

## Leatherhead Urban SEOUL 29<sup>th</sup> August 2021 - planner's comments

Today's event was held in the grounds of Leatherhead Leisure Centre. This was our second choice venue – to give some variation to the last event held in 2016 – but unfortunately permissions were not forthcoming for first choice. Slight complications came from needing to avoid overlap with the junior parkrun which uses the same field as we were based in (this led to slightly later than normal start times) and a late booking of the football field but which only affected optimum route choice for one leg of course 6. The fine weather on the day (dry, warm and sunny, but not hot) was ideal and made for a relaxed event.

The most challenging courses to plan were the courses for under 16s – courses 6 and 7. Course 7 stayed south of the River Mole and ended up slightly shorter than I would have liked. Course 6 was harder to fit in, and we did manage to get a route across the river without crossing any roads, yet it was still shorter than the recommended length. One limiting factor here was the extremely narrow pavements of Dorking Road to the east of the Mole which prevented a decent route option for course 6.

For adult courses, urban areas never get beyond Technical Difficulty 3 (= orange), so hence the interest comes from trying to find the most appealing (complex?) parts of the map to run on. With this in mind, the areas I tried to focus courses on were the town centre – with its alleyways and split-level shopping centre – and a complex estate to the northeast of the map around Levett Road. Of course, this meant the need to try to find legs with more interesting route choices between these areas. My mantra was to try to keep this to an urban event not a sprint, and to provide a variety of terrain where possible -e.g. utilising a couple of small patches of woodland, the parks, as well as the road/footpaths.

Having heard from a few discussions with competitors, the split level arrangement of the shopping centre again provided a few headaches to try to reach control 203 which was sited on the upper level. We had planned courses to avoid using the through route of the shopping centre, but as it was, covid restrictions had been lifted by the time of the event in any case. Getting to control 203 would have been eased had all courses used 1:4000 scale to be able to spot all the possible routes – I suspect this will be used going forwards.

On the balance of comments received, and that all competitors were accounted for (and no controls were vandalised), I judged the day to be a success. After all the effort to plan courses and put on the event, it is particularly pleasing to receive 'thank-yous' from competitors who appreciated their courses.

And finally to acknowledge the permissions granted by Mole Valley District Council, the Leatherhead Leisure Centre and Halcyon (the grounds of Thorncroft manor just to the east of the Leisure Centre). Thanks to Gordon Parker (SLOW) for controlling the event (and for loaning us the cables and grippels), to Mike Elliot as organiser (and mapper), and for the helpers from MV who pitched in to help on the day.