

**Minutes of the Northern Ireland Orienteering Association AGM held at  
On Zoom on 30 June 2020**

The meeting commenced at 19:30.

31 members attended: (5 FermO, 21 LVO, 5 NWOC).

**Apologies**

Helen Baxter, Graeme Francis.

**Previous Minutes**

Acceptance of the minutes of the last AGM held on 1 June May 2019 were agreed on the proposal of Ruth Blair, seconded by David Blair. There were no matters arising.

**Chairman's Report.**

Chairman Anthony McGonigle presented the Chairman's report which had already been circulated:

Thanks to all clubs and officials for the events they organised during the past year:

- NI Series – 2 events were planned by each club. Unfortunately the event at Drum Manor in March had to be cancelled because of Covid-19.
- NI Middle and Sprint (2019) Champs were held at Ulster University Coleraine. The venue was chosen to convenience planners and participants as well as providing a suitable venue for the AGM. Well done!
- NIOC Long Distance (2019) was held at Cassey Water in conjunction with the JHI. LVO did a very good job organising this event on difficult terrain. Their task was not made any easier by the last minute problems with parking. The weekend was a great success. Well done!
- The NI Score and Night (2020) Champs were hosted by NWOC at Downhill. Very high winds caused the cancellation of the event and when re-scheduled for two weeks later the winds were equally strong and disruptive. The prize giving was held at Castlerock. Well done to the organising team.

Covid -19 will be discussed further at the meeting. However, I would like to thank the representative from each of the clubs who have been working tirelessly behind the scenes at planning our return to training or competition and looking at alternative ways of presenting the sport in a safe and responsible way. It is good to see MapRunF being used to re-introduce the sport in a controlled and safe way. Thanks to all the members from each club who have been working to prepare this return.

Congratulations to Sporting Clubs Coordinator Juls Hanvey on the birth of her second child. Ric Gamble was appointed as maternity cover and has done a great job keeping developments going in N. Ireland and assisting British Orienteering with the production of guidance for the lockdown and re-introduction of the sport making sure local issues were considered and included. Thanks for all you work during these difficult months.

NIOA had discussions with National Trust at their Head Quarters and there was an acceptance that orienteering would be welcome at all NT properties as long as it did

not affect the normal activities of the venue. The meeting concluded with agreement that negotiations for access should be with the Manager at a local level. FermO have developed a good template for access to Florencecourt.

The key ongoing items of business include:

- Land and Property Services data licence – Steven Linton
- Military estate access- Philip Baxter
- Home international rotations - Raymond Finlay

To ease the workload for Welsh and N Ireland clubs in particular the proposal is that in the near future the Senior and Veteran H.I. will be held on consecutive years with the Junior H.I. continuing every year. We are also hoping that the 9 English Regions will play a much bigger role in the H.I. rotation. A big thank you to Raymond for the work he has done trying to get agreement on this.

The Community Rescue Services have been provided with pdfs of all orienteering maps to facilitate searches for missing persons in N Ireland. This was co-ordinated by Stephen Gilmore. Clubs are requested to provide updates and copies of any new maps.

Next major event was to be British Sprint and Middle Champs in 2022. This has now been moved to May 2023 with the exact format under discussion. Talks have already started with IOA looking at the possibility of the IOC and the British Sprint in NI on consecutive weekends with a few informal events during the week. The hope is that this will increase the number of visitors from across the water. We are now consulting with BOF about the proposal

Peter Hart, CEO of BOF, was to attend a committee meeting in December, with additional representation from clubs but was ill and was represented by Drew Vanbeck BOF Chairman. The committee were very appreciative of the support we have had from BOF over many years and of the effort BOF make to include N.I. in all developments.

NIOA Committee members attended a session covering safeguarding issues for trustees by NSPCC. Thanks to Fred Corscadden for organizing this training. The key message for me was that everyone involved in orienteering has a responsibility to Safeguard Children and Vulnerable Adults.

I would like to thank all the adults who put a lot of time and effort into organizing training camps, selecting teams and attendance at all the International Events. Your work is very much appreciated.

Once again we had a good representation of NI members on JHI, SHI and VHI teams and best ever JIRCs results for NI in Yorkshire in Sep 2019.

Membership figures

2019 - 295    2018 - 348    2017 - 292    2016 - 316    2015 - 232    2014 - 228

Up until now most committee meetings had been held in Dungannon Rugby Club involving a lot of time and travel. A few have been organised using Skype. Since the Lockdown Zoom has proved very useful for meetings. From now on I believe that more meetings should be held on Zoom and I am hoping that some new members might consider joining the committee because of this. Also there will be the opportunity to have more guests joining us for key issues. NIOA has an account with Zoom which clubs can use.

Thanks to committee for all their work during the year and a special word of thanks to Cara Lavery who is sadly stepping down for work reasons. I would like to thank her for all her work on publicity especially using Facebook.”

