

SOUTH WEST ORIENTEERING ASSOCIATION

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MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday 5th August 2025

PRESENT:

Christine Vince KERNO (chairman); Helen Kelsey BOK (secretary); Steve Robertson QO (treasurer); Rob Mills WIM (fixtures); Arthur Vince KERNO (cttee); Kevin Pickering WIM (cttee); Ian Jones NGOC; Richard Hudson BOK.

1. Apologies.

Pete Maliphant BOK (cttee and SWJOS); Julie Astin WSX (cttee); Neil Fraser NWO;(cttee); Liz Yeadon SARUM; Roger Hargreaves KERNO; Adrian Taylor DEVON.

2. Chairman's update. Nothing to report

3. Approval of minutes of last meeting.

Approved

4. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

Nath has started setting up the BLOG, having addressed the concerns voiced at the last meeting. He is liaising with Martin Yeo on this.

5. Treasurer and Membership Secretary's report.

Financial Status. See Appendix 1

Very little change in financial status since last meeting and funds very similar to this time last year. We have now paid our contribution to EOC (£887) for Home internationals and Interland and also for the Southern Champs trophies. There was increase in website costs to pay for the new BLOG for IT coordinators.

Grant Status. See Appendix 2

So far we have paid out £1500 in grants. If everyone in a position to claim did so our total grant cost will be £5-£5.5 K. For some grant requests we are awaiting further information. The most expensive tour is likely to be Gothenburg, but so far only 1 out of the 5 juniors eligible has put in a grant request. Some parents choose not to request funding for their junior tour or representation, whilst for some the support offered by SWOA (and their own club) is extremely helpful in enabling the junior to attend.

Kevin asked where the money is held and Steve confirmed that it is moved between the deposit and current account with Santander. The deposit account does not have a particularly good interest rate, but that is to be expected in current financial climate. Santander has informed SWOA that all club accounts will be subject to fees from October unless they have charity status. Fees are likely to be £5 per month. Steve felt that it was not worth the hassle of trying to change to to a different bank.

6. Fixtures report.

6.1 Report from BOK re 2026 British Sprint Championships

Saturday 27 June 2026 – Individual Championships – Bath University

Sunday 28 June 2026 – Sprint Relay Championships – University of West of England

Item	Individual Champs	Relay Champs
Weekend Co-ordinator	Mike Forrest (BOK)	
Officials - Organiser	Richard Hudson (BOK)	Richard Rossington (BOK)
Officials - Planner	Paul Gebbett /Matthew Rochester (BOK)	Richard Cronin (NGOC)
Officials - Controller	Simon Errington SEOA	Graham Nielson NWOA
Permissions / Planning	A first review of the area and possible Start/Finish locations will take place in the coming weeks.	A meeting and review of the area has been held at UWE. Planning is underway.
Embargoed Area	Posted on BOF website	Posted on BOF website
Mapping	The map is up to date. It will be reviewed during 2026.	The map is up to date. It will be reviewed during 2026.

6.2 Other fixtures:

A fixtures bulletin was issued a few weeks ago.

KERNO will now host the 2026 SWOA Yvette Baker qualifier at Mount Edgcumbe on Sunday 26 April 2026. This doesn't conflict with any league or championship events.

The SW League for 25/26 season is now complete, though some areas still need to be finalised.

For 2026, we are looking for offers to host SW Champs for Long, Middle & Sprint distances although we do have the option to use the British Sprint Champs hosted by BOK as the SW Sprint Champs

Any events in first half of 2027 which clubs may wish to be at level B need to be notified to Rob prior to ESG Meeting on 14th October please.

Rob also reported that DEVON had contacted him about using one of their own controllers for an event at Branton Burrows on 7th December, as they were having difficulty getting one for another club – this was passed over to Arthur who suggested that they use the up to date list on SWOA website and contact controllers individually (i.e. not through clubs)

6.3 JK 2028 *See Appendix 3*

Having looked at all the possible areas in the South West, considering permissions and parking for such a large event, Branton Burrows had seemed the only choice, but with issues outlined by Phil Beale and DEVON committee it looks very unlikely that we could get permissions signed and sealed within the next 6 months giving us

the 2 years lead time and embargo notice required. Christine has spoken to Terry Smith (Events and Competitions British Orienteering) suggesting that the South West is no longer suitable for big events. Rob thinks that BO's response will be – have we exhausted every option, so we need to be confident that we have. Arthur said that given the increasing difficulty of getting permissions everywhere in the country for such a large event, particularly as it is held at Easter, a peak holiday time, it is quite likely that in a few years the format of the JK will have to change. Steve noted that this was a trend everywhere and Forestry England rangers are becoming increasingly twitchy about permissions for large events.

