

# Scottish Orienteering Association



## Strategic Plan 2016-2020

### Vision for 2020

“To be acting efficiently and effectively, in support of a network of healthy clubs to deliver a challenging outdoor adventure sport for all ages and all abilities in local communities and nationally, and to ensure the success of our athletes at international level.”

### Review of Outcomes from the 2012-2016 Strategy

Our 2012-2016 Strategy had 17 Key Targets and Performance Indicators, which have all been met, circumstances permitting. Some noteworthy features of our Outcomes 2012-2016 are:

- *A year-on-year increase in membership of 2.5%. As a result of a GB-wide restructuring of membership by British Orienteering in 2012, membership GB-wide fell by nearly 10%. Membership of SOA remained static in 2014, but has grown significantly in 2015 so that it has more than recovered lost ground.*
- *Appointment of three Regional Development Officers, beginning with Grampian Region. Two RDOs (1 FTE) have been operating in Grampian since 2012, and three (1.2 FTE) in Grampian and Highland since 2014, funded by **sportscotland**, the Robertson Trust, the Davidson Trust and SOA. Their contracts run to August 2016. The project has been extremely successful and is documented in an interim report to the Robertson Trust (separate document).*
- *Continued athlete representation in the GB Performance Squads at about 25%. A Scotland team is not permitted to participate in competitions of the International*

Orienteering Federation. However, Scottish representation in the GB team reached 40% at the 2015 World Championships.

- *Transformation of financial processes.* This was essential and has been successfully completed, but at enormous cost to volunteer time.

## **Rationale for Strategy 2016-2020**

### **Preamble**

This Strategy has been prepared in consultation with SOA Staff and members, our clubs, our **sportscotland** Partnership Manager and a number of individuals who have experience in relevant areas. It is presented by the SOA Board of Directors. The Board comprises the President (also Chair) and seven Directors, all eight also being Trustees of the Charity.

The Strategy is for both change and growth: change in the areas of staffing and governance and growth in development of the sport, while maintaining a strong presence in performance orienteering. We have doubled our membership growth target from 2.5% per year to 5%. The Strategy is costed on the basis that, post-World Championships, it will be difficult to continue the same level of success we have had in winning grants from charitable trusts. It depends on continued investment from sportscotland at the same time as the generation of greater income from within the sport, some savings and a significant cash contribution from SOA Reserves.

We have been motivated to create this Strategy by three principal drivers: the success of the World Orienteering Championships and Highland 2015 and all that has flowed from that, including an increased understanding of how to grow membership; the rapidly increasing uptake of orienteering in schools; and the urgent need to appoint a senior staff member to take responsibility for governance and administration.

Orienteering is, in many ways, a unique sport: in addition to providing the club structure, participation opportunities and development pathways for volunteers and athletes offered by other sports, it is accessible to all age groups from toddler to pensioner as well as families, and it serves all sectors of society. Furthermore, it is seen in schools as a vehicle for learning in affective and cognitive areas, fitness, health and wellbeing, evidenced by the widespread uptake of orienteering in schools and high demand for our Teaching Orienteering course. This relevance has allowed us to achieve charity status, which has, in turn, helped us to grow the sport during 2012-2016. 2015 has seen a marked upsurge in interest in orienteering, principally associated with hosting the World Orienteering

Championships, leading to club membership growth of about 20%. Moreover, Scotland is recognised as by far the best place in the UK to orienteer, as shown by the net inward migration of orienteers, and as the most active in developing orienteers and orienteering, e.g. our performance pathway.

**Naturally, this is a momentum and reputation we wish to build upon.**

However, development presents challenges: public awareness and perception of orienteering is still patchy at best; participation is overwhelmingly (though not entirely) through organised events rather than on a casual basis; clubs vary considerably in the volunteer workforce they have available to organise these events; and much of its governance, e.g. decisions on membership and events structures, insurance, rules and guidelines, coach development and international competition, lies with British Orienteering, which hampers certain areas of development here in Scotland and diverts potential income. Moreover, orienteering is a technically as well as a physically demanding sport that requires a certain amount of determination to master, and good coaching in schools and at club level is crucial to attract, develop and retain membership.

**We plan, therefore, to continue to develop our club structures and volunteer workforce and maintain our education programmes to create an environment for continued growth in participation and membership.**

There was no better evidence for Scotland's high reputation in orienteering than the success of the World Championships, held in Highland and Moray in early August, 2015 in conjunction with our biennial Scottish 6-Days Festival of Orienteering. We hosted international teams from 52 nations and over 6000 club orienteers, the largest orienteering event staged in the UK, totalling about 33000 runs, bringing over £9M into the Scottish economy. Further highlights:

- The event delivered a welcome boost via the media to public awareness of orienteering, particularly at local level. This triggered an upsurge of interest in the sport in Highland and Moray areas, including Gaelic communities (through BBC Alba). Highland Council has adopted orienteering as a priority sport.