Anthony further commented on the difficult of the last quarter due to the Covid-19 crisis and thanked those working behind the scenes on comeback plans.

### **Financial Report.**

“Hon Treasurer Philip Baxter presented the Financial report which had already been circulated:

This report covers my first full year as NIOA Treasurer. I am not a trained accountant and offer my sincere thanks to my predecessor, Susan Lambe, for setting up such a comprehensive accounting system for me to take on. I am not sure I am able to use all its powers but the numbers on the spreadsheet do seem to match the figures on the bank statements!

The year has been quiet financially, with little overall movement in our net worth. We budgeted a deficit spend of £1550 and, once last years’ contribution to the Coaching Juniors account is included, we will have a deficit of a little over £1000. Membership income was fractionally down but levy income up by about the same amount. We spent a little more on publicity but saved on admin costs, and the apparent saving on trophy engraving is due to the bills not being presented before the end of March! The account stands at a little over £36,000, made up of an operational fund of about £11,000, a Development Fund of some £18,000 and a Reserve Fund of £7,000. The Development Fund includes the funds accrued by the 3 hubs, £2,200 between them, which will be transferred to LVO in the coming Financial Year as LVO is to assume financial oversight of the funds.

Next year’s budget includes a planned deficit of £12,00 in the operational fund. The effects of the Covid 19 moratorium on orienteering activity are difficult to predict: membership will probably remain about the same but levy income will be sharply down; support to athletes competing at Home Internationals and on the grander European and World stages will also be sharply reduced to balance, but with no real idea of how we will rebuild between now and the end of March 2021, I will leave financial forecasting to those more qualified than me!

I finish by thanking Alan Gartside for his sterling efforts auditing last year’s accounts, a task which I hope he will agree to repeat this year.”

Philip further commented that finances were healthy and were slightly under spent on budget and noted that funds of approx £2,000 from hubs were due to be paid to LVO.

### **Sporting Clubs Report**

Ric Gamble presented the Sporting Clubs report which had already been circulated:

“Juls Hanvey had gone on maternity leave at the beginning of September and Ric Gamble took over the reins in the Middle of September. Initially Ric was appointed for 4 days/week for a period of 6-9 months, so until mid-June – SportNI funding. British Orienteering extended Ric’s contract to full time until the end of July – funded by British Orienteering. Juls is returning on the 1<sup>st</sup> July so there will be a two week overlap before Ric takes his holidays.

Activity over the year had included:

## 1. General support for clubs over this period

- Publicity (mainly online) for activities and events.
- Planning, Organising, Controlling (map updates), Permissions and Risk assessments.
- Lapsed membership – email reminder and exit questionnaire – only a couple of replies.
- Since March – NIOA/Club/Hub activities/events calendar cancelled. Also FERMO Active Adults (3 CATO activities) newcomer programme cancelled. Tollymore Hub/Top Programme cancelled.

## 2. Councils

- Mid & East Antrim Council – Successful grant application for a programme of three ‘Come and Try O’ activities planned and organised within Ballymena – as well as introducing newcomers (65 mostly new participants) a closer relationship with the Outdoor Recreation Officer (Lisa Kirkwood) has developed resulting in getting an additional grant for mapping the People’s Park (Sept 2019) with good hope for further additional MEA funding for future mapping at the Ecos grounds in 2020.
- Belfast City Council – programme of two CATO activities in Grove and Alexandra Park following from WEE series – only 8 attended.

## 3. Schools

Contacting Primary and Secondary schools with regard to local activities.

- NWOC – Primary school events at Limavady GS and Coleraine College, with over 100 primary school pupils at each.
- Schools Blue Light and Outdoor Recreation Event – Hosted at Tollymore for approx. 120 primary P6/P7 school pupils.
- Primary school Event – 3 Primary schools took part in a coaching activity in the People’s Park Ballymena – 60 P6/P7 pupils took part.
- Mapping - Contacting Ballymena Secondary Schools, Methodist College and Carrickfergus Grammar School regarding orienteering provision and mapping of grounds.
- Cambridge House is now mapped.
- Methodist College will be mapped.
- RG visited Carrick GS, met with PE teacher, provided a summary of the condition of their POC, advice on how to plan a progression of activities and tuition on the use of Purple Pen.
- Ballymena Academy got a quote for mapping but has chosen not to follow this up.
- PS Strathearn Prep interested in mapping but delay due to Covid-19

## 4. Other Youth Groups

- MEA – activity at Bashfordlands, Carrickfergus with a local Youth Club – 20 participants.
- Church of Ireland Youth Events – Castlewellan, 70 young people took part. Broughshane, 10 took part.
- NI Athletics Coordination – organisation of a training activity for the Flahavans NI Junior XC squad (20 athletes and 2 NI Athletics coaches) – the plan was to do another couple of days activities during an Easter training camp – but cancelled due to Covid.
- Lisburn Scout Group – training and activities – 30 took place, following this 15 attended an LVO club event at Belvoir.

