

Derwent Valley Orienteers 2023 Annual General Meeting

Wed 18th October 7:30pm at the Family Tree, Whatstandwell

Agenda



Welcome & apologies: Judith Holt, John Cooke, Chris Millard, Rex Bleakman, Christine Middleton, Helen Chiswell, David Vincent.

Present: Val & Graham Johnson, Tony Berwick, Michelle Mackervoy, Jen & Derek Gale, Mike Gardner, Viv & Ranald Macdonald, John Hurley, Richard Parkin, Stuart Swalwell, John & Ann-Marie Duckworth, Nicky Hart, Simon Brister, Kim & Russ Buxton, Anne and Jane Kayley Burgess, Sal & Dave Chaffey

Talk by Rachel Duckworth – Running in JWOC, Romania

Break for drinks

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Club business

1. Approval of the Minutes of the 2022 AGM

Jane approved the 2022 Minutes.

2. Chair's Report – Sal Chaffey

The club has again staged successful and popular events, with urbans in Dronfield and Buxton, a Level B on Birchen Edge and EML events in Allestree Park, Carsington, Kedleston and Longshaw. In spring, we hosted a successful Derby Parks Series – mixed weather but well attended. Fortunately we had good weather for the Relays and picnic in Belper Parks which were a nice social occasion.

I really appreciate the work done by our access negotiators, event officials and helpers. Most of us know that it can take months of perseverance and diplomacy to sort out an access issue, and we're all looking forward to running again at Linacre next month thanks to Ranald's hard work. Whether it's officials or helpers on the day, there's always a lot of welcoming faces at events, which is great to see.

Thank you to Jo Lurati and to Stuart who prepared a Team of children from Brassington Primary, who had a great day at the British Schools Score Champs last weekend at Martinshaw, the Year 5s placing 2nd.

We were delighted to be successful in our grant application to the Orienteering Foundation to support a Club Development Officer, and in June, Chris Millard began in this role. We trialled the BO Find Your Way project over the summer, holding 2 afternoon MapRuns. These didn't prove as successful as we'd hoped so we withdrew from the project. More positively, in the last month, Chris has contacted 11 running clubs and staged 4 very enjoyable Night MapRuns attended by 62 people, of which 20 have been DVO members. We've had juniors coming along with parents and have recruited a new Monday Night runner. There are 4 more of these to come, starting with Chaddesden on November 16th.

In the competition circuit, we had 12 top 10 placers at the Scottish 6 days, including Rachel who won W21L. Club members won Sprint and Relay medals at the JK, and Liz achieved silver at the WMOC Sprint in Slovakia.

Finally, I'd like to say a huge thank you to the Committee and everyone else in the Club who has supported all these activities and advised me as Chair. Having been in post for 3 years, I'm pleased that Jane has offered to take the Chair role. I think the Club will really benefit from her enthusiasm, her experience as Vice Chair for 6 years, and her ideas for the future of the Club.

3. Membership Secretary's Report –Simon Brister (at end of Minutes)

Numbers have remained stable.

Average age down a little, but still skewed to later years.

Same number of members as 2014!

Now introductory messages and contact to join teams after 6 months sent by Simon. New members are also congratulated when they achieve the Racing or Navigation Challenge certificate from BO.

4. Treasurer's Report – Helen Chiswell, delivered by Dave Chaffey (at end of Minutes)

JH discussed low income from Birchen Edge, MG explained about high number of students, meaning less surplus. Also parking fee was not added to Fabian.

RM stated that Level D events don't need to be seen as income generators.

MG: Have the accounts been audited? Sal to follow-up.

5. Diversity Update – Jane Kayley Burgess

Prompted by a CS article from an orienteer who is autistic and explained her emotions at events and how she can be better accommodated. Jane has researched the condition and is working with BO to understand how clubs can support people with autism, particularly at events. Also work needs to understand other minorities – move towards a consciously inclusive club. Has implemented some simple options such as the Quiet Parking Area and Quiet Start.

6. JK Relays update – Sal and Viv

Sal: Assembly area has moved, John Duckworth is well advanced with planning.

Entries will be handled by Ursula and results will be managed by a separate team from SportIdent.

Viv: Policy is that we won't enter teams since adult helpers are needed.

