

Events Sub Committee Report. February 2020

I think the best way to describe the last few weeks in relation to LEI events is “interesting”.

Since the Aylestone event, as you are all aware, we have managed, with a little help from the weather gods, to keep our event programme rolling. Weather and ground conditions have not been ideal; thanks to all the event officials who persevered in some really appalling conditions. Fortunately, all our events have had hard standing car parking otherwise I fear we would have had more cancellations. The rest of the winter programme (Martinshaw, Outwoods and Loughborough University) looks, at the time of writing, okay and I am not expecting too many problems with them. (am I tempting fate?)

Looking ahead to the Summer. The Summer League is ready to roll and the details are on both the club and BOF websites. We are still awaiting permissions for some areas.

The Ashby Urban event has been cancelled because of clashes with two other major Urban events. These are a Euro City Tour race in Richmond and closer to home an event in Birmingham which is a trial for both a 2021 Euro City Race and an event to be held during the Commonwealth Games. I am currently looking for a possible replacement date in the autumn.

Officials Training.

Six members of the club are booked to attend an Event Safety Workshop on 27th February. Four club members have asked to attend the Planners Course organised by the Regional Development Officer which is pencilled in for early March.

Access and Permissions.

As committee members will be aware, we have for some time been struggling with getting permissions to use a number of our areas and matters came to a head towards the end of last year with refusals for a number of our key areas and problems on the horizon for others.

Members should have received from me the latest permissions policy document from Forest England. It will have a significant effect on our use of Forest England areas. Please ensure that you have read it before the meeting.

We currently have 31 areas that we could use for forest orienteering (not counting city parks etc) 14 of those are currently either not available or likely to become unavailable in the foreseeable future. The numbers don't quite do justice to the problem as the 14 unavailable include Fineshade and Wakerley with the likelihood that Outwoods will join the list once the felling is more advanced. Belvoir is only available in a very restricted window at a significant cost.

One slight glimmer of hope is that we have been asked to reapply for use of Bradgate and Swithland for the November 2020 Level B. Permission was refused at the end of 2019. At the time of writing we are currently waiting to see what the response is and in particular what restrictions may have been placed on our usage. I

would hope that by the committee meeting that the Bradgate Trust might have responded.

Event Helpers at Level C & B and Control Collecting at Level D events.

Event Helping. There currently two issues with event helping. Firstly, organisers not recruiting enough helpers and even turning away volunteers. One can never have enough helpers! I will be updating and reissuing the Organisers Notes to include a table of suggested numbers of volunteers for tasks such as the start, and control collecting.

The second issue is that a number of our regular orienteers never help at events. Orienteering has always been a sport that expected its members to volunteer when and where needed. I am fairly certain I know who the reluctant volunteers are, but as a double check I will be asking Level C and B organisers for their helper list and I will take on the task at the next event I organise of approaching those hiding away with a face to face ask for help!

Control Collecting at Level D Events. You will have heard me on several occasions grumbling about how few volunteers we have for control collecting at Winter and Summer League events. I believe that we only have 6 or 7 people who regularly collect controls.

It is not uncommon to only have three or four control collectors. Given the criteria we use in completing risk assessments (think back to your Event Safety Workshop) there have been occasions when all the control collectors could be classed as vulnerable adults.

One recent night event will suffice to illustrate my point. At the end of the event four people were left to collect controls. 1 M55, 1 M70 (vulnerable) 1 W 35 (vulnerable on her own in the forest at night) 1 W55 (vulnerable on her own in the forest at night)

Added into this we had, a missing competitor. The organiser had not realised this until he was found, wandering around and lost in the dark, by two of the control collectors. Not a very good scenario on a wet, cold night for a small group of tired orienteers.

I should add that when the organiser asked, at the end of the event, for volunteers to collect controls, there was a hasty exit of LEI members.

Similar situations have taken place a several events over the last couple of years.

I realise that not everybody can stay behind at every event to collect controls. I also understand that some organisers find it difficult to ask for volunteers. I did think that Ursula or I in our Event Coordinator roles could take on the task of finding volunteer control collectors but I am reluctant to add to either of our significant orienteering work-loads.

I would, at the meeting, welcome members thoughts on how we progress this. Whilst the responsibility for safety of the event is delegated to the event officials this committee does have a responsibility for ensuring that safe systems are in place.

Non-Members at Events.

As you may be aware, because of the terms of our Public Liability Insurance non BOF members have only been able to take part in three events before being required to join a club and or the Federation. As of 1st January 2020, this restriction was lifted, as a new insurance policy had been negotiated.

We have in recent years used the “three events rule” as a means of encouraging members to join the club. With the change in the policy that tactic has been removed. Although we have a good benefits package, which we use as part of the “script” to a potential member, we really do now need something extra.

The suggestions from the Events Sub Committee is that we re-introduce a higher event fee for non-members. We have had this in the past but it was scrapped as it brought in only a small amount of revenue and made registration a little more difficult. The situation has changed somewhat as non-member starts have now risen, from what was a very low base, to 17% of all event starts.

Chris Phillips

29.1.20