

LEI AGM 2017. Future Plans

As well as the normal programme of activities and events there are two elements of next year's programme I would like to draw your attention to:

Firstly there is our UK Orienteering League weekend that will take place over the 17 and 18th March. Whilst this has been mentioned several times in the club's newsletter, in case you missed it here are the main points. On the Saturday we will be running a middle distance event at Irchester. This will be a Level B or National Level event. On the Sunday we move to Belvoir Castle for the Midlands Championships. Clearly putting on two big events in a weekend is going to require a significant amount of volunteer help. There will be some incentives for helping. Apart from Purple Jackets for our newer members, anybody helping at both events will be given a free run, that weekend, at the event of their choice. For those only able to help at one event we shall be giving the usual 50% helpers discount. Given the high price of the events these are significant discounts. As an aside, if you every think that the entry fees for bigger events cost a lot of money, just ask to see the budgets for these two events and I promise you will change your mind about event fees. I am, on behalf of the organisers of the two events, coordinating the helper recruitment. So I will be asking you in the next few weeks, along with every club members not present tonight, to help.

The second item I am going to mention is something completely new. Earlier in the evening I spoke about the drop in the club's membership. Our fellow EMOA clubs, NOC and DVO have, over the last year, been trying out a new recruitment programme, which has had some very good results. This is the Park Series. If you are a "friend" on both clubs face book page you may have seen mention of this.

The idea is very simple. The club runs a series of orienteering events at two week intervals, in our case it will be four events, in a city centre park. These events are not aimed at regular orienteers but at those who have not tried the sport before. Publicity for the event is principally via social media. The cost of taking part is very low or even free. The courses – well they are different and probably this is not the time to explain them. The plan is to stage this series in and around Leicester in the autumn of 2018 and we are looking to put together a dedicated team to run the four events. One of the key elements in this promotion are the meeters and greeters. They need to be enthusiastic and able to explain orienteering without resorting to jargon and technicalities. The crunch in all this is ,of course, converting those who come to the events into regular orienteers and club members.

Apart from these two major elements in our programme we shall of course be aiming to deliver our usual programme of EMOA League and Urban league events and our summer and winter Leagues. Our Spring Cottage event in April

will feature the combined East and West Midlands Yvette Baker Trophy heats. Our Clubs nights will continue at their normal venues as usual.

One area of club activity that I feel will need our attention, during the coming year, is that of coaching. Several elements of the Club's Development Plan major on coaching. My own personal view is that the time is now ripe for us to invest resources in asking our Level 1 Coaches to move forward to Level 2 and perhaps some of our Level 2's to move to Level 3. This would, I believe give us a much stronger coaching base and allow a more imaginative approach to our coaching programme.

Also in an effort to keep our sport in the public eye, Maureen Webb and Andy Portsmouth will be promoting orienteering, at Bradgate Park, on the 4 Saturdays in April. They will organising a maze and a white course.

For many of our coaches and event officials 2018 will be time to renew their First Aid Qualifications. We will therefore be running a First Aid Training Day on 20th January. My thanks to Liz Heaton for facilitating this

Looking a little further ahead it is our turn, once again, to host the British Sprint Championships in 2019 and it is the East Midlands turn to host the British Championships and Relays in 2021. The likely location is North Wales. Some possible venues have already been identified.

As many of you will be aware, earlier this year, British Orienteering published its strategic plan for the next 5yrs. One of the elements to the research backing that plan was looking at what the membership of the Federation actually wants in the way of events, their location and their size. It's very clear from the research that nearly all members (some 80%) do not travel very far to events and prefer local, smaller events to the big championships. In tandem with that you may have seen Mike Hamilton's piece that appeared in the last edition of Focus documenting the problems that have occurred staging major events. Combine these two elements with a steep rise in costs over the last few years and an aging membership, it is not difficult to predict that, in the coming years we will see changes to the structure of orienteering events and the range and number of events.

In 2020 the club celebrates its 50th Anniversary. One or two ideas as to how we may mark the occasions are already circulating and your committee will be giving it some thought during the coming months. I look forward to being with you at whatever social event we come up with as our main celebration.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you.

