

Wessex Orienteering Club & Wimborne Orienteers

2nd Purbeck Hill Challenge

Saturday 14th February 2026

Final Details

Introduction/Background

On Saturday 14th February 2026, we will run the second Purbeck Hill Challenge starting and finishing at National Trust Knoll Beach, Studland on the Isle of Purbeck.

The format is copied from our northern friends at Grampian Orienteers. Every 2 years, they run the fantastic Grampian Mountain Challenge event. We are seeking to offer a softer southern version that still holds true to their mantra of a high quality, relaxed, affordable and fun event.

The format of the event is a one-day long distance walk/run navigating on a 1:26,000 map using public rights of way to find various checkpoints. However, at some point or points during the event, you will have to undertake detailed orienteering on a 1:10,000 or 1:7,500 map or maps printed on the other side of your map.

We plan to offer 4 courses with approx. total distances covered of 15km, 24 km, 33 km and 43 km which will each include about 7 km of detailed orienteering.

We will also offer two choices for the detailed orienteering sections - either technically easy or technically difficult.

You will be able to enter as a pair or compete solo.

Starts will be from 09:00 in the morning (and potentially slightly earlier if everything is in place) with courses closing at 16:00, giving you up to 7 hours to complete the course at the pace that best suits you.

The event will be self-supported i.e. you will need to carry everything you need for the day, including mandatory safety equipment (as listed in the Safety section below) but you will be free to resupply on-route using local shops, cafes and hostelryes as you feel fit.

The event area will encompass the Purbeck Hills and the Jurassic Coast and the courses will look to fully exploit the fantastic scenery this area has to offer.

Entries will be limited to a total of 100 people whether running as pairs or solo.

Is This Event For You?

Whilst this event requires navigational skills it is designed to accommodate not only orienteers and those with mountain marathon experience but also hill walkers as well as trail, hill & ultra runners who have good navigational skills.

All the courses are mix and match i.e. you can mix any length of course with either the technically easy or difficult orienteering options to suit your preferences/abilities.

The technical easy orienteering option will require the competitor or at least one of a pair of competitors to have a familiarity with an orienteering map and understanding of its scale & symbols, to be able to use a compass to orientate a map and navigate using predominately line features such as paths. The technical easy orienteering option will be of an Orange/Light Green orienteering standard

The technical advanced orienteering option should only be chosen by competitors or at least one of a pair of competitors who is an experienced orienteer able to navigate using advanced orienteering skills such as taking bearings, pacing etc. The technically difficult orienteering option will be TD5 orienteering standard

Outside of the detailed orienteering sections, competitors or at least one of a pair of competitors will need to be familiar and able to navigate using an OS 1:25,000 maps. The checkpoints will be on obvious features but competitors will need to be able to recognise and use public rights of way shown on the map to choose and navigate the optimum route between controls.

The super short course is introduced this year and is intended for competitors who want to participate in this type of event but who were put off previously by the distance and climb associated with the short course. Competitors will still need to have a good level of fitness. with an ability to undertake the climb and cover the terrain involved, some of which will be off path especially during the detailed orienteering elements.

The short course is intended for competitors who intend to predominantly walk around the course or want a shorter course. Competitors will still need to have a good level of fitness with an ability to undertake the climb and cover the terrain involved, some of which will be off path especially during the detailed orienteering elements.

The medium course is intended for competitors who intend to run significant elements of the course e.g. flat and downhill sections. Competitors will need to have a high level of fitness & stamina with an ability to undertake the climb and cover the distance & terrain involved, some of which will be off path especially during the detailed orienteering elements.

The long course is only intended for experienced mountain marathon or ultra runners who intend to run the course and have the fitness, stamina and prior experience of covering the distances and climb involved.

Competitors will have a maximum of 7 hours to complete the courses, recognising that the detailed orienteering sections are likely to be time consuming especially for the less-experienced.

Competitors will be able to revise their choice of course up to and including on the day of the event – if in doubt, please run down a course!

Courses

There will be 4 courses on offer:

1. **Super Short** – 15km, 170m climb
2. **Short** - 24 km, 440m climb
3. **Medium** - 33 km, 750m climb
4. **Long** - 43 km, 930m climb

The stated distance and climb reflect the approximate actual distance and climb covered on the optimum route choice as assessed by the Planner.

