

**ANNUAL REPORT
2022-23**

**OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY
1ST APRIL 2022 TO 31ST MARCH 2023**



WHAT WE DO

Mountaineering Scotland is the nationally recognised representative and membership organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and snow sports tourers in Scotland, and the governing body for competitive climbing in Scotland. We aim to represent, inspire and develop Scottish mountaineering in all its forms, to protect the mountain landscapes and access rights we all cherish, and promote responsible access in the hills, mountains and climbing venues.

Through our **mountain safety programme**, we offer training and information to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of the hill and mountain environment.

Our **ClimbScotland** programme, funded by sportscotland, aims to support children and young people to get involved in climbing through outreach work and competition.

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.MOUNTAINEERING.SCOT

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Page 3: Fiona McNicol!

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ROUND UP OF THE YEAR

APRIL

Our new Mountain Safety Team, Ross Cadie, Ben Gibson and Kirsty Pallas started and we launched Going the Extra Mile, providing low cost skills training for 18-25 years supported by the Sarah Buick Legacy Fund.

JULY

Over 3,700 people took part in a survey asking about using mobile phones for navigation and we launched a series of Women's Ready to Rock climbing courses.

OCTOBER

Fiona McNicol joined the team as Communications Officer as we said a fond farewell to Neil Reid, who retired after nine years in the role. CEO Stuart Younie and Senior Mountain Safety Advisor Ross Cadie spent a day in the mountains with eBony Hikers, a group created to support those with Black Ancestry who hike.

JANUARY

Members of staff and board attended a parliamentary reception hosted by Ramblers Scotland to mark the 20-year anniversary of the Land Reform Act. New guidance and an infographic on using mobiles phones to navigate in the hills was released, being widely shared and gaining high profile press coverage.

MAY

We marked Mental Health Awareness week with a blog post from Ross Cunningham, and Mountaineering Scotland joined with partners to write to Historic Environment Scotland over access issues at Holyrood Park in Edinburgh.

AUGUST

The Board agreed that Mountaineering Scotland should join the Scottish Rewilding Alliance as a full member and sign up to the Protect Our Winters Pledge. The annual Mountain Writing Competition was launched using a new online platform to streamline the entry and judging process.

NOVEMBER

CEO Stuart Younie and Dougie Baird, CEO of the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland, accepted the Scottish Mountaineering Trust Diamond Grant award of £100k to kick start *It's Up to Us*, a three year campaign to highlight the lack of funding for mountain paths in Scotland.

FEBRUARY

CEO Stuart Younie hosted the first online meeting of the Mountaineering Scotland Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Network. Our Member Services & Communications team attended the Fort William Mountain Festival and new Winter Skills for Women courses took place in Glencoe.

JUNE

The summer got off to a busy start with the Scottish Youth Climbing Championships, Scottish Youth Speed Climbing Championships, Paraclimb Scotland Festival and Scottish Lead Climbing Competition.

SEPTEMBER

Mountaineering Scotland welcomed Karen McVeigh in the role of Membership and Events Officer, and said a fond farewell to Jane Anderson, who retired after 16 years at Mountaineering Scotland.

DECEMBER

ThinkWINTER, the annual winter mountain safety campaign with our Mountain Safety Group partners, was launched on International Mountain Day and Mountaineering Scotland staff and board members enjoyed a chilly get together on a festive walk up Kinnoull Hill in Perth.

MARCH

ClimbScotland officially welcomed four new talent coaches to support young athletes on the climbing talent pathway. The ClimbScotland Fun Comp Finals also took place at Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, with 71 young climbers taking part.



PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

BRIAN SHACKLETON



Mountaineering Scotland has made a good start to implementing our new strategy for 2022-25 during its first year 2022-23, with an increasing membership alongside a renewed funding agreement from sportscotland. Delivery of the strategy with its four pillars of REPRESENTING, PROTECTING, INSPIRING and DEVELOPING is underpinned by the need for the organisation to remain relevant and forward looking in at times challenging areas, whilst always willing to engage positively with our members, clubs and the wider community. During our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy consultation, we have followed this imperative and listened to our membership so as to proceed in the right way but at the right pace for the organisation on this important but sensitive issue.

On more familiar ground, a priority from members' surveys consistently identifies the paths we all use as a key access & conservation issue; so we were delighted to work with the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) to secure the £100k Diamond Award from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT) to show our determination to make a difference and find a sustainable future for maintaining our paths alongside the other Access & Conservation work we do related to our special landscape.

The basic safety and training courses we provide through our Mountain Safety advisors remain popular with members whilst our work with other organisations through the Mountain Safety Group now allows more longer term strategic planning to take place with our partners.

The ClimbScotland programme for young people is an important way to introduce new people to our sport and along with other initiatives, such

as Going the Extra Mile and Sofa to Summit, looks to widen our offering to those from underrepresented communities. ClimbScotland also opens an opportunity to engage with clubs seeking to increase and widen their membership and offer those new to the sport a perspective that is wider than indoor climbing walls. Within ClimbScotland we have been looking to improve the talent and performance pathway for young athletes in competition climbing within Scotland but also towards national level through our work with GB Climbing and the BMC. At short notice, we supported the relocation of the IFSC World Cup event to Ratho in September 2022 alongside The City of Edinburgh Council and the BMC when China, the original hosts for the event, dropped out. The final of the men's and women's lead climbing event on the last day were enjoyed by a packed Ratho and the event judged a great success by all.