Parking field is convenient and there will be a nice assembly infrastructure.

Members will be contacted by their team leaders about volunteering.

SS: Malcolm has raised concerns about car park.

RM: Need contingencies and have started to discuss there.

7. Club Development Officer update – Chris, delivered by Dave (at end of Minutes)

JD: MapRuns pitched at the right level for new and experienced.

KB: Putting on more in New Year, would embed the experience and can extend into real event.

JKB: Social event afterwards has helped get to know people in running clubs.

KB: "He has made a brilliant start – interacting with everyone".

8. Review of DVO entry system – proposed by Derek Gale

Derek often enters multiple entrants and this is difficult with current system. However, it is possible with other systems such as Racesignup and The Start Kite.

The DVO system lacks some basic features:

- Multiple entrants
- Doesn't remember entrants' details

It is by far the worst system and reflects badly on the club.

MG: Fabian is his preference. Can also email entrants if there is any updates.

Action: We will review the choices and present to Committee.

SS: A plea to continue with entry on day.

SS: Enquiries team is really important – Ann-Marie does a great job.

MG: Fabian will be used for Linacre.

Mike Gardner suggested a proper cost/benefit analysis and this will be undertaken, with requirements gathering and a functional analysis, before a final decision is made.

9. Election of elected officers. We invite further nominations:

Jane Kayley-Burgess proposed as Chair – by Kim Buxton, seconded by Viv M

Nicky Hart proposed as Vice Chair – by Kim Buxton, seconded by Sal C

John Duckworth proposed as Committee Member – by Derek G, seconded by Mike G

No other nominations.

Jane after 6 years as Vice Chair has developed some knowledge, and is sure that more experienced club members will support her. Under Sal, DVO has continued as a friendly club which is welcoming to everyone.

Vote of thanks proposed to Sal.

Thanks to John for volunteering for Committee Member.

There are two vacancies which are currently optional posts: Press Officer, Social Secretary.

Discussed whether these are required or can be built into other activities.

MG: Good to have Social Sec if there is someone to take it on.

10. Possible intro of Club membership fee >£0 (BO = £18 incl £3 EMOA fee; £6 & £1 junior)

JH – keep at £0, seconded by MG.

11. Proposal to increase entry fees for Regional events

Proposal: increase to event entry fees (in place since 2015), currently £8/£4 BO member for Regional event, and £5/£3 for Local events. Proposed by Mike.

Proposed increase to:

Level C

Members: £10 senior, £5 junior plus £1 dibber hire
Non-members: £12 senior, £5 junior “

Level D

Fees regardless of membership to remain £5/£3 **including dibber hire**

Note the increased non-member BO levy from 1/1/24 means these may run at a loss and should be reviewed. Non-member levy is now £2.50 up from £1.65.

GJ: Made the case against the increase, quoting other clubs and bank balance.

SC: Pointed out that we will be spending on development.

Proposal: There needs to be a budget to show how money will be spent if fees increase. If the budget requires increases, the Committee has the authority to approve fee increases for .

A vote was taken. In favour of increase 3. Against > 10, therefore fees to remain the same unless an extra expense to be met.

12. Date of next meeting:

Fixtures December 5th 4pm, Main Committee December 12th 7:30pm

13. CompassSport Cup 2024 –

Save the date – Feb 18th, likely Cannock Chase

14. Any other business?

SC: Query on paying for Club First Aid is 50% or 100% - it is 100%.

Derwent Valley Orienteers – Secretary’s Report 18th October 2023

Membership summary

The membership is currently as follows:

Current 164 (according the BOF website)

In addition, we have 4 ‘Life members’

This equates exactly with our club records.

The good news is that the losses in membership in recent years has slowed and we are only 2 down on the year. The new young members have brought the average age down from nearly 52 to just under 51.

