

# Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Annual report 2015





# Don't be a spectator— get involved

By MCoFS President Brian Linington

My time as President of MCoFS is complete at the AGM in September. This brings to a close a service which began in 2008, first on the Executive, then as a Board Director, followed by a four year final term as President. During this period I have said hello and goodbye to many hard working and dedicated volunteers without whom MCoFS could not begin to function. Indeed many of the recent Directors have effectively taken on a part-time job! Fortunately they have all reported finding the experience very rewarding! In the last year I have seen four Directors leave. I offer personal thanks to Graham Boyle, Pamela Millar, Michael Anderson, and Paul Webster, who have all made big contributions, and made themselves easy and rewarding to work with. Michael in particular has made a big impression on the wider mountain safety community, and sets the bar high for his successor. Paul, too, made a significant contribution to membership services and communications, but left due to the need to devote more time to his business

What of the organisation itself? The good news is that, for the resources we have available, we are punching above our weight in terms of influence and contribution. We have come a long way since I first got involved, the transition from voluntary body to incorporated company is well past, and the company has settled down nicely. Membership is growing steadily, and the scope and level of MCoFS activity has recently been growing quickly. A big reason for this growth, which is mainly in the youth climbing and development area is investment by sportscotland in three new full time posts. In addition, plans are well advanced to purchase the West

Mill Street offices from the NTS. This will enable the company to invest some of its reserves in an asset which is expected to appreciate as well as provide stability for the organisation.

When I started my term of office, I recall telling the BBC I expected the main outward challenge to be landscape conservation and access matters. So it has proved. Through surveys we have sought to understand the views and attitudes of our membership, then to formulate a position. Our recent publication 'Respecting Scotland's Mountains' has met wide approval as a clear and balanced document which, if implemented, would allow coexistence between green energy and respect for the long term appearance and health of the land we live in. The trick now is to convince politicians to take a long term view.

Where next? To make our arguments on conservation and access issues heard we realised some time ago that it would be necessary to operate at the political and government level. Simply opposing inappropriate developments on a case by case basis was ineffective. We have had to 'up our game'. Within the foreseeable future the trend in this direction will increase. The next President – and the Board – is likely to have to operate alongside politicians and decision makers if we are to influence national life for the benefit of mountaineering. As ever we will be totally dependent on volunteers. In the recent past we have been fortunate in attracting some very good competent people. If you feel strongly about the mountains and mountaineering, don't just cheer from the sidelines - get involved!



# MCofS growing in numbers and service level

By David Gibson, Chief Officer

At the Members' Meeting in 2014 we announced our intention to develop and launch the ClimbScotland initiative, which we have defined as "the future face of the MCofS for indoor climbing for people in the age group 7 to 24 years".

ClimbScotland is a major new programme and includes a range of existing and new activities including communications, support for grass roots climbing, development of school and kids' climbing clubs and coaching, competitions and events.

We hope that members will join us at the national launch of ClimbScotland, which will be held on 19 September at EICA: Ratho on the same date as the Scottish Youth Climbing & Speed Championships and the ParaClimb competition.

ClimbScotland requires additional resources to implement the programme and we have recruited two Regional Development Officers following receipt of increased investment from sportscotland for this purpose. Paul Calton and Michael Jeans joined our team in June and both are well qualified to implement our development plans - for the east and west of Scotland respectively.

One of the aims of ClimbScotland is to attract new people to the sport of climbing and new members to the MCofS. On this theme the year to March 2015 saw an increase of 2.7% in membership to 12,509. This included a welcome 6.7% increase in the number of affiliated clubs, which rose to 142, with a rise of 4.3% in registered members of clubs

to 6,810. Individual members continued to increase, albeit by a slower rate than in previous years, by 1% to 5,699.

We recognised during the year that there was a need to improve communication with potential and existing members and to develop and update the membership benefits package. An increased focus on landscape and access issues and other campaigns was felt to require a similar skill set and the board decided to recruit a full time Member Services and Campaigns Officer. Emily Bryce joined us from The National Trust in April 2015 and will be a welcome addition to the team in Perth.

It's pleasing to see our new membership system in place. IT projects have a propensity to disappoint and, unlike an ordnance survey map, the route to a satisfactory conclusion is not always evident. Membership Administrator Jane Anderson has put in a tremendous amount of time and effort to see the project through and I hope that our members will find the new system to be a significant improvement.

Finally, I would like to thank Brian Linington and the other directors who have left the board during the year for their dedication and hard work. It's been my pleasure to work closely with Brian and Michael over recent years and their contribution to the work of the MCofS has been significant. I wish them all well in their mountaineering adventures and hope they will keep in contact with their friends at the MCofS.



# Mountain Safety drive builds on past progress

By Michael Anderson, Mountain Safety Director

The last year has been one of consolidation for our mountain safety work, with past decisions bearing fruit in terms of participation and of communicating the mountain safety message to a wider audience.

There remains much work to be going on with though, especially in getting the safety message out to the general public and with particular reference there to Ben Nevis – something which will occupy time in the year ahead.

2015-16 will also be an exciting year for our work with student mountaineering clubs. Recruitment of the St John Scotland Mountaineering Instructor will add a new dimension to our work with this important group.

