



BFA Outdoor Championship Statfold 2024 Committee Report

Introduction

As many of you are aware this was our first Champs as your new committee and we were hosting the event in a brand new and untested venue. So lots of new things for us and the site owner to get to grips with throughout the event.

It certainly opened the eyes of those of us who had no previous experience of running a Champs before as to the amount of work that goes in to this event each and every year, not just by those on the Committee, but by the wonderful volunteers who offer to step up and give their time freely to help with the set up, running and pack down of this fantastic event.

We all really enjoyed it and hope that you did too.

We've had some really positive and absolutely amazing feedback which is really appreciated. Equally we are very much aware that not everything went to plan, which is not unexpected with an event of this type and size, and we know that the new venue threw us a number of challenges across the days.

As a Committee we have shared and discussed all of the feedback we have received from you so far, both the good and the not so good. We have used this, coupled with what we felt went right and what we felt didn't, to shape our thoughts and ideas on what we feel needs to be changed as well as what we could look to change, to allow us to make improvements to the 2025 Outdoor Championship event.

The purpose of this report is to provide you with a full insight into what we have discussed and our thoughts and ideas for 2025 in order that you have this knowledge when you complete the Outdoor Champs Feedback Questionnaire 2024.

This Questionnaire will be published in the British Flyball Association Members Only Facebook Group and a copy uploaded to the Blog section of the website.

We will also be sending all team Captains an email attaching this report and asking them to remind and encourage their team members to complete the questionnaire.

This is your Championship Event ...we want to make this event as good as we possibly can for everyone but we can only do so with your help and involvement.

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Feedback from the Venue Owner of Statfold Country Park and suppliers

Their overall feedback was extremely positive.

- They walked around the event and learnt a lot about flyball. They think it's fantastic.
- They commented that everyone they met was really friendly and they said our event had a great vibe. Such a friendly family atmosphere.
- They were amazed at all our volunteers and how everyone mucked in at the end of the day.
- They were extremely impressed by how we left the site. The camping field and arena field were spotless.

The Committee would like to thank the membership for all their efforts in leaving the camping field so tidy. The Champs crew walked the field when everyone had left. They found hardly any litter and NO dog mess.

Thanks to everyone who stepped up to help clear the arena field on Sunday evening. It was amazing how quickly everything was tidied away.

The fencing company appreciated all the barriers being in one place and stacked ready to

load on to their lorry. Everything being cleared away made the job easier for the marquee company when they arrived Monday morning to take everything down.

In summary the venue is happy to have us back next year.

Outputs from Committee Review

1. Water Supply

There were not enough water points available throughout the site and there were issues with the water pressure causing problems across the event for a significant number of members.

Firstly thank you to those of you who were impacted by this issue who, despite the inconvenience, showed extreme patience and support towards everyone who worked hard to try and resolve the situation.

The owner was obviously closely involved and working with us on the issues as they occurred during the event and therefore clearly appreciates the size and scale of the Champs. We are already discussing with them the requirement for more water points for next year.

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2. The Roads

The roadways throughout the site were not fit for purpose. They were unsafe to drive on (*indeed some members had tyres punctured, we are so sorry*) and were dangerous for both dogs and humans to cross over or walk on.

We apologise for this issue and again have already raised this to the owner of the venue as something that must be rectified in advance of next year's event.

3. Party Night

We recognise that a huge part of the Champs is socialising with your team and other teams that you do not get to see from one Champs to the next.

We are aware that late running presentations meant that Friday evening's entertainment was drastically shortened and disrupted, and we won't let this happen again. And yes, we will make sure that a much bigger marquee is booked for next year!

To further improve this aspect of the Champs we discussed moving the location of the marquee, to cause less impact on the owner who lives on site, and importantly limiting the amount and type of racing to be held on the Friday to allow for party

night to start at an earlier time of 7pm.

4. Future Friday Racing and Events

Both Young Member and Foundation Racing were part of the schedule this year.

Clearly this did not work in terms of the time taken to deliver these events and the additional wear and tear this amount of racing placed on the arenas.

In reviewing and discussing this point the committee felt that perhaps the best way to overcome these issues would be to limit racing on this day by making Future Friday just about our young members, who are after all the Future of the Association.

Our thoughts on this are to look to hold young member events in the morning only, meaning presentations could take place around lunchtime. This in turn would free up the afternoon for us to look at offering something different for members to get involved in e.g. a free afternoon, seminars, fun and games, Regional Representatives Events (*if you didn't go this year you really missed out on a great time*). We've popped the choices that came into our minds into the questionnaire for you to consider and there is space to add your ideas too.

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5. Suppliers

Firstly, we need to make it absolutely clear that the supplier who provided the toilets and showers will not be returning next year! We can only apologise for the issues that were experienced by many of you this year due to the poor service provided by this company. We will do better.

