

LOC FAMILY PROJECT: END OF YEAR 3 REPORT

PRIMARY AIM: To make sustainable the club developments made in Year 1 and Year 2 of the LOC Family Project whilst aiming to achieve similar engagement and membership targets.

ENGAGING:

To recruit at least 15 families to participate in the Family Project through the proposed events and activities.

TRANSFERRING:

To attract at least 20% of those people participating in the Family Project to enter at least 3 LOC events during the year.

JOINING:

To increase the number of LOC juniors under 15 and LOC seniors between the ages of 21 and 50 who are also members of British Orienteering by a further 10%

PROPOSED METHODS

(FROM PROPOSAL TO EXTEND LOC'S DEVELOPMENT PROJECT)

CREATION OF NEW VOLUNTARY OFFICER POSTS:

VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR
PUBLICITY OFFICER (AND TEAM)
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

DELIVERY OF 12 ANNUAL ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS
FOCUSSED ON ATTRACTING NEWCOMERS WITH
DIFFERENT CLUB MEMBERS BEING SUPPORTED TO
PLAN AND ORGANISE.

CONTINUED PROMOTION THROUGH SOCIAL
MEDIA WITH DIFFERENT CLUB MEMBERS BEING
SUPPORTED TO CREATE NEW CONTENT.

WORKING WITH THE FIXTURES GROUP TO SUSTAIN
AND IMPROVE THE BEGINNER OPTIONS AT
REGULAR EVENTS

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF INCENTIVES FOR
JUNIORS

RETAINING NEWCOMERS THROUGH A CLUB
COACHING PATHWAY

ASSIST OTHER CLUBS TO DEVELOP THEIR PROJECTS
TO ACHIEVE SIMILAR GOALS TO THE FAMILY PROJECT

This third year of our Family Project has been challenging, as we expected it to be. Finding enough volunteers willing to work alongside the paid club development officer in different roles has been difficult. The success has been varied. Some problems have been identified and some solutions already found.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

CREATION OF NEW VOLUNTARY OFFICER ROLES

- Volunteer Co-ordinator Role was introduced but not maintained. For each series of events, a series co-ordinator assists the planner/organiser to find helpers.
- Publicity Officer has now been recruited in a paid position - see below.
- Club Development Officer role may now be shared amongst existing officers or a voluntary CDO appointed to continue the co-ordination of development activities on a reduced basis.

DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES / EVENTS SPECIFICALLY FOR NEWCOMERS

- Four 'Come and Try It' Family Adventures events were each successfully planned and organised by different club members including the launch of Permanent Orienteering Courses at Fell Foot Park.
- Two February half-term workshops and Two Saturday workshops with games and courses were successfully planned and organised by a group of four club members.
- These events all followed the family project "magic formula" for newcomer participation - locations which are close to populated areas and/or familiar to families, good facilities for parking/toilets/refreshments, high level of focussed friendly advertising, easy registration system and entry on the day available, free of charge, lots of helpers supporting on the day, indoor space available for drinks, games and socialising, contact details collected for sharing future event information.
- Participation levels were high with a mixture of returning families and newcomers.
- Planning documents and resources are saved within the club Dropbox folders for future reference.

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE / PUBLICITY

- A small number of club members were willing to take on the role of providing social media content for a specific event series. This often involved a high level of mentoring throughout the period. In half the instances, the volunteers were unable to offer the time to complete the publicity for the series of 4/5 events.
- Having a high level of publicity (mostly via social media) has been key to attracting newcomers to the club and, whilst other aspects of the Family Project are beginning to become part of the way the club works, it was apparent that this role would not be filled on a volunteer basis.

BEGINNER OPTIONS AT ALL LOC EVENTS

- Our Fixtures Group are now tuned into ensuring an offering for beginners and improvers (Yellow and Orange courses) at all events. There is also careful consideration to include some more familiar locations and/or locations near populated areas within each event series.
- A volunteer Club Development Officer would be of benefit to support the fixtures group with this.

INCENTIVES FOR JUNIORS

- A volunteer has been recruited to continue the scoring for our Junior Explorer Awards
- Our Junior Co-ordinator will become involved to periodically celebrate the successes and provide encouragement.
- The colour skills awards would be best used alongside coaching sessions focussing on skills.

