



CLOK Club Development Officer (CDO) Project

Progress Report – September 2023 (year 2 of 3)

Progress versus Targets

The original (over ambitious) targets were:

1. Ensure that there is a high-quality orienteering opportunity within 1½ - 2 hours' drive of Middlesbrough / Stockton / Guisborough / Darlington every week during May – July and September.
2. Once there is sufficient interest, arrange technical coaching sessions for new and improving orienteers at least once per month.
3. After the first three months, encourage a new young family or couple to join on average at a rate of one per month. (Equivalent to a rate of 2 young adults / month).
4. A stretch target would be to that after two years there would be as many CLOK members in the 20 – 40 age range as in the 50 – 70 age range. This would effectively involve doubling the club's membership, with the great majority of the new members being in their 20s and 30s.

We will be updating these targets in the next few months, as was signalled to the Orienteering Foundation when the contract was lengthened to three years.

Comments

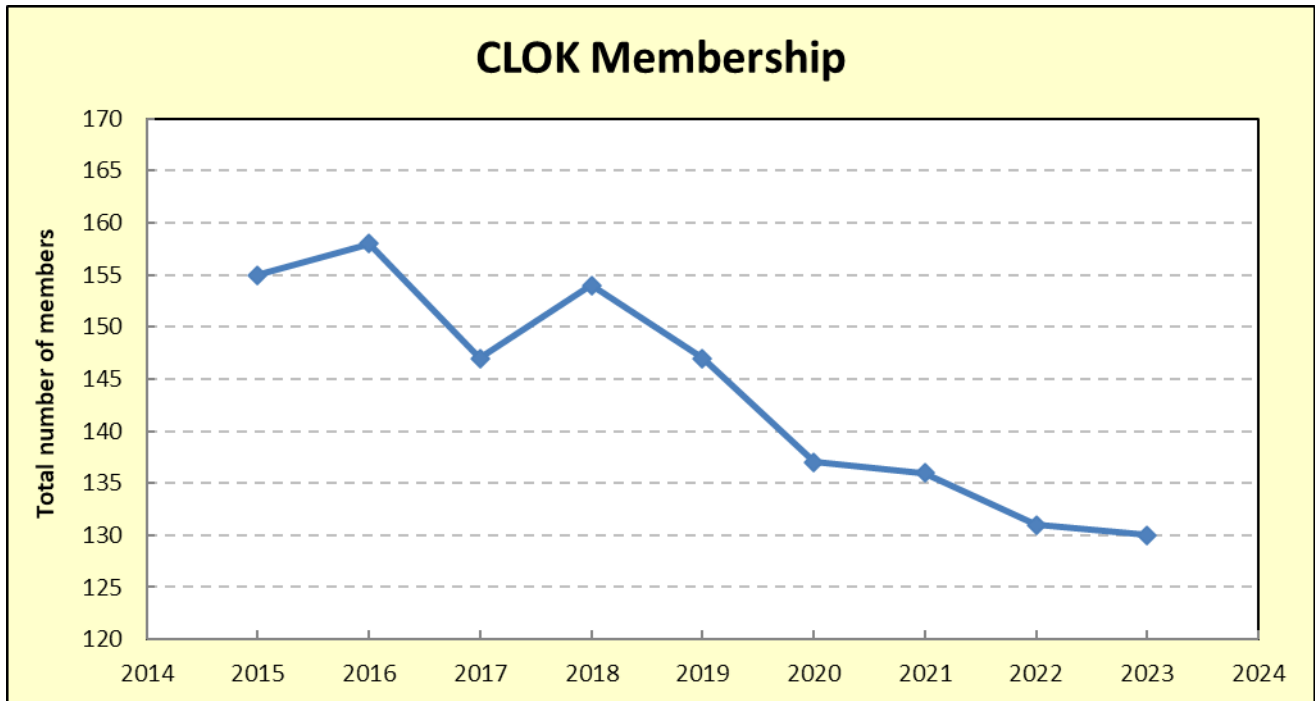
The Couch2Green (C2G) courses have been popular and successful, and a number of new members have joined CLOK as a result of the four courses and the associated advertising, though not all are in the target age range. On average, each course has had about ten participants, with about three or four attendees joining CLOK and becoming active orienteers. Two members have subsequently joined the CLOK Committee and volunteered to become Planners / Organisers for orienteering events. Couch 2 Green has also provided a way to enhance CLOK's presence in the community and put orienteering on the radar of local people.

Learning points already implemented from the C2G courses include (i) adjusting the timing to avoid winter hail, snow and gales and (ii) providing separate streams for walkers (Couch2Green) and runners (Track2Green). We also now give future entry credits for joining, rather than discounting membership fees. This encourages course participants to continue to come along to events after the course concludes. The Autumn 2023 C2G course was planned to have a much greater input from volunteers, to ensure continuity if and when there are changes in the CDO contract holder. However, we didn't get enough participants to run the programme and instead those volunteer efforts will be carried over to Spring 2024. The Autumn programme has always been the quieter of the two and holds lower retention, so the club will consider focussing more effort into the Spring programme and focussing CDO efforts towards retention during the Autumn period.

We are still seeing a number of people leaving the club. We know that some of them are retiring from orienteering due to declining abilities with age and others are moving out of our area. So far, we have only just managed to arrest the downward membership trend. We are also aware that a significant number of CLOK members are no longer active participants in orienteering (although we do have the current W90 World Masters Orienteering Champion in the club).

In the graph on the next page, the blue line shows the CLOK membership in October each year (September for this year). We arranged about 12 events in each of 2020 and 2021 (the Covid years), and we are back to arranging about 22 events at National, Regional, and local levels, plus some coaching and training activities. Overall activity levels are much improved.

The first two years of the CDO's work have generated a significant uplift in the activity levels in the club, but it is not yet clear what effect this increased activity will have on long-term membership numbers



We believed that a three-year minimum initial CDO programme is a more appropriate timescale for the project. This was agreed at the October 2022 AGM and supported by the Orienteering Foundation. At this 2023 AGM we need to consider if CLOK should fully support this type of role for at least a further year beyond that time period.

We believed that putting on some family-based sociable activities on Saturday mornings might help to increase membership numbers, and we planned to progress this further through British Orienteering's **Find Your Way** project (funded by Sport England). To date, though, we have struggled with availability of anyone from British Orienteering to advertise and support Find Your Way events and with availability of CLOK volunteers to deliver the events.

We were and are hoping that the Schools Development Officer's work would have contributed to some families taking up the sport. Unfortunately, the Schools Development Officer (SDO) withdrew from the Contract for Service at the start of 2022 and it has taken some time to find someone else for that contract. Historically, we had not seen any significant recruitment of new members from the long-running Schools Development Project, but we thought we might be able to change that with the CDO and SDO working in a co-ordinated fashion. We have just appointed a new SDO and we look forward to him having an effect on the medium to long term membership numbers.

Financial Summary for July 2021 – September 2023

Income from the Orienteering Foundation (to end July 2023):	£6,000.00
Outgoings paid on CDO Contract (including September 2023):	£12,737.00

Comments

1. CLOK has paid 25 invoices from the service provider, averaging about £509 per month. This includes approximately £7,238 for mapping and POC / VOC design work that was funded from separate community-based grants.
2. The first two months of July and August 2021 were at 50% activity level.

3. Recently the CDO contract has been on 'tick-over' levels while the CDO completes her Environmental Master's degree dissertation (which is due to be submitted this month).
4. A 10% contract rate rise was awarded in August (supported by CLOK) in order to ensure that the contract remains competitive in the market place.

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