SCOA BULLETIN DECEMBER 2013

This bulletin provides a brief summary of current SCOA issues, including those items discussed at the committee meeting held on 5th December 2013.

SCOA Long Distance Championships

The 2013 SCOA Long Distance Championships took place on Sunday 3rd November at SOC's November Classic. Many congratulations to Kezia Jukes (BAOC) and Dane Blomquist (BAOC) who won their respective open classes. A full list of medal-winners can be found on the SCOA website at http://www.scoa-orienteering.org.uk/events/2013/11/05/scoa-2013-long-distance-championships, along with some photographs of the prizegiving.

The 2014 SCOA Long Distance Championships will take place on Sunday 9th February at TVOC's Chiltern Challenge at Nettlebed, 4 miles north-west of Henley on Thames. Full details will be available shortly on the TVOC website at http://www.tvoc.org.uk/events.html.

And don't forget the 2014 Southern Championships, being held at Star Posts on Sunday 26th January. Full details on BKO's website at http://www.bko.org.uk/event/star-posts-26-jan-14.

British Sprint and Middle Distance Championships

SEOA were originally scheduled to organise the British Sprint and Middle Distance Championships in 2015, with SCOA scheduled to host them in 2016. SEOA are intending to hold the Sprint Championships in the Olympic Park in Stratford. Unfortunately, the rebuilding work in the park will not be completed by Summer 2015, so it would not be possible to hold the 2015 Championships there. SEOA have therefore requested that they defer their hosting of the Sprints and Middles for 12 months, by swapping with SCOA. We have agreed to this request – it would be fantastic for the British Sprint Champs to be held in the iconic Olympic Park.

Unfortunately this leaves SCOA with just 18 months to organise the 2015 Championships, which are scheduled for Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th May 2015.

We have identified a location for the Middles, at Naphill near High Wycombe, so this area is now embargoed. We are in the process of seeking a location for the Sprints.

We have appointed an organiser for the Middles. We are currently looking for Planners for both events, and an organiser for the Sprints. These are level A events so you will need [Katy – please can you provide some words here]. Please contact chairman@scoa-orienteering.org.uk to volunteer for one of these prestigious roles.

British Orienteering's Association and Club Conference

British Orienteering held its annual Association and Club Conference in October, on the theme of Volunteers and Volunteering in Orienteering.

Liz Yeadon (SARUM) attended the conference on behalf of SCOA; her list of the key points from the conference, and the action she suggests SCOA clubs might wish to consider, are attached. SCOA is asking each club to review this list, and for each club's representative to report back to the March SCOA meeting with their view on which of these actions they feel should be pursued. SCOA is keen to identify items that clubs might work together on, or can help each other on by sharing experiences.

Training for Organisers, Planners and Controllers

One of SCOA's functions is to provide training for individuals wishing to become Organisers, or Planners, or Controllers.

A Controller's course is currently being planned for the first quarter of 2014. If you wish to attend, please contact technical@scoa-orienteering.org.uk. And if you or your club would like a course run for Organisers or Planners, again please contact technical@scoa-orienteering.org.uk.

SCOA Junior Squad

The SCOA Junior Squad provides training days once a month, with an emphasis on coaching and technique training. Normal squad coaching and training days are open to any interested junior from second year M/W12 upwards in the region. First year M/W 12's can come to training days in the autumn of the year (1st September onwards). This applies to both full BOF members and local members of clubs within SCOA. The.

As well as improving your orienteering skills, you should find these sessions are lots of fun. So what are you waiting for?

The next training session is currently being organised; a date has not yet been fixed but it will be some time in January. Details will appear on the junior squad website http://www.scjs.org.uk/ shortly. Please contact manager@scjs.org.uk to book a place. We'll be delighted to see you there.

SCOA League 2013/14

We are now broadly half way through the 2013/14 SCOA League season. A list of the current league leaders can be seen on the SCOA website at http://www.scoa-orienteering.org.uk/scoa-league. Meanwhile there are plenty more league events to come in the first half of 2014. The full list of events can be seen at the above web address.

Association & Club Conference 2013 -

The theme of the Conference was Volunteering – covering a wide range of areas within three main themes –

1. Volunteering activities within Orienteering Clubs
2. Recruiting new folk as a source of progression
3. Sources of Volunteers from outside Orienteering

