

Warmley Forest Park & Siston Common South Gloucestershire

Permanent Orienteering Course

Information for teachers and group leaders

An orienteering course involves participants navigating around a course of 'controls' using a map. Controls are usually visited in a given order, although participants can decide on and follow their own route. This pack includes the information necessary to ensure a safe and successful orienteering experience at Warmley Forest Park and Siston Common.

LOCATION

The Forest Park entrance is on London road, Warmley (A420), opposite the Midland Spinner pub (BS 30 5JB) and 300m from the A4174 Deanery road roundabout. The visitor centre where the trail starts, is set back 50m from the Forest Park entrance.

Parking: at the public car park in Station Close off the High Street, Warmley BS30 5JB (100m from the Forest Park entrance).

Bike/on foot: the Forest Park is adjacent to the Bristol/Bath railway path by the Warmley station café.

Bus: services 319, 43,634 and 635



THE CONTROLS

There are 28 controls on wooden marker posts permanently sited at Warmley Forest Park and Siston Common, marking 5 trails of differentiated challenge levels. The trails are of differing lengths, for both beginners and experienced orienteers and are marked by a number of fixed 'controls' (on wooden marker posts). The controls on each post comprise a stainless steel plaque with a letter and an engraved picture of an animal or plant that can be found in the Forest Park and Common as illustrated below. Each post also holds a number disc as detailed on the downloadable control descriptions sheet and on the 'all controls' map. If participants are given a copy of the control descriptions table for the trail they are following, this will help them to use the number on each post to check they are at the correct control.

The engraved control plaques measure 10cm by 10cm and are made from stainless steel. Rubbings can be taken from the plaques using a wax crayon or pencil.

Participants can record the letter and/or identify the picture to show they have visited the correct marker locations. In addition to mapping and navigation skills, the orienteering course can be used to support field studies, physical education and team building.

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WHAT SHOULD PARTICIPANTS BRING?

The orienteering courses cover a variety of terrain, so it is essential that participants are dressed appropriately. As a minimum participants will need:

- Sensible outdoor footwear with non-slip soles
- A waterproof coat
- Clothing appropriate to weather conditions – jumper, hat and gloves in the winter, sun hat and sun screen in summer
- A drink and snack
- A copy of the relevant orienteering trail map and control marker sheet.
- A pen or pencil (crayons if taking rubbings of the nature trail plaques)
- At least one watch per group.

A compass is not necessary for successful completion of the courses, but may be helpful on the longer ones.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

It is useful for participants to have a basic understanding of orienteering before they arrive at the forest park including:

- Map colours and symbols
- Map scale - the map scale is 1:7,500 (1cm=75m on the ground)
- How to set the map to features on the ground

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We strongly recommend that group leaders walk the course before bringing a group and complete your own risk assessment.

- Please contact the Technical Support Officer, Community Services, South Gloucestershire Council to book group visits. ☎ **01454 863817**
- Consider the health and safety issues relating to taking groups out of school and participating in orienteering activities. A generic risk assessment for the course can be downloaded from the website
www.southglos.gov.uk/orienteering
- Please note that the 2 easy trails and the medium trail are within the Forest Park and do not include any road.

- The 2 long loop trails extend to Siston Common and include minor roads to cross which can be busy, as well as the Avon ring road dual carriage way (A4174) – bridges and underpass crossing points indicated on the map.
- Consider where staff need to be positioned to supervise groups, especially in relation to exit points.
- Ensure that all your helpers understand their specific roles e.g. marshal exit points.
- Be aware of other users within the Forest Park. There may be cyclists, joggers, dog walkers, conservation workers and other visitors.
- There is a visitor centre (not staffed) available for hire at the site which has accessible toilets and an equipped kitchen. Bookings are available through the Technical Support Officer as above.

THINGS TO COVER ON ARRIVAL AT WARMLEY FOREST PARK

Cover the following, as appropriate, with participants before they start:

- Basic map colours, symbols, scale and map setting
- It can be useful to do a 'map walk' with participants to check understanding of and reinforce the above points
- Explain about control points. The map includes a 'control card' for students to record the letter codes for each control visited, alternatively there is a separate worksheet for recording the plant and animal pictures/names.
- Put participants into groups according to their age and needs. Participants in a group can take turns to navigate between each control.
- Issue at least one map per group.
- Brief participants about the course you expect them to follow. Start with an easy course and if successful participants can try a more difficult course or set your own.
- Give a time limit for the orienteering activity and a meeting point.
- Brief participants on what to do if they get lost. Highlight the perimeter boundaries of the area and any out of bounds areas and hazards.
- If you are using compasses give a safety bearing to bring them back to your starting point.
- Consider issuing whistles and appropriate instruction on how to use them in an emergency.