COACHING PATHWAY FOR NEWCOMERS

- Some coaching sessions were delivered earlier in 2025 and were well received.
- The absence of a Lead Coach for the last 12 months has greatly reduced the amount of coaching that the club has been able to offer. The Club is currently looking at alternative ways to solve this problem.

SUPPORTING OTHER ORIENTEERING CLUBS

- All our developments have been shared on social media to enable wider access.
- A small number of clubs have been in direct contact to discuss specific areas.

ENGAGEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY

ENGAGING:

Engagement levels for our Family Adventure and Family Workshops have continued at a high level - with returning families alongside those attending for a first time.

Events based in Kendal usually attract highest numbers (reflecting population numbers).

Fell foot POC Launch - well attended
Low Sizergh Family Adventures - very well attended
February half-term workshops (Kendal and Windermere) - nearly 100 families in total
March Saturday workshops (Fell Foot Park and Abbot Hall Park) - 45 families each
Stony Hazel Family Adventures - 35 families
Broughton Fun Day - 25 juniors

Our bimonthly Saturday Series has been introduced to continue the popularity of the Family Adventures events alongside Junior / Schools League for progression and competition for juniors with score course for all.

Membership trends:

BO membership totals are steady.

Junior BO memberships have dropped this year but are still double the figures prior to the introduction of Family Project.

Uptake of free junior memberships has declined in the last 12 months (due to fewer introductory events in Year 3 than in Years 1 and 2?)

Adult 21-50 memberships are remaining steady at 25-30%

70 new members have been recruited overall.

TRANSFERRING:

We have a significant group of families who now regularly attend a variety of events.

As could be expected, family participation does vary according to the individual event - familiar areas and areas near populated areas being more well attended.

Our Explorer Awards continues as an incentive to take part in the full range of events and 50 juniors are currently registered for this, with 23 juniors having taken part in at least 3 club events between April and August 2025.

JOINING:

LOC has continued to attract new members, particularly through the current free membership offer.

In the period Oct 2024 - Sept 2025:

New junior members (free) = 48
New adult members (free trial) = 23
Renewing junior members (free) = 43

New junior LOC/BO members (paid) = 4
New young adult LOC/BO members (paid) = 2
New adult 21-50 LOC/BO members (paid) = 15
New adult 50+ LOC/BO members (paid) = 3

Current Membership

AGE	LOC/BO	Free LOC	Total
Under 15	27	86	113
15-21	11	4	15
21-50	69	20	89
50+	136	5	141
All ages	243	115	358

MOVING FORWARDS AFTER THE FAMILY PROJECT

EVENTS

The club has developed a sustainable family-friendly events format where:

- Two, novice courses are provided at ALL LOC events.
- The Saturday Series will provide regular weekend orienteering as well as Wednesday evenings.
- Areas which are close to populated areas and/or familiar to families are included in the events calendar.

The club might benefit from introducing the role of voluntary Development Officer to support the Fixtures Group in maintaining this offer.

INCENTIVES

The Explorer Awards have been very successful in encouraging juniors to attend a variety of events.

We have a volunteer to look after the points spreadsheet and a Junior Co-ordinator to continue to celebrate the junior successes with announcements, badges, prizes etc.

VOLUNTEERS

As with many clubs, LOC relies of a relatively small core group of helpers and it is becoming more difficult to find people to fill the roles required to put on events.

This is a challenge when in competition with other sports offering the appeal of 'pay and play' with no expectations.

PUBLICITY

We identified the crucial importance of posting on social media in communicating with potential orienteering families and agreed that without this work being continued it was likely that the recruitment of new members would wither.

The Club has therefore agreed to pay a Publicity Officer for an average of 5hrs/week for the next 12 months, with continued support from the NWOA.

The newly appointed Publicity Officer is a parent in a family that was recruited to orienteering by the Family Project.

DEVELOPMENT

In the absence of a Lead Coach and regular coaching opportunities for juniors, LOC has had limited impact on supporting progress.

The introduction of the Saturday Junior League is an opportunity for our coaches and members to help newer juniors to progress.

MEMBERSHIPS

The free membership offer (including free junior entries) attracted a huge number of new members and a good proportion of these have been retained gone on to renew for a fee through British Orienteering.

The club will be considering future membership and entry fees for juniors at the AGM.