In addition, there will be two options for the detailed orienteering elements on each course:

- a. Technical Easy
- b. Technical Advanced

The courses will have the following number of controls:

Super Short, technically easy – 20 controls

Super Short, technically advanced – 25 controls

Short, technically easy – 25 controls

Short, technically advanced – 29 controls

Medium, technically easy – 27 controls

Medium, technically advanced – 31 controls

Long, technically easy – 29 controls

Long, technically advanced – 33 controls

All course combinations can be run as solo or as a pair.

Location & Directions

The event centre will be at the National Trust facilities at Knoll Beach, Studland BH19 3AH. What3Words: windmill.drummers.seasonal.

Registration & map issue will take place just outside the National Trust café at Knoll Beach.

Parking

Parking will be at the National Trust car park at Knoll Beach. Parking charges are £9.00 for all day and free for National Trust members. Parking charges are not included in your race entry.

The National Trust has recently introduced Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and new associated parking machines in the car park.

The easiest way to navigate this whether you are paying or a National Trust member is via the **JustPark App**. Enter Location ID **998930** and your vehicle details. You must then input your arrival and exit times (just choose 17:00 as any parking duration over 3 hours is charged at a flat fee of £9.00). If you are a National Trust member, you will now have the opportunity to enter your

membership number or scan your membership card. Finally, you need to authorise the transaction in the App even if you are a National Trust member. National Trust members will see a £0.00 for the transaction in the App.

Otherwise, there are parking machines by the entrance to the Visitor Centre and National Trust staff & volunteers are on hand to provide assistance.

Terrain

The event area will encompass the Purbeck Hills and the Jurassic Coast, including heathland & coastal dune areas.

Given the time of year and recent weather, competitors should anticipate the courses being extremely wet & muddy in places and wear appropriate footwear such as orienteering or trail shoes which will provide adequate grip.

Map

The map will be A2 sized, double sided and laminated.

One side of the map will be an OS 1:26,000 map of the competition area. The detailed orienteering areas will be outlined on the OS 1:26,000 map and provided on the other side of the map. There is always a transition control marked on both sides of the map when competitors are expected to turn over their maps and this will also be indicated on the loose control descriptions for their course.

The map issued to all competitors will be an all-control map. At registration/map issue, competitors will be given a loose control description sheet for their particular course and will be able to highlight the controls they need to visit on their map using either a permanent marker or chinagraph pencil (works best in the wet) prior to starting.

Sections of roads that are Out of Bounds have been clearly marked on all maps using red crosses and must be adhered to for competitors' own safety & fairness. Crossing a road that is marked Out of Bounds is allowable and in one case, a road is marked Out of Bounds at both ends but with a middle section deliberately left in bounds to facilitate a potential route choice.

Facilities

Knoll beach facilities include a café (open 0930-1600), National Trust shop and toilet facilities.

In the competition area there is a variety of shops, cafes, pubs and public conveniences in Corfe Castle, Kingston, Worth Matravers, Langton Matravers & Swanage that competitors are free to utilise.

Timings

0800: National Trust car park opens

0830-0945: registration & map issue

0900-1000: starts

1600: All courses close

1700: National Trust car park closes (but cars already in the car park are still able to leave after this)

We will endeavour to allow competitors to start earlier than 0900 if possible. Whilst we want everyone to have the opportunity to finish their course, there will be a time cut-off imposed for the Long and Medium courses at the manned controls on these courses – this will be communicated at registration and will be on the loose control descriptions for the Long and Medium Courses. Priority will be given at the start to competitors running the Long Course in order to maximise the time they have available to complete their course.

Entries

Entry fees are as follows:

Solo: £30.00

Pairs: £60.00

Under 16 competitors must run as a pair with an adult.

Entries are online via RaceSignUp -
<https://racesignup.co.uk/site/event.php?eventid=5539>

There will be a maximum entry of 100 competitors made up of both solo and pairs entries.

Start, Finish & SI

The start and finish will be adjacent or very close to the Knoll Beach car park.

Competitors will use a SPORTident dibber to record they have visited the controls.

Only one dibber is required for a pairs team but both members of the pair must visit the control and remain within sight and contact of each other throughout the competition.

Competitors are encouraged to use their own dibber if they have one but dibbers can be hired for £1.00 for the event. If you are using your own dibber, please bring this to registration & map issue.