The day to day delivery of all Mountaineering Scotland activity is led by CEO Stuart Younie with his hardworking team and saw significant personnel changes in 2022-23 with the retiral of Neil Reid as Communication Officer and Jane Anderson as Membership Officer. We welcome Fiona McNicol and Karen McVeigh to the team whilst wishing Neil and Jane our best wishes for the future. We also welcome Jack Davis to the new post of Talent and Pathways Officer in ClimbScotland. At Board level, Pete Crane took over as Director for Access & Environment from Ron Neville, who retired at the Nov 2022 AGM, whilst Jo Dytch was confirmed as Director for Clubs for a further 2 years and Andrew Walker joined as Director for Member Services and Communications following Kat Jones retiral last year. Mountaineering Scotland depends on the hard work, enthusiasm and dedication of our staff

but also the guidance and support of our volunteer directors so my thanks go to both staff and directors on behalf of members and clubs.

In my introduction to last year's Annual Report, I cautioned on the challenges ahead due to increased insurance and other inflationary cost pressures in the organisation. We entered a new three year agreement for public liability insurance at the start of 2023 which confirmed a final figure of £108k for 2022-23 compared to just under £80k for last year. Accordingly, we ended 2022-23 with a £25k loss though this was less than originally forecast in this 3rd and final year of the 3 year period since membership subscriptions were increased at the start of 2020-21. Taking all 3 years together, however, we still achieved a healthy surplus of over £40k. Looking ahead, the subscription increases agreed at the 2022 AGM will go some way to offset ongoing inflationary pressures on insurance, salary and other costs but further options are being explored actively to keep the organisation on a sustainable path in this challenging financial climate.

This introduction is my fourth and final contribution to an Annual Report as I will complete my 4 year term as President at the AGM this November but I remain positive on the future for Mountaineering Scotland and the opportunities ahead with the goodwill and support of members alongside the hard work of our directors and dedicated staff. The organisation remains in good hands!

Brian Shackleton
President, Mountaineering Scotland

MEMBERSHIP

Mountaineering Scotland membership increased by **4%** overall, reaching **16,254** members at the year end, with club membership growing by **6%** and individual membership increasing by **2%**.

OUR MEMBERS

- Equalities data provided by **6386** members
- **32%** Female / **68%** Male
- Members who reported having a disability **2%** / **84%** without / **14%** prefer not to answer
- Black, Asian, African, Mixed, other ethnic group **2%** / White non-UK **8%** / White Scottish/British **74%** / Prefer not to answer **18%**

TOTAL MEMBERS

16,254

+4%

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

8,074

+2%

CLUB MEMBERS

8,180

+6%



CELEBRATING OUR MEMBERS

The Mountaineering Scotland awards returned after a two-year break during the pandemic. Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Ian Rendall from the Orkney Climbing Club for his long and continued commitment to young people on Orkney and his role in the development of climbing there. Jamie Lowther was named Young Climber of the Year for his passion and dedication to climbing and for inspiring a new generation of climbers through his coaching and personal achievements. Congratulations to two very worthy winners.

It was another fantastic year for entries in the Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Writing Competition with 23 poetry and 27 prose submissions. Winners were selected by a team of volunteer judges including former winners, writers, journalists and past and present Mountaineering Scotland staff and board members. A huge thanks once again to head judge Tommy McManmon and all the judges who give their time to support the competition.

SUPPORTING CLUBS

Clubs continued to return to usual activities post-Covid as the final restrictions were removed in 2022. To support the post-Covid recovery, we ran another 'Club month' in April 2022 through our social media channels to support clubs in finding new members and highlight the breadth of activities covered by our affiliated clubs.

The annual Club survey took place in February 2023. 45 clubs (30%) responded and told us that landscape and environment, access to skills training, developing climbing and information on safeguarding are some of the most important issues for clubs.



OUR COMMUNICATIONS

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEER MAGAZINE

In March 2023 we asked members to give us their views on the future of Scottish Mountaineer. The majority of members told us that they prefer the printed magazine, however an increasing number are subscribing to the online version only, helping to reduce the environmental impact of the magazine and manage the costs, which have continued to rise in recent years.

HILL WALKING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Mountaineering Scotland member Ross Cunningham shared his story of how getting into hill walking helped him overcome depression through a blog piece on the Mountaineering Scotland website.

FORT WILLIAM MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

The Mountaineering Scotland Membership and Communications Team attended the festival with a stand at the main exhibition hall, where they were joined by Nav Baksh from Boots and Beards who helped out on our busy interactive stand at the exhibition hall. It was great to be back at a mountain festival and meeting people face to face!

#RESPECT PROTECT ENJOY #THINKWINTER!

