SOUTH EASTERN ORIENTEERING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of the SEOA Committee meeting held on Thursday 14 December 2023**

**as a virtual meeting using the ‘Zoom’ software**

**1. Attendance**

* 1. **Present**

Sarah Brown SLOW SEOA Chair

Neil Crickmore SO SEOA Competitions Officer

Ray Curtis CHIG

David Dawson DFOK

David Dixon HH

Mike Elliott MV

Catherine Galvin LOK

Alan Leakey SLOW

David Rosen LOK British Orienteering Director

Alison Saunders HH SEOA Secretary

David Saunders HH SEOA Treasurer

Alan Wallis SN

* 1. **Apologies received**: Angela Darley, Jon Darley and Philip Gristwood

**2. Minutes of previous Committee Meeting**

The minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 14th September 2023 were accepted as a true record.

**3. Matters arising**

3.1 DS had spoken to SCOA and SWOA concerning trophies for Southern Championships. There seemed little appetite for a formal arrangement, and it was agreed to continue the ad hoc practice of each region taking responsibility when they hosted the championships.

3.2 SB thanked CG for the paper regarding BOF’s refund policy. It was agreed that this matter had been taken as far as possible. As the current refund policy may be challenged legally, this seems unlikely in practice. Club reps were asked to feed this information to their committees. CG is willing to discuss the matter individually with clubs if required.

3.3 SB will meet Simon and James Errington to discuss format and content of the SEOA website following their offer to be involved. If anyone else wishes to join this discussion they would be welcome.

 **Action SB**

3.4 SB will discuss DBS with Don McKerrow and report to the March committee meeting.

 **Action SB**

3.5 The future use of the Lynchmere map was discussed. An immediate decision is no longer needed, as the GO event on 4 Feb 2024 is scheduled for Redlands. ME will discuss the issue with GO and SN, and Philip Gristwood, as the area may potentially be needed for JK27, a sub-committee for which has yet to be formed.

 **Action ME**

 **4. Update from the Board of British Orienteering**

DR reported that the *Find your Way* project was unlikely to be extended when it ends in Sep 24. It was not considered to have achieved its objectives of increasing participation.

The BOF insurance certificate has been circulated to clubs. A quote is being obtained for increasing the cover from £10M to £15M.

BOF is seeking advice on corporation tax liability. Clubs are being advised to register as community amateur sports clubs.

A partnership agreement between the region and BOF has yet to be agreed for JK25. There is uncertainty about whether a British Long Champs will be held in 2025.

A temporary agreement has been reached with the Forestry Commission. After March, clubs will need to pay 20% of entry fee to the FC, although there might be some room for negotiation.

The performance pathway is being reviewed by Mark Saunders.

Bernie Dietzig is leaving BOF and a job specification is being drawn up for a replacement.

BOF has agreed a financial support package for WOC 2024 Edinburgh.

The BOF website is being redeveloped.

New rules have been produced that are more rational and better aligned with IOF. Although a tight deadline, it is hoped they will be introduced on 1 Jan 2024.

It has been noted that GCSE sports studies no longer includes orienteering. Peter Hart is investigating.

The BOF 2024 AGM will be in October. Some concern was raised that this would be after many regions and clubs had held AGMs that would set membership categories and fees for 2025, before any changes proposed by BOF were decided. DR was asked to investigate why the BOF AGM seems permanently to have moved to the autumn.

 **Action DR**

**5. Orienteering Foundation report**

Andrew Evans was thanked for his report, which had previously been circulated and is included as **Appendix A**.

**6. Proposal on SEOA membership fees**

DDi, on behalf of HH, had circulated a paper (included as **Appendix B**) proposing that SEOA membership fees should in future be collected by BOF as had been the practice until 2020. In summary, the paper posited that the current method, in which clubs paid a per capita amount to SEOA – in effect collecting the SEOA membership fee on the region’s behalf – was burdensome, unconstitutional and misleading.

SB pointed out that with the recent changes to the BOF membership structure, the process of collecting SEOA fees from clubs by the Treasurer had become more complex and that BOF has a mechanism for this and greater capacity.

