

## OD – a three-year strategy

### Why a strategy and what are we trying to achieve

#### Where are we now?

OD has been functioning for many years in much the same way. There has been a steady decline in membership in recent years which was accelerated by the impact of Covid. The combined impact has been that many members have become disengaged with the club which has become a little tired. We have recognised that this is unsustainable in the longer term. Consequently, the club has decided to address the problem and we intend to engage a Development Officer as part of the way forward.

#### Why a written strategy

To capture the ideas and initial work undertaken and to communicate the single message in one concise document. The strategy will show what we are aiming to achieve, our direction of travel and the milestones along the way and how we will monitor the steps we have taken. Equally importantly, it will also clarify those things that are of secondary importance and those things that we are not going to do.

#### Where are we going

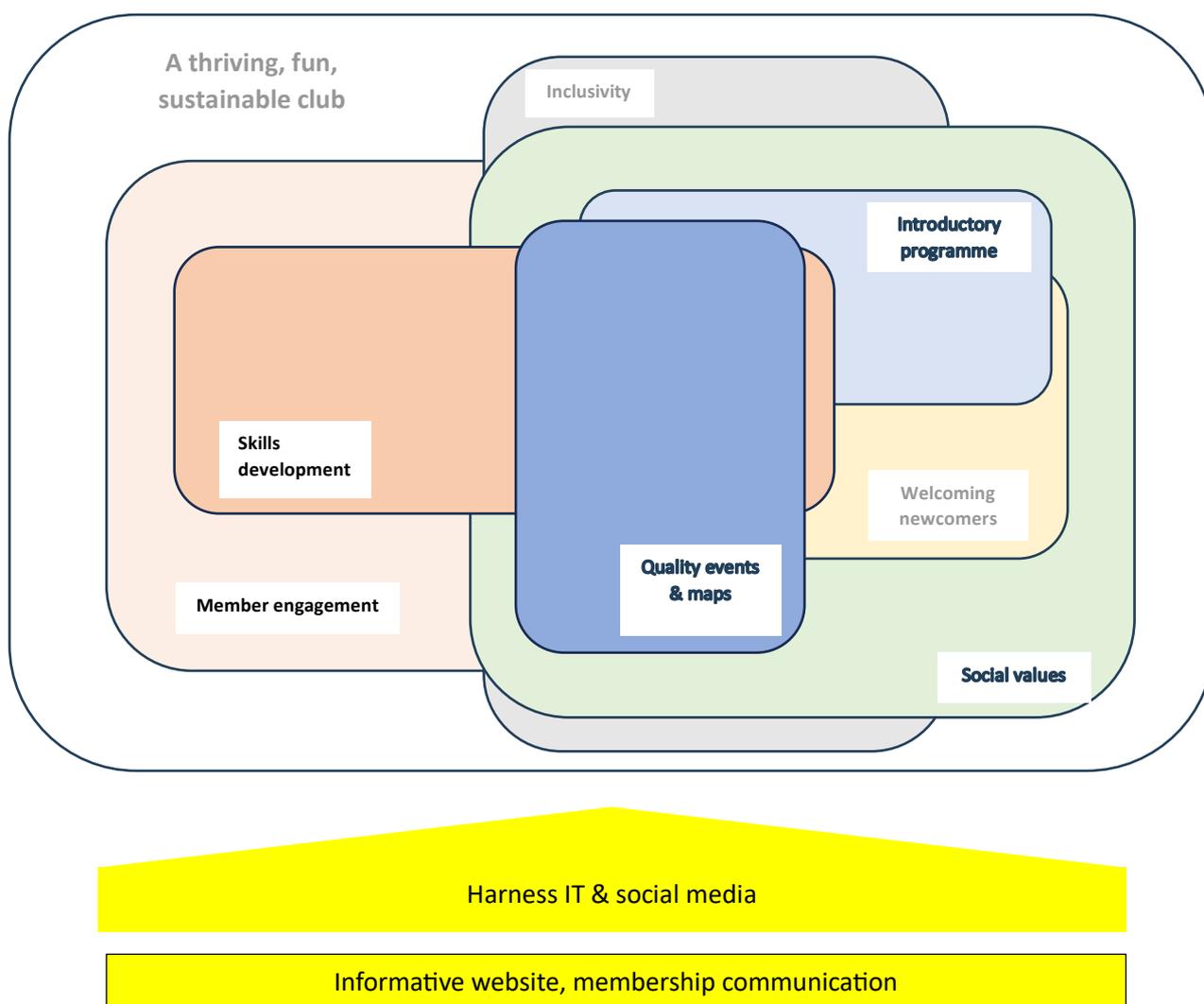
We want OD to be a thriving club with a sustainable future and a friendly, welcoming environment. One where we have winning success together, whether our winning is challenging for major honours and international titles, mastering the art of map reading and navigation for the first time, improving our own performance to get the best results we possibly can, or just enjoying the experience of exercise in the fresh air with like-minded people.

#### What will it and feel look like

- More people orienteering, greater participation, enabling and visibly supporting new people and developing new skills
- Better representation across all our communities and age groups
- Encouraging people to develop their skills – in orienteering and/or to get further involved as volunteers, event officials or running the club
- There will be a buzz about the place with a sociable environment

#### What are our aims?

Our strategy can be represented simply in the following interrelationship diagram showing what we will do to recreate a thriving, fun, sustainable club. Its main aspects have a high degree of interconnectedness as seen in the overlapped elements of the diagram. Each aspect is expanded below the diagram. The whole strategy will be underpinned by updating our IT and social media strategy to match the expectations of the target new membership together with a modern informative website presentation.



