

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY

1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND
WALKCLIMBSKI

OUR VISION

A Scotland where everyone can enjoy mountaineering activities safely and responsibly.

Mountaineering Scotland is committed to supporting Scotland's diverse community of hill walkers, climbers and snowsports tourers to participate safely, working in partnership to protect our hills and mountains for all, and to develop the sport of indoor climbing.

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A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

ANNE BUTLER



At Mountaineering Scotland, people are at the heart of everything we do.

From the staff team, Directors, members, partners and volunteers, we wouldn't be able to achieve anything without you and as we look back on 2025, every achievement is a testament to your energy, enthusiasm and commitment.

Everything we deliver aligns with our core strategic priorities: growing our inclusive community, building skills and confidence, protecting the places we love, and strengthening the partnerships that make Mountaineering Scotland the advocate for Scotland's mountaineering community; striving to connect people, protect access, and ensuring our hills remain open, welcoming and enjoyed responsibly by all.

Whether you are a walker, climber, mountaineer or skier, we expanded what we offer as part of your membership: adding Personal Accident Insurance for individual and club members and partnering with popular brands including OS Maps, Paramo, HydroFlask and Scottish Mountaineering Press to deliver even more exclusive benefits, tools and resources to support your mountaineering activities.

Our focus on mountain safety saw us launch new videos, run new Advanced Belay Workshops and deliver the 'Winter Unlocked' evenings alongside our extensive programme of skills courses. Our events brought people together, from the Scottish Boulder Champs to the Fun Comp Climbing Final and inclusive climbing workshops.

We continued to champion inclusion: marking International Women's Day with our 'Women Outdoors' online discussion and running our sell-out Gaelic Hill Names workshop. We hosted the 'Your Hills' evening at the Fort William Mountain Festival – celebrating women in the outdoors, mental wellbeing and breaking down barriers for ethnic minority groups and underrepresented communities.

The next generation of outdoors adventurers were supported through the milestone 25th student SMART weekend, the Student Winter Skills Weekend Student Winter Climbing Weekend. None of these events would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, who give their time and skill so generously. Alongside our partners and volunteers we continued to give something back to the hills with the ongoing Its Up to Us footpath repair project on An Teallach and Glen Brittle, ensuring sustainable access to the hills for generations to come.

This year has shown that we are stronger together.

I am proud to be a member of Mountaineering Scotland and I hope you are too.

Thank you for being part of it.



Anne Butler
President, Mountaineering Scotland

CHAIR OF THE BOARD REPORT

JO DYTCH



Our growing community at Mountaineering Scotland is special, and we are delighted you have chosen to be part of it. In today's world, we know people carefully consider where they dedicate their time and resources, so we do not take your membership for granted. Similarly, we understand that the motivation to become a member is different for everyone, and as our membership grows so does our diversity as an organisation.

The catalyst to join us may have been to support our work in access rights in the outdoors, it may be to help us protect our unique landscape and wildlife, or even to develop your individual or collective skills. Feedback over the last few years tells us many of you have joined to be part of the wider mountaineering community in Scotland. If you're new here, welcome, and if you have supported our work for a while, thank you for the continued trust you place in us to deliver your priorities.

As I reflect on 2025, two things are abundantly clear. Firstly, the environment we operate in is ever changing and secondly the interest in the outdoors and indoor climbing in Scotland continues to grow at a fast past. This provides opportunity and challenge for us in equal measure which I see as a positive. We are a small organisation, delivering across significant breadth and depth of expertise, so in order to manage constant change and growth, we must be proactive in our planning, while allowing capacity to react to things outside our control. Our partnerships are more important than ever, allowing us to have a wider reaching voice in Scotland and beyond.

Following the launch of our 2025 - 2029 strategy last year, you'll see that we are clearer on our aims of financial sustainability, delivering our members' priorities, developing our community and growing our partnerships across our four strategic pillars of Representing, Protecting, Developing and Inspiring.

I am confident this is our strongest strategic plan to date which allows us to operate and innovate in an evolving landscape, whilst providing focus for our staff, Board and members. We have our people and places at the heart of everything we do and will continue to be transparent about how we operate and deliver our work, and you will see that in this report.

Wherever you are in your mountaineering journey, we hope to offer a consistent, reliable and relevant voice advocating for your needs and interests. Furthermore we hope to inspire safe adventures for years to come. We love to hear from you, so please continue to provide feedback, support our campaigns and volunteer. We really could not do it without you, thank you.



Jo Dytch
Chair, Mountaineering Scotland

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

MEMBERSHIP / INDIVIDUAL / CLUBS

Membership
16,082

Individual Members
7,432

Club Members
8,650

LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS

40 ACCESS ENQUIRIES

133 SCOPING AND PLANNING PROPOSALS REVIEWED

MOUNTAIN SAFETY TRAINING

373
Members attended summer and winter skills courses

132
Student club members took part in the smart weekend, student winter skills and student winter climbing weekends

810
Students reached through st john scotland mountain safety partnership

CLIMBSCOTLAND

- REALROCK: 24 SESSIONS / 76 PLACES
- READY TO ROCK: 18 SESSIONS / 63 PLACES
- WOMEN'S READY TO ROCK: 9 SESSIONS / 25 PLACES
- FUNDAS: 29 WORKSHOPS / 167 PLACES
- SQUAD TRAINING: 17 SESSIONS
- CLIMBING COMPETITORS: 1500+
- YCS: 431 COMPETITORS OVER 4 ROUNDS

£315k
RAISED FOR
IT'S UP TO US
AN TEALLACH
PATH PROJECT

MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

It's been a full year for Mountaineering Scotland, spanning big campaigns, new faces, and a packed calendar of courses, competitions and conservation work on behalf of our members.

ACCESS AND THE OUTDOORS

- Appointed Catriona Davies as Access & Environment Officer in June 2025.
- Advanced access work at Salisbury Crags and Altnafeadh in Glencoe.
- Reached the £300,000 It's Up to Us campaign target.
- Responded to access enquiries, development applications and advised on forestry and land management proposals.

MOUNTAIN SAFETY

- Delivered navigation, scrambling, mountain skills and winter courses throughout the year.
- Introduced Avalanche Companion Rescue and Winter Skills for Ski Tourers courses.
- Undertook analysis of Scottish Mountain Rescue data and mountain incident survey responses to better inform safety strategy and communications.

CLIMBSCOTLAND

- Celebrated ClimbScotland's 10th anniversary with a packed schedule of climbing competitions and skills workshops.
- Welcomed Euan McFadyen as Head Setter.
- Delivered Scotland's first Bouldering Wall Instructor training and new Advanced Belaying workshops.
- Invested in IFSC-certified speed climbing holds at EICA Ratho.

MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Personal Accident Insurance included for club members.
- Expanded the range of member discounts.
- Published two issues of Scottish Mountaineer magazine.
- Sold out Winter Unlocked, MWIS weather workshops and online events.
- Reached more than 1 million people through the most successful ThinkWINTER campaign to date.
- Showcased diverse mountaineering voices at the Fort William Mountain Festival.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

- Delivered a financial surplus.
- Represented the sector with the Scottish Government, sportscotland and partner organisations, while lobbying for a Scottish Paths Fund.
- Helped secure an £18 million sportscotland uplift for sport in Scotland through the Running on Empty campaign.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, the team is focused on membership growth, a new website, and continued work on the performance pathway and access priorities.