Nick Carter MIC has been appointed as the St John Scotland Mountaineering Instructor and will attend student club meets and give bespoke training and support to participants. This post is funded by St John Scotland and is an excellent example of preventative spend.

As is our mountain safety training programme, ably run by Heather Morning, our Mountain Safety Advisor.

This programme has seen a continued high level of participation, with this year's winter lecture series reaching 875 people and confirmation that the 2015-16 pro-

gramme will again be supported by Cotswold Outdoor, Tiso, the Munro Society and winter lecture sponsors Scottish Walks / Herald and Times Group Magazines.

Participation in the student safety programme was also strong, suggesting that the decision to move away from an emphasis on lectures to this group was the right one. The Scottish Mountaineering Trust has given £3000 for running the annual SMART Student Weekend in November.

However, numbers attending our members' winter skills courses were slightly disappointing this year, which has prompted a move for the coming winter, using Mill Cottage in Glen Feshie as a base rather than Glenmore Lodge, in order to reduce costs to members.



*Heather Morning with members on a winter mountaineering course*

# Mountain safety



## Working with others

We continue to work with our partner organisations Mountain Training Scotland and MTUK, which continue to make good progress in broadening the range of awards to better meet needs. Examples of this include the Lowland Leader and the Hill and Mountain Skills awards, both launched in 2014. It was good to see MTS reach its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014, celebrated with an excellent dinner at Glenmore Lodge.

Following consultation with its members, the Scottish Mountain Safety Forum was wound up in 2014. We think the collaboration with others which this was designed to achieve can continue to be effective without the forum, but we will monitor the situation.

The Mountain Safety Advisory Group, on the other hand, continues to support our work and we strongly value the voluntary contributions of all who attend. We are also on the lookout for new members.

Other partner organisations with whom we work on mountain safety issues include Glenmore Lodge, Scottish Mountain Rescue, the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, Mountain Aid, and walkhighlands.

## Communications

In October 2014 we supported the Mountain Aid charity in the successful Scottish Mountain Safety Day in Stirling, and in January we issued revised

guidance to members and the public on the engagement of professional mountaineers.

The implementation of a mountain safety communications calendar is bearing fruit, with a planned programme of seasonal mountain safety press releases, which can be adapted at short notice to cope with unforeseen events/changes in conditions, leading to an improved profile for mountain safety in the media during 2014-15.

The long awaited new MCofS website will be a further opportunity to significantly enhance the range and quality of mountain safety material available online.

## Mountain Weather Information Service

The contracts for this highly popular and respected forecasting service has been renewed for another year, and the MCofS is continuing to support discussions between the service provider and sportscotland to ensure an effective and resilient service for the long term.

## Farewell

My term as director ends at the AGM. I have found my work with the MCofS both enjoyable and challenging, and would like to thank everyone – directors, staff, volunteers, partner organisations – for their cooperation and support. I wish my successor as the director responsible for mountain safety every success.



# Campaigning for Scotland's mountains

By Dave Gordon and Mike Watson,  
Landscape & Access Directors

This year we published [Respecting Scotland's Mountains](#), an updated assessment of the benefits of Scotland respecting and protecting its mountains and wild places. Drawn up with strong support through a members' consultation, it describes the future aims of the MCoFS in relation to landscape issues and indicates the kind of projects which we will be likely to oppose.

On the back of this publication we launched a petition through the 38 Degrees website. This petition asks the Scottish Government:

*To ensure that Scotland's precious remaining areas of wild land, as identified by Scottish Natural Heritage's wild land map, are fully protected from large scale development.*

*To change current Scottish planning policy to clarify that planning applications for industrial developments in such areas will be unacceptable.*

The petition currently stands at over 11,000 signatures – and rising – and will be submitted to the Scottish Parliament in the autumn.

On a number of issues we have worked with partners such as the National Trust for Scotland, John Muir Trust, Ramblers Scotland and the Munro Society to influence national policies through direct lobbying of politicians.

The Scottish planning policy which came into effect

in June 2014, formally including the Areas of Wild Land map, has added pressure on local authorities and Scottish Government Ministers to refuse consent for wind farms on wild land. However, the policy lacks strength and several applications for development on wild land have been awaiting decisions for many years.

We continue to make planning and consultation responses, with 40 in the last year. These included six new wind farm objections: Culachy, Millenium South (both Fort Augustus), Caplich (Assynt),



## Landscape and access

Macritch (Angus), Whitelaw Brae (Borders) and Talladh-a-Bheithe (Rannoch). On the Talladh a Bheithe application we worked closely with the local campaign group Keep Rannoch Wild, opposition to the wind farm plans gaining much support through the endorsement of Diana Gabaldon, author of the popular Outlander books and series, which is set in the area. Perth & Kinross Council has subsequently lodged a holding objection on this.

We also deprecated but did not object to a number of other applications on the basis that they would have little additional impact in areas that are already wind farm landscapes.

On a positive note, successes included the refusal of Glenmorrie Wind Farm by the Scottish Government and the withdrawal of Nathro and Woodlands Wind Farms by the developers when faced with local authority opposition.