## A thriving, fun, sustainable club

The main objective is to create a diverse club with a great competitive and social environment that is welcoming to all and where people are proud to be members. It will be attractive to people across the ages and skills from the various communities in our area. Members will happily go out of their way to welcome newcomers and to help and encourage them. Even though we may not all be skilled orienteers, we can certainly all aim to be friendly orienteers that are happy in what we do.

### Member engagement

Members will be involved in all aspects of the club and encouraged to contribute their thoughts and ideas. New ideas and suggestions are welcomed and we are open to new ideas and approaches. Alongside this, members will be encouraged to get involved and have their say in how the club is run and the events we offer.

This plan will be a starting point of a conversation across the membership on how we will take the club forward. Members at all skill levels will help determine and set-out:

- How we will structure OD events and programme
- The development and coaching plan we should offer
- How we recognise and develop the leaders we will need in the club

- How we build in social activities around the events and things that we do
- How we understand what works in other clubs and where collaboration is beneficial

## Social values

Offering great events and having good individual and team results is a key objective of any sporting club but other things matter too. Our sport offers physical, mental and health benefits for the wider community and, in particular, disadvantaged groups. Along the way, we will run some events aimed at the wider community and its leaders to encourage them to become active in our sport.

## Welcoming newcomers

We aim to be particularly welcoming to new members, supporting and encouraging them in their first steps. All members are encouraged to welcome newcomers and to offer to offer help. All, of course, to be undertaken within the club's safeguarding policies.

The plan will include:

- Programmes of events targeted to reach and recruit new members in our target demographic
- Our approach to specific and targeted groups of juniors
- Adapting our website, media and publicity to be attractive to potential members

## Inclusivity & diversity

We aim to become far more diverse over the plan period as the club does not mirror our surrounding communities, neither in age, gender, ethnicity or religion. We also recognise that physical and mental impairment can be a barrier to remaining active in the sport and also to those wishing to become involved.

As part of this plan, we will:

- Put on accessible, easy to reach urban courses including in disadvantaged areas – would include things like urban 'start-anywhere' MapRun courses so people can try it in the safe environment of their area
- Support people with neurodiverse conditions to participate in orienteering
- Collaborate with other clubs to champion the involvement of people who need support
- Hold and publicise Pre-O and Trail-O type events

## Introductory programme

We will explore alternative approaches to an introductory programme to determine what is most attractive to our target new member demographic. This will extend to types of activity that aim to build our inclusivity and diversity. Examples will include things like the following:

- A series of 6 O-Lite MapRun sessions aimed at outdoor active people, e.g. fitness/leisure runners and joggers rather than the committed Athletic Club member. O-Lite – an event that requires a map and some simple navigation.
- A park series using O maps and simple courses.
- A more formal couch-to-green type series
- Greater promotion of our local event series focussing on the fact that they are suitable for people to come along and try with help and guidance always available.

We are fortunate to have a number of discrete urban conurbations which offer the opportunity to try different things in different places.

## Skills development

This has two broad aspects;

Orienteering skills – utilising our existing coaches to offer specific improver courses for less experienced members and also to create a skills ladder for newcomers with the introduction of awards/recognition for attaining different levels, e.g. akin to a bronze, silver or gold award

Officials/administrator skills – a growing, vibrant club will need more officials of every kind, e.g. mappers, planners, controllers, club officers, etc. We will create a regular pathway, based largely on online tools and techniques, to allow people to build their officials/administrator skills to give them the confidence to take on a wider role within the club. Of course, building skills in mapping, organising and controlling will improve their orienteering skills as a consequence.

We will encourage members to reach out to other clubs to learn and understand how they do things so that we can adapt and try them ourselves.

## Quality events & maps

OD is justifiably proud of the quality of our maps and events and this will continue as it underpins our whole strategy. We are currently constrained by limited resources which is why the skills development outlined above is important.

Our plan will define:

- The areas we currently have available
- A target list of those skill areas we wish to develop or refresh
- A plan and budget for how we will develop additional areas
- How we use systems such as OOMaps and MapRun to offer a consistent standard of O-Lite events
- Advertising and promotion for events
- How we best organise and recognise our volunteers
- A social element around the events

## What happens next?

### Feedback

This strategy document is very much a starting point for a wider conversation across the club. We really would appreciate your thoughts and ideas. Please let us know what you think.

### Detailed plans

The next step will be to build out a more detailed plan from these initial ideas and the conversation across the club. We hope that we get funding for a Development Officer who will become ideally placed to build upon this work

## Member involvement

In addition to becoming involved in finalising our plan, members will be asked to create small teams to look at the specific aspects of the plan and help drive them forward, gaining committee approval along the way.

## Club governance

The breadth of this plan requires us to review the club's governance, in short, the way we do things. The current centralised approach is perhaps not best suited to the modern age and we need to review our structure and where decisions are taken. It includes how we communicate with members, our website, publicity, and many other aspects together with de-centralised decision-making groups within an allocated budget. This will be part of the feedback process and be undertaken early in the plan.