



Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday 22 January 2026 at 2000hrs

1	<p>Present & Apologies Ben Bardsley, Hedley Calderbank, Tom Cochrane, Neil Gostick, Kevin Parkes, Mike Bennett, Brad Smith, David Dixon, Emese Svab Apologies from: Dave Tookey, Jenny Soulsby, Alex Soulsby</p>	
2	<p>Matters arising and updates from previous meetings (not picked up under main agenda items)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minutes of the 16 December committee meeting were approved. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tables purchased and in use. Tunnel tent identified and approved for purchase at around 750 euros. TC will progress. 	TC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed actions for increasing Junior participation (see October minutes for details): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jennie volunteered as a single point of contact for schools to avoid duplication of effort and ensuring a clear and consistent HH offer. - COMPLETE ○ Scouts might be an easier target than Schools. Jennie is speaking to Scouts to offer up coaches to give training sessions during daylight evenings. BS suggested Girl Guides too as a target. JS is still to link with BS. ○ Contact page on HH website 	JS/BS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed actions for increasing Senior (especially age 16 to 40) participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mentors for newcomers (entries admin, event procedures, techniques, encouragement). Publicity should include an invitation to contact captain@herts-orienteeing.club who can either mentor directly or allocate to a suitable (local?) club member. HC will send new members template email to TC to edit. [TC/HC] ○ Newcomer initiation courses (one or two a year) to introduce potential new members aged 16 or older. Noted some differences in best approaches for children and over 16s. These could be run in lieu of an occasional training session or in parallel. [HC/AS] ○ 'Season Card' handed out at events etc. listing Saturday Series events and training sessions (and summer Street-O?). Possibly include brief description of orienteeing. [BS] ○ Publicising future events on maps and results discussed. BS to run trial for March SS event. TC to compose suitable text. Proactive contact with attendees entering as 'IND' subject to data protection rules suggested [BS/TC]. ○ Offer informal 'taster' experiences at Saturday events (e.g. a White course, return for feedback, then option of some Orange legs). No entry charge. Just turn up. No map reservation. Agreed subject to [HC/NG/MB] discussion on the details. ○ Seek customer feedback from new members and newcomers to events to inform future ways of increasing participation and membership. See draft survey at Survey Preview Window for comments to Brad. [All] ○ Condensed version of how to enter on the day. KP has discussed with Alice & Jenny. KP clarified that this is just a laminated version of what already appears on the website for issue by Registration team to 'on the day entrants'. [HC/JS] ○ Draw members (especially younger ones) closer into the club by providing organising and planning opportunities. Follow a 'pathway'? This would include Street-O. [MB/DD] 	TC/AS/ HC/BS/ NG/BB/ JS/MB/ DD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for website updating. DT has updated Club Champions, BB to advise 2024 Trophy winners to DT (2025 yet to be decided). National 	JS/BB/ DT



Hertfordshire Orienteering Club

informally known as Happy Herts

	champions list fell into disuse some years ago and was removed, JS will populate juniors page.	
3	E-business – pending or completed	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC has migrated documents from Dropbox to One Drive. BB has set up permissions structure. HC will issue guidance on use for committee members. 	HC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS/AS are in ongoing discussions with Skyswood Primary School, looking at doing something in the summer term. 	AS/JS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea of a club day or similar which would include exposing event helpers to organisational and planning issues. AS will set out some options under e-business. 	AS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planners and/or Controllers Course in 2026. Three members have expressed an interest in a Planners course. HC is willing to deliver, probably with Simon Errington. NG/MB to think of a way forward to introduce new people to 'controlling' Saturday events. 	HC/AS/ NG/MB
4	Specific Focus	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity. Brad delivered a SWOT analysis summarising the position. See presentation below the minutes. Brad's publicity priorities are these, but he is open to other suggestions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Artwork for upcoming events as discussed last time ○ Text on back of map for March (working with Tom) ○ Organising FB rota schedule with David Dixon ○ Agreeing survey text (noting comments from all) and getting that live for March's event too ○ Re-targeting Andrew Lewin for Street-O (in lieu of another Wel Hat forest event in the meantime) ○ Promo plan for promoting forest/Street O events near parkrun locations ○ Seeking help where possible ○ Other actions as minuted (e.g. discuss guides + scouts with Jennie) • Possible younger members' help with Instagram content was suggested. • Subjects for 2026. Agreed – see schedule below. 	BS/All
5	Treasurer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to discuss 	
6	Captain	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted that two junior club members had been invited to represent England at 2026 Interland. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSC Heat, Brandon. Entries being received via Mapres. TC will send a reminder and feature in Newsletter. 	TC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entries being received for BRC and JK Relays which should enable several teams. 	TC
7	Chair	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New members transferring from other clubs have not triggered a welcome email. HC will try to resolve the problem. 	HC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026 Development Conference. Several sessions relevant to current committee concerns are programmed. Committee members were encouraged to join any one hour evening sessions relevant to their interests. See Development Conferences 	All



