



**Minutes of the Northern Ireland Orienteering Association AGM
held at Tollymore Forest Park, Co Down
on 24 June 2023**

The meeting commenced at 16:30.
26 members attended: (2 FermO, 20 LVO, 4 NWOC).

Welcome

Chairman David Blair welcomed members.

Apologies

Robbie Bryson, Gavin Cairns, Des Fletcher, Alan Gartside, Wilbert Hollinger, Sarah Knight, George Savell.

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the last AGM held on 14 May 2022 were accepted.

Chairman's Report.

David Blair presented the Chairman's report.

David noted that 2022 saw orienteering return with a bang after the "Covid years": There were 7 colour series events in Gosford, Drum Manor, Florencecourt, Castlewellan, Tyrella, Castle Archdale and Learmount. There were also 8 Urban League events at Lisnaskea, Portrush, Dundrum, Folly Glen, Donaghadee, Edenvilla Park, Craigavon South and Old Warren- Lisburn West. NI Night & Score Champs were in Belvoir, Sprint champs in Lisnaskea, Middle distance in Spring Grove and NI champs on a new map at Carntogher. On top of these were LVO's Spring and Autumn cup events, numerous Wed evening events and Fermanagh's "crack of dawn" events. David's wife, Anne, is convinced that he may be more than a little obsessed with orienteering as he attended 25 events in 2022, but this was nothing compared to Kenny Weir who competed in 50 events, commitment on a huge scale. David expressed his heartfelt thanks to all those who planned, controlled and organised all the events in 2022 and continue to this year. We continue to enjoy a full and varied list of orienteering events.

David thanked all the members of NI Orienteering committee for their continued dedication to the smooth running of orienteering in Northern Ireland. There is much work done by many people behind the scenes, which mostly goes un-noticed. Stephen does a tremendous amount of work as Secretary to keep us all informed and organised. Wilbert has the unenviable task of collating the fixture list. Lyle looks after membership and produced a membership statistics report in 2022 detailing membership numbers for 9 years from 2013 to 2021. The numbers peaked in 2018 at 348 and totalled 259 in 2021. Philip continues to look after the finances. Ann looks after trophies. There are many others who help with IT and NI website, entries, printing of maps, collating of results, managing the up and coming juniors, organising Junior, Senior and VHI teams, organising courses whether for first-aid,

planning, controlling or safeguarding and of course all the mappers who spend hours surveying and drawing the maps we all enjoy.

So, on behalf of himself, as chairman, and on behalf of all the active orienteers in Northern Ireland David expressed his heartfelt thanks to everyone who makes orienteering in NI what it is today and apologized to anyone not mentioned personally. To anyone who has been reticent about volunteering to take on a more active role in the running of orienteering in NI, he encouraged to have a go as experience, knowledge and enjoyment will all be enhanced.

There was one very sad moment in 2022 with the passing of Noel Bogle, an active NWOC, NI and Ireland orienteer and committee member for over 40 years. Noel helped develop the sport from its very early beginnings in the early seventies. A short time before Noel moved into Cornfield Care Home he passed on “A History of Orienteering” which he helped compile.

Perhaps it's an age thing or entering the M70 twilight years, but it is very therapeutic to delve into the history of orienteering in NI. It makes very interesting reading. Several familiar names pop up constantly over the years, some of whom are still very actively involved in competing and organising events to this day. The origins in Northern Ireland can be traced back to the late sixties when the first orienteering course was run by Mike Dimmer, a Scout Field Commissioner. Some ex-scouts at Queen's University, Wilbert Hollinger and G Hamilton formed QUB Orienteering Club. NIOA was formed in 1970 with Bert Slater from the Central Council for Physical Recreation as the first Chairman. Antrim Orienteering Club was formed in 1971 followed by NWOC in 1972, LVO in 1977 and Fermanagh Orienteers in 1983. Events, in the early days, used simple black & white maps such as Tardree, Carnearney, Loughermore and Tollymore. Coloured maps appeared in 1974.

This was all before the computer age. You couldn't just send out instant e mails, or look up information on websites. A NIOA newsletter was compiled periodically, typed, photocopied and posted to members for example a copy of the NIOA Newsletter –Issue 1, from 1983 when the editor was Joan Henderson. Results didn't appear almost instantly on your mobile phone. You received a full list of results in the newsletter, maybe after a month had passed. No computerised entry system, no computerised control and results. It required a lot more manpower and time. Interestingly in this compilation there is a black & white map of Drumkeeragh and personal account by a young orienteer called Ernie Wilson who ran there for his first orienteering competition. His reflections on orienteering finished by saying “I retired to a shady corner to lick my wounds and figure out how I took 112 mins and 20 secs for a distance of 5km. The event was won in 54mins by a talented lad named Hollinger. Ah well, I'd better learn to enjoy myself as there's little chance of me reaching that sort of standard! On the other hand, such is the stuff of daydreams”.

