

Minutes of WMOA Committee Meeting 9th September 2024 at 7-30 pm

via Zoom

**** Some attendees had communication inconsistencies during this meeting**

Present: Marian White, Kirsten Strain, Carol Dredge, Jonathan Howell, Rick Roberts, Barry Elkington, Richard Lewis, Jim Cooke, Ian Gamlen, Dave Ellis

1. Apologies: John Leeson, Mel Elkington

2. Declaration of Interest: None

3. Acceptance of Previous Minutes: Minutes of 3rd June accepted

4. Matters Arising: Date of WMOA AGM now changed to Monday 21st October 2024

5. Correspondence: a) Minutes of EOC AGM received from Scott Collier.

6. Acting Chairman's Report: RL

Well looks like Summer's over. If we have not had the weather we have certainly had a range and choice of Orienteering events spread throughout the UK. Hope you all got to those you wished and I note the region had some positive successes.

In the last few weeks we have had some interesting urban events with very different challenges.

We can now look forward to our Winter programme and the resuming of the WMOA League events with the first coming up at Bathpool Park where there is also the West Midlands Champs- so I hope to see you all there.

This last weekend I joined the WMOA Junior Squad for a day's training at Brereton Spurs. I thank Kirsten for her efforts in putting these sessions on. It's like organising an event except that she is the Organiser, Planner and after she has placed all the controls gets to pass on her expertise to the Juniors with challenging and fun training exercises. I'm sure we will hear more about it later.

Last weekend was the Peter Palmer Relays in the Lakes.

Over the course of the next few weeks it's all change at the top for BOF, when Peter Hart the CEO for British Orienteering is standing down from his role after 6 years. As a region I am sure we all wish Peter well in his future retirement.

As we mention changes our WMOA is still looking for a Fixtures Secretary. It's an opportunity for a club member to help plan the future of our orienteering fixtures over the coming months and years.

Without anyone doing this role our WMOA fixtures are going to lapse and the communication link between regional and national fixtures will stop. Sadly this will be the case in the next few weeks.

In the past this role has been for a 3 year term but the WMOA would happily consider this on a 12 month basis to ensure we get a level of continuity in place soon.

The other role is that of Chairperson which will come up for election at the next AGM in October.

In October I will have done 5 years as Chair on and off and taking Covid into account. At this moment in time I do not intend to continue after October.

It's time for help from one of our 5 regional clubs to help fill these positions, so please help.

IG thanked RL on behalf of the committee for standing in as Chair this year.

7. Treasurer's Report: IG

Prior to the meeting IG had circulated the end of year accounts for both the WMOA and the WMJS accounts.

Lots of income and expenditure this year has been due to holding the JHI's.

There is a surplus of £900 this year in the WM account which is very healthy. Money still owed to WMOA from JK 2024 – approx. £2000.

IG suggested a potential amnesty in charging WM levy for next 12 months.

WMJS are continuing to spend money so have a slight deficit this year but not worrying.

It was agreed to put amnesty of levy on to next meeting's agenda.

RR pointed out that within the next 5 years WMOA are putting on 3 sets of British Champs each with the potential for a loss or profit. Need funds in bank to cover risks.

IG to sketch out different scenarios on levy for next committee meeting.

CD questioned whether WMOA could increase the donation, currently at 15%, offered to Juniors selected for Tours.

KS to ask other regions what contributions they make to Juniors.

Discussion on Junior finances to be put on next agenda.

Brian Laycock to inspect accounts prior to AGM.

8. Fixtures Secretary Report: RR

There are a number of issues to raise today. Firstly the state of play with events for our Leagues:

In the West Midlands League itself there are still 7 events registered, barring further mishaps. The first event of the season was held by HOC at Bodenham Arboretum and Shatterford Woods in January, a new area for the League, and the second one by OD at Coombe Abbey on 24th March. This was also the West Midlands Yvette Baker round one. The remaining 5 are yet to come.

