

Mike's eNews – 4 April 2017

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Please feel free to forward this eNews to your members; it will be published on the eNews page at <http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/page/enews>; if you'd rather send them a link please feel free to do so.

It's been a while since the last eNews, the end of January I think, apologies for this but it has been a period of considerable change behind the scenes at British Orienteering as you'll see.

JK & the AGM

Hopefully many of you will already be entered into the JK, it promises to be a great event! If you are attending, please don't forget to come and see us at the AGM and

British Orienteering Major Events

The British Orienteering major events, the JK and BOCs, have caused considerable concern over the last 10 or so years for a variety of reasons. There is no doubt that the incidence of 'near-misses' is increasing in frequency and I don't think many people believe the current model of part franchise, part partnership between an association and British Orienteering is sustainable. If you are 'in the know' about the organising of this year's events you would be in doubt no longer! Many associations are not able, or do not wish, to carry the financial risk associated with a major event, leaving British Orienteering in an impossible position in financial and governance terms. If we want to safeguard the future of our events we need to find a way to stage them that is more robust with less risk.

As those of you that are interested will know we have tried several ways to mitigate the problems and the current approach of franchise/partnership came from members and associations. Unfortunately, this is proving not to be a long-term solution. With a degree of sadness, I've reached the conclusion that 'bit-part' changes and 'tinkering' will probably not bring about the more radical changes required – sooner or later a 'near-miss' will not be averted and a disaster will take place. Perhaps it is to do with the amount of risk members and British Orienteering are prepared to live with? I know that as an employee, Chief Executive and company Director I only have to think back a few years to the disaster that hit the OMM to appreciate it was the evidence of robust policies and procedures that saved the organisers from organisational and possibly personal disaster.

At a recent Board meeting it was agreed that discussions should go ahead to quantify the risks and near-misses and to pull together some recommendations about how future British Orienteering owned major events should be delivered for the board to consider. This work is now starting.

Funding

Funding has been secured from Sport North Ireland and Sport England. Both funding bodies have changed their funding programmes significantly resulting in lots of change across the sporting framework of both Northern Ireland and England.

If you've been keeping up to date with our news items you will be up to date on our funding position.

Sport Northern Ireland have curtailed the funding they provided to develop talented athletes and coaches completely. They are providing £43,612 of funding for use on the Active Clubs Investment Programme for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Sport England are providing £266,000 of funding to develop talented athletes and £810,000 funding to support the work in our Strategic Plan to retain frequent orienteers in the sport. This is funding for the 4-year period, 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. In total Sport England funding is £1.07m against the £2.3m received during the 2013/17 funding period, a drop of 53.4%. We are still waiting on receipt of the funding contract.

Staffing

As a consequence of finalising the Strategic Plan and the reduced funding award we have been through a process of reviewing the staff structure. The following reflects the position from 1 April 2017:

	Old structure – 2013/17	New structure
British Orienteering	15 FTE combined	4.6 (+ 0.4 pilot) FTE
Sport England		6.4 FTE
Sport Northern Ireland	2	1

Our staffing structure from 1 April 2017 is:

British Orienteering:

Chief Executive: Mike Hamilton

Business & Accounts Manager: Jannette Blunden

Head of Development: Craig Anthony

Administrators (1.6 FTE): Scott Parker & Liz Goodwin

Orienteering Services Officer (0.2 FTE) – pilot for 2 years: Dan Riley

Sport England:

England Development Officers (4 FTE): Natalie Weir, Tim Herod, +2 to recruit

Communications Officer: Jennie Taylor

Orienteering Services Officer (0.4 FTE) – aligned with the British Orienteering pilot position: Dan Riley

Sport Northern Ireland:

Active Clubs Coordinator: Juls Hanvey

Unfortunately, this means we have lost Allan Bogle from his role in Northern Ireland and Rachel Atherton from the development team, Rachel has moved to the sports development team in Leeds. We will be losing Jackie Newton and Sally Pygott over the next month or so.

Once we have the Sport England funding contract in place we will then recruit a further 2 England Development Officers.

We'll update the staffing page of the website and I'll communicate shortly to let you know the roles and responsibilities in the new structure along with the names of staff holding the roles.

Work on the restructure of the staffing has been considerable and has been the main reason why I've a significant back-log of emails to deal with – apologies to those of you waiting on my responses.