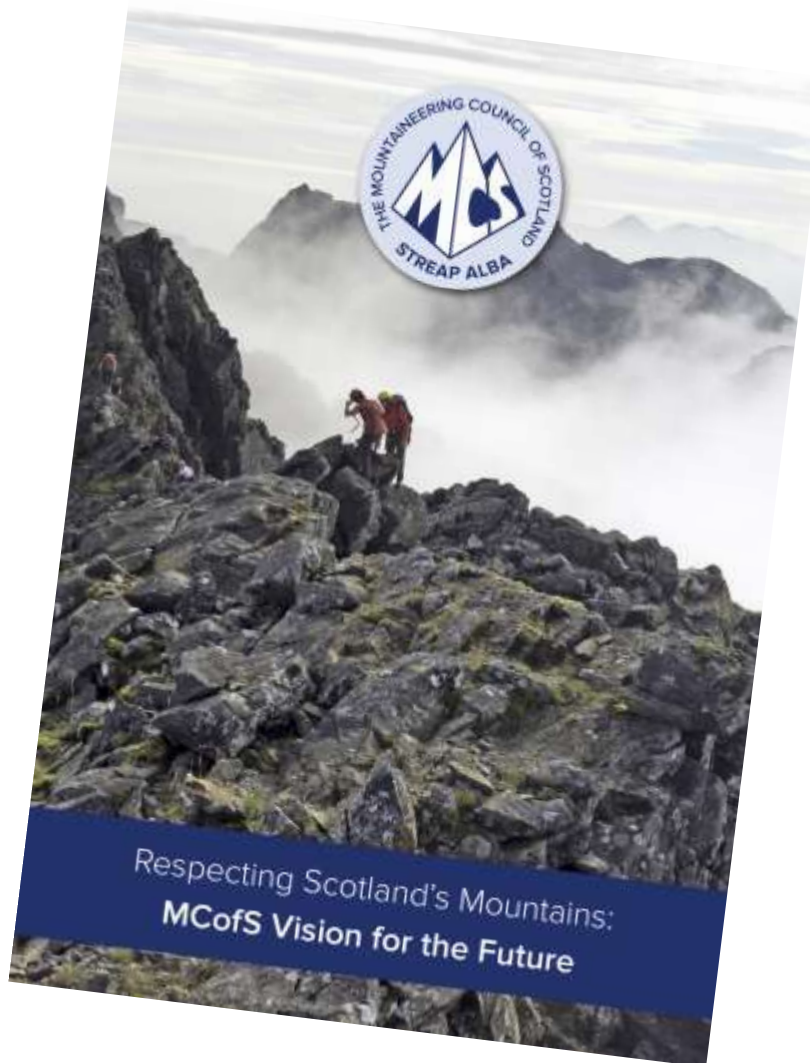
Our landscape work also included campaigning on hill tracks, working with many organisations to eventually see the Scottish Government make limited changes to the permitted development rights afforded to landowners, introducing a system of prior notification. However, this falls far short of the need for such developments to be brought fully into the planning system.

### Access

North Chesthill Estate in Glen Lyon has been infamous for decades for its resistance to responsible public access, and an online survey showed many people are continuing to experience problems. The reception a visitor will receive is unpredictable but

the estate is commonly perceived as hostile and its actions appear designed to deter, intimidate and exclude the public. Nearly a decade after the passage of Scottish access legislation, Perth and Kinross Council's failure to uphold local access rights is unacceptable. A legal opinion is now being obtained by MCofS concerning the feasibility of a judicial review relating to the council's lack of action in the context of the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003.

A national park would be expected to be exemplary in its position on public access, but we were disappointed by Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park's proposals to introduce bylaws to ban wild camping in parts of the park. We recognised there was an issue of camping capacity and of irresponsible behaviour by a small number of car campers, but argued that this should be tackled by increasing capacity and enforcing existing legislation. We have robustly opposed the proposed bylaws, which are an attack on responsible access by the majority to tackle problems caused by a minority.



An example of how working together can bear fruit is our cooperation on the matter of nesting birds. Working with Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Raptor Study Group, the MCofS has been able to improve its existing 'traffic light' system, which informs climbers which crags have nesting raptors and should be avoided, and which ones are safe to climb.

Finally, we must thank the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC for their financial support for our campaigning work on landscape and access issues.



# Our news and campaigns in the media

By Paul Webster, former Communications & Member Services Director

Our quarterly magazine *The Scottish Mountaineer* is seen as a key benefit by members as well as keeping them informed about all aspects of the work of the MCofS. Magazines have, by necessity, a long lead time and so are not always the best way to keep members up to date with the latest developments, so *Scottish Mountaineer* is now supplemented by our *Members' News* monthly email bulletins. The new MCofS website - which will be made more readily accessible on mobiles - is set for a 2015 launch.

## Media presence

As well as editing the magazine and *Members' News*, our Communications Officer also sends out regular press releases - both to a planned schedule (for example, promoting winter safety) and responding to more immediate issues. These are picked up widely by the media and have helped consolidate our profile as the voice of Scotland's mountaineers and hillwalkers. We are now regularly contacted for our views on upcoming stories and issues, and have taken part in TV and radio interviews and debates.