A pre-season seminar on risk communications hosted by the Scottish Avalanche Information Service and University of Stirling gave some useful insights into developing relevant safety information for different audiences. The 2022-23 winter ThinkWINTER campaign went live on 9 December in partnership with our Mountain Safety Group partners. Once again, conditions were varied throughout the season and the team adapted the messaging and content in response to snow and weather patterns.



SOFA 2 SUMMIT

Sofa 2 Summit, our free online guide to hiking in Scotland, was voted as one of the three 'Commended' runners up in the TGO Readers Awards 2022 Open Outdoors category. It was recognized for bringing the outdoors to those who are discovering it for the first time in an accessible way.



PROTECTING ACCESS & ENVIRONMENT

PROTECTING ACCESS RIGHTS

84 members contacted us with access enquiries in 2022-23. The main access issues reported were physical obstructions like deer fences and locked gates, and non-physical deterrents such as inappropriate signage and verbal discouragement. There were also specific enquiries about access and deer stalking, and climbing on crags where birds are nesting.

Car parking restrictions for recreational access, although not a matter under the access legislation, was a significant challenge in a number of places with either an increased number of vehicles trying to fit into limited space, or obstructions being placed on verges at traditional parking spots. This is a difficult matter to resolve quickly as although we have a right of public access, there is no right to leave a car parked on private land without landowner acceptance of it.

At the National Access Forum, working groups were convened to address in detail specific issues that affect Forum members and the environment. Three topics that Mountaineering Scotland got involved with were - access and wildlife disturbance; upland deer management and access; and communications for cumulative impacts of camping with tents.

HOLYROOD PARK – RADICAL ROAD CLOSURE

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) continued to prohibit access to the Radical Road and South Quarry indefinitely due to their risk assessment of potential significant rockfall. Mountaineering Scotland joined with The Cockburn Association, Ramblers Scotland and Scotways and met with HES CEO and senior staff in June 2022 to discuss their actions and seek a solution for reinstating public access.

HES stated that they were embarking on the development of a long-term plan for Holyrood Park, in two phases, and consultation with a wide range of interested parties and stakeholders will be a key part of this work. We are still awaiting some sign of movement on the matter of restricted access.

AONACH MOR

Access to Aonach Mor by foot from the Nevis Range car park has been difficult because of the downhill bike trails criss-crossing the most direct route up or down. There are ongoing discussions with Forestry and Land Scotland who manage the forest plantation, and Nevis Range who have the lease to manage the activity trails. A safe walking route through the forest has been identified as suitable for hillwalkers, with the route still to be mapped and waymarked at points where the way is not obvious.

Photo Credit: Niall Ritchie

REIFF

The verge at the road end continues to be blocked despite appeals to The Highland Council to intervene and remove the obstructions. The newly-elected Councillors for the area in May 2022 were contacted requesting their assistance in seeking a solution to the matter. The problem was discussed and the Ward Councillor has raised the matter with the Council Transport Department. The Community Council also wish to find a solution. Everyone wants roads, houses and fields to be accessible at all times, for visitors to feel welcome, and at the same time allowing traditional crofting practises to take place. The solution lies with The Highland Council for finding off road hard parking, however suitable land seems to be the obstacle.

PROTECTING MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPES

WINDFARM PROPOSALS
72

POWERLINE CONNECTIONS
27

PUMPED STORAGE HYDRO PROPOSALS
3

TELECOMS MASTS
6

HILLTRACKS
2

FORESTRY

20 forestry proposals were investigated, for long-term management plans or for specific woodland creation schemes. Our comments focused on the impact of deer fences and maintaining or creating new opportunities for access routes to summits. The visual impact of planting schemes was also commented on with support for areas of natural regeneration and sensitive design of plantation edges at altitude.

Mountaineering Scotland, through the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance, met regularly with Scottish Forestry and Forestry and Land Scotland to discuss various strategic policy matters that affect access for outdoor recreation.

WINDFARMS

Out of the 72 proposals assessed, for those at an early stage in planning we offered suggestions for suitable mountain summit viewpoints, and significant points on routes up and down. For fully developed proposals submitted in the planning system, Mountaineering Scotland objected to five of them on grounds of potentially significant impact on mountaineering interests, and maintained objections to three previously assessed schemes that were resubmitted or had changes to turbine layout.

The Scottish Government's updated Onshore Wind Policy Statement, and planning policy statements in the new National Planning Policy 4 provides clear and strong support for more onshore development, and the only areas where wind energy is not supported are National Parks and National Scenic Areas. This has significant implications for how Mountaineering Scotland assesses proposals and participates in the planning process in future.

EARBA PUMPED STORAGE HYDRO SCHEME

A new, large-scale pumped hydroelectric scheme of up to 900MW capacity is being proposed within the Ardverikie Estate, south of Loch Laggan. If receiving planning permission it would make it the largest electricity storage facility in the UK and would effectively double the UK's current grid energy storage capacity. There are significant potential impacts from this development, a major civil engineering in an area of wild land lying close to the popular climbing venue of Binnein Shuas and with routes to three Munros affected. Mountaineering Scotland visited the site with the developer to discuss maintaining recreational access, and how impacts of construction could be mitigated.

Consultation responses can be viewed on the Mountaineering Scotland website.

