

## A Strawman Paper By Andrew Campbell

### Options to Arrest the Decline in Moravian Membership Numbers

#### Introduction

1. Orienteering as a sport relies on an active membership to ensure that it is able to function and operate. The sport is perhaps described as 'volunteer intensive' given the differing roles and functions (mappers, organisers, planners and controllers, for example). In recent years, the sport has also become more technologically advanced and now also requires expertise in IT and bespoke software. Clubs also have a Committee structure in place to ensure safe and effective management and offer other key functions such as coaching and training.

2. Moravian Orienteering Club has been fortunate to have had an active membership over many years. Retention of existing members, and attraction of new members, has been key to its success, but since 2016 the number of members not renewing their memberships has been greater than the number of new members joining the Club year-on-year. As a result, the Club's total membership has halved over the last five years and the early signs for 2021 shows that this declining membership trend is likely to continue this year. The table below shows the data.

Year	Total Members	New Members	Lapsed Members (Members not Renewing the following Year)
2015	262		
2016	267	72	83
2017	213	29	46
2018	192	25	33
2019	169	10	37
2020	143	~10	~36
2021	118	18	43

3. In addition, the Club's skills and knowledge base has tended to rest with its more experienced and senior members which poses a risk to the Club's long-term sustainability. A sufficient regular intake of new members is required each year in order that some may retain membership and develop the required skills to sustain the Club into the future.

#### Aim

4. This strawman paper aims to outline options that the Moravian Committee could take to arrest (hopefully) the decline in its Membership base.

#### Options

5. Do Nothing. This option would see the Moravian Committee take no specific additional action at this time. The Moravian Committee may consider that the current membership levels are sufficient to ensure sustainability over the longer term (say 5 years) and that continuing to offer good quality orienteering events in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere would succeed in attracting a few new members each year and minimise the risk of its current membership not renewing their memberships. The Club Committee may wish to consider setting a review date (early 2022, for example) to assess whether this

course of action should continue or whether a more proactive intervention strategy should be considered from that point.

**Decision.** It was agreed that some actions could be taken at this time, as detailed below.

6. Conduct Survey of Lapsed and Current Members. This option would see the Moravian Committee design and send out a short survey to lapsed members to understand the main reason(s) why their memberships were not renewed and to current members to understand the main reason(s) for them either renewing their membership or not at the end of the membership year. The Moravian Committee would need to review the outcome of survey returns and assess what action(s) to implement as a result.

**Action Andrew.** To produce a draft set of survey questions (for members and lapsed members) for consideration by the Committee to be used later in the year for current members and in early 2022 for lapsed members.

**Action Andrew.** To check the basis of using email addresses of lapsed members for a future survey.

7. Increase Event and Activity Publicity. This option would see the Moravian Committee take action to increase publicity for future events and activities. The Committee may consider seeking a volunteer to act as a dedicated Communication and Publicity Rep and for that Rep to be an integral part of the Moravian Committee. The Moravian Committee would need to produce terms of reference for the role, which may include coordinating communication and publicity of future events and activities with the existing Facebook rep and targeting other areas such as the local press, schools, and establishments (such as RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks).

**Action All.** To email Andrew with names of any member who could take on the role of Communication and Publicity rep on the Committee.

**Action Alan.** To produce a Club publicity leaflet and to speak to David Ritchie about its printing.

**Action Nikki.** To liaise with future Planners to ensure event orienteering maps contained details of Moravian's next event and the Club website email address.

8. Organise/Support 'Come and Try' Orienteering Events and Activities. This option would see the Moravian Committee act to either organise and/or support 'come and try' orienteering events and activities as a means of attracting new members, either alone and/or in conjunction with Active Schools and other organisations (Windswept Brewing, National Trust, Outfit Moray, for example). This option would aim to build upon the existing engagements with such organisations. There may be a requirement to publicise the events and activities in advance. The Committee will also need to consider how best to manage and respond to organisations requesting the support of Moravian Orienteers to 'non-Moravian' events and activities.

**Action Nikki.** To identify (with Elizabeth) suitable dates for "Come and Try It" events and include those fixtures in the Club's future event list.

**Action Andrew.** To identify contacts at RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks where event details could be sent to publicise future events.

**Action Morag.** To produce an up-to-date contact list of Active School Coordinators in Moray.

**Action All.** To send Morag contact details of names of individuals or groups who could be contacted to help publicise events (Findhorn Development Trust, for example). Morag to compile the list.

9. Employ a Part-Time Club Development Officer. This option would see the Moravian Committee take action to employ a part-time Club Development Officer to work alongside the Active Schools network to re-invigorate and re-introduce orienteering to primary and secondary school children across Moray. The Committee would need to secure funding to establish the role which may come from one or more of the following funding sources: Club finances; grants (Berry burn; Baxter Foundation, for example); and 'Go Fund Me' support.

The Club Development Officer could also become the Communication and Publicity Rep (detailed at Para 7) and carry out the functions detailed in the 'Increase Event and Activity Publicity' option. Employment of a full-time Club Development Officer is unaffordable and has been discounted.

Decision. It was agreed to re-visit this option in early 2022, considering the success or otherwise of the other actions detailed above. In the meantime, Andrew would scope out the option further for consideration by the Committee, to include: CDO roles and responsibilities; cost; and measures of the success.

### Conclusion

10. Moravian Orienteers has seen a year-on-year decline in its membership base since 2016, with more members not renewing their memberships than joining anew. As a result, this paper sets out the options that the Moravian Committee could take to arrest (hopefully) the declining membership trend.

Andrew Campbell  
MOR Chair