It was noted that various regions handle membership differently, some collecting fees through BOF, while others make a per capita levy on clubs. DDi asked if this should not be standardised by BOF to avoid inter-regional issues. It was suggested he might raise this with BOF.

 **Action DDi**

The proposal to revert to BOF collection of membership fees was supported by two clubs, but most felt that there was no reason to change the current method at this point. It was noted that SAX, HAVOC and GO were not represented at the meeting. It was agreed that it would be useful for club officials to consider the paper in detail before the next meeting.

 **Action: All clubs**

In answer to a several questions, DS gave a summary of SEOA income and expenditure. Around 75% of SEOA income derives from membership fees and 25% from event levies. Approximately 75% of expenditure is on junior training and grants to juniors representing England or GB. SEOA’s annual contribution to EOC comprises nearly 20% of expenditure. The SEOA has considerable reserves, but these are being run down in line with advice from our independent examiner. DS agreed to produce a paper summarising the region’s finances and presenting alternative models for fees and levies.

 **Action DS**

It was pointed out that a decision was needed at the March 2024 committee meeting concerning the model to be used for membership fees for 2025 in order for these to be agreed at the June 2024 AGM.

**7. Officers Reports**

7.1. SEOA Chair

No report

7.2. SEOA Secretary

In response to a suggestion at the last meeting that the SEOA constitution should feature a preamble stating the aims of the region, AS had circulated a discussion paper. A version of this paper, updated in the light of discussion at the meeting is appended (**Appendix C**).

7.3. SEOA Treasurer

DS had submitted a written report and an update of SEOA’s finances (**Appendix D**).

7.4. SEOA Membership Secretary

SB thanked Sue Marsden for her report (**Appendix E**).

7.5. SEOA Competitions Officer

NC is trying to set up a controller’s course. He noted that Alan Rosen was preparing a webinar for those considering becoming a Grade A controller.

7.6. SEOA Junior Training Officer

AD had submitted an update.

A SEJS team competed at the Junior Inter-Regionals in South Wales. On the individual day Issy Hawks (HH) was 3rd, and the team was 5th. There were great team performances in the relays (boys were 4th place) and we ended up in 4th overall, which is a great result for us.

In October, 17 juniors enjoyed a training weekend in Oslo. Thanks to Ralph Street for helping with sorting out training areas and coming along to help on Sunday. Despite the snow, everyone had a great weekend. Thanks to SEOA and LOK for subsidising the trip, and all those who bought cakes from our cake sales.

November and December have seen a return to training days in the South East. Thanks to MV and GO for the use of their areas.

Luke Bennett (DFOK) and Heather High (SO) have been selected for the Talent South Squad this year.

If any clubs have any juniors who may be interested in the junior squad there is some information on the Junior Squad web page detailing criteria for membership.

7.7. SEOA Fixtures Secretary

PG had already circulated the latest SE fixtures list.

He had raised the issue of a controller for DFOK’s SE League event in Jan 2024, but this had been resolved by NC prior to the meeting.

**8. Dates of next meetings**

AS had circulated proposed dates for 2024 and early 2025. The following were agreed.

7th March 2024 @19.30

6th June 2024 @ 19.30 (with AGM)

12th September 2024 @19.30

12th December 2024 @19.30

13th March 2025 @19.30

12th June 2025 @ 19.30 (with AGM)

**Appendix A: Orienteering Foundation report**

**Orienteering Foundation Report Nov 2023**

Latest news.

The Orienteering Foundation sponsored a Coaching Day at Great Tower in October 2023. Over 90 orienteers enjoyed a great day’s coaching thanks to Derek Allison’s hard work.

We received a detailed report of the grant we gave to JROS towards their UKCC level 2 Coaching course in the summer, read more all about it [here](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/jros-coaching-course-report).

We have recently gratefully received donations in memory of [Dave Caudwell](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/donations-in-memory-of-dave-caudwell-raise-2500) and [Keith Marsden](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/keith-marsden). Click on the names to read more.

A working group for a Volunteering project which the Foundation are initiating, looking at good practice, would still welcome more people to take part. If you are interested to find out more [here](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/volunteer-effort-project).