TELECOMS MASTS

A significant new UK Government scheme, the Shared Rural Network, proposes hundreds of new telecommunications masts for greater digital connectivity for rural residents and businesses. While supportive of the opportunities afforded to local rural communities, we were concerned with plans to site numerous masts in remote wild areas where there is very little community need for them, and with the poor quality of planning applications that accompanied current mast proposals. This will be an ongoing campaign to minimise the number of telecoms masts required in remote and wild places – the cumulative and sequential visual impact could be substantial.



Stuart Younie and Dougie Baird receiving the Diamond Grant award at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival 2022



POSITIVE ACTION ON PATHS

Recent member surveys demonstrate that supporting path repair and other restorative projects is a matter of interest and importance to our membership.

It's Up to Us was developed as a joint project with the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland to highlight the impact of recreational access in the hills and mountains and to recognise the need for the hill walking and mountaineering community to take responsibility for that impact, and take positive action to address it. *It's Up to Us* launched in May 2023.

A proposal was submitted to the Scottish Mountaineering Trust's 60th Anniversary Diamond Grant Award for consideration, and we were delighted to receive the full award of £100,000 funding support the project, focusing on three key issues impacting on Scotland's upland paths: the impact of extreme weather due to climate change; the increasing popularity of Scotland's mountains; and lack of funding for path repairs on private land.




CLIMATE ACTION

Member surveys indicate that Mountaineering Scotland members consider protecting Scotland's mountain environment as a priority. As an organisation we are not able to effectively tackle biodiversity decline and climate impacts by ourselves, therefore we need to work in partnership with organisations, forums and agencies who have the necessary combined expertise, while bringing an outdoor recreational perspective to ecological and land management discussions.

In August the Board of Mountaineering Scotland approved membership of the Scottish Rewilding Alliance to address natural solutions to biodiversity issues in the uplands, and of Protect Our Winters UK to communicate the importance of climate mitigation and adaptation measures for conserving the mountain environment.

Photo Credit: Alistair Todd

A photograph of two hikers walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a forest. The hiker on the left is wearing a black jacket and red pants, using trekking poles. The hiker on the right is wearing a red jacket and a blue backpack. The path is surrounded by tall trees and low-lying vegetation.

“ The right to access Scotland’s landscapes and nature unhindered is something to cherish and protect. We are very much aware of its value to our health, wellbeing and to the Scottish economy whether you, are a walker, climber or snowsports tourer and are determined to ensure it remains this way for future generations to enjoy. ”

STUART YOUNIE
CEO MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND

Marking the 20th anniversary of the Land Reform Act Scotland in Jan 2023.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY PROGRAMME

806
PLACES

ON 82 MOUNTAIN
SKILLS COURSES

289
MEMBERS

LEARNED BASIC
NAVIGATION
SKILLS

193
ATTENDED

WINTER SKILLS,
WINTER NAVIGATION
OR AVALANCHE
AWARENESS
TRAINING

52
YOUNG
PEOPLE

ATTENDED 9 GOING
THE EXTRA MILE
SESSIONS FOR
PEOPLE AGED 18-25

2
NEW

WOMEN-SPECIFIC
WINTER SKILLS
COURSES

SUPPORTING CLUBS

CLUB SKILLS TRAINING

25

TRAINING
DAYS

11

AFFILIATED
CLUBS

114

CLUB
MEMBERS

UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE CLUBS

248

STUDENT
MEMBERS

248 student
club members
benefitted from
skills training

ST JOHN
SCOTLAND
PROGRAMME

104
STUDENTS

SMART
WEEKEND

70
STUDENTS

STUDENT
WINTER
SKILLS

60
STUDENTS

STUDENT
WINTER
CLIMBING

14
STUDENTS

“Many thanks for the training day yesterday. I thoroughly enjoyed it, learned lots, and have much more confidence for scrambling, and down-climbing.” Aberdeen & Shire Hill Walking Club training day

TALKS & ONLINE EVENTS



5

WINTER
SKILLS
TALKS

200 PEOPLE ATTENDED INSTORE
TALKS AT COTSWOLD OUTDOOR,
TISO AND CRAIGDON STORES IN
PERTH, ABERDEEN, EDINBURGH,
AVIEMORE, GLASGOW

100
PEOPLE

REACHED THROUGH
SPRING WEBINARS

WINTER SKILLS FOR WOMEN

Our new one-day winter skills courses for women were held for this first time in Glencoe in February, with 22 women attending. The courses, delivered by Mountain Safety Advisor Kirsty Pallas and climber Libby Peter, were a huge success and, after the original date sold out, an extra date was added, which booked out too. We plan to continue with our offering of winter skills for women courses and extend this to summer mountain skills weekends in 2023-24.

“ Having a course run by female instructors for other women was really inspiring. I sometimes feel like aspiring female mountaineers struggle for role models and people to look up to, so it was great to see highly skilled women in positions of responsibility. ”



GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Going the Extra Mile is a unique programme of affordable navigation courses for young adults aged 18-25, made possible thanks the generous donations of people touched by the story of Sarah Buick, the young woman who tragically died on the south side of Ben Nevis in 2021. The aim is to make this type of training accessible to as many young people as possible and provide them with the skills they need to be more confident in the hills and enjoy hiking safely.