## Campaign communications

The MCofS has to respond to planning applications with the potential to greatly damage Scotland's stunning mountain landscapes, which are so key to our members' enjoyment. Although the proportion

of applications we object to is tiny, there is a danger of the public getting the impression we are a negative organisation that spends its time complaining and finding fault. It was therefore great to have the opportunity this year to put forward our positive vision for Scotland's mountains, as detailed elsewhere, through the publication of 'Respecting Scotland's Mountains'. This outlines how we feel our precious landscapes should be protected and enhanced, whilst making clear the benefits they can give not just to mountaineers and hillwalkers, but to local communities, the economy, and the wider public. *Respecting Scotland's Mountains* received some excellent coverage and support, and was backed by our launch of an online petition calling for full protection for Scotland's wild land. This has gained over 11,000 signatures so far, and will further help to demonstrate the strength of public feeling.

## Member Services & Campaigns

Our capacity for campaigning work such as this was boosted in April when we were joined by Emily Bryce, taking up the new full-time role of Member Services and Campaigns Officer. Emily has a background in marketing and management at the National Trust and, as well as enhancing the profile of our campaigns, she will be looking to help improve the service and benefits we offer to our members.





# Helping clubs to meet their challenges

By Clubs Director Michelle Sweeney

It's been a busy but superb year on the club front, with a steady flow of requests to attend meetings and give talks and presentations. My diary, I'm happy to report, is already filling up with appointments for visits over the autumn and winter seasons. A number of common themes continue to arise from meetings with clubs, inclusive of:

- problems created by the formation of cliques that dominate committees and stand in the way of change
- ageing demographics
- recruitment issues
- dealing with change and communications mechanisms
- the challenge of getting new blood onto committees.

## Getting it right!

I've given lots of advice on strategies to tackle these issues, encouraging clubs to look at the way they promote and package themselves, positively selling the benefits and not the heavy commitment involved in being a committee member and in general being more aware of the importance of positive communication both within the club and externally. I'm often asked which clubs are getting it right when it comes to being progressive and increasing memberships. As clubs are clearly keen to learn from each other, we are now looking into the development of an online mechanism to facilitate this and hope to have something in place in the coming months which will allow them to share their challenges and successes.

Throughout the year I've really enjoyed getting out and touching base with clubs and have endeavoured to engage further via a regular column in the

Scottish Mountaineer, updating on issues and outlining strategies for success.

More recently there has been an increasing number of clubs reporting success with change programmes and recruitment, which has been uplifting, and it's inspiring to see the passion with which they are currently investing in their futures.

## Awards

The future of clubs and the encouragement of future generations of mountaineers are closely linked, so I was delighted to be involved in the development of ClimbScotland – and especially to combine its launch with the launch of two new awards, which will recognise both individual sporting achievement and the contribution made by volunteers who support clubs catering for young people. The annual *ClimbScotland Individual Achievement Award* and the *MCofS Outstanding Voluntary Contribution Award* will be officially announced at this year's Members' Meeting on 26th September, with the first awards presented in 2016.

## Future plans

Looking ahead, I'm very much looking forward to continuing to meet with more clubs. It's a great way for me to keep my finger on the pulse and is a genuine pleasure to meet so many dedicated folk with so much to offer.

Our drive to improve communications continues, facilitated by the launch of our new website in the coming months, and we will also be engaging with clubs in a survey designed to allow us to further shape our support to them, ensuring it remains relevant and driven by demand rather than assumptions.



# A year of new plans coming to fruition

By Kevin Howett (Sport Development Officer) and Jamie Smith (Team Leader— ClimbScotland)

## ClimbScotland

A major project this year has been the development of ClimbScotland as the future face of the MCofS for indoor climbing for the 7-24-year age group. The development of this has been headed up by Jamie Smith, who becomes Team Leader – ClimbScotland, with the support of Sports Development Officer Kevin Howett.

As part of the ClimbScotland project we have employed two Regional Development Officers, who will work with youth groups and climbing walls to support increased participation in climbing.

The team (pictured above) has been working with other staff to create the new initiative, which will have its own custom-made website and will cover grass roots climbing, schools and clubs, climbing walls, coaching, competitions and events – as well as an introduction to outdoor activities.

This has been an exciting and ambitious project for the MCofS, and is due to be officially launched in September. The team's focus over the summer has been to work together in getting new, engaging information and resources for the ClimbScotland website.

## Competitions, coaching and training

Throughout the year the MCofS has continued to organise and/or support a range of climbing competitions, including the Scottish Tooling Series, the Scottish Youth Bouldering Championships and the Scottish Youth Climbing Championships, the Scottish Schools Climbing Competition, the Scottish Students

Bouldering Festival, the Scottish Students Sports Bouldering Competition, and three rounds of the Youth Climbing Series as well as the British Final. Associated with the YCS were two open days with come-and-try and coaching sessions included. An addition to the competitive scene was the setting up of a Scottish Speed Team. This was launched at EICA: Ratho with good TV, radio and newspaper coverage and the team has since delivered regular come-and-try sessions and a Speed Academy, all manned by volunteers.



