Guidelines for Planning Border Liners Events

November 2026

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1. Introduction

This document covers the planning of both Local events and Regional events (also referred to as Cumbrian Galoppen events).

Local events are normally held on a Saturday morning and attract around 100 competitors

Regional events are normally on a Sunday and have 150 to 200 competitors.

Both event types cater for a full range of participants from beginners to experienced orienteers. Beginners can include families with young children, juniors running on their own or in pairs and adults.

Within the document there are sections that only apply to either Local events or Regional events. These are labelled accordingly.

Below is a summary of the tasks involved in planning, plus an average time frame. (Note: please don't feel you need to stick rigidly to this timetable – every event and every planner is different).

- Armchair plan courses (Draft courses ready 2 months before event)
- Check control sites (6 weeks before)
- Agree courses and sites with the Controller (1 month before)
- Prepare maps for printing (2 weeks before)
- Get equipment (1 week before)
- Put out controls (Day before and/or on the day)
- Wake up controls (On day, *Regional events only*)
- Collect Controls (On day)
- Return equipment (Within a week of the event)

Note: To make it easier to keep this document up to date, all contact details and other information that may change regularly are in the appendix at the end. The document will, for example, refer to the Fixtures Secretary and the appendix will give the name for the current Fixtures Secretary.

2. Preliminaries

Permission

By the time you get involved permission and car park will have been sorted out. If you have any questions, contact the Fixtures Secretary. Make sure you know what area the permission covers – it's not always the entire mapped area. Unless told otherwise, you should assume that you can visit the area whenever you want.

Map

Contact the Mapping Officer to get the up-to-date version of the map. This will be supplied as one or more OCAD files. If, when planning, you find that map updates are needed, then the Mapping Officer will be able to help with this.

Purple Pen Software

Planning is normally done using Purple Pen software which is available as a free download (see appendix). It includes a help menu. If you are using it for the first time the "Quick Walkthrough" option is a good place to start. There is also some information about using Purple Pen on the Resources/References page of the BL website. If you have any questions or problems, ask your Controller or the club mapping officer.

Controller

(Note that not all Local events will have a controller assigned – it depends on the experience of the planner.)

Make sure you know who the Controller is and that you have their contact details. The fixtures personnel manager can tell you this. For a Local event the Controller will be a BL member. For a Regional Event the Controller might be a BL member or could be from a different club. At an early stage, particularly for a Regional Event, you should agree a timetable with the Controller – e.g. when will draft courses be available, when will control sites be taped, when will courses be finalised

Organiser

Also make sure you know who the event Organiser is and that you have their contact details. The organiser will be a BL member. You will need to liaise with them about the preliminary and final details for the website, as well as start/finish locations etc.

Event Safety

British Orienteering requires all planners to complete an Event Safety Workshop/Course. If you have not already done this, an online course is available (see appendix for details)

You should also look at the British Orienteering Safety Resources page (see appendix) and read the information for planners

3. Armchair Planning

Start and Finish

Before beginning the planning, you need to decide where the start and finish are going to be. Ideally (particularly for Local events) these will be close to the car park and download but this is not always possible. Try to keep them at least 100m apart as it is less confusing for novices. Make sure the organiser is happy with the locations – there may logistical reasons why they are unsuitable

Courses

You need to know what courses the event requires:

- **Local events**: This is largely up to you. At a minimum there should be four courses ***Green***, ***Short Green/Very Short Green*** (see important information about this course below), ***Orange*** and ***Yellow*** (which is sometimes called Novice). If you want to plan additional courses, *Blue* is the next one to add (if the terrain is suitable) as it will attract extra competitors. *Light Green* is another option. You may also want to consider a *Red* (technically fairly easy, but long enough to attract runners) or even a *Brown*
- **Regional events**: A full range of colour coded courses is required i.e***. Yellow, Orange, Light Green, Short Green/Very Short Green*** (see important information about this course below), ***Green, Blue and Brown***, 7 in total. You should also consider a *Red* (technically fairly easy, but long enough to attract runners) - the Fixtures Secretary can give advice about this

In the appendix are links to planning guidance for courses of the different technical standards. It's particularly important that the *Yellow* and *Orange* courses are appropriately planned as juniors and novices can easily be discouraged. There is no specific guidance for *Red*, but read the information about *Orange* for the correct technical standard

Short Green/*Very Short Green* Planning (for both Local and Regional events)

When planning the *Short Green* course, you need to think about the physical difficulty as well as the technical difficulty. Typically, there are quite a lot of older competitors on this course who find deep tussocks, heavy undergrowth, very steep ascents or descents etc. disproportionately hard. But realistically, in some BL areas it's hard to reduce the physical difficulty without making the course too technically easy – you have to compromise.

