

British Orienteering Proposals 2026

Ordinary Resolution 1: To APPOINT the auditors for the 2026 accounts and authorise the Board to fix their remuneration.

Supporting Statement

British Orienteering Federation Limited's articles of association and company law do not require us to undertake a full audit. However, the Board continue to take the view that the reassurance that a full audit brings to the members in respect of the finances is appropriate, given the staffing levels of the Federation.

[Bates Weston](#) has acted as British Orienteering's auditors since 2023. The Board are satisfied with the support and analysis received from Bates Weston.

The Board therefore recommends the appointment of Bates Weston as auditors for the financial year 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026.

Proposed: The Board of Directors

Ordinary Resolution 2: To APPROVE the member and club affiliation fees from 1st January 2027

Supporting Statement

British Orienteering's proposed membership fee increase is intended to help protect and strengthen the future of the sport for all members. Membership subscriptions are one of the three main sources of income that enable British Orienteering to deliver services and support across the sport, alongside event levies and funding from the sports councils.

These income streams help fund a wide range of essential activities and services, including membership systems, event and public liability insurance, safeguarding, health and safety, governance and rules, support for clubs and volunteers, map copyright, and the continued development of the Great Britain Teams. They also support the day-to-day work of the National Office in delivering services and resources that benefit members, clubs, and event organisers across the country.

Since the pandemic, the Board has deliberately used reserves to help support members and maintain investment in the organisation's strategic priorities during a particularly difficult period. This approach helped protect participation, development activity, and services at a time when many members were facing wider financial and personal pressures outside of the sport.

However, after several years in which membership fees were held steady, despite high inflation and rising operating costs, the organisation now needs to return to a more sustainable financial position. Between 2020 and the start of 2025, fees did not increase in line with inflation, and this proposed adjustment is intended to reset the financial baseline for the years ahead while continuing to provide stability and support for the sport.

The proposed increase in club affiliation fees reflects these same long-term considerations. Although the increase is larger than in previous years, affiliation fees have historically been kept deliberately low and have remained well below the levels charged by many other sports governing bodies. Even with this change, British Orienteering club affiliation fees will continue to represent good value while helping ensure clubs receive ongoing support and services.

There is also uncertainty around future Sport England funding, with the current funding cycle ending in March 2027 and no indicative future allocation yet confirmed. The Board therefore believes it is important to ensure that British Orienteering is financially resilient and able to continue supporting members, clubs, events, and development opportunities regardless of future funding outcomes.

The proposed fee structure, to have effect from 1st January 2027, is as follows:

Membership Fees		
	2026 Fees	2027 Fees
Senior	£17.00	£20.00
Junior	£5.00	£6.00
Young Adult	£11.00	£12.00
Family	£39.00	£46.00
Club affiliation	£95.00	£120.00
University Club affiliation	£25.00	£25.00

British Orienteering will retain the system of part-year fees for new members agreed at the 2023 AGM, where new members joining between 1st May and 31st August pay two-thirds of the annual membership fee and those joining between 1st September and 31st December pay one-third.

Proposed: The Board of Directors

Ordinary Resolution 3: To DECIDE the levy fees from 1st January 2026

Board Proposal

Context

British Orienteering's proposed increase in event levies represents a responsible and necessary step to help secure the long-term sustainability of the sport. Event levies are one of the three primary sources of funding through which the normal activities of British Orienteering are financed, alongside membership subscriptions and funding from the sports councils.

These income streams are essential in supporting member services, staffing the National Office, and covering key operational and governance costs. This includes areas such as

membership management systems, rules and governance, map copyright, event and public liability insurance, health and safety, safeguarding, support for the Great Britain Teams, and a range of statutory and non-statutory responsibilities. Event levies are also a standard funding mechanism used across many National Governing Bodies of sport, and British Orienteering is no exception.

Since the pandemic, the Board has consciously reduced the surplus held in reserves in order to continue supporting members, clubs, and event delivery, while also investing in the organisation's strategic plan during a particularly challenging period. This approach helped protect participation, development activity, and services at a time when many members were facing significant financial and personal pressures outside of the sport.