RMT UNION SUPPORT

During the winter months, the Mountain Safety Team ran a series of six two-hour online learning modules for the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) Workers Union. These were focused on introducing the fundamental skills and knowledge needed to start hill walking in Scotland.



STUDENT SKILLS AND SAFETY TRAINING

SMART WEEKEND

The Student Mountain Rescue and Rock Climbing Training (SMART) Weekend is held annually at Glenmore Lodge in November and aimed at members of student hillwalking, mountaineering and climbing clubs affiliated with Mountaineering Scotland to up-skill those who are (or may become) interested in a position of responsibility within their club to expand their knowledge and confidence in their role, as well as help newer members learn the basics.

The event is staffed by volunteers from the mountaineering, climbing and Mountain Rescue community, with funding from Braemar Mountain Rescue Team who have been avid supporters of this even over the last few years.

ST JOHN SCOTLAND

St John Scotland have funded the Mountaineering Scotland Mountain Safety Instructor (MSI) post since 2015 with the aim of supporting one of the most 'at risk' groups of mountain users – students. The MSI attends club meet weekends mostly during the winter season to give provide guidance on planning, gear, weather and avalanche forecasts as well as appropriate skills.

Ali Rose will be leaving the role in summer 2023 and we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for the amazing work that he has done while in post. His energy and enthusiasm for delivering the safety programme to the Scottish student population has been excellent. We wish him all the best in his next adventures.

“ One of the most valuable parts of the job is just being present. Dropping in on small groups who are planning adventures on the Friday and Saturday night gets the best discussions going and allows me to chat through things quickly - Some newer clubs still need a bit of guidance on how to structure a meet for safety – Route cards, Late back procedures etc - The planning aspect of a day out can never be highlighted enough but there is a limit on how much time can be spent on this if a) the students aren't on time in the morning b) they want to get to some summits. Ali Rose - St John Scotland MSI ”



USING MOBILE PHONES FOR NAVIGATION

In recent years, it has become apparent that more and more people are using smartphones and other technology for navigation in the mountains, rather than the traditional paper map and compass. To find out more about how this technology is being used and the users experience of this, we surveyed nearly 4,000 people in summer 2022 on their mobile phone and GPS use as a tool for navigation. 87% of people said they used an electronic device for navigating at some point on their walk, and 40% of those said they had experienced a situation where their device had stopped working in some way.

Using the findings from the survey, a set of guidelines for using mobile phones as a tool for navigation were developed and shared on social media as an infographic. The new guidance attracted a lot of attention from the press with coverage in local, national and UK-wide print and online media.

In the knowledge that smartphones are now widely used for navigation, our Mountain Safety Team are also incorporating information on how to use them effectively in our mountain skills courses.

#SMARTNAV



DEVELOPING PATHWAYS AND POTENTIAL

13.2K
DOWNLOADS

OF THE SCOTROCK PODCAST 220+ REGULAR LISTENERS IN 42 COUNTRIES

118
YOUNG PEOPLE

PEOPLE LEARNED TO CLIMB AT 25 REALROCK SESSIONS

103
ADULTS

LEARNED CLIMBING SKILLS AT 17 READY TO ROCK SESSIONS

53
PEOPLE

ATTENDED 10 FUNDAS WORKSHOPS

16
YOUNG ATHLETES

IN THE SCOTLAND TALENT SQUAD

4
TALENT COACHES

RECRUITED (FREELANCE)

30
PARTICIPANTS

AT THE SCOTTISH PARACLIMBING FESTIVAL

198 competitors in the Scottish Youth Bouldering Championships
 115 competitors in the Scottish Youth Climbing Championships
 38 competitors in the Scottish Youth Speed Climbing Championships
 80+ young people took part in the regional rounds of the YCS
 22 Scottish youth climbers attended the YCS Grand Final

COMPETITION ROUND-UP

SCOTTISH PARACLIMBING FESTIVAL

30 paraclimbers from across the UK, including some from the GB team, attended the event. Some challenging routes and boulder problems, some of which were shared with the SYCC climbs, gave our competitors a good fight and it was inspiring to see everyone pushing hard.

SCOTTISH LEAD CLIMBING COMPETITION (SLCC)

Following on from the SYCC, for only the second time we hosted the Scottish Lead Climbing Competition. A lead climbing competition for adults using the same tough routes from the SYCC gave a spectacular finish to the weekend. 20 strong competitors from across Scotland came down to Ratho to test themselves, and what a fight they put up.

SCOTTISH YOUTH BOULDERING CHAMPIONSHIPS (SYBC)

Hosted at Eden Rock in Edinburgh, the SYBC saw 198 competitors from the ages of 9-17 battle it out on the 31 qualification boulder problems, before the top athletes took on the finals. The climbs themselves, set by Eden's in-house route setting team, were perfect, hard and technical, forcing the best out of all the young athletes. And what a show they put on! A huge thank you to Eden Rock for all their hard work and for hosting this event.

