

## **Report of the Development Officer to the Orienteering Ireland AGM in May 2024**

I joined the committee in 2008 with a fairly empty brief and few guidelines. My background was as a teacher so my emphasis has mostly focussed on that area. I am based in Waterford so my main focus has been on the SE region. This covers Waterford, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford and Carlow. The following is an outline of my activity since the 2023 AGM. I wish my successor well.

### **Orienteering formats**

I have tried to develop different formats that can be used with different groups in different locations and with different levels of ability.

1. **Maze** (to encourage orientation and progression of skills)
  - a. set up at both events and in individual schools
  - b. used both a single maze and 2 parallel mazes
  - c. developed 6 courses per maze to move from number + code to number only
  - d. Simplified the set up to reduce set up time
  - e. Laminated all course maps
2. **Permanent Orienteering courses**
  - a. Teacher/leader independence
  - b. Need constant maintenance by the landowner and club combined
  - c. Popular in enclosed well maintained OPW parks like Kilkenny castle and Kennedy park.
3. **Maprun**
  - a. Many courses established, limited use
  - b. Used by schools in Thurles, Dungarvan, Wexford, Graiguenamanagh, Kilkenny, Tullow and Carlow
  - c. Used by scouts (especially in Kilkenny and Waterford)
  - d. Regular map and course update required.
4. **PhotoO**
  - a. Makes use of urban base maps
  - b. Well supported by LSPs
  - c. Select photos and create map/photo sheets
  - d. Can use a heritage theme
  - e. Useful with older persons.

## **Orienteering groups.**

### **1. Secondary schools**

- a. 3 training events at Jenkinstown (5 schools), Kilbarry (1), JFK (3)
- b. SE regional event at Tintern (9)
- c. St Augustines, Dungarvan (double maze for both primary and secondary school)
- d. 5<sup>th</sup> yr Loreto at Jenkinstown (linear course)
- e. TY (Transition Year) specific, in school (Newtown, incorporated a maze); for multiple schools (St. Augustines hosted the Dungarvan schools)

### **2. Primary schools**

- a. Training events at Fethard (8 schools) included maze, Kilbarry (6), Jenkinstown (4), JFK (3)
- b. SE regional event at Woodstock (6)
- c. 7 school visits with maze in June 23

### **3. Scouts (b=beavers, c =cubs, s = scouts, v = ventures)**

- a. Carlow/Kilkenny beavers at Castlecomer (11b,2c,1s)
- b. Waterford county scouts at Portlaw over 2 days (9b,7c,9s)
- c. Wexford county scouts at JFK (6b,9c,10s,4v) included double maze
- d. At club events at Woodstock (2s), Gorey (1s,1v), Kilkenny (1c)

### **4. Girl Guides**

- a. Seashell guides at Gorey club event (multiple short courses)
- b. Dolmen guides used Maprun independently in Tullow as part of map-reader badge.
- c. Sevo propose to run a Girl Guide regional event at Kennedy Park in October.

### **5. LSPs (Local Sports Partnerships)**

- a. Sports Active Wexford
  - i. WIS (Women in sport) at Gorey with St Aidans service (disability) helped by Gorey and Courtown LTI (come and try it event)
  - ii. Paws (Positive Ageing week) in Wexford (photoO)
  - iii. Her Outdoors at Carrickfoyle (come and try it event)
- b. Waterford SP
  - i. PAWs at Dungarvan (PhotoO)
  - ii. Winterval festival in Waterford (photoO)
  - iii. Bike week at Kilmacthomas and Kilbarry, Waterford (photoO)
- c. Kilkenny recreation and sports partnership
  - i. European week of sport at Woodstock (come and try it event)
  - ii. Bike week (photoO)
- d. Tipperary Sports Partnership
  - i. Schools training at Fethard town park (maze included)

## **6. Other groups**

- a. Cashel, Ferns and Ossory Girls Friendly Society (indoor maze)
- b. Rhododendron walking festival community group at Glengarra, Co. Cork (maze)
- c. Retired teachers in Waterford (photoO), and Cahir, Co.Tipperary (photoO)

I have tried to mentor new instructors and pass on my experiences to the next generation whilst still fully active within the club. I look forward to working with the new team of regional development officers and maintaining some of this role. I thank the committee members who put up with me over the past 16 years.