In terms of other suppliers we will obviously be looking to negotiate price freezes from those we choose to go with again next year and negotiate the best price from any new suppliers that we end up using.

6. Internet Signal

We all appreciate the frustrations that were caused by the lack of access to the internet and mobile services within the site. Whilst this isn't something that was within our control this year we are already talking to the owner and other suppliers to understand how this issue can be addressed for next year.

Wi-Fi for the site is definitely needed to make communications easier, more effective and accessible to everyone.

Given the size of the event we will also be investigating the use of Flyball Geek as a means of communicating next year.

7. Camping

The new site certainly presented us with challenges when it came to the camping plan this year and we apologise for any inconvenience members experienced when entering the venue for the first time and in locating their camping pitches.

The good news is that the plan designed and implemented this year, thanks to the camping team, is now our template and we can just use this to make amendments and tweaks going forward. We should therefore be in a position to publish the camping plan earlier so that everyone will have advanced knowledge of the field they will be in prior to arrival.

8. Accessibility

As in prior years the Accessibility Officer has produced a report of findings and recommendations for the committee to review going forward.

A copy of this review is attached at Appendix 1.

9. Champs Working Party

The Committee is only ever made up of a maximum of 9 people and we recognise that, moving forward, if we want to be able to deliver future Outdoor Championship Events that provide the membership with the very best of experiences, within the financial resources available, events that promote our sport and grow our Association, then we really need more people from across the Association, people from different areas and people with specific skill sets to get involved and help.

We have therefore decided to establish a Champs Working Party.

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As a starter for 10 we think this group should include the following:

Permanent Members

- Two Experienced Events Planners (with experience in similar events) - Head Judge
- Judge/Measurer
- Tournament Organiser - Outdoor
- Tournament Organiser- Indoor
- Team Captain who's team runs both in and outdoors

A Representative from each of the following BFA functions/working groups:

Accessibility, Social Media, Stats Team, Regional Representative, Training Team,

Obviously the composition of this group can and will probably change across the project as is necessary to meet the planning and execution of the event itself.

If you are interested and would like to get involved all you need to do is let us know by filling in this section of the Questionnaire.

We really look forward to hearing from you.

Finally, we hope you have found this report both interesting and informative and we look forward to receiving all your completed Questionnaires, the results of which we will publish as quickly as we can.



2024 Outdoor Champs Accessibility Report

VENUE: Statfold Country Park

1. Applications for Access:

Applications for accessibility requests opened the same time as entries on 25/06/24.

The closing date was 11/07/24, the same as for show entries.

2. Number of Requests:

66 camping requests from people with blue badge/disability benefits/doctor's letter

5 camping requests from people who did not meet that criterion

9 for day parking only

Disabilities and medical conditions included physical, visual impairment, severe medical condition e.g. heart surgery, cancer; continence needs, asthma, adults and children with neurodivergence and/or learning difficulties.

Risk assessments were done for 7 people who either had declared significant or terminal Disability or were considered vulnerable.

4 people requested hook up for medical equipment but declined to camp away from their team to take advantage of hook up. The BFA agreed to give them 24 hour access to a designated power source.

Every applicant ticked the box to remain with the team rather than be segregated from their team into a designated Disabled camping area and it was accepted by them by ticking the box on the form that all the BFA could offer was Disabled parking near the ring.

The BFA accessibility officer spoke to most applicants to determine need and those with significant need were camped on the arena field. We also tried to put people we knew to have buggies on that field. All the committee teams had Disabled members.

5 people applied who did not meet the criterion of blue badge or equivalent. They were given parking permits.

3. Late Requests

3 late car parking passes were issued at the venue.

Reasons:

Subsequent to an Emergency A and E visit on medical advice.

2 people who were not on social media whose team captains hadn't applied for them.

4. The Challenges of The Venue

The BFA accessibility officer would recommend that they attend any future recesses of new venues, so that advance planning can be expertly put into place to mitigate any issues with the venue. It is accepted that there is a shortage of affordable, central venues.

5. Roadways and Navigation

- The use of hard core on the road ways, that was unusually extremely unrefined hard core had a detrimental impact on a number of Disabled people
- A Disabled person with a permit got a puncture from a metal bit in the hard core
- Buggy users were concerned about buggy tyres
- People with neuropathy, multiple sclerosis, visual impairment struggled to safely on the hard core
- A number of Disabled people struggled to cross the raised railway lines by the 2 gates. These included people with neuropathy, multiple sclerosis, blindness and Deafness. It was noted that the bushes on the right coming from the camping field obscured the view of trains coming for Deaf users, who could not hear the train coming. They could simply be cut back.
- The top crossing was near where vulnerable people were camped and netting was put up around it to deter them crossing as well as supervision agreed.

