

## Organiser's Comments – League 2 Bixslade – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Yesterday evening Ros and I breathed a sigh of relief that, despite the Forestry Commission banning our original plan for track parking, our Bixslade event went off smoothly. I would like to thank the large number of volunteers, additional to our usual League event requirement, who were needed to control the parking so everybody could fit in, and marshal the road crossing for an extended period from first arrivals to late departures. Sorry that we didn't come up to thank you all personally but between control hanging and running the start we only had time for a quick sandwich before it was time for control collecting! Last job of the day was to check the CU Lighting yard and I'm pleased to say there was no evidence that we had been there, so we repaid their confidence that we would not cause them any problems.

I'd also like to thank the other band of helpers manning registration, download, café, the string course and helping with control collecting. As usual Pat was helping on all fronts, so a particular thankyou to him. He certainly deserves his recent nomination for the SILVA award for *"persons who have made a very significant contribution to orienteering over a period of years, with an emphasis on 'field' activities rather than committee work"*. He didn't win when last nominated in 2008 – perhaps this time?

And thanks to all of you who came and competed. The courses were, in the main, as originally planned before loss of the parking, although the start, and particularly the finish, were moved northwards to reduce the distance from parking. To keep course lengths reasonable on the Green and Short Green it was necessary to omit some controls in the most pleasant runnable area in the southern part of the map – sorry! Unfortunately the technical courses ended with several Orange-standard controls, but the priority for this Local event was to offer the best overall experience for families. For a ranking event we would not allow the parking to compromise the standard of courses. I was pleased to see such a good turnout on Yellow – 18 runners – and they did well, as the course was planned with quite a few legs with decision points, rather than being White standard as such courses sometimes are. The only learning point is that both when the map is handed out at registration, and at the start, explanations for beginners need to be clearer, as a couple of runners managed to combine both string course and yellow course controls in their result.

The newly-introduced Short Green course seems to have been a success, as it was the only course which ran out of maps, also with 18 runners.

I'd be interested to see more people's routes on Routegadget. Interesting to see that three of the four Green routes marked so far approached Control 2 from the top of the crags – I had imagined most dropping down from Control 1 then contouring along the old quarry access route in the white woodland below the crags, rather than going through the undergrowth above and then trying to descend the crags! Pleased to see that the long leg on Blue generated at least three different route choices.

It was a shame to see only 5 runners take on the Brown course and not a single M21! Perhaps if word gets around that the League will include Brown at all events this year we will attract more people?

Finally, standing at the finish I wondered why, despite both the map and control descriptions showing a taped route to the finish along a small but dry and very runnable path, about half the runners chose to follow the muddy track alongside? We'll let you off this time, but try not to depart from the taped run-in at the JK, or you will be disqualified!