In the Urban League for 2024, there are now 4 registered events. Events in Whitchurch, Shrewsbury and Worcester have already been held with OD's in Stratford to come.

In addition, nationally, the annual BSC/BSRC weekend was very successfully hosted by OD and HOC on the Birmingham and Warwick University campuses over 22nd and 23rd June.

More importantly, as I have previously reported, there are a number of major events allocated to the West Midlands over the next few years and we still need to clarify the hosting arrangements for several of them in the near future to allow for appropriate preparation time and identification of officials.

In 2026, HOC have agreed to host the British Middle Champs on Saturday April 18th. Brown Clee has been booked for the whole weekend. As I understand it, HOC were hoping that another WM club would agree to partner and take the lead on the second day. I have had no update on this.

Then in 2027 it is the West Midlands' turn to host the JIRC'S – over 25th and 26th September weekend. A host, or lead club and venue still need to be identified. It was previously suggested that Beaudesert would be a suitable venue to accommodate the Junior teams, given it's successful use for the JHI's last year.

Then the largest issue. The WMOA are due to host BOC and BRC in 2028. It seems like a long time away but the earlier we identify hosts and venues the better- bearing in mind the need for embargoes etc.

Discuss!

HOC have agreed to host the BNC in 2029 at Eymore Wood.

Mike Cope – National Fixtures needs to know details for all these events to sort out embargoes.

RR these issues have been raised with WMOA clubs fixtures secretaries with little response.

RL to contact Kerina Lake, Welsh Fixtures Secretary, on potential use of Welsh areas by WMOA for BOC/ BRC. See minutes of last meeting.

RR reiterated that these events need to be pinned down very soon.

National Fixtures Meeting – 15th October and West Midlands Fixtures Meeting – 24th October.

9. WMOA Website: MW

Website updated when events or results come in. Next Newsletter will be out in next few weeks. KS asked to remind tour delegates for reports on tour for Newsletter. Also report needed on Peter Palmer Relays.

10. Development –

RL to speak to HM on Sunday at Bathpool to get provisional dates for courses by end of the year.

RL to speak with Mike Smithard DEE when dates are known, re possibility of combining courses with NWOA.

11. Coaching Co-ordinator- DE

Next stage following on from club coaching survey report is a single item agenda meeting to discuss survey and actions to take forward. Two strands- participation and performance. What next? Priorities? Lots of unanswered questions.

Meeting to be held after AGM. DE- suggest possible dates. Zoom meeting first. Open to any interested parties.

Early 2025- start implementation of actions agreed upon. DE needs to step back by end of July.

KS offered to host Zoom meeting on WMJS account. KS to be copied in on dates.

IG pointed out Orienteering Foundation coaching weekend in Lakes at end of November- open to all. Club reps to circulate details on this. MW to put details in Newsletter.

12. West Midlands Junior Squad –KS

The biggest thing on the horizon for WMJS is the JIRCs competition, at the end of September. It is being hosted by the SW region in Mallards Park and Sandford and Lyncombe Woods. The WM team will comprise 14 juniors, out of which we should get 9 scoring individual results and 3 competitive relay teams. A better balance of ages would be an advantage for the team competition but we hope for some good individual runs and that all the juniors going have a positive experience. The adults travelling with the team are Kirsten Strain, Martin Pigott, Steve Blackmore and Simon Thompson.

After relatively sparse in-person trainings in the first half of the year, we have a busier schedule throughout the Autumn term. We began with a training on Brereton Spurs (WCH) last Sunday.

Our next in- person training will be on the 19th October on Kinver Edge (HOC). In November we have a weekend away which will incorporate a day of training and then participation in the November Classic in the New Forest, organised in conjunction with EMJOS. Later in November is the JROS Hawkshead weekend for 16's. We will finish the year with our Christmas training in mid December on a LEI area. Zoom trainings will continue to complement in-person trainings, with one scheduled each month.

Fundraising cake stalls are planned for several events, including the WM champs in September and OD's WML in December.

