

Minutes of WMOA Committee Meeting 11th September at 7-30 pm

via Zoom

Present: Marian White, Barry Elkington, Ian Gamlen, Kirsten Strain, Carol Dredge, Jonathan Howell, Rick Roberts, Jim Cooke, Ray Collins, John Leeson, Richard Rogers, Adrian Bailey, Dave Ellis (part of meeting)

1. Apologies: Melanie Elkington

2. Declaration of Interest: None

3. Acceptance of Previous Minutes: Accepted

4. Matters Arising: None

5. Correspondence: a) Email from BOF –Club and Association Welfare Officer update. CD- to send a copy to KS- WMJS.

b) Email from Henry Morgan relinquishing his post on the WMOA committee. Suggested he may still be prepared to lead a few courses if requested to.

6. Chairman's Report: AB

First of all I'd like to thank Ian and Carol for stepping in to run the last meeting and doing such a good job.

The proposed levy changes have come as a surprise to some people and we're going to talk about that later in the meeting. Also since the last meeting, COBOC and HOC have agreed on their merger. Although there is some sadness in losing a club, there's no reason to believe that orienteering in Birmingham will be disadvantaged – it should hopefully go from strength to strength.

Since the last meeting we've had four of our regional events: the Tamworth, Rugby and Malvern Urbans, and the Burton Dassett league event. I know there's been some discussion about the number of events, but in the end we've had four urban events, each from a different club, so it's worked out quite well, and seven forest league events, so I think we're having quite a good year, even if there's fewer events than some people would like.

We've financially supported some juniors this summer and the trip to Finland was a success. We've got the JIRCs coming up, in South Wales on 23/24 September, among a flurry of other events: VHIs in the Forest of Dean on 30 Sept/1 Oct, JHIs in Sutton Park on 7/8 October. Good luck to all WM runners in these events. The SHIs have just taken place in South Wales, congratulations to Julie Emmerson 2nd W21 and Nathan Lawson 3rd M21.

We've got a lot of things coming up: the WM relays (WCH) on 24 September, the big urban event organised by Wrekin in Telford on 15 October, and WM League events organised by HOC and OD. So, either organised by WM club or involving WM runners there's a lot coming up in the next couple of months.

Report of EOC AGM

I "went" to the English Orienteering Council AGM on 14 June; Barry was of course also there. The main event coming up is going to be Interland in Belgium in March. The main points that came out for me from the AGM were:

- One of the main costs is becoming the cost of hiring vehicles for the national teams to go to events, which seems to have gone up a lot.
- We want to try and get an amendment to get EOC covered by BO insurance, which it currently isn't because the EOC doesn't count as a regional association.
- It's also an issue whether the EOC should be a charity because the income is close to the £5,000 limit – when you're beyond that, you're supposed to get charitable status, and I think it was agreed in the end that we have and EGM to agree on that.
- Finally, team managers are being sought, referring to the junior, senior and vet teams needing managers, and maybe we could ask in the West Midlands if anybody here would like to be one of those managers for the England squad.

Barry Elkington reported that since the meeting, the matters concerning insurance, charitable status and team managers had been addressed.

7. Treasurer's Report –IG

Healthy balance in both accounts. JHI money taken from main account will be repaid when event takes place.

KS pointed out that WMJS were still awaiting bill from Welsh Squad for Finland trip and had just paid out for JIRC'S entries and a weekend away. None of these show in current statement.

KS also clarified with IG if Junior's selected to represent England in JHI'S could ask for grant from WMOA. IG stated that if selected for GB, England or on a national tour grant could be given.

Brian Laycock to inspect accounts prior to the AGM.

8. Fixtures Report- R Roberts

Firstly, Regional events:

For the West Midlands League – there are 2 remaining events registered for inclusion in the league in 2023. Five events have already taken place and the remaining events are: -

19th November HOC Burlish Top and 10th December OD Sutton Park South

And the Urban League – there are 4 events in this year's urban league, only one of which remains to be held: -

15th October WRE Woodside – which is also in the UKUL.

The other regional event yet to be held this year will be hosted by WCH on 24th September - the West Midlands Relays. This event has not been held since 2019, mainly due to the impact of the pandemic and its after effects. Due to this I hope that all clubs will encourage as much participation as possible.

As far as National status events go: -

HOC and OD will be hosting the Junior Home Internationals over the weekend of 7th – 8th October with accommodation at Beaudesert and events in Sutton Park.

To complete the picture, looking even further ahead, there are several major national events scheduled for the West Midlands in the next three years: -

Easter 2024, WCH are hosting 2 days of the JK at Beaudesert .

In June 2024 OD & HOC are hosting the British Sprint and Sprint Relay Championships.

In 2026 HOC will be hosting the British Middle and the Midlands Championships over the weekend of 19th April.

And, finally, in 2027 we are due to host the JIRCs – although the host club, or clubs, are yet to be identified.

a) Discussion of WM Urban League

Rick Roberts had prepared a paper discussing issues involved with trying to combine some EM Urban league events with ours to create a larger league. After much discussion it was decided to abandon this idea as too many difficulties with it and instead try to encourage WM clubs to put on more Urban events.

b) West Midlands Schools Champs

Discussion centred around when event should take place, weekend or week day, and also form of event. It was agreed to a) consult with schools who regularly take part and b) Schools Sports Partnerships to find out what is going on with orienteering in their area and to try and drum up some support. It was acknowledged that the format of these championships might change and this would hopefully be established for 2025 competition. After a vote it was agreed that the WM Schools Champs would continue in their current format in 2024.