*Speed climbing received a boost with the formation of a Scottish Squad*

# Sport development and youth participation



*The paraclimb event attracted wide interest*

Another innovation was ParaClimb Scotland, launched at Ratho, with support from paraplegic climber Jamie Andrew. A successful event and competition saw disabled climbers from all over attending, some experienced and others climbing for the first time. In January 2015 we delivered an Equal Adventure Disability Training workshop, giving training to eight people who are or will be training or coaching disabled climbers.

Training and coaching plays an important part in our activities and we have continued to provide FUNdamentals of Climbing 1 and 2 workshops. This year we also delivered our first FUNdas 3 workshop and are developing a physical training workshop which should be launched later this year.

Delivery of the Climbing Academies and the main competitions is now by Glasgow's TCA. The first academy was held at EICA: Ratho. The Scottish Squad is a main target for the Academies, although all registered for the YCS (Youth Climbing Series), can benefit from them.

## **Climbing walls**

Over the year we supported route setting at the school/community wall at Perth High School, and helped complete the Community Playpark Boulder in Stirling. A major development was the MCoFS-supported outdoor Boulder Park at Cuningar Loop,

Glasgow, due to open in spring 2016. This will be a year-round attraction, ideal for those new to the sport as well as experienced climbers.

## **Bursary awards**

In 2014 we gave bursaries to two IFSC competitors and assisted a Big Wall trip to the Dolomites, a disabled expedition to the Alps, and three expeditions, to the Himachal Pradesh, to Greenland, and to Tien Shan.

This year bursaries have gone to two expeditions (Himachal Pradesh and Tien Shan), two big Alpine wall expeditions, and three junior and one adult international competitors.

## **GB Teams**

Scottish junior climbers selected for 2014-15 are: Rachel Carr, William Bosi, Max Milne, Rebecca Kinghorn and Angus Davidson.

Mike Mullins was appointed as rep and coach on the GB Boulder Team, and Natalie Berry was appointed as rep on the GB Lead Team.

Alexander Bosi attended two IFSC Speed Competitions, and Anna Wells, supported by a bursary, attended five UIAA World Cup Ice Climbing Competitions, and reached the finals.

## **REALrock**

2015 saw more sessions being run throughout Scotland, with the creation of new north dates supporting young climbers making the transition from indoor to outdoor climbing.

We have also seen greater demand for support from youth focused climbing clubs looking to run their own outdoors sessions. This will be a key part of the Regional Development Officers' roles.

## **Duke of Edinburgh – Gold Achievers**

Over the last year we have been working closely with DofE looking at opportunities for our two organisations to support young people participating in mountaineering activities. July this year saw the launch of a new offer of free MCoFS membership to DofE Gold achievers in Scotland. On average, the DofE award scheme sees one thousand young people in Scotland achieving their Gold award.



# Dedication impresses as staff expands

By Donald Shiach, People Resources Director

This has been my first year as a MCoFS Director, and my first impression is of the dedication and expertise that all the staff bring to their jobs. The team has grown by 50 % this year, with Emily, Paul, Michael and Nick joining the existing group of David, Kevin, Heather, Neil, Denise, Jamie, Andrea and Jane. As a result, the Board has agreed that a degree of restructuring is necessary, not only to create a less flat structure but also to enhance career opportunities for the existing staff.

By the very nature of my role, much of the work I have been involved in to date relates to giving advice to the Board and to the Chief Officer on operational HR matters and thus is not appropriate for inclusion in the Annual Report. However, I can report that during the course of the year, we took advantage of an offer from our human resources advi-

sors, Gravitare HR, to carry out a 'healthcheck' of our HR policies and practices. This confirmed that the work of my predecessor, Graham Boyle, had been valuable in bringing the Employee Handbook up to date, and the main recommendation that was made by Gravitare was that we develop a more formal mechanism for communicating collectively with the staff. This work will be taken forward in the course of this year through discussion with the staff group.

Elsewhere in this Annual Report, there will be mention of the ongoing saga of the purchase of the Old Granary building. When that purchase is complete, there will be a need to review the Health and Safety provisions in the light of changes to the layout of the office space, and that work will again take place in the latter part of this year.

## The Board

**President:** Brian Linington

**Treasurer:** Robert McMurray

### Directors:

**Landscape & Access:**

**Dave Gordon and Mike Watson**

**People Resources:** Donald Shiach

**Mountain Safety:** Michael Anderson

**Development:** Currently vacant

**Clubs:** Michelle Sweeney

**Communications & Member Services:**

**Currently vacant**

## Staff

**Chief Officer:** David Gibson

**Sport Development:** Kevin Howett

**Team Leader—ClimbScotland:** Jamie Smith

**Regional Development Officers:**

**Michael Jeans & Paul Calton**

**Mountain Safety:** Heather Morning

**Team Leader— Member Services &**

**Communications:** Emily Bryce

**Communications:** Neil Reid

**Finance:** Denise Logan

**Membership:** Jane Anderson

**Access:** Andrea Partridge (Consultant)

# Meet the MCofS team

The paid staff of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland are a small but dedicated band who work hard to deliver a quality service to the Board and all our members. Delivering advice, running skills and safety courses and safeguarding access rights, they help to make the MCofS the voice of hill walkers, mountaineers and climbers in Scotland.