Thanks to the Northern Ireland OA, the organisers of the British Middle and Sprint Championships, donations raised were £500, more details [here](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/british-sprint-middle-donations-raise-500)

The Club Development officers which are helped by funding from the Foundation are doing some great work, latest reports can be read here.

[Cleveland OK](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/clok-club-development-officer-year-2-report)

[Lakeland OC](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/loc-family-project-report)

[Derwent Valley OC](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/dvo-derby-night-maprun-series-for-runners)

There were several applications for grants this quarter and we have awarded contributions to the following.

* [South East Lancs OC](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/seloc-adult-and-family-projects) towards projects to Engaged new adults and families.
* [Freddie Carcas](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/freddie-carcas-at-european-champs-knockout-sprint) towards his expenses for the European Championships.
* [Stirling University](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/stuoc-club-development) Phase 2 of their development
* [JROS](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/jros-minibus-driving-lessons-and-test) to support a further coach gaining a mini bus licence.

We are receiving a steady income from racesignup donation of 1p per entry they take. At least two clubs have offered to match or exceed that and racesignup deal with the admin for the club by deducting any club contribution from their net income.

If you would like to read more about this news or would like to find out more about the work of the Foundation please see their web site, [www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk](http://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk),

Why not sign up for the Orienteering [newsletter](https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-email-list), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/orienteeringfoundation/), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/orienteeringfoundation/) or [Twitter](https://twitter.com/oingfoundation) accounts .

Andrew Evans

Trustee and Ambassador for SEOA

Orienteering Foundation

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**Appendix B: Proposal on SEOA membership fees**

**Summary**

Having trialled SEOA fee collection directly from club membership, HH believe that this system is more complex to administer while offering only a very small minority of clubs any advantage, and possibly increasing issues for clubs where members have a choice of which region to join. In short it is complex, burdensome, unconstitutional and unfair/misleading.

HH therefore proposes that returning to collecting SEOA member fees from BOF directly via a separate and transparent charge as part of annual membership renewals. To remove cross-region issues, HH proposes that SEOA lobbies adjacent regions and BOF to standardise on separate region fee collection at membership renewal in all regions.

**Background**

Across a series of SEOA meetings, a proposal to collect SEOA fees direct from clubs (which then list a nominal region fee of £0 in their returns) was presented, discussed and agreed, culminating in 2 linked changes to the SEOA constitution. This is as documented below (in red):

13-Sep-2018 minutes:

There was a short discussion regarding the model for 2020 but it was decided that representatives should discuss the proposal with their clubs and that a decision regarding the future model should be made at the December meeting of this Committee.

A concern was expressed regarding how the change may affect smaller clubs.

Also whether the proposed changes needed to be reflected in the SEOA Constitution.

**Changes to the basis SEOA individual membership and club affiliation**

At the September committee meeting club representatives were asked to consult on a proposal to alter the basis for SEOA individual and club affiliation fees.

Accordingly, the committee is asked to consider the following proposal, that:

**From January 2020, SEOA should no longer collect individual (senior or junior) membership fees through BO, but instead levy from each club affiliated to SEOA an affiliation fee plus an amount per senior and per junior, based on the number of that club’s members selecting SEOA as their association. These fees will be invoiced in early October each year based on membership records on the 30 September, with payment due by 31 October.**

Notes.

1. For most SEOA clubs, the levy will be on all members, the exceptions being those straddling two regions (HAVOC and SN).
2. The level of the affiliation fee per club and the levy per senior and junior member will be decided by the SEOA AGM in the June preceding the beginning of the membership year (i.e. June 2019 for the 2020 membership year). This will allow clubs time to set their fees and to respond to any increase in the levys. For guidance, in 2020 the Treasurer will be recommending an affiliation fee of £10 per club and a levy of £3 per senior and £1 per junior
3. Individuals for whom a club pays a levy to SEOA will be considered to be members of SEOA, e.g. for the purposes of competitions and membership for the SEJS.
4. If this proposal is approved, changes to the constitution to reflect the altered relationship between the association and its individual and club members will be proposed to the 2019 AGM.