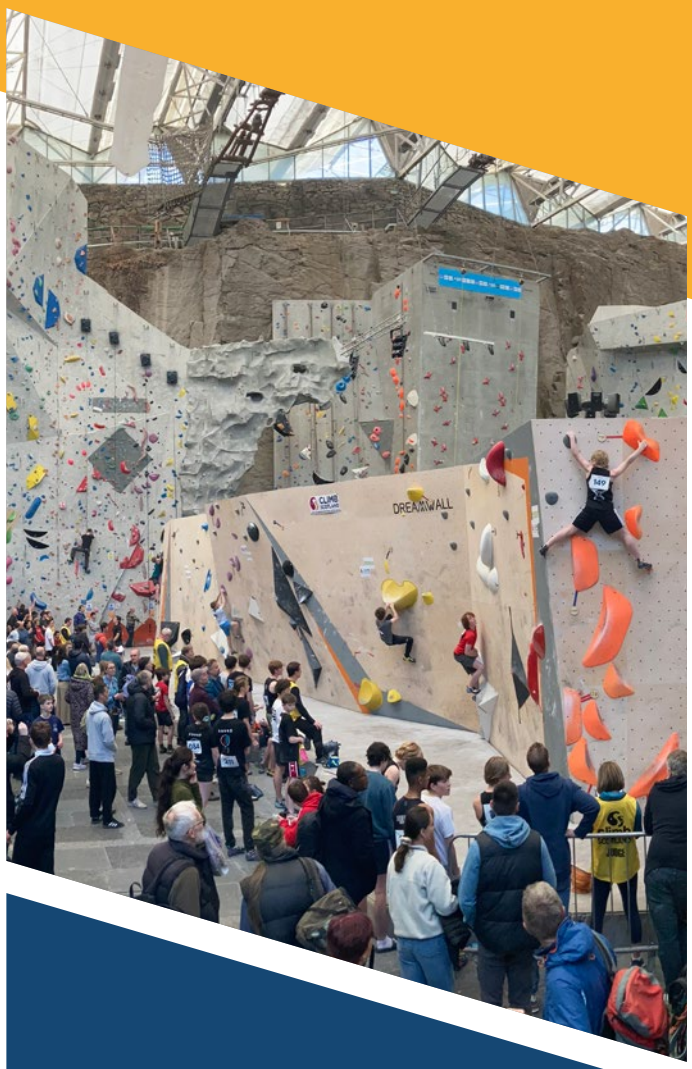
CLIMBSCOTLAND: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF GROWTH, OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY

ClimbScotland celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2025, marking a decade of supporting the growth of climbing across Scotland. Established by Mountaineering Scotland in 2015 and funded by sportscotland, ClimbScotland was created to inspire young people to develop a lifelong love of climbing and mountaineering while supporting the clubs, schools, climbing walls, volunteers and organisations that make participation possible.

Over the past ten years, ClimbScotland has grown into a nationally recognised programme. With free advice, practical resources, training opportunities and targeted investment, it has helped build a stronger, more sustainable climbing community across Scotland including:

- Development of clear progression pathways for climbers of all ages and abilities through the RealRock and Ready to Rock initiatives.
- Regular progamme of competition climbing with more than 90 competitions involving more than 5,500 competitors delivered by the ClimbScotland team, ranging from introductory fun competitions to national championships and international events.
- Through the Scottish Development and National Squads, ClimbScotland has delivered more than 50 academy days and supported over 1,000 young climbers, creating sustainable pathways for aspiring athletes while ensuring positive and rewarding experiences in the sport.
- Training initiatives, coaching workshops and volunteer support have helped strengthen clubs, improve facilities and develop the skills of coaches, instructors and leaders in Scotland.
- Partnerships with organisations including Urban Uprising, Common Wheel, Able to Adventure and the Scottish Paraclimbing Club have helped remove barriers to participation and create opportunities for people who may otherwise have been unable to access climbing.

As ClimbScotland enters its second decade, it remains focussed on supporting climbers at every stage of their journey while continuing to grow participation, strengthen communities and develop future talent. With the establishment of a new Climbing Advisory Group and strengthened partnerships across the sector, ClimbScotland is well positioned to continue shaping the future of climbing in Scotland.



A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS...

"We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our volunteer Competition Coordinators, Neil Ross, Sophie Bosi, Tony Brown, and Andrew Flockton, for their outstanding commitment and contribution throughout the year. The continued growth and success of ClimbScotland competitions is built on the passion and commitment of volunteers such as Neil, Sophie, Tony, and Andrew. Their willingness to share their time, knowledge, and experience helps create positive experiences for participants at every level, from first-time competitors to those progressing along performance pathways."

"On behalf of ClimbScotland, Mountaineering Scotland, and the wider climbing community, we thank them and all ClimbScotland volunteers for their hard work, professionalism, and dedication which helps create positive experiences for participants at every level, from first-time competitors to those progressing along performance pathways. Their contribution is greatly valued and continues to have a lasting impact on the development of climbing in Scotland."

Jamie Smith, ClimbScotland Development Manager

ACCESS AND ENVIRONMENT

Over the past year, Mountaineering Scotland has continued to champion responsible access, protect mountain landscapes and represent hillwalkers, climbers and ski tourers across Scotland. In June 2025, we welcomed Catriona Davies to the team as Access & Environment Officer, following the departure of Davie Black in March. Alongside national advocacy and detailed casework, Catriona has picked up on Davie's work with partners, communities and volunteers to address our members' priorities.



MY FIRST NINE MONTHS IN POST

"My career in access began at ScotWays, where I gained a good grounding in the outdoor access landscape. More recently, I was the Access Officer for the British Horse Society in Scotland. I have always been passionate about everyone having an equal right of responsible access in Scotland, and joining Mountaineering Scotland has been a great opportunity to bring that experience together with my own love of hillwalking and climbing.

I had worked with Davie Black through access groups and forums in my previous roles, so I knew I was stepping into big shoes. These first nine months have given me the chance to build on Davie's great work whilst bringing my own experience and perspective as a mountaineer to bear.

Much of my previous work focused on walkers and horse riders. At Mountaineering Scotland, I have been struck by how much casework relates to climbing crags, as well as by the distinct issues around ski touring through ski resorts. Working with the ClimbScotland team and other colleagues who bring deep knowledge of climbing, skiing and their communities has been invaluable, and I have enjoyed approaching access challenges from these different perspectives.

A highlight this year was joining volunteers from Mountaineering Scotland, the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland and the British Mountaineering Council for some path maintenance on Skye. Despite challenging weather and demanding manual work, the enthusiasm of the volunteers was incredible. People from different places and backgrounds worked brilliantly together, and the impact of our work was immediately visible. I am really looking forward to returning in 2026.

I have also found it heartening to review forestry and nature-restoration proposals and imagine how Scotland's mountain landscapes may change in future. Large-scale energy infrastructure remains a substantial part of the role, particularly wind farm proposals and I am very grateful to Dave Gordon for his expert help in assessing their implications for mountaineering. I'd also like to thank our four Strathfarrar padlock volunteers, whose work helps maintain winter vehicle access for members to the glen with the landowner's kind permission.

Looking ahead, it seems we are starting to make progress on long-running issues such as the Radical Road in Holyrood Park and parking at Altnafeidh in Glencoe. Scotland's access rights are precious, but we must never take them for granted. Irresponsible behaviour—whether dirty camping, disturbing livestock or obstructing forestry work—risks damaging relationships with land managers and communities. We all have a part to play in making responsible access work well."

Catriona Davies, Access & Environment Officer, Mountaineering Scotland

OUR WORK THIS YEAR

ADVOCACY

National Access Forum

We continue to represent hillwalkers, climbers and ski tourers on the National Access Forum and to contribute to relevant working groups. Topics discussed this year included the ongoing review of guidance which supports the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, commercial access, outdoor events, financial resources for access, the use of drones, private level crossings and managing access at historic sites.



Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance

Mountaineering Scotland is a member of Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA), a coalition of the nation's main outdoor recreation organisations, representing a variety of activities including walking, climbing, snow-sports touring, cycling, paddling and horse riding. SORA members work together to amplify the voice of all access users. Although the people we represent enjoy the outdoors in different ways, we all rely on our right of responsible access being understood, valued and upheld. Ahead of the 2026 Holyrood elections, we worked together to produce a joint manifesto, which included five key "asks":

- **A single Scottish Paths Fund of £50 million to cover the period 2026-2031**
- **The new Scottish Government to work with the UK Government to ensure core paths are shown on OS maps**
- **New guidance to access authorities on how to fulfil their legal role**
- **An expanded access role for NatureScot including education and promotion**
- **An Outdoor Access for All initiative to help the most disadvantaged groups enjoy the benefits and joy of outdoor recreation.**

The manifesto was promoted at the major party conferences and we were delighted that two parties—the SNP and the Scottish Greens—included a commitment to establish a Scottish Paths Fund in their own election manifestos.



ACCESS CASEWORK AND PRACTICAL ACTION

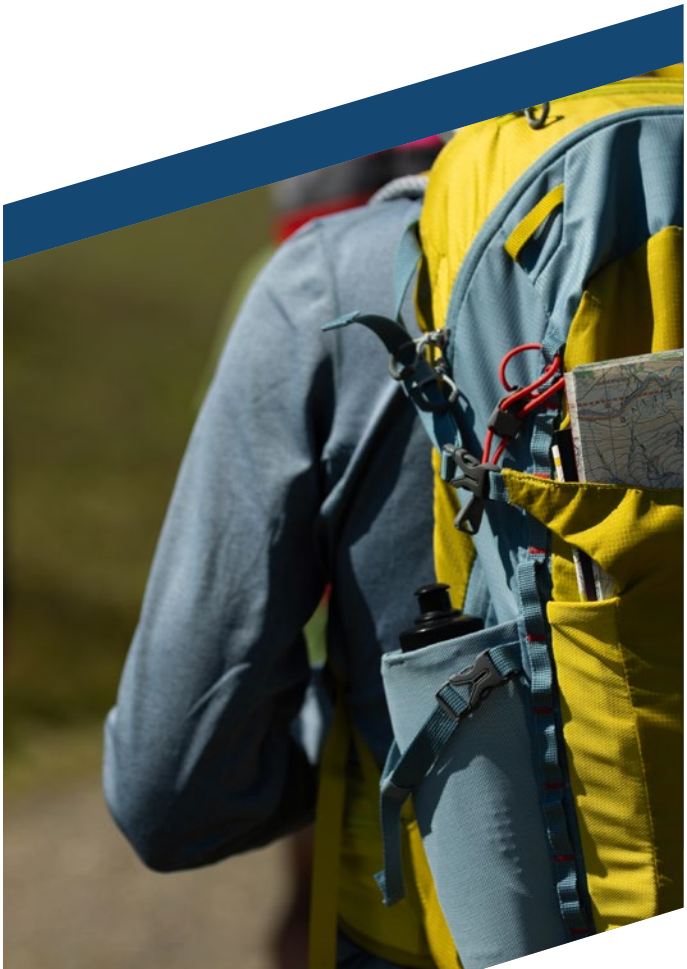


Radical Road, Holyrood Park, Edinburgh

We have continued to push for the reopening of this historic route through our membership of the Radical Road Working Group.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES), which manages the site, has agreed to a partial reopening of the route and submitted a planning application for new fencing and signage on the Radical Road below Salisbury Crags in December 2025 which would allow climbers to access the South Quarry area for the first time since the Radical Road closed following rockfall in 2018. Mountaineering Scotland responded to the application, welcoming the prospect of renewed access while raising concerns about some details of the proposals, including a climbing permit system. We do not endorse climbing permits because we do not believe the practice complies with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. However, we are working with HES to ensure that any system presents as little a barrier as possible to access and safe practice.

At time of writing, planning permission has been granted, but we are still waiting to hear when the work will be carried out and the permit system will go live.



Altnafeadh parking

Mountaineering Scotland has been representing hillwalkers and climbers on the newly formed Altnafeadh Parking Working Group which is seeking a long term solution for the current parking situation beside the A82 at Altnafeadh, close to Lagangarbh, which is inadequate and increasingly dangerous. The group brings together the landowners, Transport Scotland, Highland Council, Glencoe Mountain Rescue, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and Glencoe and Glen Etive Community and all parties are committed to finding a long-term, sustainable solution. An options appraisal has been commissioned to compare potential approaches.

PROTECTING MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPES

A key part of our conservation work is reviewing major energy and land-use proposals and responding where we believe they would have an unacceptable impact on mountain access or landscapes. This year we considered 133 proposals across all stages, including 45 planning applications. Wind energy accounted for the largest share, with 68 proposals reviewed.

Glen Lednock Wind Farm

The proposal for 19 turbines on the rolling uplands between Loch Earn and Loch Tay would be clearly visible from Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and many popular hills, including Ben Lawers and Ben Chonzie, as well as climbing crags and bouldering areas in Glen Lednock. We concluded that the visual impact of a development visible from up to 25km away would be too great and submitted a detailed objection to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit.

Reay Forest Estate

We also reviewed forestry proposals, including plans to re-establish native woodland in upland areas. The Reay Forest Estate proposal illustrates how careful design can support habitat restoration while safeguarding access.

The estate had identified a need to increase woodland cover in riparian areas to connect fragmented woodland habitats and provide more dappled shade for the river, helping to reduce surface-water temperatures and create a more resilient and productive habitat for aquatic species, including salmon.

Herbivore impact assessments showed that, despite relatively low deer numbers, browsing damage is high and the project would be unlikely to succeed without fencing. We were pleased that the estate had considered routes to the surrounding hills and carefully positioned gates in the deer fences for walkers heading to summits including Arkle and Ben Stac. The fence lines were also planned to minimise their visual impact on the landscape.





IT'S UP TO US

2026 marked the successful completion of the first project of the It's Up to Us campaign to restore the badly eroded path on An Teallach. Launched in May 2023, over three years the joint campaign with the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland raised over £315,000 to repair and rebuild more than 3km of the An Teallach path and has demonstrated what can happen when the whole mountaineering community works together.

With no public funding available, the project's success was made possible through a combination of community fundraising and support from charitable trusts, corporate partners, mountaineering clubs, and individual donors. Key contributors included the Scottish Mountaineering Trust 60th Anniversary Diamond Grant, the European Outdoor Conservation Association (EOCA), Cotswold Outdoor and Keela.

Volunteers also played a vital role with 33 OATS Path Maintenance Volunteers contributing over 412 hours of work to the project – the equivalent of more than £16,000 in labour value.

Beyond fundraising, It's Up to Us aims to create long-term solutions, working with government and other stakeholders to develop a sustainable funding model for upland path repair and habitat restoration. The next phase of It's Up to Us will see Mountaineering Scotland and OATS asking the mountaineering community for their suggestions for mountain paths that need some TLC, with the aim of starting a new project in 2027.

For full details of the campaign, what we've achieved so far and what the next steps are, visit:

SAVEMOUNTAINPATHS.SCOT

3.2
kilometres path repaired

700
tonnes of material used

183
stone built drainage ditches



SKYE PATH VOLUNTEER PROJECT

In September 2025, Mountaineering Scotland teamed up with Outdoors Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) and the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) to take eleven volunteers and four staff to maintain some of the approach paths to Skye's popular Cuillin ridge. Over 3 days more than one hundred drainage channels were cleared across 4km of mountain path on the popular routes leading up to the Cuillin ridge from Glen Brittle and 200 trees planted around the Fairy Pools car park.

