

## DFOK CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE PLANNER'S COMMENTS

When we discussed in committee whether to hold a December challenge I was a bit doubtful as I was disappointed in the turnout for the Plumstead Common one I set in October. We decided to make this one a little different, though, with a seasonal theme along the lines of the festive events that used to be organised by Phil Basford. I devised a word-making event using MapRun and Allison checked the rules for me and the challenge was ready to go just as Kent went into tier 4. But Bexley soon went into tier 4 as well and anyone could run and I could not have been more pleased with the response.

Overall there were 36 runs by 23 different people. Many people ran the course twice and Antoine had four goes, improving his score each time. If it hadn't been for some people needing to self-isolate at times those numbers would have been even higher. The full list of results, together with the words people claimed successfully, is in a separate document.

Runners generally fell into one of two camps – those who wanted to get as high a score as possible, and those who wanted to make interesting or different words and word combinations. The very first runner was Ian Ditchfield and I think he was in both camps. The first words he made were BANANA and NITWIT, neither of which I saw again. When he submitted his claim to me Ian explained how he had chosen his words, concentrating on good points per km run, which meant rejecting some of the bonus words.

I deliberately made some of the bonus words not worth their value and Antoine fell into my trap by including TURKEY on his first run. He worked this out and then went for the more efficient CHRISTMAS PRESENT SANTA and SNOWMAN before finally eschewing these altogether on his last run. Here he concentrated entirely on the northern section and visited 74 controls in under an hour, scoring 106 points. His word list probably took as long to research as his run but I have checked them all and they are all valid.

Andrew would have topped the points table apart from this last run of Antoine's and who knows how many points Andrew could have got up to if he had been able to get in as many runs improving at the same rate. Other high point scorers were Ian, David Float and Keith Bennett.

Keith suffered a deduction on one of his runs. On checking his track I found that he had lost count of the number of CH combinations he had run. After running CHURCH he didn't go back to CH again before the ORD of CHORD. This was one of a number of almost genuine orienteering mispunches. Vadim ran TINSLE instead of TINSEL so I was only able to allow him TINS. Rosie Sibley ran SANTN instead of SANTA so she only scored ANT.

Now we are into the fun runners. On the day I spotted HUMBUG I found David Dawson had got to it first and had run BAH HUMBUG HOHOHO (which I had to let him have) and MUD, just because he had time left and it described the conditions in Danson Park. Rob Sibley didn't bother to go for points at all and simply spelled out THANK YOU DFOK, which was appreciated. Rosie and Colin said they had spent many hours working out their runs on paper with the help of a spreadsheet from Colin. Colin put this into use with TINSEL FOR CHRISTMAS but Rosie bettered it with TWIT FORGOT KIT FOR WORKOUT.

Inspired by Rosie I tried to come up with something myself and I got THROUGH ROUGH TIME STAY HIGH. I would have liked to finish with STAY STANDING but I had neither the time nor the legs.

I said I would present a prize to the person with the best word or word combination and while Ian got off to a very good start I am awarding it to Rosie. I hope to have the opportunity to present it at an event very soon in 2021.

Stay safe everyone

Geoff