WHAT ARE THE LINES AND COLOURS ON THE MAP?

As with any other map, the symbols and colours on an orienteering map represent different features in the landscape. However, although these symbols are easy to recognise they are NOT necessarily the same as those found on a standard Ordnance Survey map. It is therefore valuable to go through the map with participants to ensure they can interpret the map before sending them out on the course.

The colours

There are five basic colours on orienteering maps:

Black Often represents 'man made' features such as buildings, walls, bins and fences. It is also used to represent rock features and boulders. Paths and tracks are also shown in black, but not roads, which are shown in brown.

Green Various shades of green represent different types of woodland. The shade of green indicates how easy or difficult it is to move through. For example, light green or white areas are suitable for running or walking through, whereas dark green areas indicate thick, dense bushes or scrub and are best avoided.

Yellow Indicates open areas. Bright yellow usually represents open areas such as playing fields or larger open spaces. Pale yellow is used to show thinly wooded areas or rough grassland that may be less accessible.

Brown Pale brown normally indicates a hard or artificial surface such as gravel, tarmac and playgrounds etc. It is also used for contours and other ground features such as pits or depressions.

Blue As with other maps, blue represents water such as rivers, ponds, brooks and lakes.

The lines - All orienteering maps have parallel lines drawn vertically on the map. The tops of these lines have an arrow indicating magnetic north. These lines will only be relevant if using a compass.

Hazards - The ring road has been marked as an out of bounds hazard as indicated by red hatched lines on the map. Bridges and underpasses over/under the ring road are indicated on the map.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about local orienteering events, training and developing orienteering trails contact Bristol Orienteering Klub through their website at www.bristolorienteering.org.uk/

FOOD CHAIN NATURE TRAIL

Warmley Forest Park has a number of different habitats within its boundary. The Orienteering and Nature Trail is an innovative and fun way to introduce participants to the concept of food chains and the opportunity to learn about the different animals and plants that live in each habitat.

There are food chains from four habitats to discover:

Grassland habitat

Woodland habitat (there are 2 woodland habitat food chains)

Hedgerow habitat

Orchard habitat

Use the orienteering map to find the location of the control markers and collect the rubbings associated with each habitat. The challenge is to put the plants and animals in the right order to create a food chain. Food chain collection sheets are available to download from www.southglos.gov.uk/orienteering Information can also be downloaded from this web page about the first South Gloucestershire permanent orienteering trail which is at Three Brooks local nature reserve, Bradley Stoke (adjacent to the leisure centre).

NATURE TRAIL FOOD CHAINS ANSWERS

Very easy trail - Hedgerow habitat (posts 37, 31, 33, 32)

Ash tree leaf → privet hawk moth caterpillar → blue tit → sparrow hawk

Easy - Woodland habitat 1 (posts 36, 35, 34)

Oak leaf → earthworm → badger

Medium Loop - Woodland habitat 2

(posts 36, 47, 44, 48, 45)

Oak leaf → woodlouse → millipede → vole → tawny owl

Long Loop 1 - Orchard habitat (posts 54, 56, 55)

crab apple blossom → codling moth → Pipistrelle bat

Long Loop 2 - Grassland habitat

(posts 41, 40, 50, 57, 39)

Grass → grasshopper → toad → grass snake → buzzard

Orienteering trail answers

Post number	Control letter	Picture	Habitat associated with picture
31	E	Privet Hawk Moth Caterpillar	Hedgerows
32	G	Sparrow hawk	Hedgerows
33	M	Blue tit	Hedgerows
34	B	Badger	Woodland
35	C	Earthworm	Woodland
36	R	Oak leaf	Woodland
37	N	Ash Leaf	Hedgerows
38	X	Hedgehog	Woodland
39	I	Buzzard	Grassland
40	B	Grasshopper	Grassland
41	K	Grass	Grassland
42	W	Fox	Woodland
43	S	Holly leaf	Woodland
44	J	Millipede	Woodland
45	V	Tawny Owl	Woodland
46	H	Diving Beetle	Wetland
47	A	Woodlouse	Woodland
48	Q	Vole	Woodland
49	L	Heron	Wetland
50	U	Toad	Grassland
51	D	Roach	Wetland
52	Y	Squirrel	Woodland
53	Z	Rabbit	Grassland
54	O	Crab apple blossom	Orchard
55	T	Pipistrelle Bat	Orchard
56	F	Codling Moth	Orchard
57	P	Grass snake	Grassland

You can also download the control descriptions PDF sheet to enable participants to learn the internationally recognised symbols for orienteering control locations.

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