If at all possible, you should design the course with a shortcut to make it a *Very Short Green* course (e.g. on a course with 10 controls you might suggest people go straight from control 5 to control 8 if they want the shorter course). Competitors don't need to decide in advance whether to take the shortcut and anyone who does will appear in the results under "Very Short Green". In the appendix is a link to some examples of *Short Green* courses with a *Very Short Green* cut-off

Course Lengths

British Orienteering give guidelines about how long courses of each colour should be. The idea is that a competitor should take approximately the same time on the same colour course at any event they go to (assuming they have a similarly good/bad run)

The guidelines say that the *Green* course should be of a length that would take a top, male, elite runner 26 minutes. Other course lengths are then calculated as percentages of this (e.g. *Brown* is 140% of *Green*, *Short Green* is 85% of *Green*). At a fast area like Askham Common a top elite runner would probably go at about 5 minutes per km, whereas on a rougher area with more climb such as Binsey they manage do 7 m/km

The table below shows the lengths for all courses relative to a *Green* course, plus how these numbers translate into actual course distances – a range is given for distances as it depends a lot on how rough the terrain is and how much climb the course has.

Brown	210%	7.4 km to 10.5 km
Blue	140%	5.0 km to 7.0 km
Green	100%	3.5 km to 5.0 km
Short Green	85%	2.9 km to 4.2 km
Very Short Green	70%	2.0 km to 3.5 km
Light Green	75%	2.6 km to 3.8 km
Red	130%	4.5 km to 6.5 km
Orange	65%	2.3 km to 3.2 km
Yellow	55%	1.9 km to 2.7 km

More Advice and Information

If you want more help with planning, particularly if it's your first time, talk to your Controller. Alternatively, the club has a lot of experienced planners who can act as mentors. The Fixtures Secretary or Fixtures Personnel Manager can help find someone if necessary. You might also find it useful to look at previous events on the area using Routegadget (see appendix).

Controller

Once you have draft courses, send them to the Controller to check.

Liaison with the Organiser

The organiser is responsible for producing the preliminary details for the event but you need to supply the following information

- What courses there will be and their approximate length/climb. Also, if different map scales will be used for different courses, what scale each course uses.
- Distances to start and back from the finish
- An honest description of the terrain so that older competitors in particular can decide whether it is suitable for them, and which course they might run. Try to make it course specific (e.g. "Longer courses go into areas with significant heather/tussocks but Short Green stays in terrain with easy underfoot conditions")

Other things to consider while armchair planning

- BL only have around 60 SI boxes, so if you need to use this many or more let the Electronic Equipment Officer know well before the event so that he can arrange for some to be borrowed from another club. Bl have 100 or so control stakes which should be enough for any Regional or Local event.
- Map scales – you may want to have different courses at different scales (for example, the longer course at 1:10,000 and the shorter ones at 1:7,500). Discuss this with the mapping officer. **Important**: if you do use different scales, you should still only have ONE Purple Pen file.
- On a small area, longer courses may need to cover some or all of the area more than once. In this case consider a double-sided map (e.g. controls 1 to 13 on one side and control 14 to 20 on the back). This makes it easier for competitors. Purple Pen includes an option to specify a course as double sided.

4. Checking Control Sites:

You need to visit all the control sites in advance to check that they are ok; sometimes they might not be quite what you expected from the map. You should generally mark them with a coloured tent peg (available from club equipment store) or similar. This allows the Controller to check them and also makes it easier when you putting out controls. However, there are occasions where a marker is not necessary or advisable – for example an obvious path junction in public area where the marker is likely to be stolen or annoy a landowner

For urban events, decide what you are going to attach the control and SI box to.

If possible, go round the *Yellow* course to make sure that the line features that you expect competitors to follow are as easy to see on the ground as the map suggests

5. Preparing the maps for printing:

Once the Controller had checked the course and control sites and everything is finalised, you need to prepare the maps for printing

Control Descriptions

You need to put control descriptions on the map (Purple Pen makes this easy). Descriptions should be text plus pictorial for Red, *Orange* and *Yellow* and just pictorial for the rest The course closing time should be shown at the bottom; this is normally 90 minutes after the last start time for a Local event and 2 hours for a Regional event.