Rob said that he would inform Mike Cope (chair of the events subgroup) that the formal response from SWOA will be to decline to take on JK2028.

Kevin suggested that maybe we should be thinking of using areas in France or Belgium where permissions are less restrictive for future British championship events.

Regretfully the committee agreed that we couldn't commit to running the JK in 2028.

7 SWJOS Report

In Pete's absence, Christine reported back that she had looked into the rationale for the course allocation for the Yvette Baker competition, and the idea of restricting it to Green as the longest course is to be inclusive. As this is the major Junior national competition, we must make every effort to avoid the conflict that happened this year by not scheduling it at an event that juniors would otherwise compete in on a different course. (No problems with 2026 Kerno event)

8 Recorder of Controller's Report

It was agreed that Scott Colier of KERNO should be registered as grade C controller.

9 AOB.

Arthur informed the committee that the prize giving for the South West Orienteering League season 2024-25 would be at the first event of the next season on 28th September at Ramscombe.

Helen queried whether the SW Championships should be required to continue to produce certificates for all class winners, as in both the recent Long Distance and Sprint championships, hardly anyone was left by the time the results were available to enable a prize giving, meaning that the organisers had gone to considerable effort to produce these certificates and were then left with most of them at the end. It was agreed that it should be left up to the individual organiser, so rules will be changed accordingly. Kevin suggested that a certificate could be produced to be available on the website for winners to download and fill in themselves.

The date of the AGM was agreed as 21st October. Any proposed changes to the constitution must be received by the Secretary by 21st September

It was agreed that the committee would recommend to the AGM that SWOA membership fees should remain at zero for the coming year.

10. Club reps report to clubs.

- The SWOA AGM will be held on Tuesday 21st October at 8pm using Zoom. Any proposed changes to the constitution will need to be with the secretary by 21st

September. Anyone wishing to stand for the committee should notify the secretary in writing before the meeting if they are not able to attend in person.

- The BLOG for use by IT coordinators is under construction and will be up and running soon.
- It has been agreed that South West Championships rules will be changed to allow the organiser discretion as to whether or not they should produce certificates for class winners.
- The South West Orienteering League trophies will be presented at the QO event at Ramscombe on 28th September.

11. Date of next meeting. Tuesday 21st October after the AGM.

Appendix 1

Treasurer's report

SWOA Financials - July 31, 2025 (Year End)

		<u>May 20th</u>		<u>July 31st</u>		<u>Period</u> <u>Change</u>
Total Funds		£	10,536	£	10,448	£ (88)
Memo: Prior Year End July 31, 2024				£	10,084	364
Income	Levies				£	1,594
	Interest					<u>13</u>
						1,607
				Total	£	
Expenditure	Grants - Junior Tours				£	(1,535)
	Website - Hosting/Maintenance					(160)
						(1,695)
				Total	£	
				Period Change	£	(88)

SWOA Financials - August 5th

		<u>July 31st</u>		<u>August 5th</u>		<u>Period</u> <u>Change</u>
Total Funds		£	10,448	£	9,458	£ (990)
Income	Levies				£	(33)
	Interest					<u>0</u>
						(33)
				Total	£	
Expenditure	EOC contribution - Home Internationals/Interland				£	(887)
	Southern Champs Trophies					(70)
						(957)
				Total	£	
				Period Change	£	(990)

August 5, 2025

Appendix 2

Grant status

SWOA Grants 2024-25

	<u>Selected</u>	Grant Requests <u>received</u> (Aug 5, 2025)
Junior Tours		
Lagganlia	3	2
Deeside	1	1
Stockholm	2	1
Gothenburg	5	1
Czechia	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	12	6
Junior Representation		
EYOC	2	1
JHI	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	5	1

Grants paid to date	£ 1,535
Estimate if all participants claim	£ 5,000 - 5,500
Memo: 2023/24 Grants awarded	£ 6,460

August 5 ,2025

Appendix 3

Reports from Phil Beale and DEVON committee concerning the possible use of Braunton Burrows for JK 2028

From Phil Beale:

Braunton Burrows

Car parking

We have sometimes used the farmer's field. He is Marcus Avery and a tenant farmer to Devon Christie Estates and in the past he has been paid well for his inconvenience of delaying his crop etc to allow this. In Sept 2021 BOC, the field flooded due to heavy rain which rendered the field unusable anyway! In 2024 he declined our request to use the field again citing pressures on farmers to maximise their crop to pay increasing rents as his reason. He could be asked again, but I tend to doubt he will change his mind, unless the increased fee that JK may be able to afford might tempt him. Even so there is still a risk of wet spring weather making the field unusable, and a separate assembly area would still be required.