1. Volunteering activities within Orienteering Clubs

	Comment	Action
Volunteer capacity	Many Clubs actually run with a small proportion of their members & keep their activities to a level that this small band can cope with. The face of Orienteering is changing and Clubs need to move with this or they are likely to decline. Clubs need to think how to encourage, enthuse, commit & develop our members	α) SCOA Clubs perhaps need to look at themselves & ask how they could expand or if they want to! β) We perhaps need to look at how much time people can commit to volunteering, given the demands of work and family and give appropriate tasks, with support, to fit in with this.
Succession Planning	If we do not plan how our Clubs are going to develop in the future, they could just sink as current members age & possibly leave orienteering Mentoring new volunteers within a Club. There is a tendency to stay with the same faces doing the same jobs at every event or on the committees. This needs to be addressed to bring in new blood to take over as the stalwarts move on! Clubs also need to be aware of how this appears to a newcomer or outsider – as it can appear very cliquey or the task hard to do. Someone within each Club needs to have an overview of the numbers of Officials there are and that a plan is in place to ensure that sufficient people are being encouraged to train to move into potential vacancies.	α) The Clubs should have a plan to encourage new people to take on tasks – with help and training to de-mystify things. β) Clubs need to work out how to keep new folk once they have become members, to encourage them to take on tasks, however small, to feel part of the Club. This can then lead to more involvement as they become accustomed to things. To work on barriers to new people taking on these commitments.
Roles & Respons-ibilities	Roles of tasks within Events & Committees need to be analysed & simplified to ensure a spread of responsibilities	SCOA Clubs – can ask their members why, or why they don't take up the various tasks & see if there are strategies to overcome their fears or approach things differently. Again discussion about the findings of this analysis could be shared between the Clubs.
Events v Committee	It is (slightly) easier to get volunteers to take on roles of responsibility for specific events rather than on to committees; specifically Organisers are hard to come by. Breaking down tasks to lighten the burden – although the requirements for overall responsibility still lie with the Organiser.	Simple lists of tasks & responsibilities Mentoring by experienced members Breaking down tasks to share the load Raise the profile of Organisers by offering courses & grades as with Planners & Controllers and

		encouraging people to do them! We need to give them some status!
Volunteer Coordinator	The idea of having a person, either within a Club or an Association, responsible for promoting the needs of volunteers was mentioned several times during the day. Clubs tackle work with Volunteers in many ways but maybe different approaches are needed to look at the situation form different angles – it is easy to remain with the status quo!	- Consider having someone within the Association to facilitate discussions regarding Volunteers – ideas for recruitment/ encouragement of current Club members/ sharing of good practice - Clubs could pair up to share good practice & ideas but this might leave some Clubs on their own.
Perceived level of bureaucracy	There is a feeling that there are an increasing number of rules & regulations to be adhered to which can be very daunting to an Organiser who bears the brunt of actioning them .	- The distinction between requirements of areas such as Insurance/ Health & Safety/ safeguarding and the BOF Rules needs to be made clearer by BOF - Task allocation amongst Event officials needs to be looked at and reviewed to see what can be delegated to other people, thus lessening the Organiser's task – BOF are looking into this but so could SCOA!
Development	Training for all levels of Officials needs to be increased, particularly for Organisers. There is also a need to encourage different people to serve on committees with posts mentored if necessary to develop the members and discover new talents. This also ensures progression within the Clubs Looking at what people do in their 'other' lives can bring in different talents.	Clubs to discuss & share what success they have had in encouraging people to take on a share of both organising events & serving on the committees and how they achieved this.
Motivation & recognition	There was much discussion about how volunteer work is & could be recognised – through social aspects; team work, making it fun to be part of things!; material rewards; simple courtesies. One major idea that was discussed was a weekend conference, arranged by SOA for all of their Clubs after one of their Scottish 6 days. Members from all of the Scottish Clubs were all brought together and a wide variety of courses & activities put on to offer courses for Officials, Mappers & Coaches with practical activities for those not wishing to do any of these. Great fun was had, we were told!	α) SCOA Clubs could share what is appreciated by their own volunteer groups. β) Ask members what motivates them to volunteer & what rewards please them. χ) A SWOA rep & myself are looking into the viability of arranging such a Conference between SWOA & SCOA.

2. Recruiting new folk as a source of progression/ succession

Comment	Action
Clubs have been working on many ways to get people to participate but getting them to join and then keeping them has been a different matter. We need to look at what makes people join a group rather than just partake of their activities and thus hover at the fringes.	α) Discussion of real issues that prevent people joining and perhaps come at them from a different angle? β) Keeping them – look at how we appear to outsiders
Clubs need to look at who they want to attract, why and in what numbers	Discuss & plan to target specific groups – share ideas of how to do this

3.Volunteers from outside Orienteering:

The general feeling about using volunteers from outside the Sport is that there is a use for them for specific events – large and/ or special events (eg. Urban, WOC 2015) where quantities of help are required non-specialised jobs – control watching/ car parking/ marshalling for example. There was a feeling that for most smaller events, their lack of knowledge of Orienteers & Orienteering could be a potential barrier.
Sources of external volunteers were given:

- http://www.do-it.org.uk/partners/
- http://vinspired.com/
- http://www.wwv.org.uk/
- https://www.joininuk.org/
- http://www.sportmakers.co.uk/
- Local county sports partnerships
- Local groups – Scouts/ cadets/ Forces bases
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards programmes
- School Community Sports Leaders Awards

The Dof E Award attracted a lot of interest as the young people taking part require skills & practice before they can do their Expeditions which orienteering can fulfil. Clubs should contact their local schools to discuss this.

BOF has produced an action plan of their own, considering putting on courses, collecting data, highlighting Volunteering with regular articles in Focus; however, as an Association, we could do a lot to decide what SCOA Clubs need and achieve in-house! To look hard at where we are ; to share what we are doing; what we are doing well; how we achieve that; succession issues – how we all move our Clubs forward as the current bunch of stalwarts starts to retire!

Items from the Conference should be available on the BOF website by the coming weekend.