SCOTTISH YOUTH CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIPS (SYCC)

The Edinburgh International Climbing Arena hosted 115 competitors for what was a huge day of climbing on Scotland's biggest indoor walls. The routes, set by the ClimbScotland-endorsed route setting team, looked great from the ground and looked even better with youth athletes cranking through them. With the qualifiers over, the finals began and we watched these incredibly strong climbers cruising through some hard moves, all nearing the end of the routes but being split by a few points. The finals were closed out in spectacular style with the final male and female competitors both putting on a massive fight to top their finals routes. What a show!

CLIMBING AS AN INCLUSIVE SPORT



INCLUSIVE CLIMBING WORKSHOPS WITH ABLE 2 ADVENTURE

In February 2023 Able 2 Adventure delivered two Inclusive Climbing Workshops in collaboration with the ClimbScotland team. Participants ranged from parents of disabled young people, to Special Educational Needs schools, club volunteers and staff from local authority outdoor education and climbing walls. The project was funded by sportscotland allowing the cost to participants to be subsidised.

Both workshops were fully booked and brought out some great conversations around the work people are already doing and the work we can do as a collective to help supportive an inclusive climbing community in Scotland. Adaptive equipment and approaches are constantly evolving and it's important to realise that no-one has all the answers - you just need to be willing and approachable!

We look forward to continuing to work with Able 2 Adventure in the future and workshops are currently being planned for 2023-24.

PUTTING THE WHEELS IN MOTION WITH COMMON WHEEL

Common Wheel is a mental health charity based in Glasgow providing meaningful activities for people with mental illness. ClimbScotland approached Common Wheel to work with them to bring climbing into their offering for service users, and to upskill their volunteers to support climbing sessions through our FUNdamentals workshops and ongoing volunteering opportunities. In the future, ClimbScotland will be working closely with Common Wheel and identifying what other support will be beneficial to users and volunteers, to enable and empower them to deliver more activities so that service users can experience the social, mental and physical wellbeing benefits of climbing.





DEVELOPING SCOTLAND'S CLIMBING PATHWAY


In October 2022, ClimbScotland welcomed new Talent and Pathways Officer Jack Davis to the team. With major changes to the climbing pathway at GB Climbing level, Jack got straight to work managing developments in the Scottish Pathway for athletes at Junior level and below, creating the new Scotland Talent Squad, and an associated selection policy.

In collaboration with the BMC and GB Climbing, we successfully ran through a selection process that brought 16 young athletes to the Scotland Talent Squad, two of which have already gone on to

compete internationally with GB Climbing. To help build on these developments and to provide support for Scottish athletes, four coaches - Hannah Smith, Mike Mullins, Michael Bleazard and Pete Langlands - were recruited on a freelance basis who bring years of experience and expertise to the squad.

There has been a lot of learning and a lot to figure out in an area that we have not operated in before, but we certainly seem now to be laying some strong foundations for the future.

SCOTTISH CLIMBING WALL NETWORK



Our relationship and how we collaborate with indoor climbing facilities is key to our sports development in Scotland. In September 2022, the ClimbScotland team hosted a Scottish Climbing Wall Network meeting at Perth College Climbing Centre. It had been over two years since the team had invited walls from across Scotland to a meeting, providing a great opportunity for them to update on developments in Mountaineering Scotland, get input and feedback from Scottish walls into our work and to discuss how

we can work together to develop the future of the sport. We had a fantastic turn out with managers and staff from 12 Scottish walls attended the network meeting and engage in the discussions and workshops delivered over the course of the day.

We were delighted to welcome Nick Parkins, the Managing Director from the National Indoor Climbing Award Schemes (NICAS) to the meeting and provide them with great insight into our working relationship with the Scottish Climbing Wall Network.



REALROCK 2022

It was another busy year for the ClimbScotland RealRock programme, with 25 sessions delivered for 118 young people to develop their climbing skills across a variety of outdoor climbing venues in Scotland including bouldering, sport and trad climbing.

SCOTROCK PODCAST

The popular ScotRock podcast continued to reach new heights in popularity, with the ClimbScotland team chatting to well-known climbers including Rebekah Drummond, Matt Meyerhoff, Kirsty Pallas and Karishma Rogerson, to name a few while addressing issues of stress and anxiety when climbing in a two-part special with mental health professional and climber Lanah Dunsmuir.

CLIMBING ESSENTIALS VIDEO SERIES

The ClimbScotland team created a series of videos to support and promote good practice in climbing, including how to put on a harness correctly, belaying, lead climbing safely and basic technique and movement, all available to view on the ClimbScotland YouTube channel.

IFSC LEAD AND SPEED WORLD CUP

In a last minute change of venue, the IFSC lead and speed world cup came to Scotland in September 2022 with 6 Scottish Athletes competing as part of the GB team. ClimbScotland created a video wishing the home team all the best in this exciting event.

OUR ORGANISATION

Mountaineering Scotland have ended the 2022-2023 financial reporting period with a loss of £25,966, an improved position on the budget which had forecast a loss of £39,264. Following the delivery of healthy surpluses over the last two years, a conservative budget, with associated deficit, had been prepared in the knowledge that the third and final year of the 3-year financial plan would be challenging for a number of reasons. The impact of growing operational, insurance and other costs as well as other cost of living increases was acutely felt. As always, the financial situation was closely monitored throughout the year and forecasts adjusted to reflect the changing landscape.

