing experienced orienteers would also benefit from coaching, even if they don't realise it. It was suggested that sessions could start with this group and that newcomers would follow. Licensed coaches will need to be present at sessions.

David Wathey (MDOC) expressed support for the group and its progress but shared his club's perspective: this should not be seen as an alternative to club coaching. MDOC will continue to provide basic club coaching, as without it newcomers tend to join for a year and then leave. The general consensus in the room was that clubs would continue their own coaching. A further question was raised about how coaches within clubs can be supported.

Small skills-building ideas were discussed:

- Fraser Dixon (SROC) referred to the online orienteering games.
- Virtual orienteering, such as watching headcam orienteering videos.
- These should be shared more widely on social media and the NW website, with video links, giving newcomers easy access to basic online material. Existing YouTube videos made by others should be gathered for this.

Decision: The CDM supports the working group's proposal overall.

8. Fixtures 2027 onwards (George Crawford Smith)

See the Fixtures report and AGM minutes. Events under consideration for NWOA in May 2028:

- 13th May 2028: British Middle Distance Championships (Major), LOC, at Haverthwaite (TBC).
- 14th May 2028: Northern Championships (National), hosted by NW clubs at High Dam (TBC). WCOC are likely to be the lead club, with support from all other NW clubs for other key event roles such as parking, entries, start and finish.

9. Dates of next meetings

- Next Exec meeting: Monday 23rd November 2026.
- Next CDM: Tuesday 12th January 2027 (virtual).

10. Any other business

NW Urban League (NWUL) trophies

DA had been approached by Paul Turner (SELOC) to ask whether NW funds were available for NWUL trophies across approximately 14 classes. This was discussed in detail. The consensus was that permanent trophies for each class would be hard to manage, particularly getting them returned each year. It was agreed that the NW would support funding a memento for each class instead.

It was noted that there are several different leagues, which are hard to keep track of. LOC commented that when they have tried to plan an urban event it has been almost impossible to make it suitable for the number of junior entries they would normally expect, so it is difficult for them to contribute to these leagues.

Defibrillators

Hannah Dabinett (PFO) asked Richard Tiley whether the NW Exec had discussed PFO's request about funding towards clubs buying defibrillators. The answer was no. Most clubs present felt this would not be worthwhile: a club defibrillator would most likely be kept at Download/Assembly rather than with someone out on the course, and more local events and parks are likely to have one nearby. A couple of clubs already have one. WCOC said that mountain rescue members in their club had advised against getting one.