However, the accounts are now at a point where the prudent and responsible course of action is to return to a breakeven or modest surplus budget position. During the period between 2020 and the start of 2025, event levies were held at existing levels and did not keep pace with the significant inflationary pressures experienced across that time. While inflation has now stabilised to some extent, levy rates now need to be reset to provide a sustainable financial foundation for the future.

In addition, British Orienteering faces uncertainty around central Sport England funding, which expires in March 2027. At present, no indicative figure for future support from the sports council has been received. The Board therefore wishes to ensure that this increase in event levies provides an appropriate level of financial resilience against a range of potential funding outcomes, helping to protect the sport, maintain essential services, and continue investing in opportunities for members and clubs across the country.

The proposed fees table and considerations are outlined below:

Levy Fees		
	2026	2027
Senior Members	£1.85	£2.00
Junior Members	£0.60	£0.65
Senior non members	£2.80	£3.00
Junior non members	£0.60	£0.65

Proposed: The Board of Directors

Ordinary Resolution 4: To APPOINT the President of British Orienteering

Steve Cram CBE

Steve Cram is a British retired track and field athlete and former orienteer and has been President since 2022.

Along with fellow Britons Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett, he was one of the world's dominant middle distance runners during the 1980s. Nicknamed "The Jarrow Arrow", after his home town, Steve set world records in the 1500 m, 2000 m and the mile during a 19-day period in the summer of 1985. He was the first man to run 1500 m under 3 minutes and 30 seconds. He won the 1500 m gold medal at the 1983 World Championships and the 1500 m silver medal at the 1984 Olympic Games.

In 2000, Steve co-founded international children's charity COCO (Comrades of Children Overseas) with British Army Major Jim Panton after running the Bosnia Comrades ultramarathon in 1998. Steve remains chairman of COCO, an organisation which currently provides sustainable sources of quality education to children living in poor, remote parts of East Africa.

In 2008 Steve was appointed Chancellor of the University of Sunderland, and in 2009 was elected as President of Jarrow & Hebburn Athletics Club.

Steve now works as a television presenter and athletics commentator, motivational speaker and athletics coach.

Steve's introduction to Orienteering as a teenager seemed like a marriage made in heaven for a map-loving, running enthusiast. He has so many happy memories of belting through forests and across moorland, often recklessly, occasionally with surprising accuracy! "*The thrill of the find always outweighing the sense of bewilderment at my own navigational shortcomings. It also gave me on my mantras I hold to this day....the map is never wrong!*".

Proposed: The Board of Directors

Ordinary Resolution 5: Election of Elected Directors

The Articles of Association require that Board of Directors of British Orienteering constitute eleven members, including:

- The Chair, appointed in accordance with Article [26](#);
- Six Elected Directors, elected by the membership in accordance with Article [30](#);
- Three Independent Directors, appointed in accordance with Article [31](#); and
- The Chief Executive, ex officio.

At the 2026 AGM, two Elected Directors reach the end of their current terms. Duncan Birtwistle reaches the end of his second term and Alison Howe (vice Chair) reaches the end of her first term of office.

Alison Howe is seeking re-election for her second term and Duncan Birtwistle has decided to step down and not seek a third term.

We have received three nominations for the two vacant positions.

Alison Howe (Saxons Orienteering Club)

Statement

Three years ago, I joined the British Orienteering Board with a commitment to apply my corporate strategic and financial background to the sport we all love. Having served an initial term of 3 years, including the past 18 months as Vice Chair, I remain committed to help secure the long-term sustainability of the sport.

Over my first term, I have worked hard to provide stable, robust governance through a period of significant organisational change:

- **Leadership & Succession:** I have played a central role in board renewal and executive recruitment, including the appointment of our new Chair, Independent Directors, and CEO
- **Strategic Delivery & Member Support:** I have actively supported the executive team in driving our long-term strategy forward—specifically focusing on improving governance standards, creating lifelong participation pathways, and modernising the perception of orienteering.
- **Risk, Policy & Access Management:** I have applied my professional background to complex operational and regulatory challenges, including strengthening our risk management frameworks around member insurance, navigating sensitive policy reviews, addressing the growing environmental and land access challenges, and upholding our commitment to safe, inclusive sport.