OUR INCOME

Member subscriptions continue to provide the backbone of Mountaineering Scotland's income, enabling the team to continue the wide range of work done on behalf of our members. A continued growth in individual memberships (up 2%) and a strong club membership (up 6%) has boosted income, making up 57% of our total income for 2022-2023.

At the annual general meeting held in November 2022 members voted to raise subscription fees by 15% from April 2023. Fees were last increased on 1st April 2020. These increased funds are to support Mountaineering Scotland's ability to deliver its strategic plan amidst the rising costs and uncertain financial landscape. The impact of this rise will be seen in the coming financial year, from 1st April 2023 and was intended to deliver a break-even budget in 2023-24.

Sportscotland investment as of March 2023 was slightly higher than the 2022 investment at £238,300 (6% more) which also included some unbudgeted further funding secured to support inflationary pressures. This figure represents 37% of the total income, compared to 38% in 2021/22 and 40% in 2020/21. This funding supports our mountain safety programme, ClimbScotland and provides an additional contribution to cover support costs across the organisation.

Other income includes surplus from Mountain Safety courses and ClimbScotland events, sponsorship, member donations and merchandise sales through the online shop.

OUR EXPENDITURE

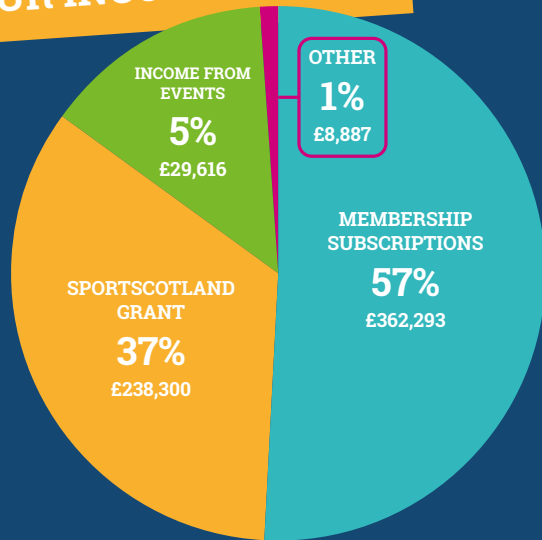
During this financial year, utilities and other costs rose at a critical rate. Activities were able to increase following the recruitment of some key resources. Office, staff expense and administration costs were tightly controlled amongst rising utility, factor and administrative costs.

Public liability insurance is a key part of our membership package however costs for this benefit have increased from £79,596 to £108,099 (36% increase). It is clear that these continued annual increases are untenable and as such an Insurance Working Group is reviewing a variety of alternative options.

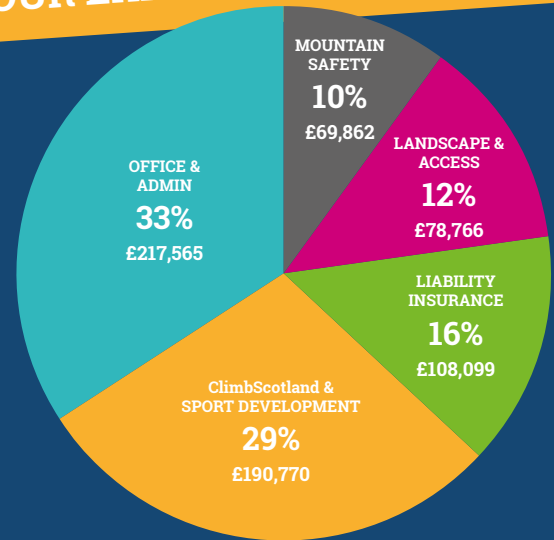
The print editions of Scottish Mountaineer had higher than anticipated costs due to rising paper, production and postage costs and a reduction in advertising revenue income compared to pre-pandemic levels. A review of how Scottish Mountaineer is delivered and how we can enhance our other member communications in a sustainable and cost effective way is being undertaken.

Expenditure on Mountain Safety and ClimbScotland activities has increased as activity levels return to pre-Covid levels and the costs associated with delivering a full programme of well subscribed events are felt.