David recalled that he was recently on the Isle of Wight for 2 days and noticed that included in the island's “Festival of Running” was an orienteering event. It added to my trip down memory lane as you entered on the evening and they used a simple punching system at the markers. Perhaps Noel said it best when he said “Live your life by a compass, not a clock”

2022 was a great year for the amount and variety of orienteering events and 2023 has started similarly. A lot of hard work and effort was put into organising and planning the British Sprint & Middle distance Championships in May. David's over-riding

memory was the way everyone in NI Orienteering, from all three clubs, pooled their knowledge, experience and energy into making it the success that it was. There were successes for both young & not so young NI orienteers:

- Aran Power (M10) won gold in sprint & bronze in middle distance
- James Ewart (M14) won silver in sprint
- Peter Gamble (M18) won gold in sprint
- Zack Murphy (M18) won gold in middle distance
- George Savell (M35) won silver in sprint and middle
- And that young lad appears again..... Wilbert Hollinger won sprint gold in the M75 class.
- Moire O'Sullivan (W45) won bronze in sprint and finally
- Rosemary Croley won bronze in W80.

Lastly, David extended A big NI Orienteering thank-you to Ric Gamble and Juls Hanvey for all their hard work in promoting our sport over the past year. It was sad to hear that Juls shall be leaving to take up a new role as Outdoor Development Officer with Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and wished Juls well, suggesting that orienteering will feature in her outdoor pursuits in the future.

David said that it has been a privilege to be the NI Orienteering chairman for the past year, but indicated that with his entry to the Septuagenarian club he would not standing for re-election next year, and hoped that the mantel will be taken on by someone much younger. David expressed the view that we need younger orienteers to take on the running of NI Orienteering and there have been several younger planners stepping up recently. One of which was today's planner, George Savell, mentioned previously for his success at the British Sprint & Middle distance Champs. David encouraged others to join George and ensure that orienteering has a continued and long future.

Financial Report.

Hon Treasurer Philip Baxter presented the financial report with accounts (appended below).

Philip reported that the year had been relatively financially static once the advance income and expenditure for the Sprints and Middles was removed. Broadly: membership is down, levies are up and development remains about the same. Our income last year came from: membership fees, event levies, development activity contributions, bank interest and entry fees for the British Sprints and Middles held this year.

- Membership fees fell back to £1174, down £319 on last year and still well behind the 18/19 level of £2402.
- Levy income continued to grow back to £1744 from £917 last year, not yet close to the 19/20 level of £2123.
- Development activities contributed a net £516 to the Development fund.
- There was no grant income this year and bank interest brought in a small increase to £80!

We spend money on: mapping grants to clubs, athlete support, Junior support, publicity, Sprints / Middles, administration and bank charges.

- NWOC received £1000. Previous years saw £1000 to LVO in 19/20 and £4500 in 18/19 to FERMO (£3500) and LVO (£1000).
- Senior athlete support figures are artificially low as the 2021 and 2022 VHI grants have not been finalized and we had no NI runners in the SHI team.

- The normal vehicle for support to juniors is via a £1000 grant to the Coaching Juniors account. The Junior Coaching account is in the process of closing so no funds have been transferred to it (we normally transfer £1000). As indicated last year, junior funding has now reverted to the main NIOA account.
- Spend on development equipment (mostly repairs to SI units and battery replacement) is shown as a separate item, up £57 to £576.
- We have not paid for any trophy engraving costs in this FY.
- Publicity includes the cost of maintaining the NI Orienteering website as well as the occasional flier, while administration covers the costs of NIOA Committee meetings (largely now conducted through our Zoom account) as well as the NI Sports Forum subscriptions and are broadly in line with last year.

Some years ago the NIOA Committee proposed that we should run deficit budgets (spend more than we earn) to reduce the funds that we hold which had been swelled by JK 2011 profits and other grant income. With the exception of 2019/2020 when we had bumper membership and income levels and the development team efforts brought in substantial contributions (net income of £2700) we have run at a deficit for 5 of the last 6 years (-£4500, -£4600, -£3500 and -£1900) as planned. This year, once we remove the Sprint and Middles figures, shows a net increase of £586; this will disappear once the VHI figures are included and once the bills for trophy engraving arrive.

The net result of all of this is that the fund currently stands at £38830 which is made up of £17000 in the development fund, £1444 in the closing Junior Coaching account, £6300 in Sprints/Middles, £7000 in reserves and £7000 as working capital. While this looks healthy we should note that unless membership and levy income increase our ability to continue to provide mapping and other support will erode the working capital to almost zero over the next 2 years although the Sprints and Middles should provide a small profit which will help us to continue running a deficit budget for a little while longer.

It was proposed by Raymond Finlay, seconded by Anthony McGonigle and agreed that the attached draft accounts be accepted, subject to the usual independent inspection by Alan Gartside.

Sporting Clubs Report

Juls Hanvey presented the Sporting Clubs report in verse:

Six and half years...