Lead volunteer from the BMC, Steve Charles said "The great thing about these events is starting out as fifteen strangers and after a couple of days in the rain and sharing meals in the evening, we become a band of brothers, and everyone really gets on. And then it's obviously great to give back to the mountains and work on paths in dire need of repair."

Sarah, a first time path maintenance volunteer with Mountaineering Scotland said "Until I did this, I didn't realise how much was involved in path maintenance, and how important it is. Not just from considering access to the mountains but the ecology of it all and keeping our hillsides thriving."

Thank you to all the volunteers for their hard work and relentlessly cheerful attitude and to Eva and Euan from OATS who showed us what to do, shared their skills and kept an eye on us all.

- 11 VOLUNTEERS
- 122 DRAINAGE DITCHES
- 200 TREES PLANTED
- 60 TEAS & COFFEES

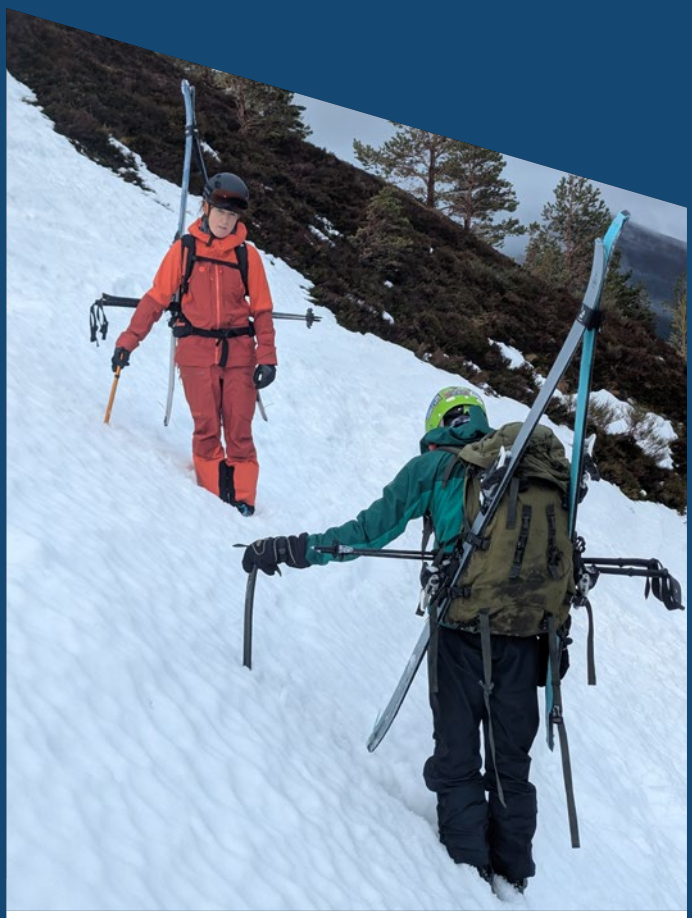




MOUNTAIN SAFETY

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING WINTER IN THE MOUNTAINS

Winter skills training and messaging continued to evolve this year in response to more changeable winter conditions and continued increase in people visiting the mountains in winter to walk, climb and ski. The 2025-26 ThinkWINTER campaign and skills programme reflected a clear theme: helping members build the judgement, confidence and practical skills needed for modern winter mountaineering in Scotland.





MOVE TO MORE 2 DAY COURSES SUCCESSFUL

A major success was the continued move towards two-day winter skills and mountain skills courses. The format gives participants more time to learn, practise and consolidate, while also allowing instructors greater flexibility around weather conditions and venue choice. With accommodation included, the courses also create a stronger sense of community among members. Demand was strong, with most two-day courses selling out, showing that participants value the additional time, support and shared experience.

NEW WINTER COURSES FOR SNOWSPORT TOURERS

For the growing ski and snow sports touring community, the team developed training in winter skills for snowsport tourers and companion rescue. These courses recognised that strong skiing ability does not automatically translate into mountaineering judgement. Micro spikes were also trialled as a standalone course, but the learning from the season suggests they may be best incorporated into wider winter skills courses where appropriate. This reflects how the equipment is now increasingly part of the winter walking toolkit, while still requiring careful judgement about when it is suitable and when full winter equipment such as crampons and ice axe is needed.

"Really good session on the planning aspects of winter navigation. Outside tailored to weather/ snow conditions to enable best use of time"

Winter navigation course attendee

BUILDING WINTER CONFIDENCE FOR STUDENTS

The Student Winter Skills Weekend remains one of the largest and most important student safety initiatives in our Mountain Safety programme, with around 60 students attending. The 2025 event was supported by significant funding from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and support from Glenmore Lodge. With full winter conditions, for some students it was the first time they had experienced widespread winter in the mountains rather than isolated patches of snow or ice. That created a powerful learning environment, giving participants a realistic sense of the hazards, uncertainty and decision-making required in winter.

The annual Student Winter Climbing Weekend provides a more focused opportunity for a smaller group of around 14 students. Supported by the Mill Cottage Trust, Braemar Mountain Rescue Team and Mountaineering Scotland. A new application process this year created a more balanced mix of student experience and ambition. Feedback from students also highlighted the importance of visible role models, particularly female instructors, who are valued by female students.

TEN YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH ST JOHN SCOTLAND

The year also marked 10 years of partnership between Mountaineering Scotland and St John Scotland, a relationship that has quietly shaped the safety culture of student weekends by funding a Mountaineering Instructor role specifically supporting student clubs.

St John Scotland

Current St John Scotland Mountaineering Instructor Malcolm Airey joins student clubs on meets, supporting groups during the day and providing lectures and more informal support over the weekend. Being present with the students in the evenings, he is able to advise and influence decision-making at the point when plans are being made for the following day providing knowledge and guidance delivered in a way that helps students make better choices for themselves and their clubs.

THIS YEAR MALCOLM HAS SUPPORTED:

- **15 student clubs on 29 weekend meets**
- **Students receiving on hill instruction: 187 summer / 142 winter**
- **481 students attending evening avalanche awareness talks**



SMART WEEKEND MARKS 25 YEARS OF STUDENT MOUNTAIN SAFETY

The 2025 Student SMART Weekend marked a major milestone: 25 years of supporting students to build safer, stronger mountaineering clubs. The anniversary was recognised with cake (of course!), commemorative buffs for volunteers and a visit from Roger Wiles and Heather Morning, who spoke to volunteers and participants about the origins and importance of the event. This popular weekend event has evolved significantly over the years and strengthened the culture around safety, with student clubs now placing greater emphasis on planning, responsibility and looking after newer members. Alongside the long-standing focus on practical mountain skills, newer elements include belaying workshops, scrambling skills and group management.

One of the most powerful parts of the weekend remains the peer-led 'near-miss' talks. Hearing directly from other students who have experienced serious safety incidents helps participants understand that accidents are not abstract events that happen only to other people. These stories bring home the physical, mental and practical consequences of mountaineering accidents, from injury and recovery to the impact on studies, friends, family and climbing partners.

The SMART Weekend depends on a remarkable volunteer effort and financial support from Braemar Mountain Rescue Team. Around 22 volunteers give their time and include mountain rescue team members, instructors, doctors and others with the skills and goodwill to support student safety. Without this combination of volunteer expertise and partnership funding, the weekend would not be possible.