Average age of DVO membership

October 2023

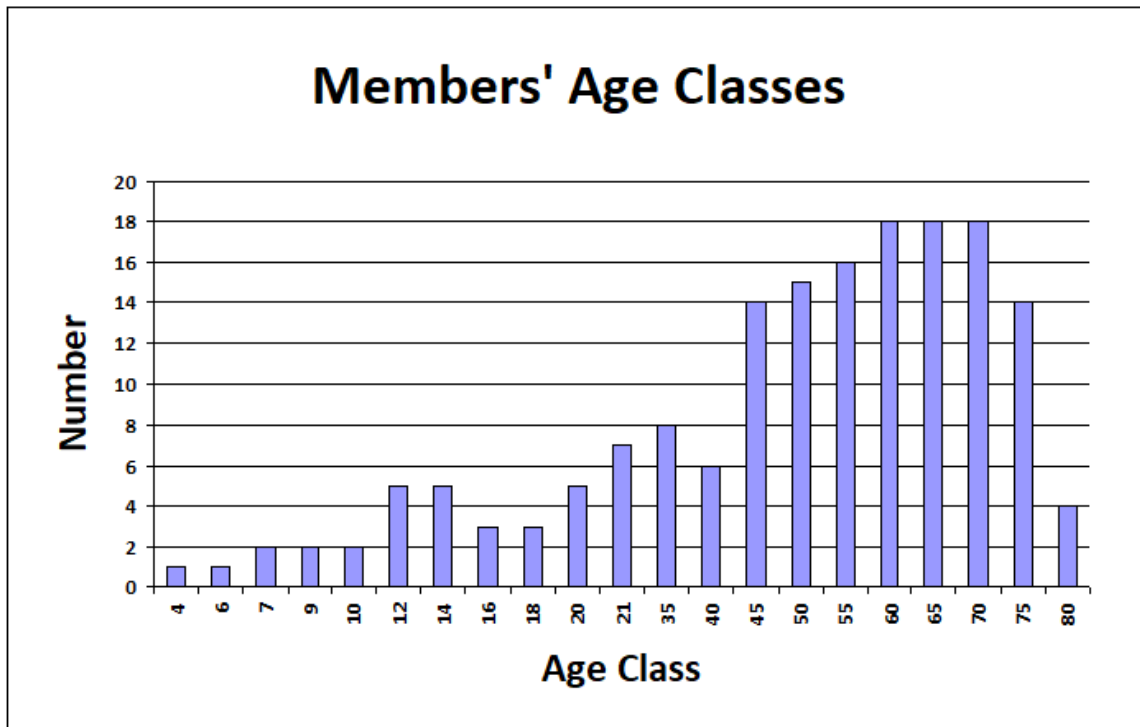
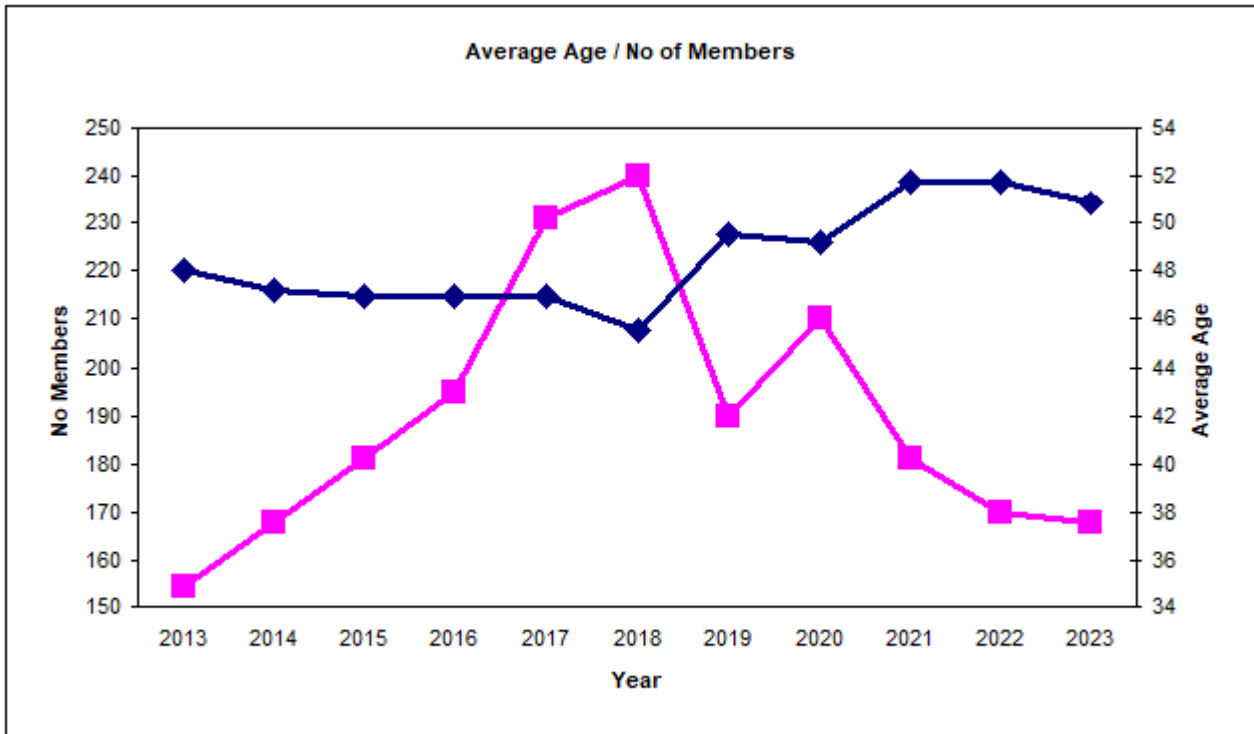
At Date	Members	Average Age
14/10/2022	170	51y 276d
14/10/2023	168	50y 315d

