

Board Meeting – Approved minutes

4pm, Thurs 26th February 2026 – The Granary and online via Zoom

Directors: Anne Butler (President); Alistair Todd (Vice Chair); Ilona Turnbull; Fiona Bennett; Andrew Tait; Stephen Johnson; Andrew Walker; Pete Crane; Brendan Hughes, Hugo Allan,

CEO & Company Secretary: Stuart Younie.

Observers: Sarah Birrell (sportscotland); Fiona Kerr.

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

In person: SY, HA, ATodd, AW, PC, AB

Online: ATait, SJ, BH

In attendance: FK, Catriona Davies (MScot Access and Environment Officer), JD; (invited as proposed Chair pending approval)

Apologies: SB

2.0 Declaration of Interests

ATodd –declared his recent appointment to the Board of Cairngorm Mountain.

3.0 Draft Minutes of the Board meeting of 6th November 2025

Approved – no changes

4.0 Actions and matters arising not tabled elsewhere in the agenda.

- Website business case scheduled under Finance (item 7).
- Adult Wellbeing Policies: small technical queries from Nov meeting were clarified with Children 1st; policies updated and published.
- MOU with OATS included under item 6.
- Anti-Doping added to agenda at HA request.

5.0 Call for AOCB

TAKITHAME branding request (PC): Board agreed branding can be shared with Mountain Bothies Association.

6.0 CEO & Operational report

Operational highlights from Q3:

- AGM delivered smoothly with positive feedback.
- Fee/Articles changes successfully implemented.
- Mountain Training (MT) Review: Desktop review and stakeholder consultations complete; final report expected March.
- HR Review: AAB engaged to undertake HR audit.
- CEO and Access Officer attended SNP Conference; engagement lower than anticipated but useful networking undertaken.

6.1 Access and Environment

CD shared a presentation which included:

- An overview of strategic access groups
- Specific operational items (e.g. Radical Road, Altnafeadh parking and Strathfarrar).
- Conservation and planning response data (Majority relate to wind energy, but also hydro, forestry, land restoration).
- Success of the Skye Path Volunteering event.
- Work in promoting responsible access (e.g. guidance on nesting birds and climbing ethics).

CD noted thanks to volunteers at Strathfarrar and also to Dave Gordon.

6.2 Its Up to Us

SY & CD provided an update on the campaign. Key points:

- An Teallach project nearing completion; celebration planned for May 2026.
- Consultation planned with members and wider community to identify next priority paths for “It’s Up to Us 2.0” (launch aimed Spring 2027).
- Additional volunteering days planned in Sep returning to Skye

6.3 Members Survey results

SY provided an update on the insights report produced by Christina from the membership survey. Thanks were noted to Paolo Savino who has been providing volunteer support and has done a lot of the analysis of the data. Key points:

- 1,000 responses received — highest to date.
- Membership stable and generally satisfied.
- Priorities identical across age segments:
 - Protecting mountain landscapes
 - Safety & skills
 - Access rights
 - Responsible access
 - Reducing barriers for newcomers
- Age differences more significant than gender in expectations.

Club survey being finalised thanks to Steven for his feedback on questions

7.0 Finance Report

7.1 Financial Report Q3 2025/26

FK provide a verbal update in the Q3 report net income at Q3: £117k vs budget £51k, driven by:

- Lower salary costs
- Magazine cost savings (higher ad income)
- Marketing underspend
- Higher membership income
- Updated full-year forecast: £80k surplus after late insurance cost (+£6k).

7.2 Budget 2026/7

- Initial draft showed £30k surplus; after insurance (+£24k) adjusted to £6k surplus
- Includes:
 - 3.8% membership fee increase (AGM-approved)
 - Assumed growth: initially -2%, but discussion agreed to revise to +1–2% growth target
 - Magazine budget reduced by £5k; reallocated to marketing
 - 3% salary inflation used for indication – TBC at May meeting
 - Coach/setter rate increases (ClimbScotland)
 - ML course removed for low viability
 - Note omission in the budget in relation to final invoices submitted for insurance late in Jan £12k

To note sportscotland investment uplift on staff costs not yet included.

ACTION – SY/FK Revised budget to be circulated and approved via email before 1 April.

7.3 Website

AW provided an update on the paper which had been circulated. Thanks noted to AW and HG for their work on the paper. Key points:

- Market testing with four Scottish agencies; indicative range £10k–£60k depending on scope.
- Target £50k to deliver full rebuild - Board approved spend
- Timeline 4–9 months, aiming to begin Spring 2026 and go live 2027.
- HG would lead but discussions required around capacity and support.

7.4 Funding support AMMH refurbishment project

SY provide a verbal update

- BMC are now providing a grant rather than loan.
- The board previously agreed £10k loan
- Discussion around potential change in that position
- No decision to be made until further clarity of year end finances and sportscotland funding confirmed.

8.0 Governance

8.1 Appointment of Directors

AB provided a verbal update on the recruitment process:

- Chair: Joanna Dytch proposed as preferred candidate; subject to formal agreement of board and election at AGM.
- Finance Director: Preferred candidate identified; final due diligence meeting arranged.
- Commercial Director: Board agreed to continue searching for a candidate with sponsorship/partnership/commercial development expertise.

8.2 Policies and Procedures Review Schedule status report

- Document management spreadsheet has been updated and cross checked with changes to the Company Manual
- Noted the need to develop an IT and Cyber Security Policy and new policies relating to AI and Volunteering.
- SY has approached SSA for admin support to conduct a document review. SY seeking authority to progress this in consultation with President, Chair and Director for HR, Governance and Equality. This was approved.

8.3 Anti Doping Update

HA asked Directors to note the work being undertaken on Anti Doping and that a new list circulated; implications were understood; no immediate impact in the level of competition delivered by ClimbScotland with greater focus at international level competitors.

9.0 Standing Agenda Items

9.1 Risk Register

- FRAG deferred review of the Corporate governance section as not quorate.
- Finance Section has been reviewed and update
- Ongoing work in relation to safety systems and procedures
- Potential new risks discussed:
 - Loss of members due to insurance offers elsewhere
 - Reputational risk following an incidents

9.2 Health & Safety

9.2.1 Incidents and near misses

Incident reported by Heriot Watt University MC relating to a fall at Limekilns crag. Individual suffered serious injuries but is recovering. No report submitted to insurer's yet and still to confirm details of accident. Support offered to the University following initial meeting with RC

9.2.2 Glencoe FAI / Austrian court case

- BH led discussion on wider lessons and duty of care.
- Suggested - guidance to clubs and liabilities information should be reviewed, taking legal advice into account. Guidance should be reviewed annually.

ACTION - AT seek legal contact and establish a smaller working group

9.3 Child & Adult Wellbeing

- Ongoing compliance work taking place with Children First ahead of sportscotland investment panel
- 2 cases noted and support being provided

AOB

Recent concerns about snow damage at ski resort by walkers/ guides was noted.

10.0 Future meetings 2025

- FRAG - Tues 12th May, 4pm
- Board - Thurs 21st May, 4pm
- FRAG - Tues, 4th August, 4pm
- Board - Thurs 13th August, 4pm
- FRAG - Tues, 27th October, 4pm
- Board - Thurs, 5th Nov, 4pm
- AGM - Sat 14th November
- Christmas Social staff and Directors - Thurs 10th Dec