CLIMBSCOTLAND: ADVANCED BELAYING WORKSHOPS





New Advanced Belaying Workshops have been a valuable addition to ClimbScotland's skills development programme, providing climbers with the opportunity to enhance their understanding of one of the most important aspects of climbing safety.

Developed and delivered by ClimbScotland Climbing Development Officer, Robert MacKenzie, the workshops create an environment that balances expert guidance with plenty of hands-on practice and individual feedback. Recognising that belaying is often described as the most critical responsibility in climbing, the workshops were designed to move participants beyond basic competency and develop the advanced skills, knowledge, and confidence required to manage a variety of climbing situations safely and effectively.

Workshops cover a range of topics through demonstration and practice, including current best practice of lead belaying and delivery of a 'soft catch'. They also provide climbers with a chance to explore a range of belay devices and gain insight into how different systems function. The small group format allows sessions to be tailored to the needs and experience levels of participants, ensuring that both newer and more experienced climbers were challenged appropriately and able to gain meaningful learning outcomes.

The positive feedback received demonstrates a clear demand for advanced skills training and highlights the workshops' contribution to building a safer and more knowledgeable climbing community, with the BMC keen to provide the workshops for their own members in England and Wales. Look out for more dates in 2026!

QUOTES FROM ATTENDEES:

'Incredible value for money!'

'I thoroughly enjoyed this course, as well as finding it very useful. An excellent experience.'

'It was the first Mountaineering Scotland course I had been on and I would definitely recommend to others.'

'Fantastic training with very knowledgeable delivery and facilitated in a super nice manner. Loved the balance of theory and the 'why' behind it all, mixed with the practice - was spot on.'

'Great teaching style, relaxed and fun but very educational. Lots of useful tips and information.'

UPGRADED INSURANCE & MEMBER BENEFITS OFFERING

Insurance might not be the first things that comes to mind when renewing your Mountaineering Scotland membership, but it is potentially one of the most valuable benefits of being a member. Personal accident insurance for club members was introduced in January 2026 as an additional benefit, and following it's introduction for individual members a year earlier. With up to £10,000 cover for accidents and injuries sustained whilst taking part in mountaineering activities, it also includes physiotherapy cover for new injuries, and has proved popular with many members making claims over the last 12 months.

Several new member discounts came on board this year including Paramo, Keela, Hydroflask and Findra clothing. Ongoing member savings with Osprey Europe and Cotswold Outdoor continue to prove popular with members, with more being added to the members portal JustGo all the time. The JustGo Rewards for members had an update in 2025, and is now available to all members free of charge with a rolling programme of offers from top brands including Garmin, Fitbit, Hello Fresh and many more.

AllTrails · FINDRA · Hostelling Scotland · JustGo · OS MAPS · PÁRAMO DIRECTIONAL CLOTHING · Scottish Mountaineering Press · Westholidays

View all member benefits on our website:
www.mountaineering.scot/members/members-benefits





MOUNTAIN SAFETY GROUP

Scotland's Mountain Safety Group has now been operating in some form for around 15 years, and similar structures have now formed in England, Wales and Ireland based on the model operating in Scotland. Cross-representation between the groups allows information, learning and good practice to flow in both directions, creating a healthier and more joined-up approach to mountain safety across the UK and Ireland.

USING DATA TO IMPROVE MOUNTAIN SAFETY

One of the most strategically important areas of work in the Mountain Safety Group this year has been the growing use of accident, incident and near-miss data to improve mountain safety. The aim is simple but powerful: to learn from the incidents that are already happening, understand patterns more clearly and use that evidence to shape better advice, training and decision-making.

Data from Scottish Mountain Rescue, the 2025 Mountain Incident Survey, BMC accident and near-miss portal, and longer-form stories submitted by members all feed into the analysis and Mountaineering Scotland is becoming a link between researchers, students, mountain safety organisations and the datasets that can help answer important questions.

Researchers at Lancaster University are working with data from the Mountain Incident Survey, which collected over 750 responses UK wide, while Strathclyde University master's students are also using the data for analysis projects. Analysis of Scottish Mountain Rescue data into ankle and lower-leg injuries particularly among women, is helping us to understand risk and identify practical steps that may help reduce injuries.

This work also depends on people continuing to share their experiences. The more members report incidents, near misses and stories about what went wrong, the clearer the picture becomes. That evidence can then feed into the Mountain Safety Group and partner organisations, helping them guide members and participants towards safer choices in the mountains.

> Report your own near misses here: **www.mountaineering.scot/safety-and-skills/essential-skills/near-misses**



DIGITAL SAFETY CONTENT AND PUBLIC MESSAGING

Digital content continued to play an important role in reaching members and the wider outdoor community with timely safety messages. The Mountain Safety Team worked with partners to create accessible, practical safety videos including dealing with heat in the mountains with Dr Naomi Dodd, winter skills and equipment with the team from Tiso and beginner tips in a partnership campaign with Scottish outdoor clothing brand Keela.

The 2025-26 ThinkWINTER campaign once again brought together the collective expertise of Scotland's leading mountain safety and outdoor sports organisations, forming the Mountain Safety Group for Scotland: Mountaineering Scotland, Scottish Mountain Rescue, Mountain Training Scotland, Glenmore Lodge, Police Scotland, Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland (DMBinS) and the Scottish Avalanche Information Service.

ThinkWINTER aims to equip people with practical tools for heading into the winter hills safely: checking mountain weather and avalanche forecasts before setting off, carrying appropriate clothing and equipment, and being honest about personal skill levels before heading into serious winter terrain. Through this partnership, ThinkWINTER delivers consistent, trusted advice on planning, equipment, and decision-making - helping people match their plans to conditions and their own skill levels. This year's campaign was one of our best yet, reaching over 1.5 million people on social media.

As unpredictable winters look set to continue, ThinkWINTER's collaboration will remain an important part of Mountaineering Scotland's safety work, ensuring people can continue to enjoy the mountains and come home safely.





WITHIN YOU – INSPIRING NEWCOMERS TO THE OUTDOORS

A new partnership with Scottish outdoor clothing brand Keela saw the launch of 'Within You' on World Mental Health Day in October 2025. As two organisations that share the same goal - to make the outdoors accessible, enjoyable and safe for all – we combined Keela's technical expertise with our deep-rooted mountain knowledge to help more people step outside with confidence.

The campaign celebrated the confidence, freedom and connection that come from time spent in nature and was led by two inspiring women – our own mountain safety adviser, Kirsty Pallas, and Mountain Leader and Keela ambassador, Anna Danby. Anna and Kirsty shared real stories, expert advice, and inspiration.

KEELA

CLIMBSCOTLAND: SUPPORTING SPEED!

2025 saw Mountaineering Scotland supporting a significant upgrade to the UK's only international-standard speed climbing wall at Edinburgh International Climbing Arena (EICA: Ratho) this year. Through funding reallocated by Mountaineering Scotland, new IFSC-certified speed climbing holds were purchased and installed, ensuring athletes training and competing in Scotland continue to have access to equipment that meets the highest international standards.

The investment was made in consultation with the speed climbing community and supports both athlete development and competition delivery. As the only venue in the UK with World Climbing-standard walls for all three Olympic climbing disciplines—lead, boulder and speed—EICA plays a critical role in Scotland's performance pathway and wider climbing ecosystem.

The upgraded wall provides climbers with the opportunity to train on equipment that closely replicates international competition settings, helping to prepare athletes for national and international events. It also strengthens Scotland's capacity to host high-level competitions and supports the continued growth of speed climbing as an Olympic medal discipline.

Andrew Goodall, GB Climbing Speed Climber has been reaping the benefits of the speed holds upgrade:

"The new speed climbing holds have been a massive help for me this season. As they are now up to competition standard, I have been able to train on a wall that is identical to what I'd find in a European/ World series speed climbing event. I think the new holds are one of the main drivers behind my several British records this year, and first World Cup finals in Krakow a few weeks ago."