Ages are based on the integer age for each member as at 31st December - i.e. Orienteering Age.

Derwent Valley Orienteers
Membership over last 10 years

14 October 2023

At Date	Members	Av. Age	Increase in average age per annum	Members in year			
				New		Lapsed	
14/10/2023	168	50.86		20	12%	22	13%
14/10/2022	170	51.76	-0.90	11	6%	22	13%
14/10/2021	181	51.74	-0.44	9	5%	33	18%
14/10/2020	210	49.19	0.50	21	10%	1	0%
14/10/2019	190	49.53	0.52	18	9%	73	38%
14/10/2018	240	45.57	1.02	42	18%	33	14%
14/10/2017	231	46.96	0.94	36	16%	0	0%
14/10/2016	195	46.98	0.83	14	7%	0	0%
14/10/2015	181	46.92	0.72	13	7%	0	0%
14/10/2014	168	47.18	0.62	14	8%	0	0%
14/10/2013	154	48.01	0.49	7	5%	0	0%



As a result of an increase in the number of juniors joining we have slightly improved our age profile (9 of the new members are 16 or under).

We have developed introductory emails to all new members welcoming them to the club and then again after 6 months hoping that they are enjoying their membership as well as suggesting that they might like to volunteer themselves for a 'team'

In addition, as soon as we hear that a member has achieved a Racing Challenge award or a Navigation one a congratulatory email is sent to them also advising on the procedure for downloading their certificate

Accounts summary



DERWENT VALLEY ORIENTEERS

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Club's financial year runs from 1 September to 31 August. This Annual Report provides an analysis of the Club's finances for the financial year 2022/23.

Overview

The table below details the year end balances in the Club's various accounts over the last 6 years.

Balance at ...	31 August 2018	31 August 2019	31 August 2020	31 August 2021	31 August 2022	31 August 2023
Current Account	£3,944	£17,038	£7,721	£9,449	£10,347	£11,637
Deposit Account	£10,964	£10,970	£10,976	£10,977	£10,979	£11,035
Registration Team Float	£200	£200	£200	£207	£200	£150
Total	£15,313	£28,367	£18,897	£20,633	£21,526	£22,822

At year end DVO's total financial assets stood at £22,822.

The Current Account balance has increased by £1,291 this year to £11,637.

The Business Bank Instant (Savings) Account, stands at £11,035, an increase of £56.

In addition, there is a further £150 in the Registration Float.

Business Bank Instant (Savings) Account

There were no withdrawals from or deposits to the Club's Business Bank Instant (Savings) Account. The year-end balance stood at £11,035 which included accrued interest of £56.

Current Account

The Current Account balance results from receipts of £19,070 against an expenditure of £17,780 since the start of the financial year, leading to a balance within period of £1,291. Adding this to the opening balance of £10,347 gives a closing balance of £11,637.

There were no significant outstanding receipts or costs at the end of the financial year.

	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Receipts</u>
Totals:	(£17,779.95)	£19,070.46
# transactions	120	142

Opening Balance:	£ 10,346.55
Balance within period:	£ 1,290.51
Closing Balance:	£ 11,637.06

So, where's it come from and where's it gone?

