

LEI Permanent Orienteering courses Current status and the Suggestions for the Future

Current Status.

LEI manage one of the largest number of POC areas and courses of any club in BOF, currently with over 35 sites, many with multiple start locations and courses*. More than some regions!

The main route to accessing the maps and courses is now through the BOF POC site. We also provide printed maps to some landowners for resale (i.e. Brocks Hill, East Carlton Park, the Pavilion Huncote, Hicks Lodge and Bradgate Park who now do their own design, which is to a high standard). The format of these varies and tends to be the same as the very first map for that location. There is no LEI branding. Brocks Hill is the only fast seller, but only a dated map is available.



The majority of the LEI downloads on the BOF site are free. We charge for all maps downloaded where the landowner sells them, to avoid any competition. The charges vary from 50p- £2.00 for a

pack. British Orienteering gives us this income less about 20p a map. Our total income in 2017 was £151, compared with £57 in the previous year with £25 for sales to Brocks Hill.

Onsite publicity plaques are visible at all sites. Courses are available from White to Blue and Score, but with very few courses at the TD5 end. With so many areas, courses and control sites the question of maintaining these and the associated mapping is an area for concern. While Roger E is doing sterling work picking up many of these the long term ability to manage such a large number of areas is an issue and needs discussion. The availability of mappers is already an issue for the club. Changes to POC maps are driven by our events requiring the area to be remapped. There is no specific programme to refresh maps for POC areas.

While discussing the POCs we need to keep in mind what we are trying to achieve by making the courses available. The main objective must be to improve awareness of the sport, increase participation and as a consequence the membership of the club, as well as supporting our own club activities. As a club we currently make limited use of the courses ourselves, Club nights may use the odd course, some may be used as part of a summer or winter league event and some are used for training by individuals.

As a tool to generate more interest in the sport and to increase/maintain membership numbers they also have limited impact. Downloads from the BOF websites are significant (nearly 2000 downloads in 2017 and already 200 to date in 2018). Despite previous group emails (we are due another one) out to people who have downloaded maps the impact on membership and participation at a LEI events I believe is negligible. We currently have list of 100 emails addresses from the BOF downloads but we only receive this information if it is provided (it is not compulsory). We receive no information on those purchasing from visitor centres

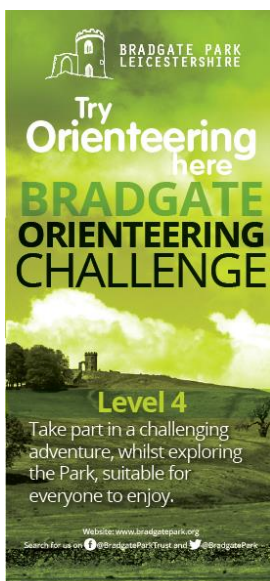
Many of the courses have been developed in partnership with the local land owners and the support from these continues. Recent involvement among others has included Bradgate Trust and The Forestry commission both keen to increase the use of their sites. As a sport we are dependent upon the good will of the landowners and it is essential that we maintain this where possible.

* NB this does not include school maps that are not available to the public.

Suggestions on the way Forward

Having had time to think about this I have a number of suggestions for a discussion on the future of the LEI POCs

- 1. Consistency of the offer.** Reduce number of courses (not the number of sites). Provide only a Beginners White/Yellow, an intermediate Light Green and a Score. (Where possible). As a consequence this should reduce the number of control sites and the maintenance associated with them. Given recent incidents with members of the public claiming injuries due to our POCs this may also reduce our exposure here. If we are approached about a new area think seriously about the long term maintenance and costs, before agreeing to set it up.



2. Consistency of mapping and appearance of maps. Create a standardized LEI product/ brand. Adopt a LEI graphical design. The brand and colour printing used at Bradgate looks very effective. Maps should include instructions if they do not already do so. Consideration will be needed for both printed maps (partnership with Landowners etc) and downloads.

3. Focus on sites with visitor centres / where engagement with the landowner is good. Other than where maps are readily available anyone wanting to use a POC needs to plan in advance, maps need to be downloaded and printed. Despite the advertising at each site this is not currently possible. Make maps immediately available to interested visitors this can only be provided via the centres/ coffee shops. This will require further discussions with a number of landowners including the upfront payment for the map printing. This may help to engage with new

members of the public, but we need to consider how we capture these people as a club. Those using the BOF site tend to be people familiar with the sport and POCs

4. Revisit the volunteer list and have an appointed coordinator for each site. I feel there is a level of volunteer fatigue with all the club is trying to achieve. Personally I think with the level/number of activities we currently commit to this will be difficult to maintain. However if we manage the number of control points and commit to a once a year check, providing each coordinator with a repair kit, this effort could be kept to a minimum. We receive regular feedback from users and this should be encouraged.



5. Use of new technology. There are a number of new technologies now being made available. Where maps cannot be purchased locally make them immediately available via Apps such as MOBO.

<http://mobo.osport.ee/> MOBO is smartphone app providing a 3-in-1 device for orienteers– map, compass and punching device all in one

package. Currently available at 19 sites in UK, we could use this or similar technology at sites where maps cannot be accessed locally. We need to ensure the product is well tested and sustainable.

6. Rewards for completion, Work with BOF as a possible route for this. E.g. Bring 3 completed course maps and or evidence of App completion and get free entry to an event.

7. Charge for all Downloads .There is a significant amount of time and effort required to maintain and support the POCs. Any funds received should be reinvested into the POCs/ mapping.

Happy to discuss.

Steve