**We are well aware that growth and development of our sport across Scotland will only happen if we create greater publicity for it and market it properly, primarily on a local level through the work of local clubs and development officers.**

- Our Regional Development Officers had already been building a legacy in clubs and schools and of partnerships across northern Scotland, and this will continue through to August 2016, with the ultimate aim of placing their clubs in a stronger, sustainable position within their communities. Club membership in the area has increased by 33% in 2015 over 2014. A comprehensive report of RDO activity is available as a separate document, written for the Robertson Trust, part funders of the positions along with **sportscotland** and SOA. Clubs elsewhere across Scotland are envious of this level of development.

**Therefore we plan to “roll out” the successful use of development officers in northern Scotland across the whole of the country by creating a wider coverage of development officer support.**

- Another feature of the World Championships was the remarkable success of Scottish athletes in achieving GB representation, helping the GB team gain promotion to the top tier of orienteering nations (top eight of 79 nations). 40% of the GB team of 17 was Scottish and 50% were alumni of Edinburgh University Orienteering Club (EUOC). This has come about through our strong performance pathway provided by club and area talent squads, the Scottish Junior Orienteering Squad and the Scottish Elite Development Squad (SEDS), enhanced by their relationships with EUOC. This structure, unique in the UK and the envy of other associations, is funded through athlete donations, a small amount of sponsorship, SOA and Winning Students awards to EUOC members.

**It is our desire to maintain this level of successful talent development and representation.**

Returning to schools, despite a rapidly growing recognition amongst teachers of the benefits of orienteering in the context of the Curriculum for Excellence, we suffer from the same chronic problem as many other sports, namely converting pupils' participation in schools (in

lessons and with Active Schools) into local club membership and a life-long association with the sport. We do not know how many pupils Scotland-wide participate in orienteering, but we do know there is rapid growth (for example, in Moray, all eight school clusters now orienteer; Perth & Kinross Council holds a festival for 1000 pupils every year; Midlothian similarly for about 700 pupils; and the sport is particularly popular in the private school sector). Apart from in Moray, where a development officer works with the local club for two days a week and has delivered a doubling of junior membership, very few pupils go on to orienteer in local club events and even fewer join their local club. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that, despite training through Teaching Orienteering CPD courses, teachers find it difficult to introduce orienteering in their schools, partly because its technical content places a big demand on their time. These issues need to be addressed over the short to medium term. On the other hand, in the last year or two our RDOs have had success with coaching sessions tailored to families, commonly those that have children who have tasted orienteering at school, and who are happy to become club members.

**We plan to better understand the school-club pathway, seek out and disseminate best practice and support clubs to put this into effect with the help of development officer support. “Push” from schools, “Pull” from clubs and the engagement of parents are essential elements.**

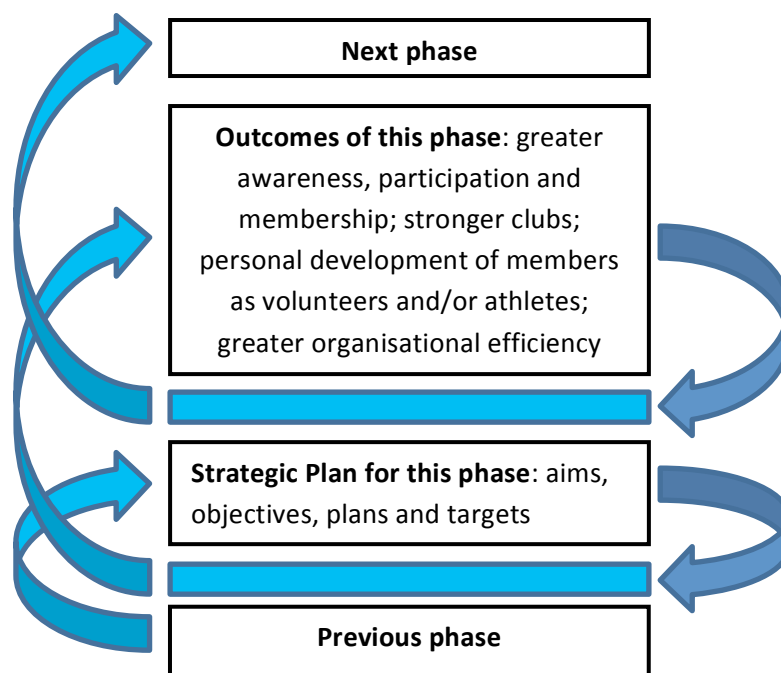
Over the last few years SOA has experienced an increased emphasis on governance, especially related administration and bureaucracy: our success in achieving charity status has brought us many benefits but also accountability and a significant amount of paperwork; we have grown to six staff with related administration audits and HR Healthchecks; we are building more partnerships; our financial affairs have become more complex, various policy documents require updating to meet changing legislation and we now seek parallel funding for projects more often; we receive governance audits more frequently, and plans, evaluations and targets have become more rigorous. SOA is a small SGB, and whilst broadly successful in meeting governance requirements, for example in Equality Standard and financial processes, there is still much to do to be “state-of-the-art”. This burden impacts on staff time that should be used to deliver and develop the sport, but it is also making it very difficult to attract Board members, on whom much of this