An analysis of the Club's income and expenditure over 2022/23 is detailed below.

Overview

The Club's Income and Expenditure Account for 2021/22 is provided below:

Category	Receipt	Expense	net Income /Expenditure
Clothing	£ 30.00		£ 30.00
Coaching / Training	£ 20.00	£ (154.83)	£ (134.83)
Equipment	£ 1,115.00	£ (512.40)	£ 602.60
Events	£14,160.62	£ (9,440.78)	£ 4,719.84
Mapping		£ (1,713.75)	£(1,713.75)
Meetings		£ (80.50)	£ (80.50)
Misc	£ 61.40	£ (1,380.47)	£(1,319.07)
Newstrack		£ (354.00)	£ (354.00)
Permanent Courses	£ 2,043.80	£ (374.34)	£ 1,669.46
Publicity		£ (326.82)	£ (326.82)
Relays / CSC	£ 370.34	£ (1,459.56)	£(1,089.22)
CDO	£ 750.00	£ (1,224.20)	£ (474.20)
Find your way events	£ 519.30	£ (756.30)	£ (237.00)
Totals	£19,070.46	£(17,777.95)	£ 1,292.51

Details of income

Total gross income of £19,070 resulted from:

Events	£14,161	Detail below
Permanent courses	£2,044	£99 maps sales via BOF £800 High Peak Council – Buxton POC £750 Derby Council – Mickelover Meadows POC £200 Buxton rotary club £150 National Trust – Kedleston POC £45 YHA - Ilam POC
Equipment	£1,115	£740 Hire to Explorer events £375 Hire to South Derbyshire Schools (Rex)
CDO	£750	£750 quarterly grant from Orienteering Federation
Find your way	£519	£519 rebate for FYW costs
Relays / CSC	£370	£370 club members contributions to relay costs
Misc	£61	£50 returned from club float £11 profit share from Lakes 5 day
Clothing	£30	£30 sale of club top
Coaching / training	£20	£20 Rolls Royce training day

Details of expenditure

Total gross expenditure of **£18,250** resulted from:

Events	£9,441	See below
Mapping	£1,714	£720 Birchen edge £420 Allestree £350 Dronfield £224 OCAD licence
Relays / CSC	£1,460	£782 JK and British relays £642 CSC entries £36 Irish relays
Misc	£1,380	£813 shed hire £328 web site associated fees £106 stationery (various) £66 OS licence £38 clubs awards trophies £30 flowers
CDO	£1,224	£1,173 CDO salary (2 months) £51 flyer printing
Find your way events	£756	£263 Park access fees £317 FYW salary – 2 months £130 Arboretum mapping costs £100 leaflet and certificate printing
Equipment	£512	£279 SI kit repair £230 First aid kit £4 registration equipment
Permanent Courses	£374	£289 map printing £81 marker plates £5 travel expenses
Newstrack	£354	£354 printing costs
Publicity	£327	£203 Derby parks flyers £124 badge scheme leaflets
Coaching / Training	£155	£81 Coaching conference (1/3 of fees) £72 surplus Arboretum map printing (partially covered by Rolls Royce fees)
Meetings	£81	£81 room hire for AGM 2022

Details of CDO and FYW income and expenses

In the 4th quarter of this year, DVO started with the Club Development officer role. These costs are partly covered by grants from the Orienteering Federation. Details of the costs associated with the CDO role and FYW events are shown below and represent costs for the 3 month period June, July and August 2023.

	Total cost	Grant income	Cost to DVO
CDO salary costs	£1,524	£750	£774
Other CDO costs	£51		£51
	£1,575	£750	£825
FYW salary costs	£413	£413	£0
Other FYW costs	£704	£664	£40
	£1,117	£1,077	£40

Find Your Way costs were fully covered by the grant, excluding a small charge for advertising. Participation in FYW has now ceased.

CDO costs were partially covered by the Orienteering Federation grant income, and the cost to DVO was £825 over the three month period. This cost will increase slightly over the coming months due to the withdrawal from the FYW scheme – estimate a cost to DVO of ca. £1,400 per quarter.

Events

There has been a total of 15 (12 open and 3 closed) events during the year, which have attracted 2,240 participants and netted £4,490 income.