Alongside my national role, I remain deeply connected to the grassroots of our sport as a competitive orienteer and active club member, organising local, regional and national events, as well as development projects with Senior Schools in Medway and Scouting organisations in Kent as a whole. I am eager to remain on the board and to serve a further three years.

Proposed by: Sarah Howes SAX

Seconded by: Jean Fitzgerald SAX

Rob Lines (Southdowns Orienteers)

Statement

I've been a member of Southdowns Orienteers for just over 20 years. Along with the rest of my family, we have become completely immersed in the sport, enjoying the many aspects of volunteering and participation. I'm an active member of the SO committee and regularly coach, organise, plan and advise on events. I also take photographs to help promote the sport. Highlights have been the fun of organising the annual Brighton City Race and the excitement of

photographing GBR successes in recent years. We travel to competitions in Europe and there always seems to be an interesting angle to try back home as a new initiative.

I've recently retired from paid work as a Chartered Accountant and look forward to spending more time in voluntary work. The professional skills that I have to offer the board include business, finance and negotiation along with 30-years' experience of contract management and project management. The majority of my career has been spent in the private and public sectors, but I also spent 4 years managing a charity which supported young people leaving care. As well as managing the staff teams, I also attended board meetings and handled formal governance and administration.

I'm passionate about the sport of orienteering which benefits from the enormous goodwill of its members who volunteer countless hours each week to organise safe and successful events up and down the country. Whenever we travel to events, home and abroad, it's the warm, welcoming orienteering family that makes our sport so special. If elected, I would work to support the development of orienteering at all levels. Orienteering truly is a sport for all, and I'm excited to see where we can take our sport in the coming years.

Proposed by: Alan Williamson SO

Seconded by: Sarah Brown SLOW

John Leeson (Harlequins Orienteering Club)

Statement

While many orienteers were introduced to the sport by their parents, I was introduced to orienteering by my children, who were lucky enough to go to a school where the deputy head was a keen orienteer.

25 years later, I'm a member of the Harlequins Orienteering Club, and I'm currently representing HOC on the West Midlands OA Committee. I've also been the club's vice-chair and from 2010 to 2014 was the club's chair.

I'm experienced in planning, organising and controlling events at a variety of levels, and was the planner for the British Sprint Relay Championships at Birmingham University in 2024. Since retiring, I've also become the apprentice (at M65) in HOC's mapping team.

One of my key drivers is to develop our club and our sport by bringing orienteering to new audiences. I've pioneered HOC's MapRun based SMap (street-map-app) urban series with a particular focus on attracting new entrants and this initiative is showing early signs of success.

As a geologist and engineer, with an additional legal qualification, I was a director and co-founder of the environmental consultancy, SLR Consulting. As well as the management of the business, I directed major multi-disciplinary environmental assessment projects. As a result, I'm conversant with a wide range of environmental issues and regulations and of negotiating with regulators and decision makers.

When I'm not orienteering, I'm a trustee director of the Katherine Martin Charitable Trust which makes large grants to three of Britain's best known charities. I'm also a keen hill walker (and OMM competitor) and member of the British Mountaineering Council where I've served on BMC's Access Management Group.

Many of the challenges over access that users of hill walkers and mountaineers experience are similar to those that affect orienteering. I'm concerned about the difficulties that clubs seem to be encountering with obtaining permissions, sometimes due to environmental concerns that aren't relevant to the reality of orienteering events.

In short, I'm able to bring to BOF a range of orienteering, business & charity management and technical experience that I hope is relevant to driving our sport forwards.

Proposed by: Simon Thompson HOC

Seconded by: John Embrey SROC

Ordinary Resolution 6: Updating of the Articles of Association

The Articles of Association have undergone a detailed review by Director David Rosen. The purpose of this review was to update minor provisions and ensure that the language used throughout is gender-neutral, addressing previous gender-specific wording.

Amendments have also been made to the timelines for the AGM. These are proposed as:

- o Director nominations from 50 to 40 days.
- o Candidate pen portraits from 40 to 35 days.
- o Written notification of the AGM from 70 to 50 days.

No other material changes have been made to the substance or intent of the Articles.

The draft Articles of Association can be found [here](#).

Proposed: The Board of Directors