

# Club Development Officer for OD

## Role, Objectives and Attributes – an overview

### Background

OD's development goal for 2025/6 is to increase the membership of the club with particular focus on active adults and active families. This will principally be achieved through a structured series of activities and events that are attractive to those in the target demographic groups who are typically involved in running or other outdoor pursuits. In addition, we wish to introduce orienteering to ethnic minorities, people from less advantaged backgrounds and other hard to reach groups, e.g. teenagers.

We also aim to encourage members to become more connected to the club by providing a personal development path for people to improve their orienteering skills and also provide the opportunity for them to go on to become event and/or club officials. This will be achieved by offering a structured programme which encourages people to broaden their skills and includes fully integrated coaching and mentoring strands.

In order to make this possible, OD will need to provide a supportive and inclusive environment where newcomers feel that they are making progress and that their success is recognised. It will need an identifiable pathway for people to move along, and feel that they are moving along, from a novice to a competent orienteer and on to becoming an official should they wish. Along the way, success should be rewarded, perhaps by certificates or badges, probably by results and, not forgetting perhaps the most important of all, by recognition and congratulations from other club members. The club needs to create a well thought out programme that encourages people to turn up to regular events with a warm and supportive feel in everything that we do. Newcomers should be contacted to give them opportunity to explore areas for improvement, personally and by the club, which will build a greater sense of engagement. Contact to be by phone, email or social media and, of course, face-to-face at events and activities.

Additionally, our Development Officer (DO) should also look to enhance the skills of members who have joined in the last few years, during and immediately after the Covid era, when there was little available but the occasional event. OD has plenty of experienced orienteers and officials and a key task will be to harness their support and involvement in the skills improvement areas outlined below.

There will be a range of coaching and mentoring activities aimed at improving the orienteering skills of newcomers and less experienced orienteers out in the field. Alongside this, a similar programme of coaching, mentoring and training activities will be implemented to bring forward the next generation of planners, mappers, organisers, controllers, coaches and club officials in all areas. To help facilitate development in these areas, the local event schedule will be strengthened and used as the mechanism to build skills in a safe environment supported by experienced orienteers acting as mentors. It will include in-club training sessions in areas such as event organising, planning, etc., and also cover new technology approaches such as MapRun. All this will be supported and reinforced by a range of online training and development sessions.

Finally, there is a clear intention to regenerate the club's social environment to make it a lively, fun place where you can regularly meet up with friends and clubmates to enjoy your shared interest. This

will be a central tenet of all the above activities which will, in turn, allow them to become the engine of the very change that we wish to introduce.

OD recognise that this is not a quick fix and expect the programme to last for a period of at least two years subject to review at year one and funding availability. We also recognise that the focus is quite likely to evolve and change as we establish the most effective approach and learn from the success of others.

## Method

OD would like to recruit a DO to drive through the objectives and initiatives outlined above. The principal role will be to instigate a range of club activities and events designed to be attractive to potential newcomers and less experienced members. These activities and events will provide the coaching and training opportunities to build skills and engagement. A key aspect of this will be to enthuse experienced club members to contribute their skills and expertise to this end.

We expect the first year's cost to be **£7000** which will cover 500 hours as appropriate for the CDO plus ancillary costs, e.g., travel, printing, access charges. OD hopes to fund this with 50% from club funds together with a grant application to the Orienteering Foundation for the other 50%.

OD's heartland has been in and around South Coventry, Warwick, Leamington Spa and Warwick but it also has a large geographical area with several dispersed major population centres with divergent local characteristics, e.g. Solihull, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby and Daventry plus Stratford-on-Avon. Initially, the focus will be our heartland area although the potential of others should be explored.

## DO's broad objectives and attributes

The broad objectives of the Development Officer are:

- To arrange and deliver a range of high-quality orienteering activities and events within and around the heartland area. The delivery will be by the DO themselves but also, increasingly over time, by club members and newcomers on their own development path. These activities and events will be additional to the limited programme currently offered.
- To research the successes of other club DOs in recent years and to network with them to ensure the benefits of best practice are incorporated where they align with our targets and direction.
- Identify and implement successful strategies and tactics to attract people into our sport by interfacing with relevant sporting clubs, outdoor groups such as hikers and ramblers, running clubs and groups, and also local authorities and community groups who are increasingly focussing on outdoor activities of various kinds.
- Encourage and enthuse the newcomers attracted by ensuring that they have a positive and enjoyable experience so that they wish to return with post event follow-up.
- Further encourage newcomers to try events not specifically targeted at them, both offered by OD and surrounding clubs, and convert them to membership.
- Engage, understand and appreciate the depth of experience of existing club members making best use of their competences in support of the programme.
- All of the above will incorporate the instigation and application of a club social media strategy which is likely to be a principal means of reaching the target audience and communication within the club.

The full detail of the programme will be determined in conjunction with the DO when in post as some aspects will depend on the skills and capabilities of the successful candidate and, in particular, their orienteering experience. However, OD feels that the enthusiasm, efficiency, approachability, organisational qualities and personal communication skills are principal facets in order to create the right environment. The level of orienteering ability of a potential DO are not considered to be the prime determinant although some experience would be an advantage.

### **Provisional focus of activity/event series**

- A winter and summer 6-week O-Lite\* series, largely MapRun based
- Two series of 3 or 4 park based O-Lite courses for beginners/novices
- Online coaching session for members and newcomers
- Online skills development training to become club or event officials
- A pathway from the O-Lite series to a local and/or regional event
- A series of 'Raid' type evening or weekend sessions for members to encourage social activity within the club

\* O-Lite – straightforward and simple sessions attractive to runners and active people that have a map and easy navigation elements which are not the main component of the session