13-Dec-2018 minutes:

[The treasurer] had also circulated a paper (Appendix F) relating to the SEOA Club Affiliation Model.

*It was agreed to go ahead with the proposed change from 2020.*

The Treasurer explained that the 2019 AGM will agree the 2020 fees so that clubs can modify their own fees by incorporating the SEOA individual fee for collection in October 2020. As far as SEOA is concerned the change is cost neutral as it is for individual members – only the method of collection is changed.

The 2019 AGM will consider the necessary changes to the SEOA Constitution.

Club Treasurers will be informed of the changes.

13-Jun-2019 AGM minutes:

1. **Changes to the SEOA constitution**

Two changes had been tabled by the Secretary

*- the removal of the role of Meetings Secretary as it has been amalgamated with the role of Secretary*

*- various amendments to reflect and clarify the position of clubs and individuals within the regional Association following the decision to change the method of collection of the affiliation fees.*

AW pointed out that the Region had no contact with some of the smaller clubs eg BAOC and RAFO, whose members were spread across a number of Regions. He therefore suggested that the words ‘affiliated to SEOA’ in paragraphs 4.1.1 and 4.2 should be removed.

There was general agreement on this point; AW therefore proposed this as a change and this was seconded by the Treasurer.

 *This was agreed nem con.*

*(PMN; It was decided that since the amendment proposed by AW had not been considered by all clubs and their members it was necessary that an EGM be called to ratify this proposed amendment)*

A copy of the revised Constitution is included as Appendix H [relevant section as below].

[4.2 Individual membership fees are payable annually on 1st January through a club. For the purpose of assessing fees, age and class of competitor shall be as currently defined by BOF**.]**

12-Sep-2019 EGM - further change in constitution approved to say:

1. **Membership**

Membership of SEOA shall be open to anyone interested in the sport on application, regardless of sex, age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion or other beliefs. The Executive Committee may refuse membership, or remove it, only for good cause, such as conduct or character likely the bring SEOA or the sport into disrepute. An appeal against a refusal or removal may be made to the members.

4.1 Members of the Association are defined as follows:

# 4.1.1 Seniors and Juniors who have paid the appropriate membership fee to the Association through a club. Such members shall be as currently defined by BOF.

4.1.2 Honorary Life Membership may be accorded to persons who have given outstanding service to orienteering and who have been nominated by the Executive Committee and approved by the Annual General Meeting.

 4.2 Individual membership fees are payable annually on 1st January through a club. For the purpose of assessing fees, age and class of competitor shall be as currently defined by BOF**.**

**Resulting issues**

1. **The current system to collect fees is burdensome.**
Fee collection through BOF is automatic as part of membership renewal, and BOF has an efficient mechanism to distribute region fees. With the current system, the annual renewal states an SEOA fee of £0.00, so the system is clearly set up for the collection of association fees. Fee collection through clubs requires the SEOA treasurer to calculate membership and invoice individual club treasurers; these need to confirm the numbers and arrange for transfer of fees. Late payments need chasing. Fee collection also requires clubs to bundle in SEOA fees in to their Club fees during the annual BOF return leading to members seeing an apparently higher club fee than is actually the case. This is not transparent for members and with the changes captured in point 2, much more complex, unnecessarily so if SEOA fees were collected directly from BOF. For almost all clubs, this is an unnecessary burden since if SEOA fees were collected separately, these calculations would not be required.
2. **The current system to collect fees is complex.**
From 2024 onwards, BOF has introduced additional membership categories (young person; family), and part-year fees depending on when a member joins. None of these changes were anticipated by the SEOA, due to the scheduling of the the SEOA and BOF AGMs, and as a result there is ambiguity and unintended complexity with the current system. All individual SEOA clubs have to judge how to map across SEOA £3/£1 fees to 4 membership types and 3 membership lengths, while trying to propose equitable fees that fit with BOF’s intent. These assessments would be avoided if SEOA fees were collected directly.
3. **The current system to collect fees is at odds with the constutition.**
Expected practice is to collect fees from clubs in arrears in October (as agreed in Dec-18). However the later updated constitution (Sep-19) states that “Individual membership fees are payable annually on 1st January through a club”, in contradiction of practice. While this is an oversight that could be corrected, the current system is open to challenge as unconstitutional.
4. **The current system to collect fees is unfair.**
Where region fees are collected through BOF in one region and through clubs in another, clubs on the border will always have issues as members joining one region will either pay too much or too little when compared to members joining the other region. The same is also true between two regions that both charge via clubs but have different membership fee structure. This disparity can also be manipulated by regions to gain more membership – a member considering joining two regions is likely to choose the region with a lower (£0) fee.
5. The current system makes region fee management easier at certain cross-region clubs.
This is presumably the reason for making the initial change, where the adjacent region also charges fees through the club**.** However, for the vast majority of clubs, the changes made by SEOA to move to the current system have made administration of membership fees much more complex. **This residual issue is best resolved by asking all regions, through BOF as necessary, to standardise on collection of fees through BOF.**