9. WMOA Website

For the purpose of the WM leagues it was discussed how COBOC members would fit into the leagues? It was agreed that for ease COBOC members would be part of HOC from the beginning of the year. MW to report this to relevant people to update leagues.

10. **Development**- Henry Morgan not at the meeting.

11. **Coaching Co-ordinator**- Dave Ellis

Apologised for not getting questionnaire round to clubs as promised – coaching needs of clubs, views on coaching and coaching available. DE will report back to December meeting on state of coaching in the clubs. DE left the meeting.

12. **West Midlands Junior Squad –KS**

The main squad activity that has happened since the last meeting has been the summer tour to Finland. This was very successful and enjoyed by 10 WMJS juniors and 6 WMJS adults, together with the Welsh junior squad and one family from the East Mids, making a total of 29 young people and 12 adults. One WMJS junior was sadly unable to come due to injury. The tour comprised five days of training, one rest day and one competition day. Two of the sessions were joint with the local club, which gave the athletes a chance to meet Finish orienteers of their own age. The number of people was above average for this type of tour, which brought some challenges, but on the whole everything went smoothly.

The Junior Inter-Regional Championships this year are being held in South Wales on 23rd-24th September. We are pleased to say that every squad member is available so we are taking a team of 14 athletes this year. Several juniors have agreed to run up to a higher age class, as agreed between coaches, parents and athletes. This means we have 11 potentially scoring athletes in the individual and 3 potentially scoring relay teams, out of a maximum of 12 and 4 respectively. This is a big improvement on the previous two years. The team is travelling in a minibus and a car. The travelling adults are Kirsten Strain, Karen Thompson, Graham Pigott and Matt Lambe.

One WM junior – Eden Pigott – has been selected to represent England at the JHIs in October this year. We wish Eden the best of luck.

A weekend trip is being planned for November, incorporating the Orienteering Foundation's training on Colonel's Drive and a Cumbrian Galoppen event at Roanhead. Accommodation has been booked at the same bunkhouse as last year's successful Lake District weekend. It is the intention that EMJOS will be joining us for the weekend.

The JROS Hawkshead weekend is at the end of November, for M/W16s. We will have two/three athletes this year and two adults (Kirsten Strain and Alistair Powell). It has been a few years since we have been able to take juniors due to the age restriction, so we are pleased to get it back in the squad calendar.

Day trainings are hoped for Sunday 22nd October and Sunday 3rd December, however permission for areas has not yet been achieved. Help with this would be appreciated, especially as the October date is very soon.

Zoom trainings are restarting this month after a summer break. It has been decided to keep going with monthly technical trainings but discontinue the physical trainings, which had been getting poorer levels of engagement.

After our recent appeal for more help with running the squad, we are pleased that a number of parents have offered to take on some of the work. In particular, Karen Thompson (HOC) is going to be helping with all things relating to admin and coordination, including email correspondence. Graham Pigott (POTOC) is helping specifically with the organisation of trips such as JIRCs and Lakes trainings and Iain Stamp (WCH) has expressed an interest in helping on the coaching side. Thank you to all our new volunteers!

We'd still love to hear from anyone else that is interested in getting involved, in any capacity. In addition, we're looking for a fresh intake of juniors so would appreciate getting names and contact details for any junior members of WM clubs that are confidently completing orange courses. Please contact us on wmjsquad@gmail.com.

13. BOF Levies and Fees

After discussion it was agreed that impact of this would be minimal as increase for non members has only gone up by 85p and clubs choose whether to differentiate members and non members with event fees. It may encourage more people to join BOF.

14. Safeguarding

Mel Elkington has agreed to take on the role of Regional Welfare/ Safeguarding Officer. It was agreed that ME could pop in on Zoom meetings as and when required.

IG agreed to check club websites within the region to check Safeguarding information displayed.

15. WMOA AGM

Great Barr Hotel booked for Monday 2nd October between 7-9pm. AGM date has gone out to all members to be followed up with Agenda, Minutes of last AGM in next few weeks. Need for new Vice Chair and WM Editor will also be highlighted.

AB to bring laptop to enable people to connect via Zoom.

16. Club Round-Up

OD-BE

Next events- Elmdon Park- October, Sutton Park- December.

Map Runs still being held but attract no Juniors – a push to put on more events that Juniors can attend and also include EOD for newcomers.

2 new Permanent Courses at Solihull – aided by Council.

HOC – JL

Merger with COBOC had gone smoothly. Birmingham group would continue to put on Beginners/ Families events.

2 WM League events – Burlish Top in November and Bodenham Arboretum in January. 5 City of Birmingham events on Saturdays, 9 street events using Map Run and 6 forest evening events planned.

WRE- R Rogers

Woodside Urban in October, part of UKUL, last event of the year.

WCH – JH

Urban event in July at Tamworth went well. No League event to be held in the Autumn as a lot on next year.

WM Relays later in month – not many entries as yet. Using internal controller as not able to get another.

CSC round in February. Two days of JK at Easter on Beaudesert- WCH providing planner and organiser. May need help from other WM clubs.

AGM to be held shortly need new Chair and Captain but interest shown in these positions.

POTOC- JC

3 more local events to be held this year..

WM champs – Leek Training Area- being remapped and extended- Morridge. Provisional date Sunday 12th May.

15. Any Other Business

SWOA- Tamar Triple now abandoned –problems with permissions / areas/ time of year. Used to alternate years with SINS.

16. Date of Next Meeting- Monday 11th December at 7-30pm by Zoom.

Meeting finished at 9-15pm.

Thanks to Barry Elkington for coordinating Zoom Meeting.