The staff on this page may already be familiar to you. And on the next page you'll meet the new faces who have joined us in the course of this year.



**David Gibson,  
Chief Officer**



**Heather Morning,  
Mountain Safety  
Adviser**



**Jamie Smith, Team  
Leader—ClimbScotland**



**Kevin Howett,  
Sport  
Development Officer**



**Denise Logan,  
Finance Officer**



**Neil Reid,  
Communications  
Officer**



**Jane Anderson,  
Membership Officer**



**Andrea Partridge,  
Access Officer  
(Consultant)**

# Meet the new faces on the MCofS staff team



**Emily Bryce,  
Team Leader—  
Member Services &  
Communications**

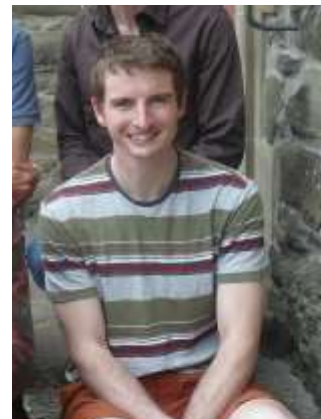
Emily originally joined us in April, and was subsequently appointed Team Leader: Member Services & Communications in July. She will help improve the services we offer members, recruit more supporters and raise the profile of our work and campaigns. She has previously worked in marketing and management with the National Trust.



**Paul Calton,  
Regional Development  
Officer (East)**

Paul and Michael started in June and will be key in our ClimbScotland initiative, which is the future face of the MCofS for indoor climbing for people aged 7 to 24.

Paul has a BA in Adventure Tourism and Outdoor Pursuits and has been working in the outdoor sector for eight years. He has his Mountain Instructor Award and Winter Mountain Leader Award,



**Michael Jeans,  
Regional Development  
Officer (West)**

as well as paddle sport and mountain biking qualifications.

Michael is a keen boulderer and former Assistant Manager at Glasgow Climbing Centre. He is an MCofS endorsed coach, involved in the delivery of the FUNdamentals courses. He has Climbing Wall, Single Pitch and Climbing Wall Leading Awards, and is working his way through the Coaching Award Scheme.



## ...and the St John Scotland Mountaineering Instructor

Nick Carter is contracted by St John Scotland, but will be working closely with the MCofS team to deliver his vital safety message to members of university clubs, going out with them on meets to share skills and advice out on the hill.

Inverness-based Nick has been climbing since he was just 12 and has been living in Scotland for 17 years, his first job here being at Outward Bound's Lochail Centre. He holds the Mountaineering Instructor Certificate (MIC), the highest qualification in the British Mountaineering Instructor scheme, and has made numerous new routes at home and abroad.



# A year of continued growth for MCofS

By Robert McMurray, Treasurer

Financial Year 2014-15 demonstrated continued growth for MCofS, with increased sportscotland investment for our activities and an encouraging increase in income from memberships.

As a headline figure, the end of year accounts show a surplus of £74,671, which builds upon similar surplus levels in each year from 2011-12. It should be noted however that the surplus does include almost £35k of committed (but uncontracted) spend, that whilst having been included within the 2014-15 budget, will only be utilised in the 2015-16 financial year. This has not been added to the budget spend for 2015-16.

sportscotland investment in Scottish mountaineering increased to £226,725, due to deferred income from 2013-14 and will increase further to £285,300 as indicated in the 2016 budget. Significant work continues to ensure that we reach our investment targets and can justify further levels of investment in future.

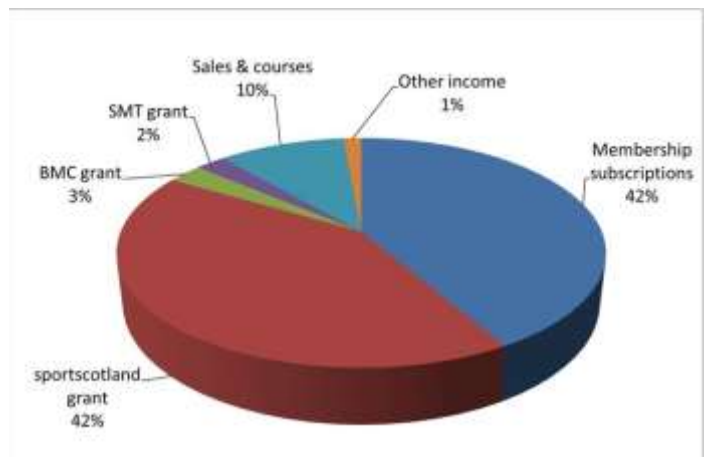
Landscape and access work continues to be supported by both the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT), and the BMC. The Mill Cottage Trust also provided a grant in 2014-15 to support a student and young person's winter skills weekend.

We are very grateful to sportscotland, SMT, BMC and MCT, for their continued support.

The figures contained in this report are based on the 2014-15 accounts certified by our accountants, Johnston & Co.

## Income

MCofS income increased to £541,605; and of this, membership income increased by 2.1%. This reflects a continuing upward trend from last year, in our membership, and in particular, in club membership numbers.