Recommendations for 2025: We need to make sure that we camp wherever possible all scooter users in the arena field to avoid using the buggies on the hard core. That the AO identifies those who cannot transport their buggy to the Disabled parking area to prioritise this.

That we place rubber mats over the hard core where you cross to get to the ring e.g. in line with the footfall from both railway gates.

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6. Toilets and Showers

The position of the only permanent Disabled toilet and (our makeshift) shower is a concern and presents significant safeguarding concerns.

These were well separated from the general public accessing the railway museum.

However, the only permanent Disabled toilet is in the men's toilets where there are urinals and male users. As this is used by women and children this is a concern.

The fact that the venue has no Disabled shower is a significant deficit. The BFA had to make a Disabled shower by adding a shower stool, mat, grab rails to a shower. It sadly had a small step into it which wasn't ideal. Due to the need to have a Disabled toilet by a Disabled shower both had to be in the men's toilets.

The accessibility officer did advise everybody in writing to use the shower and toilet with a carer, but this is not ideal. Social media was used to ask all non Disabled people not to use the block and for it to be reserved for Disabled users. Notices were put up. However notices and barricades were taken down by the venue cleaners everyday so men were still using the urinals.

The permanent Disabled toilet and (our makeshift) shower are situated over 100 yards away from the nearest parking. Further, during the day when this area was used for Day Parking. This made it difficult for people with sticks or crutches to mobilise there carrying washing bags and a change of clothing.

The door to the Disabled toilet is too narrow for access for some buggies. The floor from the outside door to the toilet and shower gets waterlogged and slippery presenting a hazard for Disabled users.

The Disabled toilet was blocked on the Sunday and padlocked by the venue.

The rented Accessible portaloos were not marked with any symbol designating their usage. The supplier told the AO she was not to put any labels on them as there was risk of damage.

It is a credit to BFA members that they were not blocked as they were last year.

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Recommendations for 2025: *The BFA should formally raise the safeguarding concerns regarding the location of the only Disabled toilet being inside the male toilets in view of the urinals. This is unacceptable given their use by vulnerable users. Also the fact that there is no Disabled shower in the venue.*

If the venue does not have a designated Disabled shower next year we should do another makeshift shower and include a non-slip step into it.

To ask the venue to temporarily block the urinals and men's toilets off and inform their cleaning staff of this temporary usage.

The toilet should have a radar key to prevent misuse. (The BFA has a collection of RADAR keys that can be given out.) This should be suggested to the venue.

7. The Elsan

The entrance to the elsan is too narrow for anyone in a buggy, wheelchair or using a stick or crutches. This is because a single panel is used to mark the entrance and the hedge is overgrown. After several complaints the AO cut back the hedge.

It was observed that the bushes in the elsan area and also on the hedge near it that are blackberries and rosehips have a white residue. This is most probably from the chemical cleaner. Children who ate these berries were admitted to A and E.

Recommendations: *The AO cut back the bushes earlier.*

We put up Visual yellow poison hazard signs on the bushes with berries around the elsan area.

8. The Disabled Parking Area

This was well placed for the ring and it was possible to have plenty of

room to allow for buggies and for people with mobility extra room to get out of vehicles. It was however too far from the marquee and this rendered the marquee inaccessible for some. This created an issue with access to measuring and presentation.

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It was used as follows – please note of the AM and PM usage the higher figure was given for each division:

Thursday

- 1 Div 10 spaces
2. 20 spaces
3. 25 spaces
4. 27 spaces
5. 29 spaces
- 6 17 spaces
7. 12 spaces

Friday

20-30 spaces all day

Saturday

- 1 Div. 8
- 2 Div. 15
- 3 Div. 22
- 4 Div. 27

Sunday

- Div 1. 7
- 2 Div. 21
- 3 Div. 31
- 4 Div. 37

Recommendations: Use the same area. Discuss options with the marquee.

Feedback

Most of the feedback has been incorporated into the above and hopefully we will get more on the feedback questionnaire.

Other points raised:

Teams camped in the camping field near the gate nearest to the rings felt it was within walking distance for users who had some walking ability and reasonable leg elevation (250 meters). These can be identified next year.

Some people struggled getting from the woodland walk area of the arena field to the rings – however they were issued with parking permits.

Some teams complained as members in motor homes or campers couldn't drive to the Disabled parking near rings

Deaf and hard of hearing users would benefit from flyball geek and better signal to pick up messages from team

The typeface used by the media team for champs posts is unreadable by people with dyslexia/specific learning difficulties – this was raised last year by the AO but this continues.

Hearing aid user said judges not using hand signals for whistle – thought this was something that should be happening now.

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