**Proposal**

HH proposes a return to collection of SEOA member fees from BOF via a separate and transparent charge for the 2025 membership year. To remove cross-region issues, HH proposes that SEOA lobbies adjacent regions and BOF to standardise on separate region fee collection at membership renewal. If agreed, the SEOA constitution should be amended accordingly for approval at the 2024 AGM.

The proposed new arrangement would be simpler, fairer, more transparent to members and easier to administer (for almost all clubs and SEOA).

**Appendix C: Proposed aims of SEOA**

Discussion paper amended following the SEOA Committee meeting in December 2023.

Suggested aims of SEOA (not in order of importance):

1. To provide a forum for Southeast orienteering clubs to exchange information and news concerning events and activities within their area.
2. To support and provide a sustainable, quality platform for junior coaching across the region.
3. To arrange and co-ordinate training of club officials, for example, first aiders, controllers, organisers, etc.
4. To share expertise, knowledge, and experience amongst the clubs’ representatives.
5. To ensure that clubs have access to, and knowledge of, national concerns and issues.
6. To co-ordinate between clubs for SE league and other related programmes, for example GLOSS.
7. When regions are asked by BOF to put on “larger scale” events, to be the vehicle for discussion, planning and implementation. Examples would be inter-regional events, home internationals, the JK, schools’ events, etc.

**Appendix D: Treasurer’s Report to the December 2023 SEOA Committee Meeting**

Interim 2023 SEOA Accounts

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| --- |
| **Income and expenditure statement at 1 December 2023** |
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| **INCOME** |   |
| Subscriptions | 3,082.00  |
| Event levies | 1,020.30  |
| Interest | 28.40  |
| Miscellaneous | 0.00  |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | **4,130.70**  |
| **EXPENDITURE** |   |
| Junior grants | 1,192.39  |
| Junior training / expenses | 2,757.50  |
| Development courses & conferences | 384.88  |
| English Orienteering Council | 828.00  |
| Officers' expenses | 0.00  |
| Competitions | 233.22  |
| Communications | 290.88  |
| Bank charges | 55.00  |
| Miscellaneous | 49.86  |
| **TOTAL EXPENDITURE**  | **5,791.73**  |
| **SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)** | **(1,661.03)** |
| Net Assets @ 1 January | 21,937.77  |
| **TOTAL NET ASSETS** | 20,276.74  |

Income

All but one club has paid the annual membership and affiliation fees. Levies yet to be received for recent SE League events (SN Mytchett and CHIG Epping). Small amount owing from Oslo participants.

Expenditure

No further significant expenditure expected this year. Costs in from all junior tours and training, including the Oslo and Hawkshead weekends.

End of year projection

Assuming the outstanding fees are paid, levies are in line with projections, and no unexpected expenditure, the end of year deficit is likely to be in the range £1,300 – 1,500. This is in line with the recommendation from our independent examiner that to comply with best practice we reduce our reserves over the next few years.

**David Saunders 5 December 2023**

**Appendix E: Membership Report for the December 2023 SEOA Committee Meeting**

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**Susan Marsden**