OUR INCOME 2022-23

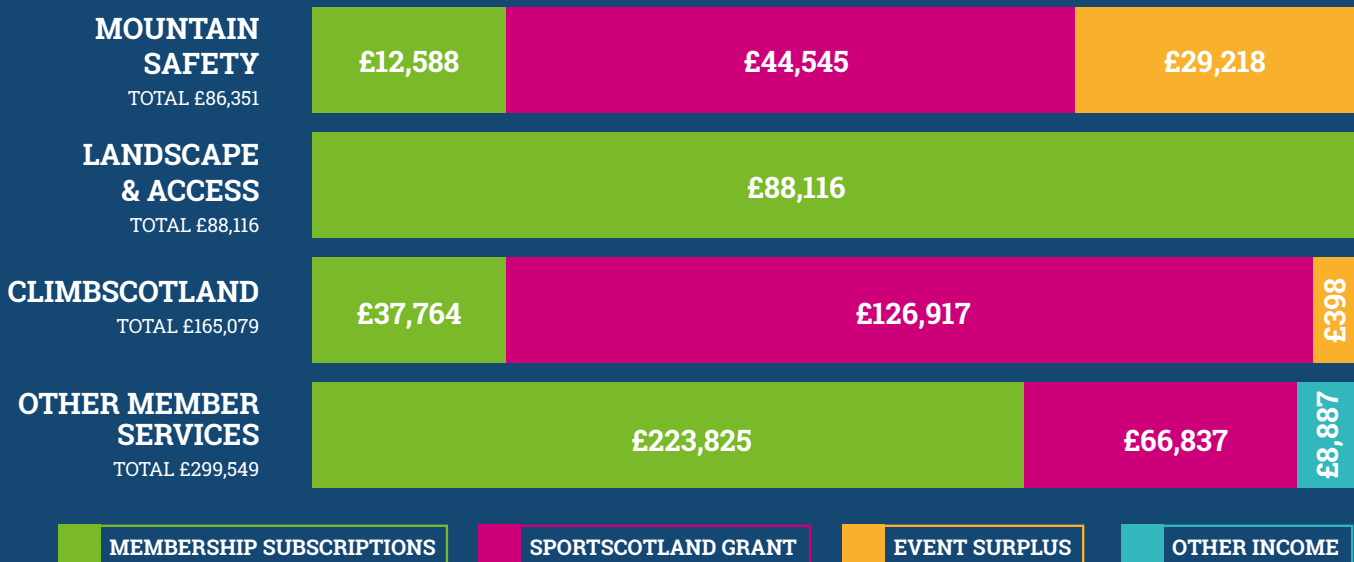


OUR EXPENDITURE 2022-23



OUR FUNDING AND HOW WE USE IT

We have illustrated how our funding is used across each activity, aligned with grant funding objectives from sportscotland, event surplus and membership subscriptions.



INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2022-23

For the period

1 Apr - 31 Mar	2022-23	2021-22
INCOME		
Membership	£362,293	£333,767
Grants	£238,300	£225,350
Other income	£38,503	£32,514
Total income	£639,096	£591,631
EXPENSES		
Staff costs	£440,905	£379,357
Civil liability insurance	£108,099	£79,596
Magazine costs	£31,245	£17,940
Other costs	£84,813	£74,975
Total expenses	£665,062	£551,868
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(£25,966)	£39,763



OUR ORGANISATION

There were significant changes to the staff team this year following the restructure of the Mountain Safety Team and the retirement of Neil Reid and Jane Anderson who both had 25 years' experience working for Mountaineering Scotland between them. Denise Logan also planned to retire in the summer of 2022, but due to difficulties in recruiting a suitable replacement, she kindly agreed to continue to support the CEO and Board in managing the finances on reduced hours until a replacement was found. Managing the impact of these changes required a significant investment in time, both in the recruitment process and in managing the handover of responsibilities to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. We are pleased to have delivered on that objective and delighted that new staff Karen McVeigh and Fiona McNicol and have settled well into the team.

Following the return to the office at the start of 2022 we have maintained a hybrid work pattern for those

based in the office, ensuring that we aim to have at least two members of staff available during normal working hours to respond to member enquiries. Maintaining positive health and wellbeing continues to be a key priority across the team.

Following the approval of the new strategic plan, an operational plan was developed to set out the activities and targets the staff team are working on to deliver the aims and objectives set out in the new strategy. This now aligns to the quarterly reports which are submitted to the Board meetings and establishes a clear line of sight from the strategy through to the operational activities the team delivers.

At the start of 2023 we participated in an external Development Audit commissioned by sportscotland and carried out by KPMG. This is normally undertaken every three years and provides an external review of our organisations structure, governance arrangements, financial management and HR procedures. The audit is intended to provide a 'health check' of the organisation along with some recommendations, and should provide reassurance to the staff, board and members about the management of the organisation and our working practices.

OUR PEOPLE



Mountaineering Scotland team development day, Aberfoyle Feb 22



OUR THANKS GO TO....

All the members and freelance instructors who support our mountain safety and skills courses.

The many dedicated volunteers that support youth climbing clubs, competitions, affiliated clubs and club huts.

All the members of the Scottish Climbing Wall Network, especially those that host competitions and events.

Our partners:

sportscotland, DMM, Scottish Mountain Rescue, Glenmore Lodge, Mountain Training Scotland, Association of Mountaineering Instructors, St John Scotland, Police Scotland, Mountain Weather Information Service, Met Office Aberdeen, Mountain Skills and Safety Scotland, Scottish Avalanche Information Service, Herald & Times Group, Snowsport Scotland, Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, Mill Cottage Trust, The Munro Society, Scottish Mountaineering Trust, The Winter Sports Legacy Trust, NICAS, Association of British Climbing Walls, GB Climbing, BDO, BMC, Mountaineering Ireland, Tiso, Cotswold Outdoor, Craighdon Mountain Sports, Rab Equipment.





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