administration falls at present. Indeed, if we do not relieve Board members of this level of administration and bureaucracy the future for the governance of SOA is bleak.

**Therefore, we propose to recruit a Chief Operating Officer to undertake this wide range of administrative tasks, thus freeing up Board members to concentrate on policy and planning and permit staff to focus on their development roles.**

### **Aims and objectives of this Strategy**

We see our aims and objectives as components of an upward spiral of growth for the development of orienteering over the next four years. The concept of a spiral presents development as a continuously growing, progressive activity (Fig.1).



**Figure 1.** The Growth Spiral.

#### **Aim 1: Promoting orienteering**

**Using the many positive attributes of orienteering and a variety of media, widely promote orienteering as a sport for all.**

**Objective 1.1** Use lessons learnt during the World Orienteering Championships 2015 to focus on what we know to be the most effective news stories, primarily at local level and coming from both club and development officer sources. Our objective is to have all clubs submitting news stories well within the time frame of this Strategy.

**Objective 1.2** Exploit the widest possible range of media and outlets, such as Community Sports Hubs and youth groups, to market orienteering to the broadest target audience. We envisage development officers advising clubs in this area, especially the area of social media. Ideally, one Regional Development Officer in our new staffing structure will have some knowledge of marketing and publicity.

**Objective 1.3** Improve provision of permanent orienteering courses for casual orienteering by members of the public through partnerships with charitable bodies, Forestry Commission, NTS and other landowners, to be facilitated by an Events Manager. We will aim for all clubs to have at least one locale for casual orienteering.

## **Aim 2: Club development**

**Through a wide range of development initiatives, support Scottish clubs to achieve a mark of excellence, increase participation, convert participation into membership and retain members.**

**Objective 2.1** Through the support of their Regional Development Officer, help each clubs to achieve a mark of excellence (Clubmark equivalent) as a vibrant, high-quality community sports club (Fig. 2). We aim to have all 18 open clubs in this position by 2020.

**Objective 2.2** Support clubs in developing the resource needed to run regular, accessible, welcoming, high-quality local events to increase participation opportunities. Support includes development officer support, development project grants, including land access and mapping, and training courses (see Aim 3). SOA aims to maintain these resources at the current level at least.

**Objective 2.3** Support clubs to create local partnerships that will attract members of their local communities into orienteering. This includes partnerships with schools and Active Schools, local businesses and cognate sports, e.g. JogScotland and hill running clubs, and will be facilitated by a development officer.

**Objective 2.4** Work with clubs to streamline the membership recruitment and retention process with advice in these areas from a regional development officer, with the aim of achieving a year-on-year membership growth of 5%.

**Objective 2.5** Ensure that there is a programme of high-quality events regionally and nationally, including our Scottish league events, to provide a development pathway for both the club athlete and the aspiring performance athlete. This will be in the remit of an Events Manager kept under review for new opportunities to enhance the events programme.

**Objective 2.6** Provide support in particular to our four clubs in the south of Scotland, where clubs are small and population density is low. This will be done with regard to the particular circumstances there through the work of the Regional Development Officer South.

**Objective 2.7** Through the work of the Regional Development Officer North, explore the possibility of establishing a new club or satellite club in northwest Scotland in light of increased interest from Gaelic-speaking communities and Highland Council nominating orienteering as an adopted sport.

### **Aim 3: Volunteer development**

**By providing development pathways for volunteers and rewarding their efforts, motivate members to volunteer at club and SOA level. Provide coaching and training opportunities for club members.**

**Objective 3.1** Maintain a comprehensive programme of training courses for event officials through the work of an Education Manager. Keep this under review to respond to demand and new upskilling opportunities (Fig. 2).

