

Planner's Comments – Cove Brook Urban 16/7/2022

Thank you all for coming to our newly mapped area, which offered plenty of scope for a variety of navigational challenges. A big thank you to our club mappers Pete (who created the map as a lockdown project) and Steve who made numerous minor corrections and improvements to the map over the last couple of months. A few further observations from competitors on the day can be corrected for the future.

Farnborough FC was a convenient base with ample car parking, and the adjoining park for an assembly area. As is so often the case, it was difficult to design junior courses which avoided traffic completely. Course 7 was perhaps a little trickier (and more interesting?) than usual for the younger juniors, and we chose to twist course 6 through the intricate housing estate on quieter roads which were felt to be safe enough for the older juniors.

For the senior courses you were all guaranteed to have an interesting early and late section through the Totland estate, and for courses 1 to 3 there were options to incorporate significantly longer route choice legs, with either the river or the motorway to cross. For the shorter legs there were often left or right choices, and the philosophy was to make you navigate across the complexity without losing touch, rather than make it feel like an extended sprint race with frequent controls. On longer legs the optimum (shortest) routes were (hopefully) not always obvious, and it was perfectly reasonable to choose a longer route if that meant easier navigation and faster running.

The urban planning guidelines are quite loose, and I deliberately aimed at the upper end of distance and winning times. I feel there are too many races where a long (and expensive) journey is made in return for a relatively short run. Hopefully you felt it was worth it on this occasion. Please upload your routes on Routegadget so I can learn how to set better traps next time!

I enjoyed seeing so many smiles at the finish, and at least we had a little shade under the trees to recover after downloading. We were all glad that it wasn't REALLY hot! Thank you for your positive feedback on the day – it really is appreciated by both myself and all the other volunteers, and makes us all happy to do it again when asked.

Paul Fox, SN