## 5. Hubs

- Tollymore Night-O
- Night-O organisation – liaising with Tollymore NOC and Mark Stephens to put on a series of Night Orienteering/Navigational coaching/training sessions. Publicised to Orienteering and specifically to target Hill running communities – 45 participants, 35 non-members from Hill Running community
- Spring Club/Hub planning and publicity – Tollymore Hub (6 activities)– Cancelled

## 6. SportNI / Sports Forum support events & seminars

- Game Changer Conference – SportNI – development of clubs/participation
- Club & Workforce Development Network – promoting value of sport and creating a supportive club to retain members and attract newcomers.
- Sports Forum – Do's and Don'ts of Social Media – LVO and FERMO attended support on how best to publicise and promote the sport through NIOA/Club websites and Social Media
- Sport NI – Sports Clubs Survey Document attached
- SportNI – Female Sports Forum Event in TNOC 40 newcomers involved in Orienteering training/activity

## 7. British Orienteering

- British Orienteering - Visit from Drew Welbeck (BOF Board Chair) – meeting with SportNI and NIOA
- British Orienteering Development conference Weekend – Steph Pruzina LVO and Eileen Young (IOA/GEN) also attended. Looking at Volunteer experience; Marketing, knowing your target group. RG attendance partly funded by FERMO and NWOC –met and fed back main development themes/ideas to support NWOC and FERMO development.

## 8. Training

- Teaching Orienteering Parts1&2 – organisation. Thanks to Helen Baxter for delivering this qualification training – 10 attended.
- UKCCL2 – planning for March/April but was cancelled.

## 9. Other Organisations/Agencies

- National Outdoor Recreation Forum (NORF) – Seminar looking at the economic impact of Outdoor Recreation in NI, 2019.
- The Outdoor Partnership (TOP)
- Meeting regarding a National Lottery funded Outdoor Club Development officer based at Tollymore working in the SE region of NI to develop local people's engagement with local outdoor recreational clubs.
- Top – Meeting with Caoimhe Connor (appointed person) –What is the orienteering club/hub set up? Membership breakdown? What is the coaching provision? What does the existing timetable look like?
- Top – Meeting with Caoimhe Connor. Follow up to plan a programme of activity - what local schools are mapped. Link to Tollymore Hub.
- Benefits of Outdoor Sports for Society, BOSS project – Seminar on the cost benefits of outdoor sports – Stephen Gilmore also attended.
- Outdoor Learning Seminar – Mount Stewart. Seminar on the Social Value of Outdoor Recreation.
- National Trust – meeting of some NIOA members and NT to discuss the opening up of NT properties to support Orienteering Activities/Events. A

supporting document was produced to help with access, development of Orienteering within NT properties.”

Ric also referred to the Sporting Club Annual Review. SportNI were happy with the way things were progressing. However the annual program budget had reduced from £11,000 to £2,000. This was the last year of the 4 year plan having changed from Active Clubs to Sporting Clubs.

Ric then presented the summary of the SportNI Club Survey to which all 3 clubs has responded. Feedback from SportNI had included that there was more opportunity for fundraising rather than relying on membership and event income. It was no surprise that 50+ was the largest age category, but the sport was still growing. Exit interviews would be useful, although difficult. The male:female coaches and volunteer ratio was similar to the membership profile and coaching was well received. Clubmark was seen as a positive aspect of club governance as were development plans. SportNI were supposed but pleased that BOF was the main support and were also surprised that the high volunteer requirements, and at the high but necessary expenditure on mapping.

### **Juniors Report**

Stephanie Pruzina presented the Juniors report which had already been circulated:

“One of the many, many effects of the recent lock down and curtailment of all orienteering has been the interruption of the momentum that had built up in our junior squad. The year got off to a good start with a small squad attending an extra selection race in England in order to qualify for consideration for JROS summer camps. Resulting from this, Andrew Elwood spent a week in Gothenburg at a ‘self-led’ camp. Earlier in the summer he had also been part of the Irish team at EYOC in Belarus, where NIOA was also represented by Daniel Earnshaw and Meadow McCauley. By all accounts the terrain and the competition were both very tough and as usual the Scandi countries did best, but our juniors gained great experience and put in some excellent training in the few days prior to the competition.

