

Chair report for AGM 2021, for year Sept 2020-Aug2021

The covid-19 pandemic has continued to significantly limit the orienteering events that were allowed to go on during the last (financial) year. Last year was the first year with the covid pandemic affecting orienteering.

One solution to enable some races to continue was to shift urban events into virtual events using an app which we started for the first time last year. We continued this approach for the **winter street o series** this year, running it under virtual conditions (short window of opportunity to post a time, no socialising), using the MapRun app. This started off well, with four events being run under these conditions. But then the pandemic case numbers rose, with lockdowns in November and January, and the later tighter restrictions meant the series was paused until restrictions eased, to avoid inadvertently encouraging travel to areas not deemed local. The final three events of the series were opened up all at once for a longer period, but given the limitations on orienteers accessing these events, no trophy was awarded this year.

A second solution was for orienteers and newcomers to make greater use of the **permanent orienteering courses**, of which MV has many. These have been used significantly during the last year, including the opening of the new Beddington Park POC this last year to local fanfare with the Mayor of Sutton.

Orienteering has been allowed to restart after restrictions to control the covid-19 pandemic were first eased in spring 2021 and then removed in summer 2021. We are currently allowed to go ahead with events, but this hasn't meant that a boon of orienteering events suddenly exploded on the scene due to the need to still get permissions from landowners, and the lead time in arranging this. This is becoming easier though, and events are being held; the recent return for example of mass activities such as parkrun hopefully bodes well.

In the **South East League**, Mole Valley was promoted up to division 1 at the close of the previous (2019/20) season, which was truncated due to the start of the pandemic. The 2020/21 season didn't in essence occur, with the first South East League events for the elongated 2021/22 season following the restart of orienteering beginning in May and June 2021. After the three events held so far, MV are trailing in division 1, but did not come last at the latest event. The season restarts in November

Recently, we have concluded the Mole Valley 2021 **Summer Series** coordinated by David Fisher – thank you once again David – seeing events in Nonsuch Park, Beddington Park, the Nower and Norbury Park, though we haven't yet been able to host these from a pub, but we have been able to see the greater social mixing following events outdoors with a post-run food/drink in the parks. We look forward to the social aspects of orienteering events returning in full.

The **Greater London Orienteering Summer Series (GLOSS)** returned with five events running in June to July this summer, with Mole Valley putting on the third event at Reigate Priory Park. MV came fourth in the series this year, well done to the competitors who contributed, and thank you to all those involved in putting on and helping at the Reigate event.

The **London Park Race Series** was still held this year, but this series was planned from the start as a 'virtual' series, using the MapRun app and providing competitors with fortnight windows to post their run. MV's contribution was a course in Morden Hall Park – thank you Tony Burton.

And as an example of managing to hold a race that had been postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic, we recently contributed a level B event to the **South East Urban Orienteering League (SEUOL)** with our event in Leatherhead at the end of August. Thanks to Mike Elliot and Gordon Parker in assisting me with that event.

As we move into the autumn now, we are very much hoping that the upcoming orienteering season will be able to continue as normal, as there are several big events that were postponed due to the pandemic that are in the pipeline, such as the Southern Champs in Dec; our South East League event in Feb 2022, and then in March 2022 the British Champs/Relays postponed from 2020. Fingers crossed that we have learned enough as a society (and Government) to know what action to take in time for if the virus returns: especially that individual outdoor socially distanced sport is hopefully not considered to be an activity to restrict. I'm confident given the commitment of the club's committee members and volunteers that we can continue successfully into the new season.