DEVELOPING CLIMBING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Inclusive climbing workshops with Access Sport:

The workshops focus on disability inclusion and are open to coaches, volunteers, climbing wall staff, and anyone interested in developing greater confidence in delivering inclusive climbing opportunities. Training explores how to create welcoming and accessible environments for disabled participants and building an inclusive culture across all aspects of climbing provision.

ABC ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH CLIMBING WALLS

Association of Climbing Walls (ABC):

The ClimbScotland team attended the ABC tour at Eden Rock in March, leading panel discussions on the relationship between coaches and route setters, and workforce development in climbing.

NICAS NATIONAL INDOOR CLIMBING AWARD SCHEMES

NICAS:

ClimbScotland supported the delivery of NICAS Pro Connects Scotland, a two-day (26-27 March 2026) professional development event for climbing coaches, centre managers, and course directors hosted at Brushworks Climbing Centre. A blend of discussion and practical sessions, the event fostered collaboration between coaches and centres, creating opportunities to share experiences and identify ways to strengthen participant experiences and progression pathways.

OUR THANKS GO TO...

All the members and freelance instructors who support our mountain safety, climbing and student skills courses, and the Mountain Rescue Teams that allow us to use their bases to host courses.

The many dedicated volunteers that support affiliated clubs and club huts, the Strathfarrar padlock maintenance volunteers and members who support the monitoring of and responses to planning proposals.

All the coaches, route setters, competition coordinators and volunteers that have support have supported our academy programmes and competitions for young aspiring climbers from across Scotland. Members of the Scottish Climbing Wall Network, especially those that host climbing competitions and events.

OUR PARTNERS

sportscotland
DMM
Scottish Mountain Rescue
Glenmore Lodge
Mountain Training
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
Snowsport Scotland
Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland
Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland
Able 2 Adventure
John Muir Trust
Ramblers Scotland, Mill Cottage Trust
The Munro Society
Braemar Mountain Rescue Team
Scottish Mountaineering Trust
NICAS
Association of British Climbing Walls
GB Climbing
BMC
Mountaineering Ireland
Tiso
Cotswold Outdoor
Keela
Connect Communications
Serious Climbing
SoiLL UK
Rock City
Eclipse Climbing
RedChili Climbing
Edelrid
Common Wheel
Climbers Against Cancer
Urban Uprising
Forma Designs
Petzl
Access Sport

YOU SPOKE, WE LISTENED...

Over 1,000 of you took part in our 2025 Member Survey where we asked for your honest views on membership, your time in the hills and climbing walls, and where Mountaineering Scotland should focus next. These insights gave us a brilliant snapshot of what this community thinks is important.

Member satisfaction is high:

- **84% OF YOU RATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT VALUE**
- **84% ARE SATISFIED OVERALL**
- **94% ARE LIKELY TO RENEW IN THE NEXT YEAR**

LIFE IN THE OUTDOORS

Hillwalking and hiking remain at the centre of what you do. Over **40%** of you are out every week, and **85%** take part at least occasionally. Activities like scrambling, wild camping and non-technical winter mountaineering also feature strongly.

Among younger members, **indoor climbing and bouldering** are especially popular - often acting as a gateway into the outdoors. More technical disciplines, like ice climbing, remain niche, reinforcing that our membership is a broad and inclusive community.

Thank you to everyone who took part. Your views are helping guide the future of Mountaineering Scotland.

WHY YOU JOINED

Your reasons for joining highlight three key themes:

- **PROTECTING MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENTS (52%),**
- **BEING PART OF A LIKE-MINDED COMMUNITY (44%)**
- **MEMBER OFFERS AND DISCOUNT (39%)**

Over **61%** of those who answered the survey have been members for five or more years, and these members are more often motivated by advocacy and giving something back. Newer members tend to be younger, often joining while building skills and confidence. Over time, that connection deepens. One thing is consistent across all ages: **community matters**.

YOU ALL WANT THE SAME THING

We were surprised at the result when we asked you to rank priorities for the next two years, every single age group and gender gave the same top five answers, in the same order:

1. **Protect mountain landscapes and wildlife**
2. **Promote safety and skills**
3. **Campaign for protection of access rights**
4. **Promote responsible access**
5. **Reduce barriers for newcomers**

Whether you've been a member for six months or twenty years, whether you're a hillwalker or a winter climber, a teenager or a retiree, there's a shared sense of what really matters.

Our club community has continued to grow, with new groups that encourage more and more diverse people to enjoy the mountains through hillwalking and climbing. Here's what they think of their first year in action:

GRUNND CLIMBING CLUB, GLASGOW

It's now been a year since we decided to formally become Grunnd Club, a climbing collective for women (cis and trans) and non-binary people across Scotland. Our first year has been an exciting time. We've been on many adventures, including several bouldering trips to the Scottish Highlands, staying in the CIC hut on Ben Nevis for the solstice, and many sunny evenings bouldering at Dumbarton rock. Our welcoming community has come together across Scotland to share our love of climbing. Members have fed back that they've found a space where they can meet like-minded people in a welcoming and supportive environment. We've also been able to use our pay-it-forward fund as planned, to support access to our events for members who need it.

We're lining up an exciting calendar of future events for the next year, and can't wait to see how our community continues to develop. We aim to offer a mix of indoor climbing meet-ups, outdoor climbing days, and accessible outdoor adventures, and we're all about keeping things kind, safe and welcoming for everyone in the group. The goal is to always enjoy climbing together.





PANORAMA HILLWALKING CLUB, GLASGOW

Panorama was formed in March 2026, aimed at members of the LGBTQIA+ community in their 20s and 30s. Our goal is to foster a sense of community and belonging amongst our members, whilst exploring the great outdoors. We're based in Glasgow and most hikes are within two hours of the city, but we have members from across the central belt and western Scotland. We host walks at a variety of difficulty levels, and everyone is encouraged to find a walk that suits and join in, even if they have no prior hiking experience.

Our first hike was a very muddy trek up the Kelvin Way from Glasgow to Milngavie on 1st March, and since then, we've hosted 12 more hikes, culminating with our first weekend away on the Isle of Bute on 11th-12th July. We have gained over 100 new members, and still being in our infancy as a club, most hikes are filled with new faces alongside a couple of "old hats" who've been around since March! Our members are a welcoming bunch with a wide range of interests outside hiking, so the club is a great way to make new friends.

2026 FORT WILLIAM MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

The Fort William Mountain Festival has become a regular event in the Mountaineering Scotland calendar. For the 2026 Festival, Mountaineering Scotland hosted a full evening session – Your Hills – which celebrated the diversity of people and experiences in the Scottish Hills.

Mountaineering Scotland's President and avid hill bagger, Anne Butler, gave a humerous and heart warming A-Z of her experiences gained through more than 30 years of hill walking, during which she has achieved the Full House of SMC lists twice, and is now well on her way to a third. Anne went on to interview Sean Green, otherwise known as Grizzly Munro Diaries, who in 2025 completed a round of Munros which saw him carry his bike to the top of every Munro and then cycle down. He spoke of his love and respect for the mountains, the highs and lows of his 8 year Munro journey, and how he wished it would never end. Lastly, Joshua Adeyemi, founder of the Black Scottish Adventurers (BSA) and content creator, spoke about his own discovery of Scotland's mountains when he moved to Edinburgh from Nigeria, and the joy he gets from being outdoors and supporting others to experience it too, through the BSA group. Josh was joined by BSA member Ade Fakoya, who shared her own experiences and highlighted the importance of groups like the BSA which provide support and safe spaces for communities that are under represented in the outdoors.