**Objective 3.2** Continue to expand and strengthen our coaching workforce to address coaching needs at all levels, from schools to performance, through a programme of training and CPD courses organised by an Education Manager. We will set annual targets for coach education in consultation with **sportscotland**.

**Objective 3.3** Offer training opportunities through semi-permanent courses and coaching weekends for club members who wish to develop their orienteering skills. An Education Manager and an Events Manager will work together to do this.



Event Officials	Club Officials
Organiser	President/Chair
Mapper	Secretaries
Planner	Treasurer
Controller	Events Convener
IT Officials	Club Captain
Team Leaders	Club coaches
Team Assistants	Equipment Officer
	Volunteer Manager
	Committee Members
	Other, e.g. Social, Publicity

**Event Officials Pathway:** Local events >> Regional events >> National events>>International events

**Club Officials Pathway:** Club level >> Regional level >> National level

**Figure 2.** Volunteer positions in the club setting and their development pathways in terms of seniority of events. SOA has a programme of training and CPD courses for Event Officials and Coaches, but only occasionally delivers courses for Club Officials. The latter will be addressed in the context of Objective 2.1.

#### **Aim 4: Supporting talented athletes**

**Build on the recent success of our high performance squads to secure further Home Nation success and GB representation at international events.**

**Objective 4.1** Ensure we have the ability to recognise and retain talent through the activities of Club and Area squads, the Scottish Junior Orienteering Squad (ScotJOS) and the Scottish Elite Development Squad (SEDS). This objective will be progressed through communications across our network of volunteer coaches, with a small amount of funding from SOA to support coaching weekends.

**Objective 4.2** Seek external funding for our performance squads (ScotJOS and SEDS) so that athletes can reach their full potential and aspire to GB representation. This will be progressed by volunteers with support from the SOA Marketing & Communications and Performance Directors.

**Objective 4.3** Through building a strong network of coaches, support individual athletes in their efforts to become members of British Orienteering's Talent, Development and Performance Squads and maximise their chances of representing GB. Managed by the SOA Performance Director.

**Objective 4.4** Attract major international events to Scotland to showcase orienteering and motivate athletes, but keeping this within the capacity of the volunteer workforce. We will host the Junior European Cup in 2016 and bid to host the World Universities Championships in 2020. These will be volunteer run with support from an Events Manager.

## **Aim 5: Improved governance**

**Continue to develop our governance processes to make them robust, efficient and effective.**

**Objective 5.1** Maintain a strong management team of SOA Directors, Staff and volunteer managers and coordinators, with appropriate skills and training opportunities and supported by up-to-date HR policies.

**Objective 5.2** Maintain our robust set of financial processes.

**Objective 5.3** Continue to build a relevant and up-to-date portfolio of policies.

**Objective 5.4** Meet our obligations as a registered company and charity and use this status to good effect.

**Objective 5.5** Work with key partners in a mutually beneficial way and identify prospective mutually beneficial partnerships, not least with British Orienteering.

**Objective 5.6** Create, maintain, execute and evaluate operational plans in development, performance and governance.

**Objective 5.7** To facilitate all these requirements, we will appoint a Chief Operating Officer.

## **Staffing structure and costs**

The Strategy put forward here requires a new staffing structure for SOA. The current and proposed structures are shown below.

### Current structure

Post	FTE	Funding sources
Professional Officer	1.0	SS*, SOA Scottish 6-Days Co.
Development Officer	1.0	SS, SOA
Regional Development Officer North 1	0.6	SS, SOA, charitable trusts
Regional Development Officer North 2	0.4	SS, SOA, charitable trusts
Club Development Officer Deeside	0.2	SOA, charitable trust
Club Development Officer P&K	0.2	SOA, charitable trust

\*SS – **sportscotland**

### Proposed Structure

Post	FTE	Funding sources
Chief Operating Officer	0.5	SOA
Administrative Asst	0.3	SOA
Events Manager	0.8	SS*, SOA, Scottish 6-Days Co
Education Manager	0.6	SS, SOA
Regional Development Officer North	0.6	SS, SOA
Regional Development Officer South	0.6	SS, SOA
Club Development Officers	<i>N</i>	Parallel funding from some or all of Club, SOA, a local charitable trust, sportscotland funding streams, local authority sources, etc.

\*SS – **sportscotland**

SOA will realise the required funding by:

- Continued investment from **sportscotland**
- Increasing income from within the sport
- Making savings that can be managed within the context of the Strategy
- Making use of healthy Reserves