Event Type	Event	Entries			Finances		
		Juniors	Seniors	Total	Receipt	Expense	Balance
Level B	2022-10-08 British Schools Score Champs Shipley	208	0	208	£1,062.34	-£1,116.93	-£54.59
other	2022-09-28 Alfreton Park Schools' Event	0	0			-£114.05	-£114.05
Level C	2022-09-25 Calke Park	33	191	224	£1,568.38	-£519.90	£1,048.48
Level C	2022-11-13 Allestree Park	33	165	198	£1,383.78	-£567.60	£816.18
Other	2022-10-15 Brierley Forest Park	1	47	48		-£107.10	-£107.10
Level C	2023-01-02 Dronfield	34	229	263	£1,972.80	-£1,013.92	£958.88
Level C	2023-02-25 Birchen	110	354	464	£3,124.84	-£3,143.49	-£18.65
Level C	2023-04-23 Buxton	13	169	182	£1,446.61	-£812.80	£633.81
Level D	2023-04-15 Arboretum	15	46	61	£234.91	-£180.50	£54.41
Level D	2023-05-13 Alvaston	41	56	97	£338.23	-£183.10	£155.13
Level C	2023-06-11 Carsington	47	206	253	£1,838.26	-£1,142.40	£695.86
Level D	2023-05-27 Darley	22	48	70	£398.19	-£129.99	£268.20
Other	2023-05-19 Mickleover Meadows	0	0			-£26.30	-£26.30
Level D	2023-06-23 Markeaton	19	50	69	£259.54	-£142.25	£117.29
Level D	2023-07-08 Allestree	38	65	103	£380.23	-£317.82	£62.41
					£14,008.11	-£9,518.15	£4,489.96

Open events - Level C

The club held six level C events during the year:

Event	Runs	Net income
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Calke Park	224	£1,048
Allestree Park	198	£816
Dronfield	263	£959
Birchen Edge	464	-£19
Buxton	182	£634
Carsington	253	£696

Positive income was made from all events (excluding mapping costs which are accounted for separately) with the exception of Birchen Edge, which had higher than typical costs for equipment hire.

Open events – Level D

The club held five level D events during the year:

Event	Runs	Net income
Arboretum	61	£54
Alvaston	97	£155
Darley	70	£268
Markeaton	69	£117
Allestree	103	£62

A modest positive income was made from all events (excluding mapping costs which are accounted for separately).

In addition the club also held a free maprun event on Mickelover Meadows, which had costs of £26.

Closed events – Schools events

DVO hosted the British Schools Score Championships. Entry income was shared with the club and some expenses above this income were covered by BSSC. However, the net result was a small loss of £56 for running this event.

DVO also ran a schools event in Alfreton Park. This had a cost of £114.

Closed event – club events

The annual club championships were held at Brierley Park. Entry was free and costs were £107 for map printing and the BOF levy.

SI and Computer related Equipment

The club's computer related equipment for insurance (replacement) purposes was previously valued in excess of £26,000 and with no significant acquisitions or losses that will remain the same.

Equipment	Details	Number	Estimate replacement value	Total replacement value	Value
Control Boxes	66 numbered, 11 other units	77	£103	£7,931	
Master Stations	1 with SI kit, 2 with Finish team	4	£153	£612	
EMOA SI Cards	SI Card 5	24	£30	£720	£13,358
	SI Card 9	33	£40	£1,320	
SI-Active Timing Cards		19	£65	£1,235	
Stakes/Misc		70	£22	£1,540	
School Sets (3)	SI Boxes	39	£103	£4,017	£8,436
	Master Stations	3	£153	£459	
	Printers	3	£400	£1,200	
	SI Card 5/9	60	£40	£2,400	
	Special Dibbers	12	£30	£360	
Laptops	Acer	1	£500	£500	£1,500
	Dell Inspiron	1	£500	£500	
	Samsung N150	1	£500	£500	
Buxton	HP T5800 laptop	1	£600	£600	£1,100
	Optoma Projector	1	£500	£500	
Printers	CBM1000	1	£311	£311	£804
	Epson TMT88-v	1	£219	£219	
	Epson TM Splits Printer	1	£274	£274	
Leisure Battery		1	£150	£150	£150
Fire Extinguisher		1	£35	£35	£35
Honda EU20i 2.0 kW Generator		1	£1,500.00	£1,500	£1,500
	TOTAL				£26,883

Scrutiny of Accounts

In line with the Club's Constitution, the accounts will be externally scrutinised and the findings will be shared with the Committee as soon as available.