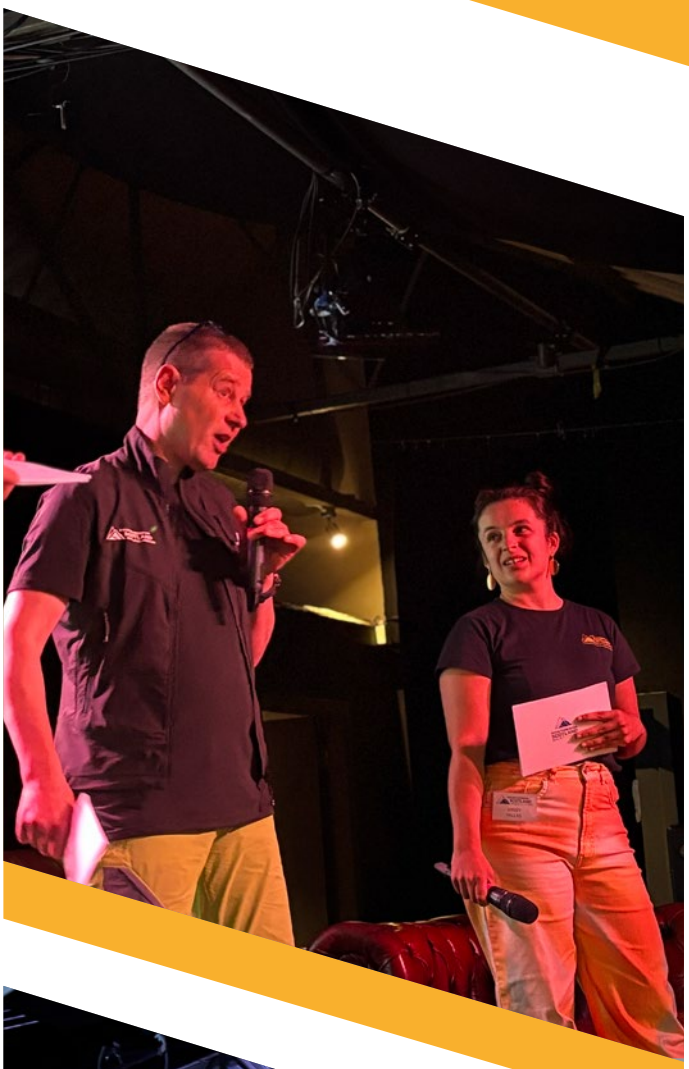
Despite the February weather, staff and board members joined the BSA on a Sunday morning walk, a great opportunity to find out more about their group and the people that make up their vibrant community of nearly 7,000 members.





TALKS AND EVENTS

We kicked off the winter season with our hugely successful 'Winter Unlocked' events in Glasgow and Edinburgh, with more than 100 people attended each evening. The audience enjoyed a lively programme of practical advice, inspiring presentations, films and expert guidance on staying safe in the hills during winter - there was something for everyone! We were joined by Glenmore Lodge, MWIS, SAIS, alongside inspiring speakers Kevin Woods and Alison Thacker. Local mountain rescue teams, Keela, DMM and other exhibitors helped create a vibrant atmosphere. We would like to thank our partners and speakers for helping us shape these fun and educational nights and our attendees who joined these community evenings - we're already looking forward to welcoming you back in 2026.



The learning continued online with an engaging programme of talks and webinars that lasted all the way to spring. A highlight was the extremely popular Gaelic Hill Names workshop, as part of World Gaelic Week. Speaker Eilidh Cameron Sykes shared a wealth of insights into ecology, geography and culture and their influence on language and placenames. Geologist Professor Tony Prave, from the University of St Andrews, then took us on a fascinating journey through Scotland's geological history, while RSPB Cairngorms rangers shared insights into life in the uplands, the remarkable species that call these landscapes home, and how we can all play a part in protecting them.

To mark International Women's Day, we welcomed inspirational mountaineers and climbers, Keri Wallace, Anna Danby, Louise Flockhart and Anna Fleming, for an open panel discussion about their experiences as women in the outdoors, how they train, the challenges of menopause, how to manage periods in the mountains, hormones and much more. The overwhelming positive response has inspired us to introduce a series of women focused talks in the year ahead. Keep checking our website for event updates! Finally, we rounded of the online talks series bringing in the famous wildlife tracks and signs specialist, Dan Puplett, who shared useful tips and tricks on how to identify mammals and birds through footprints, feeding signs, scat, bones, feathers and trails. It was a fitting conclusion to another year of learning and we were eager to head out into the hills with a new perspective on the landscape.



Whether in person or online, these events continue to strengthen our community by bringing members together to learn, share experiences and celebrate all aspects of mountaineering.



CLIMBSCOTLAND: DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SQUADS

This year, members of the Development and National Squads strengthened their confidence, judgement and technical skill through an outdoor bouldering training weekend in Torridon, one of Scotland's premier climbing destinations. The weekend gave athletes coached time on real rock, helping them transfer indoor training into a natural environment, develop movement awareness across varied problems, and build the experience needed to progress within the ClimbScotland pathway.

The National Squad also benefited from a national training event at Boulder UK, where Scottish athletes trained alongside climbers and coaches from Scotland, England and Ireland. Working in this wider performance environment helped athletes compare their development with peers, experience different coaching perspectives, and understand the standards required as they continue to progress.

ClimbScotland's Talent Development Officer, Jack Davis, supported Scottish athletes throughout the event, helping them reflect on their learning and make the most of the training opportunity. Collaborative events like this are a key part of the athlete pathway, giving climbers experience of different coaching approaches, stronger competition readiness, and a clearer sense of the skills needed for future success.

For the athletes, the value of these experiences was not only in the climbing itself, but in the chance to practise decision-making, adapt to new environments, learn from others and see their own development in a broader context.





ORGANISATIONAL UPDATE

STUART YOUNIE, CEO



In April 2025 we welcomed Membership Admin Officer Charmaine Duthie to the team. Charmaine is a keen outdoor enthusiast with a long involvement in the Scouts, and has been the person at the end of the phone and email to help answer all your membership enquiries. Christina Skounti also joined the team as Membership & Club Development Officer in September. This new role was made possible through reallocation of sportscotland funding to focus on the delivery of our updated membership strategy, supporting clubs, and to achieve our equality, diversity and inclusion aims. Christina has worked in the environmental charity sector for 7 years and is a keen hill walker and trad climber. She brings a wide range of skills and experience in communications, community engagement and project management.

In October 2025 Sarah Birrell took over from Derek O'Riordan as our sportscotland partnership manager, following Derek's secondment to UK Sport. Sarah is an experienced member of the sportscotland team and has a good understanding of the challenges faced by Scottish governing bodies of sport, and as a keen sailor also has an appreciation of outdoor sports.

Early in 2026 we had the welcome news about a £40m increase in sports funding for 2026, with £18m directed to sportscotland to help support the operational needs of governing bodies. This significant uplift follows Mountaineering Scotland's support for the "Running on Empty campaign", which highlighted the financial pressures faced by sports organisations after five years of standstill funding. I was part of the leadership group which co-ordinated the campaign and attended the meetings with the Cabinet Secretary and Ministers to make the case for increased funding. This new investment will help us continue to deliver the programmes and support that our members, clubs and the wider mountaineering community depend on.

Finally a huge thank you to the trustees of Mill Cottage who made an extremely generous donation of £10,000 to support our mountain safety programme. The team have been giving careful thought about how best to use this very welcome new money to further enhance our skills and safety offering.