We ordered more stock of squad kit and that arrived over the Summer, so we are able to offer O tops and jackets to any new members.

It was mentioned at the last WMOA meeting that coach capacity was limiting activities. This term, planning and delivery of some of the coached sessions is being helped by Andy Simpson (LEI) and Alistair Powell (OD) who are both working towards their coaching qualifications. Karen Thompson is doing a magnificent job of admin and we are thankful to Ian Gamlen for continuing to produce regular financial reports. The biggest area that still needs support is liaising with clubs to arrange permissions for trainings. Help with that would be much appreciated.

We are actively looking for more new members for the squad. We are having to be increasingly flexible about the lower age and standard of juniors joining the squad in order to have any new intake at all. As such we would appreciate if clubs helped us get in touch with any juniors aged 10 or over who could benefit from training. Younger / less experienced juniors may be invited to participate as associate members if they have a parent/ adult to support them, until they are ready to be full squad members.

RL wished the squad well at the JIRCS.

13. AGM

AGM to be held on Monday 21st October 2024 at 7-30pm at Great Barr Hotel and by Zoom.

Notice of AGM had been sent by CD to all membership secretaries to inform club members. None of these had forwarded email on to members. CD to resend email to committee members to ensure message gets through to all WMOA members.

IG to sort tea/ coffee on the night and also to pay for room hire.

14. Club Round Up:

OD-BE

Regional event to be held in December with local events before this and Stratford Urban.

Development Officer to be discussed at AGM. Grant request has been made to Orienteering Foundation then need to find right person and sort out job description later.

(IG WMOA Orienteering Foundation rep. Let IG know beforehand if asking for financial help. Has reasonable funds and welcomes bids where clubs put in some money and they add to it. Club development officers very popular at the moment. Orienteering Foundation website explains more.)

DE asked for synergy between club development officer and ideas from coaching survey. BE to pass this on to Keith Willdig.

WCH-JH

Quiet Summer for Chasers. Winter evening map run series, once a fortnight, about to start.

Regional event in November. New map for Urban event next year.

Saturday series being trialled to encourage new members.

BE- questioned whether Saturday series events might be better on a Sunday. Saturday clashes with Park Runs and school sport. WMOA has many Sundays with no events now. Orienteering is essentially a Sunday morning sport.

HOC-IG

John Leeson asked for two points to be raised at meeting-

1. HOC have some matting available for car parking which clubs may borrow. Peter Langmaid- HOC chair contact point for this.
 2. National Outdoor Show held at NEC in March had a BOF stall but no publicity for local clubs. JL suggests local clubs get involved by putting out literature/ helping at the event.
- All in agreement with this JL to contact BOF to arrange this for next year.

HOC's series of Beginners/ Newcomers/ Families events starting soon. Night Street League to take place on Thursday evenings.

Regional event at Eymore on 10th November needs a Controller. IG to contact Bob Brandon for advice on this.

POTOC-JC

WMOA Champs at Bathpool this Sunday.

Morrige level C event on 4th May subject to army permissions.

West Midlands School Champs – Level C – Central Forest Park- 17th May. Good facilities for school children.

POTOC 50th Anniversary next year. Park Hall being remapped for a level C event on 26th October 2025.

KS suggested that WM schools champs might attract more competitors on a weekday. MW pointed out that WRE had held v successful schools events midweek. JC – Staffordshire schools events held in week always well attended.

JC agreed to change event to a weekday - report back at next meeting new date.

WRE- RL

Have held 4 very small events during the summer which attracted plenty of newcomers.

Shrewsbury Quarry event was held directly after junior Park run and attracted 93 juniors. Plans for Nescliffe event in hand.

15. Any Other Business: None

16. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 9th December 7-30pm by Zoom

AGM- Monday 21st October 7-30pm Great Barr Hotel and by Zoom.

Meeting closed at 9-16pm

Thanks to Barry Elkington for coordinating Zoom Meeting.