Other requests in the past have been made for use Braunton Academy, and also Perrigo Pharmaceutical at Wrafton, without success.

I therefore feel that the best option is likely to be use of RMB Chivenor and if this is to be pursued we feel that an approach from BOF is most likely to carry the necessary weight required for a major event, particularly if the new Chair, Rob Woods as an Air Commodore, may have contacts at the right level to help with this. Use of hardstanding areas there could cater for all of the event parking, although bussing would still need some careful thought with single deckers being the most suitable for the lanes approaching the Burrows. The MOD do use coaches to transport troops to the area for their training exercises, although a continuous shuttle service for a JK would put more pressure on the narrow roadways. We have always published a one way route in our final details around the lanes to & from the area for larger events.

There is an MOD activities coordinator, who deals with military activity on the Burrows, and is based at Chivenor, who we have liaised with regarding our use of the area who has been very helpful.

We also have a good working relationship with a guy named Max who operates the Sandy Lane car park under licence from Devon Christie Estates. He is always helpful in our coming and going, but he cannot cater for that many orienteering vehicles competing with his regular car park users, particularly on a Bank Holiday weekend. I would suggest some use of his car park just for event officials would be the best option.

Assembly Area

For the events I mentioned above we have usually used the parking field to double up as the assembly area, but with remote parking for Caddihoe 2024, some at Sandy Lane car park, and some at Crow Point car park plus minibuses, we managed to gain permission to locate an assembly on the Burrows themselves.

This is a SSSI area and part of the North Devon Biosphere, so a sensitive area. The first approach should be made to landowner Devon Christie Estates, who then consult with MOD who use the area for military training, and also Natural England. In 2024 the landowners gave me some guidance on

what to include in a method statement for NE which they then submitted for their approval. They are pretty cautious about the idea of caterers or traders on the area at all, but we managed to get permission for one of each, setting out procedures such as food just being pre-cooked and heated on site (as done by Podium Catering) rather than cooking with more equipment and oils etc. We had to limit the number of vehicles staying on the area with others having to leave after dropping off equipment. Oil drip trays had to be placed under any vehicle staying more than an hour.

Having read the JK Handbook advice on the design considerations for a JK assembly area this would have a much greater impact on the area. Based on this year's JK there were at least 3 possibly 4 catering outlets 2 or 3 sports equipment traders, plus the commentary setup and a long run in with viewing area and space for a large number of club tents, toilets, prize giving area, much larger marquees as required for enquiries, download, baggage drop/changing etc. There were also other activities such as the biathlon shooting held in another marquee to the side with it's own small O course.

Our Caddihoe had around 350 entries so only around a dozen or so club tents were put up.

We had been advised that ecological surveys may be required by NE for our location of the assembly area, but we discovered there are 4 areas that the MOD have already approved with surveys done previously to assess the risks. MOD use these pre-agreed areas as bases for tents and vehicles for their training activities, so we were able to piggyback and use their area H1 which I believe is the largest, for our assembly area.

Whether the size and scale of a JK assembly area is a step too far to gain permission, I do not know, and once again we think an approach at a higher level from BOF initially to the landowner would be appropriate if this is to be pursued, perhaps with some assistance from club members who have made these arrangements in the past. I feel the only way to find out would be to ask the landowner first, and if he feels it is worth asking Natural England to submit an early "worst case" method statement including as much as possible to get an early indication, rather than gain a yes at an early stage, and then keep adding further detail nearer the time that may tip the balance and be rejected at a later date.

However, it may not be impossible, as I have seen a large area of the Burrows being used in the past for a major Hollywood film production with catering vehicles, golf style buggies moving personnel around and metal roll out temporary roadways being used and security staff in place, but that was a big movie budget!