Stuart Younie
CEO, Mountaineering Scotland

TREASURERS' REPORT

OUR INCOME

TOTAL £973,505



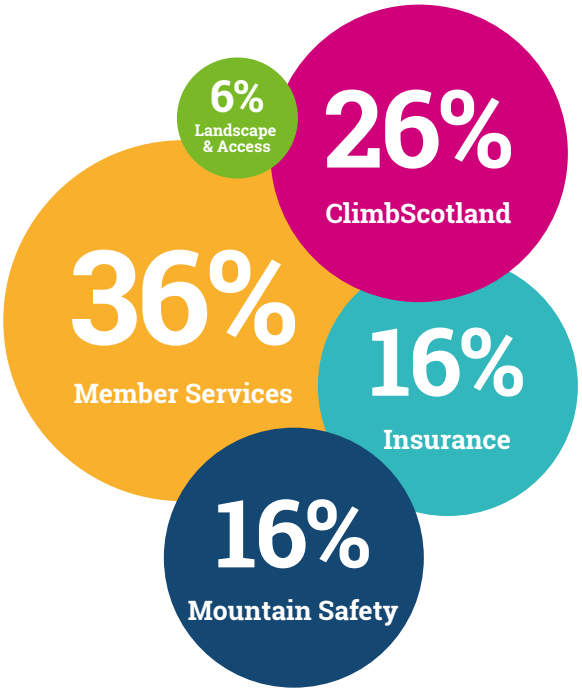
Member subscriptions continue to provide the majority of Mountaineering Scotland's income, and we continue to be grateful for our member's loyal support. Membership income was over 20% higher than the previous financial year, due to the increase in fees on 1 April 2025, making up 54% of the total income for 2025-26.

Your membership continues to support access and mountain safety programmes along with enabling the organisation to function. Investment from sportsscotland increased by 9%, making up 28% of the total income for 2025-26. This funding supports our mountain safety programme, Climb Scotland, and other member services. We continue to work collaboratively with sportsscotland and appreciate the ongoing and open dialogue between organisations.

Income from Climb Scotland continues to be higher than forecast due to the success of competitions and Squad Academy work. Other income includes member donations, interest and online shop merchandise sales.

OUR EXPENDITURE

TOTAL £901,728



Expenditure grew overall by 10% which was less than expected due to ongoing savings on staffing cost due to vacancies. Significant savings, of more than a third, have been achieved in producing Scottish Mountaineer magazine. Public liability insurance continues to be a key expense, rising 9% from the prior year.

HOW WE USE OUR SPORTSCOTLAND GRANT

TOTAL £274,466



SURPLUS

Your support and the lower than expected staff costs led to a healthy surplus in 2025-26. This surplus will enable Mountaineering Scotland to operate through short periods of financial difficulties and will enable the redevelopment of the Mountaineering Scotland website to improve members' experience and attract new members.

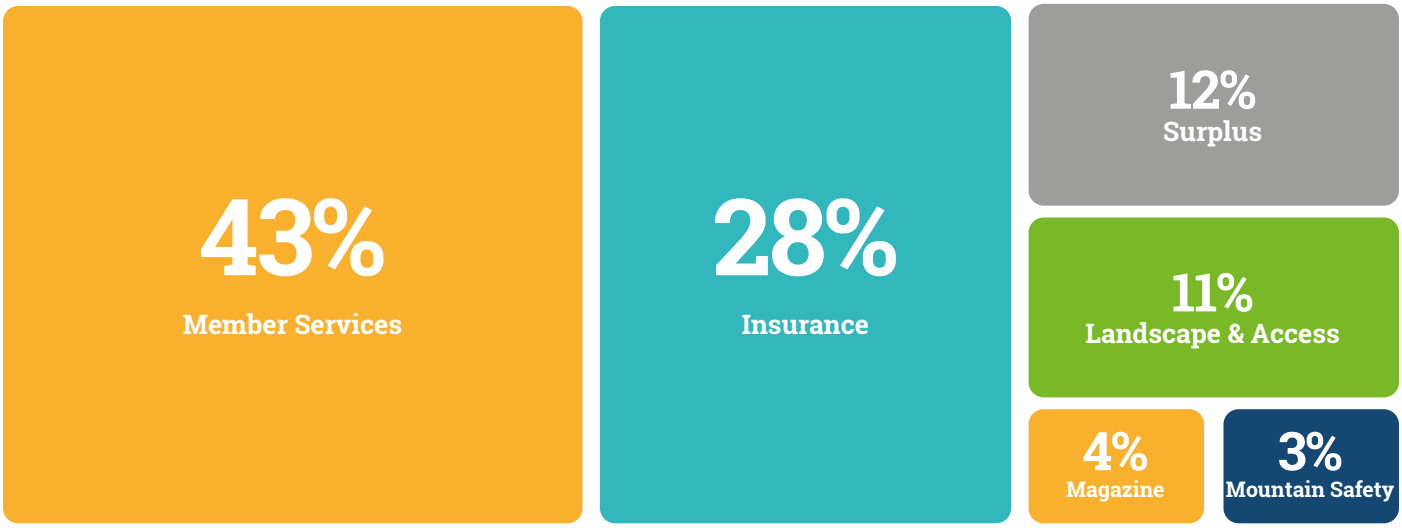
Note: There is no change in the accounting methodology used but the financial analysis in this Report is now on a gross basis.

For full financial statements for this and previous years please visit our website:

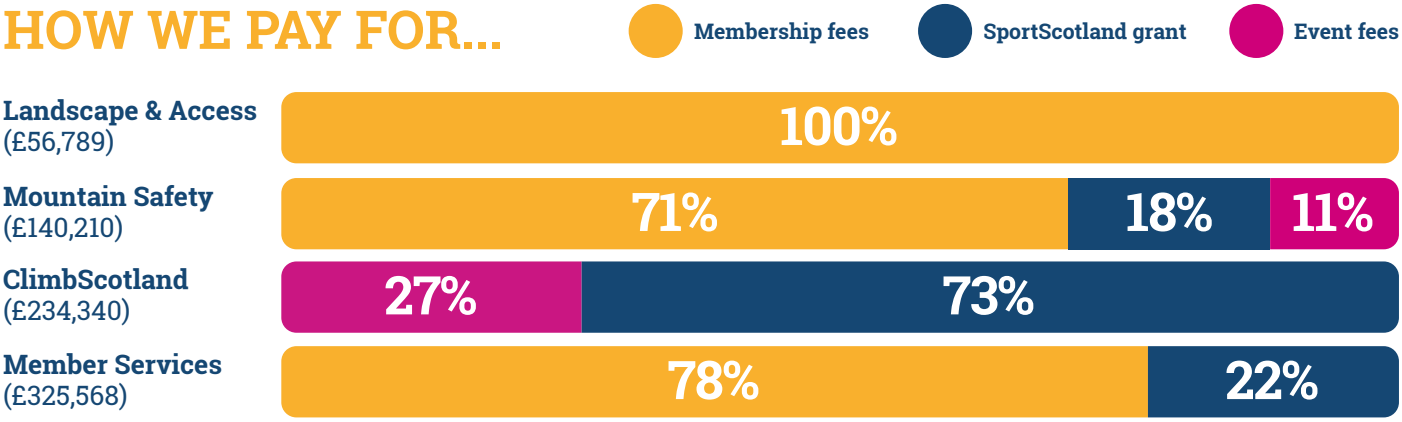
www.mountaineering.scot/about-us/business-matters/annual-report-and-accounts

HOW WE USE YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEES

TOTAL £525,155



HOW WE PAY FOR...



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