In Conclusion

The Club's finances remain sound, with £22,822 of funds available, representing an increase of £1,296 from the previous year.

The AGM is requested to endorse The Treasurer's Annual Report.

Helen Chiswell, Treasurer, October 2023

Club Development Officer Update – Chris Millard

Firstly, a huge thank you to all who have supported me as club development officer. You are such a friendly and supportive club who love to give new ideas a go. You are generous with your time, and I hope together we can inspire others to see the attraction of orienteering.

Most recently, you have supported me in hosting the Derby Night Series. We have had a total of 26 DVO members at the first four MapRuns who have provided a core of runners to create a buzz at these events. We have welcomed 36 non club members, many who have been to at least one event, and have suggested that they would be back for more. In total, we have had 62 competitors plus two dogs.

One of the reasons for attracting such a large following for the Night Series was by targeting running clubs around Derby. I contacted 11 Derby running clubs and two exercise groups back in June and the concept of a series was warmly received. Perhaps I tempted a few more with the promise of a post-run social?! Regardless, I hope we can tempt others by presenting the challenge of navigating while running in an accessible format and I hope we can foster a sense of community and allow friendships to develop. Our hope is that a similar number would attend the next four events after half term.

Getting to grips with social media is one aspect of the job that has presented a steep learning curve. However, Sal has been a great mentor and was already very busy with the Facebook page. I should thank the whole of the Chaffey family who have been instrumental in getting our Instagram page up and running, especially in giving me crash courses in setting up posts, stories, reels and memories. If you are an active user of Facebook and / or Instagram, please do remember to re-post our items, as this will work to broaden our audience.

Another aspect to the club development officer role was to engage with Find Your Way activities. These have predominately been targeted at family groups with the objective of improving public health. I have worked with the Find Your Way team to set up 3-5 virtual events at six different parks around Derby as well as take part in an activator event at Allestree Park.

One of the encouragements of the Allestree Park Find Your Way event was the cluster of DVO families who attended and made it feel like something was happening. I feel this provided a nucleus and together we were able to attract and encourage 12 family groups. We established that the kids really enjoyed the competitive element of a "sprint" course (completed in less than two minutes) and they loved trying to beat their own time as well as their friends. They also really enjoyed receiving edible and non-edible prizes.

For the rest of this term, I intend to promote club events through our Newcomers email list and on social media. I am keen to encourage competitors from the Night Series to future orienteering events. In

feedback to this series, it would be useful to know if there is appetite for a continuation of MapRun events into the Spring. What do DVO members think?

I will start thinking about our club night after Easter; who to attract, where to hold the event, who else can help with recruitment and ultimately help run the club night. It would be good to model our club nights on success from SYO and NOC.

I would like to acknowledge again the tremendous input from Sal and Dave. Sal has pushed me to make the most of our social media pages platform to promote ourselves. And has been so active in promoting the level D series events. Thank you, Sal!

Autism and Orienteering – an update on DVO's approach

This is part update/part scene setting for those of who don't know anything about what I've been trying to do. In April this year an article in CompassSport was brought to my attention by the wife of a friend with autism. A number of you may have seen it. It was written by an orienteer from BASOC called Gemma Karatay and she is autistic. She is in her early 40s and has only recently received a diagnosis.

In the article, Gemma describes a normal event with all the noise, chatter, confined spaces, small mistakes in the final details, the control descriptions and maps and the last-minute changes that we expect, and most of us forgive in a competition run by volunteers, even at a high level. Gemma loves to orienteer (and she is very good) but finds the busyness and the noise a real distraction, so much so that by the time she gets to the start, she can barely make sense of her map. She hates misinformation and finds it hard to process. Likewise mistakes or assumptions.

At some events, Gemma has been so stressed even finding the car park that she has turned around and driven home. She described to me recently an event where she finished a race and 'hid in the bushes' until she had regained enough composure to go to download. Her senses had become so overloaded that she just had to get away.