The date of the event should be included on the top line of the description

Discuss with the organiser whether there should be an emergency phone number on the map. This is generally either the organiser's or planner's mobile. Obviously, there is no point unless there is a mobile signal at parking/enquiries/download.

Control Codes

By default, Purple Pen assigns control codes from 31 upwards. However, because of how the club's SI boxes are normally numbered you need to use codes 101 and above. Try to use consecutive numbers with no gaps (i.e., if, for example, you have 30 controls you use codes 101 to 130). There is a facility in Purple Pen to re-number controls if required. (Note that this does *not* mean that each individual course needs consecutive codes, and indeed it's better to avoid consecutive codes for *Yellow* and *Orange* courses in case beginners come to expect it.)

Other things to do

Look at all the control circles and lines between controls. Are any important map details obscured? If so, break the circle/line to expose them (using the "Add Gap" facility in Purple Pen). Also look at where the control numbers are and move them if they cover relevant map details.

Map Printing

This is done by the club's Map Printer and/or Mapping Officer. You should send the Purple Pen file and OCAD map file(s) to the Mapping Officer at least a week before the event to allow time for printing. For Regional events, loose descriptions for competitors to pick up at the start are needed, but the Map Printer will sort this out. Ideally, and especially for a Regional event, you and/or the Controller should get the maps (and control descriptions if required) in advance in case there have been any printing problems.

Liaison with Computer Adviser

Once the Purple Pen file is finalised send it, together with the map file(s) to the event's Computer Adviser (the Organiser will know who this is). These files are used to set up the Download system and Routegadget.

6. Final Details for the Event

The organiser is responsible for producing these but you need to supply the following information:

- Final course lengths and climb
- Map information: scale (which might be different for different courses), contour interval, anything non-standard about the map e.g. open is shown in white not the standard yellow, an X symbol represents a bench etc.
- Anything unusual about the courses e.g. there is a taped route on the *Yellow* course, or the *Blue* course has a double-sided map
- Any information about out of bounds areas and crossing points e.g. uncrossable fences are shown with purple lines and must only be crossed at marked crossing point.

7. Equipment

Electronic Equipment

The Electronic Equipment Officer will supply this. At least 10 days before the event you will need to tell him how many controls you are using and the range of control codes (see above in Planning section).

You will be supplied with SI boxes for all controls (plus spares). These will be enabled for contactless punching.

You need to liaise with the organiser to decide which of you will get the start, finish, check and clear boxes. This is what is needed:

- Start boxes (one per start and spare)
- Clear boxes (one per start and spare)
- Check boxes (one per start and spare). In addition to checking that SI cards have been cleared, this box also turns on the contactless mode for SIAC dibbers
- Finish box (and spare)

Non-Electronic Equipment

Contact the Equipment Officer(s) to arrange a suitable time to collect this.

The appendix contains an inventory of all the equipment available. (It's from Jan 2022, but has not changed much)

You will need some or all of the following:

- Control kites (including ones for the start and finish plus some spares)
- Control stakes (fibreglass poles with a holder on top for attaching SI box, and clips on the side for attaching kites). There are two different lengths - long stakes are generally better for the Novice course for greater visibility, short stakes are better for technically difficult courses
- For urban event, gripples (plus key) to attach kites and SI boxes securely to fences etc. Stakes are not generally needed for urban events.
- Extra fibreglass control stakes for Start, Finish, Clear and Check boxes (or if you are running short of fibreglass ones, there are aluminium ones you can use instead). Liaise with the organiser about who will be responsible for getting these
- Canes/short fibreglass posts/mini route markers plus red/white tape to mark the any taped routes on the courses, and the route from the last control to the finish if necessary

8. On the day (and the day before)

Putting out controls

Depending on the area, you might need to put out some of the controls the day before the event. (Unless you are happy with an extremely early start!) Controls at possible risk of vandalism should only be put out on the day. A useful rule of thumb when putting out controls is to allow 5 minutes per control (or more if they are particularly far apart). The Controller will normally want to check the controls (certainly at a Regional event) so discuss the timing with them. The peg you marked the control with should be left so that the Controller can see it. If you need help with putting out the controls, let the Fixtures Personnel Manager know.

Aim to have all the controls out (and checked) half an hour before the first start time. Helpers often like to start before this so that they can get back in time for helping later,

Useful tips:

- Use Purple Pen to set up and print a "course" that includes all the controls, in the order you will put them out. This can help with control collection too.
- Thread the SI boxes on to a string in the correct order so that the right box is always to hand - this can save quite a lot of time.
- Check the kites before you go out – do they hang properly and do they have sting to attach to the hook on the stake. There is nothing worse than having to repair a kite in the rain!