Hertfordshire Orienteering Club

informally known as Happy Herts

8	Events	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to scrap one failed laptop. There is no immediate need for a replacement, but the committee would support a purchase when necessary. 	KP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BNC & AoH 7/8 Feb 2026. MB is trying to recruit more volunteers. Entry numbers are heading towards forecasts. Finances are expected to be near to break-even. 	MB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JK 2027. All locations have been changed. MB is now organizing the Middle races on the Saturday at Ambersham. Agreed that HH would offer to help on that day. 	MB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy on weather related event cancellation. NG & MB agreed to draft a policy. DEFERRED 	NG/MB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saturday Series. Agreed that a 'free run' option should be retained (via MB) at the request of a committee member where appropriate to encourage specific new individuals or groups. There should be no other concessions in view of the new 'free informal taster' plan. 	MB/NG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking fee for Lees Wood / Whippendell event agreed and its collection via SI Entries.. 	NG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement USB Master Station (Download box) for Yvette Baker Trophy loss. NG to check with HW if we were charged for the loss before deciding on how to replace (NLSIC or HH decision) 	NG
9	Rotas for 'Specific Focus', 'Meet the Committee' & 'Demystifying...'	All
10	AOB & Dates of future meetings:	
	Next dates are 5 March, 16 April, 28 May	All

SWOT Analysis Brad Smith

Strengths

1. Google Analytics installed – website traffic – 66,000 views since March
2. Popularity around events – note bigger peak for St Albans weekend
3. Good promotion of the Verulum/Hertford weekend – mainly done by WAOC and their designer, and lots of good prep by Adam
4. Strong artwork for Stevenage courtesy of Matthew Dixon
5. 13,800 views of the Facebook profile

Weaknesses

1. My artworking skills.
2. My time!
3. Andrew Lewin hasn't responded to my request yet
4. Wanted to do but haven't managed – Facebook ad trial

Threats

Competition – parkrun, for example, is free – reducing barriers to entry – free tasters at Saturday series will be a good idea.

Opportunities

1. 'Couch to 5 controls' – discussed last time, but look to get new members on to training, then Saturday series, then on to new events – on the pathway
2. Promote the mentoring scheme – as discussed
3. Talk up map reading skills
4. Scouts – link up with Jennie, develop interest from Scouts/Guides over time



Hertfordshire Orienteering Club

informally known as Happy Herts

5. Parkrun events – low hanging fruit. Check for parkruns near our Saturday series events
6. Street O – gateway drug – target running clubs when we have an event near them (could be an additional prompt for the planner – are you aware of any sports clubs that run events nearby e.g. circuits classes at King George V, WGC)
7. Videos in addition to photos – make a dynamic intro video to show what a welcoming bunch we are?
8. Re-use other materials (such as the card Mike shared last time, plus BOF events).
9. If we do print leaflets/materials – suggest we push the ‘season card’ (with list of upcoming events’ rather than individual events

Schedule for ‘Specific Focus’ slot

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Committee member(s)</u>
Previous meetings in grey		
22 January	Publicity	Brad Smith
5 March	Low -key events (incl. Street-O & similar to Find Your Way)	David Dixon
16 April	Planner/Organiser/Helper Training	Alex Soulsby
28 May	Increasing senior participation	Hedley Calderbank
9 July	POC etc.	Emese Svab
20 August	Volunteers	Mike Bennett
1 October	Juniors	Jennie Soulsby
12 November	Area development & Mapping	Simon Errington / Neil Gostick

Rota for HH Newsletter Articles

<u>Newsletter month</u>	<u>Approx. deadline</u>	<u>Meet the Committee'</u>	<u>Demystifying O Events'</u>
Sep-25	24-Aug	Hedley Calderbank	
Oct-25	24-Sep	Ben Bardsley	
Nov-25	24-Oct	David Dixon	OMM - Ben Bardsley
Dec-25	24-Nov	Tom Cochrane	
Jan-26	24-Dec	Hugh Wiltshire	
Feb-26	24-Jan		Compass Sport Cup – Tom Cochrane
		David Hodson	BOC (incl. relays) - Ben Bardsley
Mar-26	24-Feb	Neil Gostick	SEOUL/Urban leagues - David Dixon
Apr-26	24-Mar	Emese Svab	Jukola - Tom Cochrane
May-26	24-Apr	Kevin Parkes	Peter Palmer relays - Emese Svab
Jun-26	24-May	Brad Smith	
Jul-26	24-Jun	Jennie Soulsby	
Aug-26	24-Jul	Simon Errington	
Sep-26	24-Aug	Mike Bennett	
Oct-26	24-Sep	(vacant)	
Nov-26	24-Oct	Jacob Sharpe	
Dec-26	24-Nov	Alex Soulsby	Yvette Baker Trophy - Soulsbys
Jan-27	24-Dec		JK (incl. relays) - Simon Errington