Please note the following:

1. Both the medium technically advanced and long technically advanced courses have more than 30 controls. As such, if you are using your own dibber, it will need to be SI-card 9 or higher (which includes all SIAC dibbers) to accommodate this number of controls
2. SIAC will be disabled for this event so all competitors will have to physically punch all the controls with their dibber. This is for safety reasons to allow the control boxes to be interrogated in the event of a missing competitor.

Safety

GOLDEN RULE: All competitors who start must report to the finish & download at Knoll Beach whether they complete their course or not otherwise we have to go out and look for you! If, for whatever reason, you are unable to report to the finish & download then you need to contact the Organisers on the phone numbers printed on the map.

Each competitor will be required to carry the following mandatory safety equipment:

- Waterproof jacket with hood or separate hat
- Full length leg cover (to be carried if running in shorts)

- Compass
- Whistle
- Head torch
- Fully charged phone
- Cash, means of card payment also recommended
- Permanent marker or Chinagraph pencil
- Map (provided)

This will be checked at the start.

Competitors may choose to run in shorts but should note that they may encounter gorse (that can be avoided) on the course. As above, if competitors choose to run in shorts, they must carry full length leg cover.

The majority of main roads through the competition area will be clearly marked Out of Bounds on the map for competitors' own safety. These roads will be crossable however within 30 mph areas but extreme caution should be observed. Minor roads in the competition area not marked Out of Bounds may be used by competitors but again extreme caution should be observed.

Livestock (cattle) may be present in the competition area – they are used to people being in their vicinity but care should still be taken.

Please be mindful and give way to other users including local residents, horse-riders, cyclists, runners, hikers, dog walkers, etc.

Specifically, we have been asked to communicate the following to all competitors by Studland Stables:

Could you please ask all the runners to adhere to the following code of conduct when passing/meeting horse riders on the day:

When approaching a horse rider please observe the following:

- 1. Alert the rider if running from behind by calling out in advance 'Hi, is it ok to pass?'*
- 2. Give the horse and rider time to react. The rider might not always be able to hear you straight away, so it is good to wait until you have been noticed before passing*
- 3. Slow down or stop if asked to do so. The rider will know if the horse is about to react, which could mean the horse could move suddenly.*

4. Pass wide and slow.

Last autumn our riders had quite a bad experience with runners taking part in an organised run event on the heathland in Studland (not Purbeck Hill Challenge or orienteering), and it turned out they were not informed how to approach and pass horses safely. It was very lucky that nobody was injured.

Outside of the detailed orienteering sections, competitors must use public rights of way and not cross walls or fences other than at gates or stiles. Competitors may only deviate from public rights of way out with detailed orienteering sections as follows:

- In managed plantations, where forest roads shown on the OS 1:26,000 map may be used, noting some may be tarmacked
- On the Purbeck Hills and Corfe Common, still abiding by the requirement to only cross walls or fences using gates or stiles

All courses except the super short course will include at least one manned control where competitors must give their names to the marshal.

Emergency contact numbers for the Organisers will be printed on the map. In the event of a serious emergency, dial 999 first and then contact the Organisers.

Basic first aid will be available at registration/download.

If you need to retire, you are asked to make your own way back to Knoll Beach if you are able. Fyi, there is a regular bus service from Corfe Castle to Swanage via Kingston & Langton Matravers. A separate bus service then runs from Swanage to Knoll Beach on its way to the ferry & Poole.

Dogs

The event has not been planned specifically to accommodate Canicross. The detailed orienteering sections are off path and involve some rough and wet ground with some steep slopes. There is loose livestock on the Purbecks and there are lots of deer there too. There are unmanned road crossings and some of the paths are narrow (and on cliff tops) depending upon which course you choose.

If you are OK with this and happy to take responsibility for your dog, then we are OK with you competing with your dog on condition:

1. your dog needs to be under your close control at all times
2. you use best endeavours to avoid your dog distracting or annoying other competitors, some of whom may be wary of dogs.

Withdrawal Policy

Withdrawals were only available up to the 31/12/25 via the RaceSignUp web page for this event.

Refunds/credits are not available after 31/12/25, but team members can be substituted by the entry owner until entries close by contacting the Organiser.

Officials

Planner: Chris Turner, WIM

Organisers: Rob Mills, WIM e-mail: robmills372@gmail.com

Bruno Smith, WSX

Controller: Ian Sayer, WSX