Contactless punching and waking up controls

SI boxes only work in contactless mode once they have been "woken up" by a dibber inserted in the hole.

- For **Regional events** you need to visit all controls on the morning of the event to wake them up; depending on the area this could take a long time, so get help if necessary (discuss this with the organiser).
- For **Local** events there is no need to wake up controls on the day; the only effect of not waking them up is that early starters with contactless cards will find they need to dib normally at some controls. If they tell you that the SI boxes aren't working in contactless mode you know not to be concerned

Start and Finish

It is the Planner's responsibility to put out kites, on stakes, at the start and the finish.

The start kite goes at the position of the start triangle on the map. This is generally not the same place as where the Start SI box is. Either it must be very visible to the start SI box, or a start official should explain where it is.

The finish kite goes at the position of the finish symbol on the map, and this is also where the Finish SI box is.

Discuss the layout of the start and finish with the organiser.

Collecting controls

The organiser will generally be able to assign people to help with this. Discuss it in advance. When you collect controls make sure that the peg you used to mark the control site is collected. Also make sure that any pegs at unused control sites are collected too. In theory controls should only be collected after course closing time, but in practise it is acceptable to collect controls only used at the start of courses earlier than this

9. After the event

Return all equipment to the stores, Electronic Equipment Officer etc. If it has been wet, you should ensure that all equipment is dry before you return it. In particular, wet kites should be air-dried e.g. on your washing line, and SI boxes should be unpacked to air indoors for up to 24 hours. At the stores make sure to put everything back where it came from to make it easier for the next organiser.

Claim travel and other expenses from the Treasurer (see appendix for current travel rate). It's important to do this - the principle is that you give your time freely, but you should not be out of

pocket. If you need to submit invoices or receipts to the Treasurer it should be done electronically (take a photo if necessary).

Appendix

(Please report any broken links to the fixtures secretary)

Course Planning Guidance

- The British Orienteering official course planning guide (which included details of what each level of technical difficult means) is here: British Orienteering Rules – look at Appendix B
- Planning guidance for *Very Short Green, Short Green*, *Green*, *Blue* and *Brown* courses: www.britishorienteering.org.uk/doc/resource-library/planning-courses/planning-green-courses
- Planning guidance for *Light Green* course: www.britishorienteering.org.uk/doc/resource-library/planning-courses/planning-light-green-courses
- Planning guidance for *Orange* course: www.britishorienteering.org.uk/doc/resource-library/planning-courses/planning-orange-courses
- Planning guidance for *Yellow* course:
- www.britishorienteering.org.uk/doc/resource-library/planning-courses/planning-yellow-courses
- Purple Pen planning software is available to download free at: www.purplepen.golde.org
- Border Liners Routegadget is found at www.bl.routegadget.co.uk/rg2/

Short Green courses with *Very Short Green* cut-off – there are examples here: https://borderlinersorienteering.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/short-and-very-short-green-examples.pdf

British Orienteering Online Safety Course

Available at: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/elearning

The course is called “The British Orienteering eLearning Event Safety Course”. It costs £10, but you can almost certainly reclaim this from the BL Treasurer. The course doesn’t have an expiry date; once you’ve done it, it lasts forever.

British Orienteering Safety Resources Page

Available at https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/safety_resources

Expenses

Mileage Rate for claiming expenses – 40p per mile for petrol/diesel cars and up to 20p per mile for electric cars (updated Sept 2026)

Club Contacts

(Where no email address is given, contact the club’s secretary, secretary@borderlinersorienteering.org, who can give you the address)

- Fixtures Secretary: Karen Parker (BLdanandkaren@gmail.com)
- Fixtures Personnel Manager: Carol Edwards
- Mapping Officer: Dan Parker (BLdanandkaren@gmail.com)

- Map Printer: Dan Parker (BLdanandkaren@gmail.com)
- Equipment Officers (non-electronic): Phil and Janice Nichols (Equipment is stored at their barn at Aikton, between Wigton and Carlisle. Contact via equipment@borderlinersorienteering.org)
- Electronic Equipment Officer: Jeff Powell Davies

BL Stores Inventory

(January 2022 with updates since)

Stores Held at Aikton (between Wigton and Carlisle)

CORREX SIGNS (with BL or "O" logo)

1m x 0.6m:

- *2 x Turn Right "O" sign*

0.9m x .0.45m:

- *1 x Start*
- *1 x Finish*
- *1 x Download*
- *1 x Enquires*
- *1 x Turn Right*
- *1 x Turn Left*

A4, on stake

- *6 x Turn Right Arrows*
- *6 x Turn Left Arrows*
- *6 x Straight-On Arrows*
- *2 x Helpers Parking*
- *2 x Follow Tapes to Start*
- *2 x Caterers*
- *2 x Follow Tapes to Download*
- *2 x Remember to Download*
- *2 x Motorhomes*
- *2 x Traders*
- *2 x No Entry*
- *2 x "4 x 4 vehicles"*

A4, not on stake

- *5 x Please Close Gate*
- *10 x Keep Off Wall – Unstable*
- *2 x Key Drop*

4 x Large "Caution Runners" signs (Sept 2023)

A variety of happy and sad face signs for use on White and Yellow courses to help keep youngster on the right track

Various sizes of blank/re-usable Correx for customising (some with logo, some without, some on stakes)

BANNERS (2m x 0.6m with posts and guy ropes)

- *1 x Start*
- *1 x Finish*
- *2 x "Orienteering"*

FEATHER FLAGS

2 x "Border Liners" - tall (5m or so)
1 x "Finish" – shorter (3m or so)
1 x "Start" – shorter (3m or so)

STAKES etc.

Yellow Fibreglass Stakes *for SI boxes/kites*

30 x 80cm high stakes
70 x 70cm high stakes (about 10 of these are normally kept Penrith not the main stores)

Short Yellow Fibreglass Stakes *– 40 or so. About 40cm high, suitable for marking routes to start, finish, download plus taped routes on courses. (Attach coloured tape to top before use)*

Mini route markers *– 60 or so. Sturdy wire, about 30cm high with small flag. Suitable for marking routes to start, finish, download plus taped routes on courses.*

Electric Fence Posts *– 60 or so. About 1m high, green plastic, suitable for attaching notices and creating e.g. finish funnel*

Aluminium Stakes *– 30 or so, mostly with SI box holder. Thes are what used to be used for kites/SI boxes before fibreglass ones were available. Heavy! Still suitable for Start, Finish, Clear, Check boxes. Some have labels saying "Start", "Finish" etc.*

Canes *- At least 150 of lengths between 0.5cm and 1m, some with strips of coloured tape attached. Suitable for marking routes to start, finish, download plus taped routes on courses.*

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KITES

- *About 150 normal kites, of various ages, weights and states of repair.*
- *20 mini kites (may be in Penrith)*

FIRST AID

- *Blue Rucksack containing Sleeping Bag, Warm Clothes, Survival Bag etc. and small first aid kit.*
- *Big orange first aid kit*
- *Large plastic boxes of equipment (dressings, bandages, plasters, disinfectant etc. Some of the contents are COVID related (PPE etc). This contains items for topping up first aid kits after use. No need to take it to events.*
- *4(?) x Hand Sanitiser dispensers*
- *Large amount (10 litres?) of spare sanitiser in big containers*

OTHER THINGS

- *Start Display Clocks – 2 digital, 1 analogue*
- *Rolls Red/White Hazard Tape*
- *Hi-Vis Jackets/Tabards (some should have "Ask Me for Help" on)*

- *Arrows and Pointing Hands for use by parking officials*
- *160 pin punches*
- *Box of tent pegs (suitable for marking control sites when planning)*
- *String/Rope/Cord*
- *4 x Mallets*
- *10 x clear plastic boxes with lids for holding maps at start –labelled with course colours (Brown to White)*
- *20 x collapsible map boxes mostly labelled with course colours. No longer in general use – use the clear plastic boxes above in preference.*
- *Around 5 small boards with bulldog clips for holding loose control descriptions in the start lanes*
- *50 (??) x gripples and keys for secure attachment of controls (urban events)*
- *Organisers Box (contains useful oddments - scissors, cable ties, marker pens, and much more)*
- *4 x Clipboards*
- *2 x Tables (1 small green plastic one and a large wooden one that is a bit unstable)*
- *BL Feather (a second one is held in Penrith)*
- *4 x Fisherman's Tents (small, easy to put up tents suitable for use by start/finish official in bad weather, or for leaving clothing in)*
- *Large Tents*
  - *Gazebo (3.5m x 3.5 m 2.5m high, detachable mesh sides)*
  - *Tent (3m x 3m, 22.5m high, fully openable sides).*
  - *2 x old heavy tents – not recommended!*