

2024 Chairperson's Report
Paul O'Sullivan-Hourihan
May 2024

So much has happened in Orienteering in the last twelve months that it is almost impossible to keep up.

Proving yet again that we are primarily a volunteer driven organisation the volume of work by orienteering volunteers is phenomenal. The unheralded and unseen work of the volunteer Executive Committee needs to be acknowledged. This contribution of expertise, time and commitment, means that we can all go to the orienteering events around the country and partake of the sport we love. It is also important to acknowledge the club volunteers who organise, control and plan the events we all enjoy so much. It is safe to say that without all these volunteers our sport could not succeed.

One of the major challenges facing the sport is the need for new volunteers to build on the work done by so many others to date. My ask of you now is if you think you can contribute to make the sport enjoyable for yourself and others, please get involved. We also need to improve our female involvement in administration, coaching and event organisation. It is universally acknowledged that balanced boards and committees lead to better outcomes.

In addition to, and in support of, the volunteers in Orienteering Ireland I want to acknowledge the contribution of our Operations Team. Eric, Deirdre and Mark have developed into a formidable team and they work tirelessly in promoting both Orienteering Ireland and our sport. They have added a new level of professionalism to how orienteering can be delivered. During the year they have never failed to rise to any challenge presented to them. On behalf of the orienteering community, I thank them for their efforts and look forward to more successes.

Earlier this year we delivered on a promise made at last year's AGM. In early March a Club's Conference was held in Portlaoise. Subjects discussed included membership, fixtures and IOC into the future. It was a great opportunity to share opinions, discuss experiences and explore what the future of orienteering in Ireland looks like.

Thanks to all the Clubs that attended and their contributions to all the topics discussed. As outlined at the Conference the NGB is there to support the Clubs and assist them to be successful.

A significant amount of time and energy has been dedicated to the organisational change that we embarked on two years ago at the AGM in Killarney. The move from our current "Type A" organisation to a "Type B" governance model is nearing completion. This year's AGM will also serve as an EGM to address the final moves to this position. Please continue to support this endeavour.

As with every year when the AGM comes around, we look at filling the executive committee positions. All positions are considered available, and Clubs are encouraged to submit their nominations.

This year Andrew Cox has decided to call time on his involvement at National Executive Level as Development Officer. For many years Andrew has been a "FORCE OF NATURE" in his involvement and promotion of the sport. His involvement at club level, schools and uniformed groups is unmatched. We thank him for his many years of dedicated support and wish him well in his future orienteering activities

Also, this year Fiona Buckley stepped away from her position as Communications Officer. We thank her for her work and contribution to the post and wish her well in her future orienteering.

This year also the Mapping Officer position has become vacant. Stuart Scott has decided to call time on his involvement at this level. New challenges on his time have taken priority. He has been a dedicated committee member for many years and we thank him for all his work during that time.

The Development position will be managed by the Operations Manager and his team. Both Communications Officer and Mapping Officer appointments will hopefully be filled by new nominations from the Clubs.

Another stalwart of our orienteering family has decided to call time on her involvement at national level. Barbara Foley-Fisher has contributed hugely to our compliance with, and development of, our safeguarding policies and procedures. The importance of this work cannot be overstated. The work done by Barbara and others ensures that our sport is a safe and welcoming environment for everyone young and old. A significant achievement. A HUGE thank to Barbara from us all.

The vetting element of Barbara's work will be undertaken by the Operations Team. Her other portfolio of National Liaison Officer will have to be filled.

Along with all the administrative and organisational challenges the normal activities need attention. Representative Orienteering continues with both the Junior and Senior Squads competing in many championships around Europe. We wish them well in their efforts and ask that you please support them in any way you can.

Thanks to Dave, Jens and their support teams of selectors, etc., for all their work.

If you are travelling to IOC 24 hopefully we will see you there. Frank Ryan and his team will ensure a challenging weekend of great competition. Enjoy the various competitions and join us in the Hodson Bay Hotel for our AGM on Sunday May 5th at 5.30pm.

PAUL O'SULLIVAN-HOURIHAN

Chairperson
Orienteering Ireland