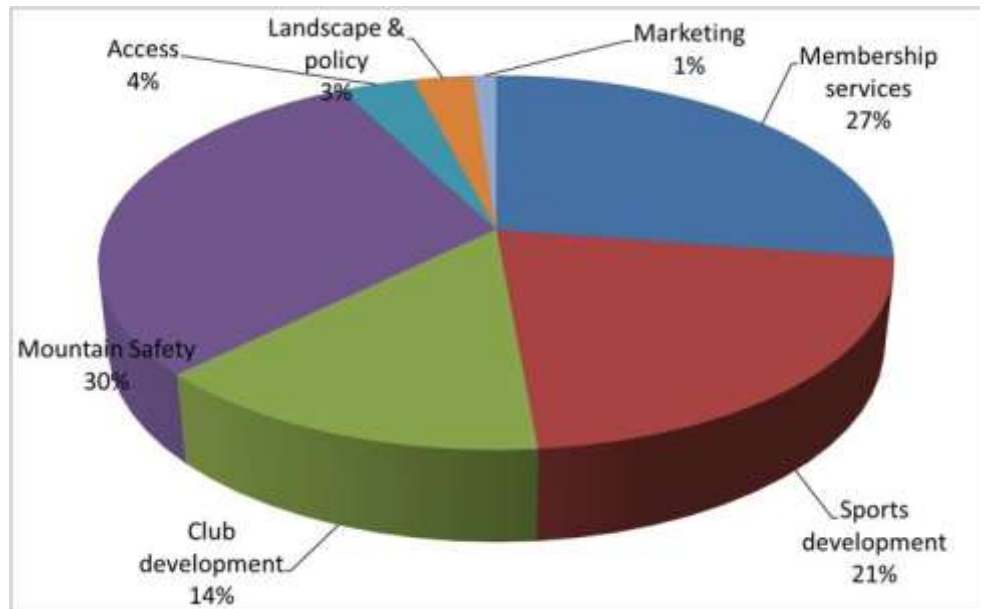
Income 2014-15 (£541,605)

## Expenditure

Total expenditure decreased in 2014-15, with almost all areas of expenditure positive to budget for the financial year.

## Treasurer's report 2014-15

When considering expenditure, the first priority of MCofS is to service its membership, with the surplus funds thereafter, used to fund its activities. As in previous years, in order to provide greater clarity on how subscription levels are set and where subscription monies are spent, the charts which accompany this report provide clearer detail on the sources of MCofS income, the cost of the main activity areas undertaken and the proportion of a member's subscription that goes towards them.



**Total expenses 2014-15 (£467,497)**

### Balance Sheet

The total capital and reserves as at 31 March 2015 stood at a healthy £307,723. That sum however includes the committed (but uncontracted) spend from 2014-15 and amounts set aside for the purchase of the MCofS offices at The Granary. This has been delayed for reasons outwith MCofS control but should be completed by the time this report goes to print. In that regard it should also be noted that MCofS have not been required to pay rent from 1 September 2014, in acknowledgement of the delay and in anticipation of completion.

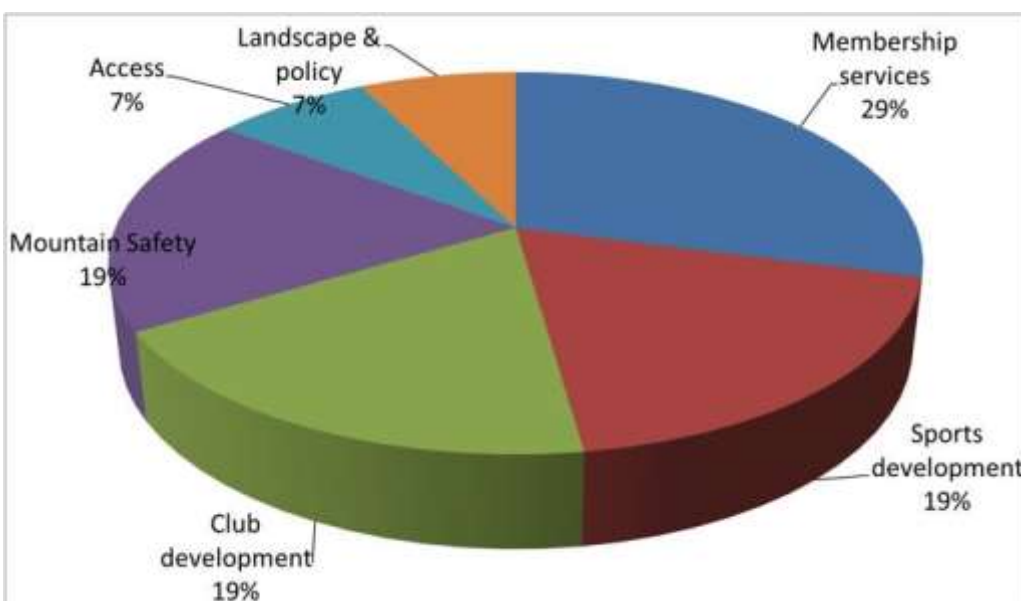
### Budget 2015-16

As with previous years, the Board has sought to take a comprehensive, albeit cautious and con-

servative approach to the budget for 2015-16, which continues to be based, on a fully-costed operational plan.