## **Ongoing requirements**

1. Support of Orienteering Ireland
  - a. in providing instructors to help raise the quality of the experience by adding cone exercises and mazes (dependent on age)
  - b. in providing equipment such as cones.
2. Support of clubs (in my case SEVO) in providing
  - a. Volunteers (the more available, the easier to run the events)
  - b. equipment
  - c. maps
  - d. Transparent finances
3. Support of schools.
  - a. Cost of travel (they will gladly travel short distances or welcome you into the school). We need to keep the cost of entry low.
  - b. Changing personnel (constant need to educate the teacher)
  - c. Question the optimum size of event
  - d. TY classes are the hardest groups to control and motivate.
4. Support of LSPs
  - a. Source of funding
  - b. Problem of changing personnel
  - c. Tied to specific days/weeks
5. Support of uniformed groups
  - a. Each age group requires different courses
  - b. Beavers tend to go in 4's with tehri leaders for an etension of a hike; cub scouts tend to pair off and are a little more competitive; scouts and ventures start on their own.
  - c. The use of bases by the Kilkenny/Carlow region keeps younger groups fully occupied and encourages older scouts to help with setting up and running the bases.

- d. Multiple short courses with progression works with small groups attending urban events

### **IOSG role**

As development officer, it was my role to chair the IOSG (Irish Orienteering Schools Group). The role of the IOSG was laid out in 2009. It is time to assess if it is needed into the future to promote the guidelines of the group:

1. Plan and co-ordinate the running of events and coaching (Comment: there was little focus on coaching as this was taken over by the excellent Ready To Go courses and the personnel did not have the time to carry any meaningful programme out themselves)
2. Set out the minimum standards that shall be applied in running schools orienteering events; safety at events; suitability of areas; guidelines for the suitability of courses; risk assessment; parental permissions; numbers attending and the minimum number of event organisers to ensure the safe running of the event; Schools/teachers responsibilities versus the event organisers responsibilities and the communication of this to the individual schools; Code of ethics, child protection vetting etc. (Comment: guidelines were formulated for the ISOC Irish schools orienteering championships. Much of the rest followed OI guidelines. There was no mention of financial overview. This needs to be considered.)
3. Agree the dates, locations and organising clubs for the championship events: Provincial Schools Orienteering Championships and Irish schools orienteering Championships. (Comment: this was carried out annually)

I would like to thank the following for all their support over the past 16 years: Liam O'Brien, Jim Callnan, Ted Lucey and Willie Fitzgerald from the Cork schools; Mary Healy from the Leinster schools; and all the SEVO members in the SE who have given of their time when asked. Without this dedicated band, there would be no schools orienteering.

### **SE Scout Survey**

The findings of a survey of 10 scout leaders in SE (most are club members of SEVO) are summarised here:

The leaders brought groups (ranging from beavers to ventures) to events which included some or all of the following: maze, linear courses, multiple short courses and extra bases. There was positive response for the model where a club runs a County event and the scout leadership provide the support personnel from within the scout group; orienteering competes with other scout activities, sporting commitments and family time; interest in running more camp based or midweek events locally; a request for leader training; increased communication, adding more scout leaders to email lists to increase awareness and participation; enjoyment was often mentioned; cost of

transport was another issue; more POCs and Maprun courses at scout sites such as Dundrum would be welcomed. Groups in Waterford and Kilkenny (where club members are leaders) have used POCs and Maprun courses locally. There is scope for new areas such as Gorey and Wexford town.

There was unanimous agreement that an orienteering specific badge would raise the profile of orienteering amongst the scouting community.

Andrew Cox (Devoff)