Forests, parks, maps, meetings and so many good times

And now we are all gathered here under the sun for the last of my wee rhymes

Richard McCourt summed it up recently when we were having a wee tea break

He said "You came to us a young unsullied girl and look at you now for goodness sake!!!!"

I still don't know what a reentrant is or the difference between a small depression and a pit

But I have picked up a few things (very slowly, bit by bit!)

So much has happened during those years , there's been pregnancies, a pandemic and plenty of chats and craic

But through all of this madness and chaos , I've always felt that you had my back

*I should probably talk about the sport, and all that we have achieved - the figures, the funding, the results, the stats
But I'd rather talk about the people of the clubs, and I don't care what anyone says - you're actually pretty cool cats
What you all do is absolute magic, I'm not sure you even know
Supporting people to access the outdoors, to move and learn and grow*

*Planning, controlling, organising, welcoming, mapping so many different roles
All so this community can get out there, get lost, find themselves and hunt down those controls
I've been out in hail, torrential rain, snow and in sun
It's been an honour and a pleasure and a whole lot of fun*

*Your friendships mean so much to me, many of you I knew I could always call
Actually when I rang you, we would end up not talking about orienteering at all!
So thank you all for everything, I'm amazed by all the working parts
I may not have won any races But I think I won a few hearts*

A presentation of flowers was made to Juls who was leaving post at the end of June 2023 to work in outdoor activities with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Juniors Report

In the absence of Stephanie Pruzina, Stephen Gilmore noted that the highlight of the year was Junior Inter Regional Championships held in Northern Ireland. The juniors had enjoyed orienteering on home turf at Tyrella. Significant challenges were overcome due to the late cancellation of accommodation.

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults.

In the absence of Safeguarding officer Chloe Reed, Stephen Gilmore reported that there were no untoward incidents to report.

British Orienteering had held a webinar and given advice to improve safeguarding information on club and association websites. The safeguarding page on the NIOrienteering website had been updated appropriately.

Chloe had also been working to ensure that Access NI and Safeguarding training was up to date. It was noted that to be Access NI checked a person must either be coaching juniors for more than 3 times per month, which is very rare in orienteering, or as a chaperone on an overnight trip.

Presentation of the Colin Henderson Trophy

Chairman David Blair announced that Alan Gartside was the recipient of the Colin Henderson Trophy for Services to NI Orienteering. Alan had given much to the sport of orienteering particularly in map printing, compilation of the NI Colour Series League and in promoting Trail-O.

As the recipient was unable to be present, David requested that the meeting did not share congratulations with Alan as an opportunity to present the trophy will be taken on 28 June 2023 at Belvoir Park Forest.

Elections of Committee and Officers

Richard McCourt took the chair and expressed thanks to the outgoing committee.

Chairman. David Blair was proposed as Chairman by Teresa Finlay, seconded by Ann Savage and agreed.

Vice Chairman. There were no nominations for Vice Chairman. It was agreed to allow the Committee to agree the appointment from among its members.

Honorary Secretary. Stephen Gilmore was proposed as Honorary Secretary by Gordon Stephens, seconded by Anthony McGonigle and agreed.

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

A minimum of 8 additional members were required. The outgoing committee was Philip Baxter, David Blair, Robbie Bryson, Michael Burton, Heather Cairns, Raymond Finlay, Teresa Finlay, Lyle Fleming, Des Fletcher, Wilbert Hollinger, Stephen Gilmore, Anthony McGonigle, and Gordon Stephens.

The reappointment of the committee was proposed by Harry Bell, seconded by Ric Gamble was agreed.

George Savell was proposed for committee by Stephen Gilmore on behalf of Des Fletcher, seconded by Harry Bell and agreed.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending. He made a plea for younger members of the Association to join club and Association committees in order to provide the basis for future leadership.

The meeting ended at 17.30.

Northern Ireland Orienteering Income & Expenditure Account

1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100711

| | Income | Expenditure |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Membership | 1,174.50 | |
| Levies | | |
| 2022 | 1,744.50 | |
| Development BSM | 7,652.90 | 1,328.49 |
| Development Team | | |
| Courses & events run by team | 1,906.50 | 1,390.00 |
| Equipment | | 576.12 |
| Individual Athlete Support JHI | | 450.00 |
| Junior Support | 425.00 | 765.00 |
| Mapping | | 1,000.00 |
| Publicity | | 239.99 |
| Trophies | | - |
| Administration costs | | 253.88 |
| Bank interest & charges | 80.05 | 68.80 |
| Grand Total | 12,983.45 | 6,072.28 |

Fund as at 1st April 2022 30,475.77

Income 12,983.45

Expenditure 6,072.28

Net increase / (decrease) in fund 6,911.17

Fund as at 31st March 2023 37,386.94

Prepared by:

(Treasurer)

I certify the foregoing Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Account to be a true & correct copy of the Accounts of Northern Ireland Orienteering for the period 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023 on the basis of the information & explanations supplied

Signed:

(Auditor)

Adopted on behalf of the membership by the NI Orienteering Committee

Signed:

(Chairperson)