

LVO Chairman's Annual Report 2010-2011

As my second year as Chairman draws to a close I am again pleased to be writing my Annual Report, reflecting on what I believe was a busy and fun year, and commenting on how the Club is progressing.

Firstly, yet again, the Club owes a big thank-you to all those who have devoted time and effort to keeping us running –in the forests, on the spreadsheets, on the phones, on the roads and in the workshops around the countryside.

As always there is a long list of workers behind our ever widening range of activities and in 2011 these activities have again been numerous – Spring Cup and Autumn Trophy competitions, Prize-giving and Social Gatherings, Catering, AGM's, Bi-Weekly Training sessions and courses, National Families Week, Wee Series, WEST's and WENT's, Junior Fun-Days, Colour Series, Inventory days, Camping week-ends, BBQ's and social events, Committee meetings, managing grants, managing our money, managing teams and of course going live with a new trailer and associated paraphernalia.

Add to that – preparing for the sports biggest festival (and maybe this Clubs biggest ever commitment in terms of effort) this coming Easter and we have the ingredients for a very busy year.

Supporting these activities are a band of Club volunteers – I won't mention any names as I would risk leaving someone out – but it is good to report we have a growing band of volunteers that fill the roles of Planners, Organisers, Controllers, event reception (starts, registration, mentoring), Webmasters, Mappers, Treasurer, Membership & Competition Secretaries, Committee members, Social Committee members, Club Kit & Trophy/Prize Coordinators, Equipment Officers, WEE Series Coordinator, Junior and Senior Team Managers and Coaches.

On behalf of all the club members – a big thanks to everyone who filled these roles in 2010.

Those who attended the AGM last year at this same venue were offered the chance to write down what was good and what was not so good about the club. The feedback was collated and those areas that were viewed as not so good became points for debate in committee life in 2010. Apologies that I have not yet typed up the points from last year, but the committee did try and tackle the broader concerns, once the urgent and important issues had been dealt with.

The following report will again show progress built on success.

In 2010 we again struggled to find volunteers to run events, and in many cases it seems we have barely managed, but the Spring cup went ahead as usual, with Castleward, Hillsborough Forest and

Slievenagore providing the challenges. Over on the training side the dark evenings saw the end of the Wednesday Evening Night Events in January and February, with indoor training hosted by Queens at the Dub and by Gregg and others in Bryansford Hall.

March saw the club descend on NorthWest's Drum Manor for our Club Championships, which were well supported with most classes being covered, and having the benefit of no-one being left out due to organisational involvement. An approach we will repeat again this year.

March also brought some good news – against a backdrop of cutbacks in public funding, we were awarded £9k for a new club trailer. A working party was set up to spec the trailer, Graphics and accessories etc, March ended with another visit to Parkanaur for a Colour Series,

And then into April - which saw the return of the Junior Fundays which would run across three separate days in April, May and June. These have proved to be both popular and a positive step forward and it is hoped the club will be able to continue in a similar theme in 2010. April also introduced a small revolution for the club, when, at the Irish Champs in Coleraine the trailer went live! at the TempO registration, just ahead of the LVO manned SprintO event, which I believe was an early practice for the JK sprint team.

And finally in April the Club was again pleased to be associated with the Trailquest cycle events.

Into May and we saw the start of the 2010 WEE Series - a continuation of a very successful event format. The club recognises that the WEE series offers an accessible low-key entry into the worlds of both orienteering participation and event planning and organisation – long may this friendly format continue. But again in 2011 it's a question of people giving their time and effort to make it happen. A lot of new and eager faces turned out for the kick-off session which translated to a lot of new planners and organisers across the series. Thanks to all those who got involved.

At the end-of May a Belfast Orienteering Festival (National Families Week) was held across many of the parks, attracting more than 500 entrants. Beginning with the inaugural Belfast Cliffhanger in Ormeau Park, - thanks to those involved for bringing a new experience for us to enjoy.

June brought us the opportunity to come together as a club for our Northern Ireland Orienteering championships / Tollymore week-end with barbeque and camping, string, Night, and training events – where the weather again was good and the Tollymore location attracting a high number of competitors to the NIOC. Again it is hoped we can repeat the event in 2011 and maybe beyond to build on the format .