Strategic Plan

Just a brief update on the progress in rolling out the action plan:

1. To consult with our associations, clubs and members regarding the plan, as stated above. On-going
2. To consider how the strategic plan can be resourced which continues to raise queries regarding commercial opportunities and activity. On-going – report to Board June 2017
3. To refine the functions/services required of British Orienteering as the National Governing Body for orienteering that can be delivered through self-funding and in a sustainable manner. Completed
4. To review the steering group and committee structure of British Orienteering to reflect the needs of our strategic plan. Jun 2017
5. To finalise the staffing structure and clarify the staff positions that are delivering the core role and functions of the governing body and those staff that are involved in delivering government funded contracts. There was strong agreement that the staff structure that is delivering the core role and functions of the governing body should be self-funding and sustainable. Completed
6. To establish work programmes and an operational plan for 2017. On-going, finalised 30 April

Social Media & Coaches

Evidence has come to light about poor practices that some coaches are involved in and it is clear we need to impress on our coaches the risks that they take in continuing their poor practices.

Coaches are in a position of trust to our young athletes and must do their best to protect them; coaches are also at risk from allegation and must safeguard themselves from such risk.

Similarly, many young athletes and their parents see coaches as role models and therefore coaches must commit themselves to providing the good practices expected of role models. Having spoken to a few coaches over the last few months there is a need to 'walk the walk' and not just 'talk the talk'! If you are a coach in orienteering set yourself high standards in the way in which you communicate and avoid the pitfalls so easily stepped into of using social media poorly.

If you are a coach or use social media please read the latest Rules and Practice available [here](#).

Web Development

The changes to the website are now well progressed and we hope to be able to switch from the current site to the new site at the end of April.

The user experience will be quite different with the public facing website being very friendly and minimal. The members' portal is accessible using your user login but you will need to know your login and password – if you don't have them, please use the 'Forgotten login details' link on the website and enter your membership number if you still cannot login please contact the office on info@britishorienteering.org.uk.

As members, you will be able to access your dashboard that provides a summary of your recent orienteering activities and then drill down either from the dashboard or the menus to the various resources you have access to.

Whilst the new site is going through considerable testing I am sure there will be bugs to iron out, please let us know of any errors and we'll get them sorted out.

Several 'modules' will follow the release of the new website, for instance we will be collecting information about the events you volunteer at. There will also be a single theme forum so that we can collect ideas and feedback from you on significant matters.

Reserves Policy

The Board has a responsibility to ensure that the Company has sufficient reserves to meet its operational needs. This includes maintaining a level of reserves which would enable it to continue to meet its obligations even when there are significant changes to its circumstances. The recent governance audit by Moore Stephen on behalf of Sport England has recommended that 'wind down' costs are considered for inclusion.

The current Reserves Policy states that the level of reserves that the Company should maintain are:

Reserves should be maintained at a level which ensures that three months of the Company's normal activity (a full programme as is currently being implemented) and a further three months of core activity (meeting its commitments to the membership) could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. A proportion of reserves will be maintained in a readily realisable form. For this purpose, the reserves that the Company carries excludes fixed assets.

At the end of 2015, the requirement of funds to meet the reserves policy was £397,206 and the actual reserves amounted to £473,168.

FRS102 indicate that the two leases we hold, the National Office and the copier, should be included but other advice is that we hold sufficient reserves to cover staff redundancies.

Staff redundancies are difficult to quantify as they often change frequently within a year. In the case of 'wholly' funded positions, past practice of both Sport England and UK Sport has been that funding can be used to cover redundancies of funded staff. Sport England have been asked to provide assurance of this position in writing; this has not yet been forthcoming despite repeated requests.

As a consequence of the parameters agreed at the December 2016 Board meeting the updated Reserves Policy states:

New Reserves Policy

Reserves should be maintained at a level which ensures that six months of normal activity can continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. This normal activity will include core activities and back office facilities as are currently being implemented but not include programmes funded through National Lottery or Exchequer funding awards.

Additionally, the reserves should maintain sufficient funds to cover wind-down costs that British Orienteering might require including:

- *The cost of any leases that British Orienteering is contractually obliged to meet as indicated in FRS102.*
- *Any costs associated with staff redundancy at the end of the 6-month period. To be clear, this will include all staff employed on 1 January of the year. Costs associated with the redundancy of staff employed to work solely on funded programmes (National Lottery and Exchequer) will be omitted from the reserves calculation provided written confirmation is received from the funding partner confirming that the funding awarded is available and can be used to cover such redundancy costs.*

A proportion of reserves will be maintained in a readily realisable form. For this purpose, the reserves that British Orienteering carries excludes fixed assets.

Impact

At the end of 2016, the requirement of funds to meet the reserves policy and in line with the revised going concern policy and “wind-down costs” is £333,665 and the actual reserves amount to £511,971. This compares to the 2015 reserves policy which required a minimum of £397,206 to be held in reserves.

Best wishes,

Mike