Map

Chris Johnson BOK produced the new maps as used for BOC 2021 based on a 2.5m contour with some special symbols to indicate direction of slope. We have used updated versions of this map for our subsequent events. Some liked this, and others were less sure. In organising Caddihoe 2024 one of our controllers asked me to refer a query to the Rules and Mapping Group which I did. The answer I received implied that the style of map Chris had produced for BOC 2021 had been agreed as a one off for that event as it was done fairly rapidly as we came out of covid lockdowns, and may not be appropriate for other events.

So I would recommend that this is looked into. Chris did an excellent job then and has been very good in helping us since with updates, so ought to be involved again, but suitability for a JK and

world ranking event should be checked, although I know you have said a new map would be done anyway.

Cookworthy - I am less familiar with this area and its suitability and it would be better consulting with other club members as to whether it can support the JK and associated infrastructure for nearby parking and assembly.

Exeter Uni - I was surprised to see this being considered for the relays. I am not aware if the urban format this would offer fits in with Competition Rule H but I will leave others to decide if this can be done. Also I am aware that there are many who do not like urban style events and do not attend Day 1, so would they also have less interest in Day 4 relays for the same reason? It may be a case of, if you don't try it you will never know.

I hope some of these points regarding Branton Burrows will help with an overview of what has been done in the past and what would need to be considered if the idea of a JK there is to be considered.

I will leave Adrian to get back to you with our committee's considered view and how DEVON may be involved in any arrangements should this go ahead.

Report from DEVON OC Committee Meeting

Following lengthy discussion after the last meeting on 20th May about SWOA hosting JK 2028 you will have received an e-mail from Phil Beale about his views on acting as overall event organizer. Last night Devon OC (Fixtures, Mapping and Access group) also had an opportunity to fully consider the pros and cons of hosting the event in Devon, and particularly at Branton Burrows. We don't think any other Devon areas would be suitable for April 14-17th, 2028: Dartmoor has restriction due to the bird nesting season (from mid-March to Sept), Cookworthy can be extremely muddy, has limited parking and would not be able to host a 2-day event. It is also likely that FE would also rule Cookworthy out at this time of year, for similar ecological reasons. The purpose of this communication is to highlight some key points from that meeting. We identified three critical criteria to judge the suitability of Branton Burrows to host the JK 2028.

1. Suitably technical area for up to 3000 people including junior courses: YES
2. A large and accessible area for arena to include long run in and vehicle access (traders etc): See below.
3. Parking for up to 1500 vehicles to include pick up and drop off areas for coaches: See below.

Arena access on the Burrows:

Our last event (Caddihoe, Sept 2024) involved c. 500 participants on each of the 2 days. In organizing it various stipulations were set by Natural England (NE) for limiting environmental impact (eg, trays under vehicles to avoid oil drips, very few vehicles allowed at and around the finish, out of bounds areas on the competition area). We have discussed this issue in detail based on experience in

working with NE at Branton. We conclude that we do not have the volunteer capacity to invest in lengthy discussions, in conjunction with British Orienteering and SWOA, that would in our view be very unlikely to have a successful outcome for JK 2028 with c. 3000 participants and all the event infrastructure.

Parking:

Due to the single-track roads around Branton, and the limited parking spaces for c. 1500 cars (particularly at Easter) participant bussing would be required. The fields used for assembly and parking for the previous National and JK events are no longer available. We have previously identified no suitable options for parking away from Branton, unless we had access to Royal Marines Barracks Chivenor. The club does not have the volunteer capacity to invest in seeking access for parking, especially given the fairly high likelihood that permission could be removed at any time leading up to Easter 2028. We would suggest that negotiations would have to be at senior level within British Orienteering, with appropriate people in the military. If parking access at the Chivenor base were granted then we also recommend that the Council/police would be requested to enforce a one-way traffic system to allow multiple 52 seater coaches to transport participants to the event centre on the Burrows without delays. As you know, North Devon is a magnet for surfers and other holidaymakers at Easter, many of whom travel through the difficult holiday traffic in Branton. Bussing, in all these circumstances, presents a real risk to the event.

In terms of both access to the Burrows and parking at Chivenor, we have identified a risk of permissions being withdrawn, should they initially be given at this point in 2025. Devon Orienteering Club would not be able to accept any financial liability in such eventualities, as we doubt would SWOA. At a time when volunteering is in decline and experienced Club members are getting older we have also carefully considered the personal investment for a JK 2028, relative to delivering an ongoing programme of quality local and regional events.

Apologies that this is a negative response, but we need to be realistic.

I will be happy to discuss further. Best wishes,

Adrian Taylor (Devon OC Chair)