The summer break was filled with evening cycling and thanks to those who kept up the social side of club life in this way.

August being filled with the third half of the WEE series kept the interest going, and with the fading light in September the action moved onto the Wednesday Evening Sprint Training (WEST) .

September brought us the opportunity to contribute to the SAM's charity by donating our proceeds from the Hillsborough event at the Oyster Festival. I believe we raised approx £340 on the day, which incidentally allowed the club to enter the Soap Box Derby race in the main street later in the day. I have still not heard the result, but the day was fun despite the rain.

September also brought us the news of Sudden Oak Death, and this was to upset the events calendar for some time to come, with cancelations at Glenarrif and Woodburn. However despite this the Clubs Autumn trophy events went ahead in Hillsborough (as already mentioned) Cairnwood and Barnetts Demesne.

October saw the restart of the indoor training hosted again by Queens club, and many thanks for providing that.

November now and we are nearly round again, with the start of the WENT series again, and back to SlieveNaGore for a Colour event. And of course we had a visit from BOF, in the form of a roadshow in Belfast, which was very well attended.

December saw the snow arrive and played havoc with our last few events in Barnetts and the Christmas WENT's.

Also going on in 2010, we ventured onto Facebook to spread the word of our great sport. Put a number of people through First-Aid training. Took Juniors on training week-ends and supported club-members in travelling overseas where appropriate.

As for the Juniors in 2010, Gregg has done a separate Report, and we will come to it, as again he has done a fabulous job of keeping the Junior Program alive.

Also going on was a little thing called JK2011 preparation, which is a whole separate ball of fun – as it rolls along absorbing energy from everyone it meets.

I had said I would not mention anyone by name, but having just reflected on what has been achieved in 2010 – I will take this opportunity to thank some of those who helped shape the club and are or will shortly be standing down from Office;

Rosemary Croley for her help and patience with everything including managing the Memberships over the years.

Violet Linton for her help and support with all, in particular Prizegiving.

Greg and his fantastic successes with the club juniors.

Looking forward to 2011 - like most of us I am sure - see a challenging year ahead for local Club activities –(at least until Easter is out of the way), with so many club members being drawn into the JK organisation teams and so much time being diverted to that event , I feel that Club focused activity will go into a soft freeze until after the JK. For example - Our recent mapping initiative will be progressed in 2011 to give us more terrain... but really just sits on the shelf for now, as does our desire to gain the Clubmark standard, etc etc.

As at the end of 2010 we had a membership of 194 (a snapshot shows today there are 146 – so so cause for concern there ?), and I don't know if that includes a batch of 16 Juniors who joined this week. This new batch of juniors who will want/need the same type of coaching that these older juniors received – so a Junior Coach and Junior programme is essential to the continued development of the club.

However – post JK - will also a time of opportunity for orienteering, and looking ahead I would like to see us continue to develop and innovate. I would like to see a simplification of event organisation, and associated IT kit, a more concise, straightforward and undemanding Red Book with a model or template event clearly defined. I would like to see a standard budget introduced for events, so people don't have to come back to the committee to approve spend. I would like to see more use of advertising, using everything

available, Twitter, Facebook and where possible getting local schools involved in the WEE's, Spring and Autumn trophies. On the technology side I would like to see our Computers and screens showing real time tracking of competitors, and pushing results out to Phones and Internet in real-time. I would like to see onboard camera's record You-Tube videos at the WEE series. It would be great to have a string course at all events; it would be great to have another Cliffhanger, another Micr-O and maybe more Urban events. It would be great to automate pre-entry for events.

The wish list goes on and on ...and we can and will move on some of these opportunities, but never at the expense of the governance and stability of the Club and its basic program of running Orienteering events.

As I have already mentioned a number of times before it is down to people giving up their time. Please take a look at the positions vacant and consider giving it a go. Again I would reiterate that the club is not looking for perfection but rather progress – so please either put yourself forward proactively or be prepared to help when asked.

Be a participant.

Wilson McAlister
Chairman