In the article, Gemma goes on to describe another event. She has pre-entered (didn't need to go near the crowded assembly) and there's a quiet car park where she can recompose herself after the drive to the event. There is a quiet warm-up area, which was also used by people who don't want to be sharing the details of last week's run with everyone they know. She has let the organiser know she's coming and has been given a start time in a quiet period so that she's the only person on her minute in the start box. The final details have told her it's 750m to the start and she has worked out how long that will take her. She gets frustrated when an organiser tells her how long it will take (rather than a distance) as they can't possibly know how fast she walks. Gemma has a great run. The only problem is that this event is fictitious.

This is how Gemma dreams of an event being.

Gemma doesn't have a mental illness. Her brain is wired differently to a neurotypical person and it processes things differently. One of the processing differences for (and it is different for every autistic person) means that noises are overly loud. The overstimulation in her brain of people talking, the start clock beeping, dogs barking, cars reversing and even waterproof coats rustling can build up so that she just has to take herself away. Autism can affect any or all of the senses which can be over or under stimulated and both can cause acute stress. We know that our sport attracts a lot of people who have autism or other neurodiverse conditions yet, as a sport, we do very little to help them have the best run they can.

Recognising this, and that there is a way to help, has got me doing some homework on autism. Helped by Gemma I've read books, watched videos and listened to radio programmes by autistic people for autistic people or those who want to understand more about autism. I'm currently doing a college qualification in understanding autism. It's a lot of work but it's eye-opening for me.

I'm in quite regular correspondence with Gemma, have spoken to organisers at events which Gemma has reported as helping her greatly and have met with Louise Satherley, the Diversity and Inclusion manager at British Orienteering. On Monday night I attended a BOF webinar on diversity and inclusion. There were five people presenting and three participants. Louise doesn't care that there were only three of us. She recognises that we are early in our journey to be seen as inclusive.

She said something very interesting when we met. If a black teenager had looked at premiership football thirty years ago they would have thought 'there's no one here that looks like me'. Now look at premiership football. It just takes one or two people to look like you and you might be tempted to give it a try. Studies show that psychological and social barriers are much more of a turn off to people entering a sport than financial barriers.

Sal Chaffey and Chris Millard, amongst others, have done some work this year on trying to attract people from minority groups, whether that's racial minorities, financially disadvantaged people or people who have come to the UK to escape terror in their own countries. I would like to see us build on the great work they have done, to help to make us look and feel like a club that is consciously inclusive. We can't do everything for everyone every time but we can look like a club that would welcome a question and give back a positive answer.

Because I'm still learning, I've started slowly with autism, with the great help of the start team, an organiser and the car parking team. We don't have a huge banner that says 'Autistic people this way' for all sorts of reasons, not least because a huge number of autistic people don't know they are autistic. What we do have are signs that direct people (any people) to a quiet parking area if they want it and we mention it on the website in the event details.

Likewise we offer a quiet start (again on the website) where, if asked, the start team will provide a blank map and control descriptions so that competitors don't have to stand listening to chatter and the clock beeping loudly.

We have had a few use the quiet car park and no one has yet asked for a quiet start. But it doesn't matter. What matters is that people are noticing, and commenting, and word will get out that DVO make an effort for people with autism. In the most part we will rely on someone contacting the organiser and saying 'Can you tell me if you have a quiet area to park and is there somewhere I can warm up?' and we need to show signs that we are willing to listen and respond. Gemma did that at the VHI a few weeks ago and got a tremendous response.

So what next?

Louise is doing a case study on Longshaw for us, which will be published in the BOF newsletter. This will raise awareness for us. I would like us to develop some guidelines for organisers and planners of things to look for to make autistic people feel more comfortable. I'm not talking about huge, volunteer gobbling things as it is mostly about being aware of what we can do for almost no effort. I would like to encourage more people with autism to come forward and tell us what would help them, such as running non-competitively and build these small differences into our club psyche. Gemma says that since 'coming out' as autistic,

her club have been amazing and she feels now she doesn't have to use all her coping strategies; she can ask for help.

Working with Louise has made me think differently about attracting new people. It's not about the numbers. We are very lucky and have a healthy club and we are a healthy sport. Autism is one area where we can make a difference and it's a starting place for us. There is so much we can do, but more of that another day.