The autumn is always a busy time with JHI following 2 weeks after JIRCs. This year JIRCs were in South Yorkshire and a team of 13 were led by Denis Murphy and Stephanie Reed. Ben Cairns and Zach Murphy put in very creditable performances at M14 coming 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> respectively. Daniel Earnshaw had our highest placing, coming 11<sup>th</sup> at M16 and Meadow McCauley was 12<sup>th</sup> at W16. Unfortunately, Rebecca Linton, in her first big competition had to withdraw to help an injured fellow competitor back to the start. All credit to her for doing so. Overall the team came 10<sup>th</sup> (out of 12) and equalled our best result of recent years. The weather was atrocious and thanks go to the parents Denis Murphy, Donal O’Kane, Stephen Linton and Stephanie Pruzina for their part in looking after the team.

The JHI was hosted by LVO this year with Stephen Gilmore planning the individual event on Cassey Water and Stephanie Pruzina planning the relay in Donard Forest. Controller, Richard Williamson and Co Ordinator Harold White had some interesting access issues but in the end the event went smoothly! Saturday showed the Mournes at their best and Stephen’s courses provided the athletes with plenty of challenges, while Sunday was disappointingly miserable weather-wise. The Irish juniors were delighted to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> overall, retaining the Judith Wingham trophy, and NIOA was well represented by Oliver O’Kane, Daniel Earnshaw, Andrew Elwood, Peter Reed, Meadow McCauley and Rachel Collins. Special mention should go to Meadow who was awarded the prize for best Irish performance over the two days.

I know many of our juniors are feeling very frustrated by the current situation. This year's JROS camps have been cancelled and other events are still uncertain, but their team spirit is strong and they are continuing to keep in touch with each other through the various orienteering related virtual events and quizzes."

Steph further commented that the junior group had been strong during the year with some new faces, particularly Rebecca Linton. Steph thanked again the LVO team who had successfully renegotiated access issues for the JHI. The international experienced by leading juniors was appreciated but lockdown was a frustration. The JHI in October was in doubt. Cross-border cooperation was very good.

### **Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults.**

Anthony McGonigle reported on behalf of Fred Corscadden reported that no issues had arisen during the year. He also thanked Fred for his work in organizing a worthwhile safeguarding training session for the NIOA committees which was presented by NSPCC.

### **Presentations**

The Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Alan Gartside.  
The Coach of the Year Award was presented in absentia to Fred Corscadden.  
A Services to NI Orienteering Award was presented to Stephen Gilmore.

### **Elections of Committee and Officers**

Alan Gartside took the chair and expressed thanks to the outgoing committee.

Chairman. Anthony McGonigle was proposed as Chairman by Charlie Reid, seconded by Harry Bell and agreed.

Vice Chairman. David Blair was proposed as Vice Chairman by Wilbert Hollinger, seconded by Philip Baxter and agreed.

Honorary Secretary. Stephen Gilmore was proposed as Honorary Secretary by Teresa Finlay, seconded by Wilbert Hollinger and agreed.

Honorary Treasurer. Philip Baxter was proposed as Honorary Treasurer by Olivia Baxter, seconded by Raymond Finlay and agreed.

A minimum of 8 additional members were required. The outgoing committee was Philip Baxter, David Blair, Michael Burton, Raymond Finlay, Lyle Fleming, Des Fletcher, Wilbert Hollinger, Stephen Gilmore, Cara Lavery, Anthony McGonigle, Dee Orwin and Gordon Stephens. Cara Lavery wished to step down.

The reappointment of the committee with the exception of Cara Lavery was proposed by Harry Bell, seconded by Ruth Blair was agreed.

Jane Wilson was proposed for committee by Stephen Gilmore, seconded by David Blair and agreed.

Eibhlin Largey was proposed for committee by Raymond Finlay, seconded by Ric Gamble and agreed.

### **Return to Sport after Covid-19**

Ric Gamble reported that BOF were trying to respond to the NI Executive announcements along with England, Scotland, Wales and IOM. Groups of 30 were now able to meet outdoors as of 27 June. Competitive sport could restart from 17 July

and then from 30 July with some spectators. Access permissions could be an issue and social distance protocols would be required. A generic covid-19 risk assessment and a code of conduct had been prepared. The document was regularly updated on the BOF website.

A NIOA group has been working on the MapRunF smartphone app which did not require any controls or touching. This was showing good potential for informal orienteering. Courses to test the technology were being launched. BOF had relaxed the insurance to include liability cover for organizers.

Mark Pruzina reported that LVO's 7x7s challenge walks had been cancelled due to external factors.

Control punching was a significant issue. There were 59 SIACs available which with approx 40 NIOA members owning SIACs so SIAir+ could be used, but there would be issues of circulating the cards between clubs. There was a discussion around charging for SIAC hire, with the suggestion that GPS punching could become the norm within a few years.

### **Any Other Business**

Home Internationals 2020

Raymond Finlay reported that England, Scotland and Wales were indicating that they were unwilling to travel and that therefore the VHI would be canceled. However FermO still intended to host NIOC. The SHI scheduled for Sep was also cancelled. Discussions were ongoing regarding the JHI in south London in October.

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 20:35