Whilst most areas of the budget remain unchanged from 2014-15, the principal changes are to income, to reflect a further increase in the sportscotland grant, for the appointment of two Regional Development Officers. Salary costs are increased to reflect both these posts and the appointment of Emily Bryce in April 2015, as MCofS Member Services and Campaigns Officer. Expenditure on activities has also increased to reflect the increased level of MCofS activities.

For the first time in many years, the MCofS Board has approved a budget deficit in 2015-16, agreed primarily for the purpose of investing the reserves built up over the last years, to assist the growth in membership numbers, the promotion of mountain safety and to address future landscape and access issues, as they arise.



**Allocation of subscription income 2014-15 (£225,559)**

The MCofS continues therefore, to invest in its continued growth, development and future.



Treasurer's report 2014-15

<b>The Mountaineering Council of Scotland</b>				
<b>Income &amp; Expenditure Account</b>				
<b>For the period ending 31 March</b>		<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Actuals reviewed by Johnston & Co, Chartered Accountants, from the records supplied by the MCoFS		<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Subscriptions/fees	Individuals	125,115	124,268	127,039
	Clubs	98,000	99,731	92,791
	Associates	1,885	1,560	1,170
Grants/investment	sportscotland	285,300	226,725	203,875
	Scottish Mountaineering Trust	12,600	12,600	12,600
	The BMC	14,800	14,800	14,800
Donations		3,000	3,038	3,105
Sales & courses		72,760	54,332	54,159
Royalties/commission		800	625	1,123
Rents		300	1,265	1,517
Other		1,500	2,661	6,938
		<b><u>616,060</u></b>	<b><u>541,605</u></b>	<b><u>519,117</u></b>
Less cost of sales:				
Courses & comps		(108,380)	(74,272)	(68,218)
Expedition awards		(4,000)	(4,500)	(4,000)
L&A inquiries		(13,751)	(536)	(14,754)
Scottish Mountaineer		(14,000)	(11,125)	(10,750)
MWIS		(42,300)	(42,300)	(42,300)
MTS		(28,000)	(28,000)	(28,000)
Stock movement		0	(797)	954
		(210,431)	(161,530)	(167,068)
<b>Gross Profit</b>		<b>405,629</b>	<b>380,075</b>	<b>352,049</b>
<b>Administrative Expenditure</b>				
Officer salaries & expenses		310,148	191,735	185,193
Admin salaries & expenses		17,651	15,198	16,408
Rent		1,200	9,600	9,600
Office and admin expenses		36,100	28,308	29,731
Advertising & website		4,900	1,232	7,818
Civil liability insurance		31,661	31,280	35,007
Board & Advisory Group expenses		5,000	4,063	3,998
General Meeting & Gathering expenses		600	516	2,003
Membership database		3,348	(440)	6,711
Bank charges		4,900	4,402	4,778
Marketing		9,200	5,259	5,303
Depreciation		8,999	1,366	1,899
Miscellaneous		11,650	13,448	9,820
		<b><u>445,357</u></b>	<b><u>305,967</u></b>	<b><u>318,269</u></b>
Operating Profit		(39,728)	74,108	33,780
Interest (Net)		250	704	895
Corporation tax		-	(141)	(179)
<b>Net surplus for the period</b>		<b>(39,478)</b>	<b>74,671</b>	<b>34,496</b>

## Equality



The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport (the Standard) was launched by the UK sports councils in November 2004 to help address the inequalities that exist within the sports sector. It is a framework to guide sports organisations, including governing bodies of sport, county sports partnerships, sports councils and national sports organisations towards achieving equality.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland has achieved Foundation status, demonstrating a clear commitment to equality and that this commitment has been communicated to all staff and volunteers. It also shows that the MCofS is aware of its position in terms of equality.

## Acknowledgements

- Our volunteers, including elected members, those contributing to advisory and working groups, kids' competitions and events
- sportscotland for its continued support for, and investment in, Scottish mountaineering
- The BMC for its grant support for our landscape and access work, and partnership working on sports development and coaching
- The Scottish Mountaineering Trust for grant support for our access work and REALrock events
- Glenmore Lodge for their support for MCofS mountain safety work and their contribution to many other initiatives
- Mountain Training UK and Mountain Training Scotland for their partnership working and support for coaching initiatives
- The Sporting Chance Initiative for their financial support for the research, and the Institute of Design Innovation at the Glasgow School of Art for their research report into branding and design options for the ClimbScotland initiative
- Herald and Times Group Magazines and Scottish Walks Magazine for their support for the MCofS winter lecture series
- Members of the Scottish Climbing Wall Network for their support for climbing competitions and events
- Other sponsors and supporters including The Munro Society, Silva, Tiso and Cotswold
- The Interactive Design Institute and Summit Financial Services for their support for Children's Climbing Events
- The many members and others who have made voluntary donations during the year



Thanks to Al Halewood for our cover image of Laks Indrakaran scrambling in Glen Coe on an MCofS course