



PHOTO CREDIT: MAX HUNTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY
1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025



WHAT WE DO

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

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

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

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.MOUNTAINEERING.SCOT

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ROUND UP OF THE YEAR

APRIL

Members were updated on some long-term access issues and high profile planning proposals with the potential to have a major impact on mountain areas, and our summer mountain skills programme started.

JULY

A new digital-only membership for 18-25 year olds was launched this month to encourage more young members to join, and we shared the first few videos on the new Mountaineering Scotland TikTok account.

OCTOBER

The mountain safety team issued a reminder to pack a head torch and extra layers as the days get shorter and cooler, and the first of a series of mountain weather workshops took place in partnership with the Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS).

JANUARY

Winter came and went as the Mountain Safety Team began the new winter skills programme, and preparations for the 2025 International Winter Climbing Meet were in the final stages.

MAY

Our joint campaign It's Up to Us raised over £200,000 in it's first year, and we met with Building Digital UK to discuss our concerns over phone mast locations as part of the proposed Shared Rural Network.

AUGUST

A list and map of the Shared Rural Network phone mast planning proposals went live on our website, and the ClimbScotland Fun Boulder Competition Finals took place after 275 competitors took part in the qualifying rounds.

NOVEMBER

Storm Bert caused havoc with the Mountaineering Scotland AGM, which was moved online at the last minute to avoid members having to travel, and the Mountain Safety Team hosted the annual student SMART weekend at Glenmore Lodge.

FEBRUARY

The Mountaineering Scotland team met for a development day at EICA Ratho to explore ways to grow and serve our community, the Board of Directors approved a new strategy framework and sportscotland confirmed an increase in funding for the next 3 years.

JUNE

The Scottish Youth Climbing Championships took place at EICA Ratho and a walkers route up and down Aonach Mor from the Nevis Range car park was finally agreed to allow access without crossover with the mountain bike routes.

SEPTEMBER

The ClimbScotland team were busy with the start of the Youth Climbing Series, while Mountaineering Scotland staff and board members took part in a litter pick on Ben Lomond as part of our TakItHame campaign.

DECEMBER

The annual ThinkWINTER safety campaign launched along with guidance on using microspikes and crampons, informed by the results of a community survey held earlier in the year by the Mountain Safety Group.

MARCH

The International Winter Climbing Meet took place, with 60 climbers from 15 countries including China, Korea and Japan, and we marked International Women's Day with a series of inspirational videos featuring staff, board and members.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY ANNE BUTLER

This year's Annual Report is an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and look ahead to an exciting new chapter for our organisation. Whether it's walking, climbing or skiing, time spent outdoors remains one of the best antidotes to the stresses of modern life. In a world that often feels overwhelming and unpredictable, Scotland's mountains offer us something rare and a valuable; a space to breathe, to reflect, to challenge ourselves and connect to the natural world.

In March we were proud to host the International Winter Climbing Meet. Despite the lack of snow and ice, climbers from across the globe came together to celebrate their love of climbing and adventure. It was a powerful reminder that the spirit of mountaineering goes far beyond conditions; it is about bringing people together to share their passion for the mountains.

This year marks a significant milestone as we introduce our new Strategic Plan 2025-29 which lays the foundation for our activities over the next five years. Building on our strengths and values and guided by the aspirations of our members, the plan responds to the evolving needs of the wider mountaineering community.

As we prepare to deliver this ambitious strategy, we recognise the need for robust governance and leadership. To support this, the Board is proposing a restructure that would increase the number of volunteer directors to ensure we have the skills and experience needed to drive our work forward. We are also proposing to split the role of President and Chair, enabling each to focus more effectively on member engagement and governance respectively. This is a positive and timely evolution that reflects the growing scale and complexity of our work.

I would like to extend my thanks to outgoing Directors Dominic Hall and Hazel Meehan for their ongoing support. On behalf of the Board, I would also like to thank Chair and Director for Clubs Jo Dytych for her six years of unwavering service. I am very pleased to welcome our new Directors Steven Johnson, Andrew Tate and Fiona Bennett.



After 7 years in the role, Access & Conservation Officer, Davie Black retired at the end of March 2025. On behalf of the mountaineering community, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Davie who has been a tireless advocate for Scotland's wild places.

There have also been other changes within our staff team. I'm delighted to welcome Megan Murray, Charmaine Duthie, Heather McAslan and Catriona Davies into their new substantive roles. These appointments have allowed us to adapt the staff structure in line with the new strategic plan, ensuring we are fit for purpose and well placed to deliver our goals.

Finally, I would like to thank to sportscotland for their continued support. Their decision to increase our funding is a strong endorsement of our work, and a vital investment in the future of Scottish mountaineering and sport climbing.

As we look ahead, I am filled with optimism about what we can achieve together. The mountains belong to us all and together we are shaping their future.

Anne Butler
President, Mountaineering Scotland

MEMBERSHIP

Total membership of Mountaineering Scotland sustained at around the **16,000** mark over the course of the year. Club membership continued to grow, finishing the year **1.8%** up on the previous year, whereas the individual membership fell slightly, at **2%** down on the previous year. There seems to be a similar trend across other membership organisations, and our staff team continue to develop our membership offering to attract and retain members.

OUR MEMBERS

- Equalities data provided by **6846** members (at 31 December 2024)
- **32%** Female / **65%** Male / **3%** Other or prefer not to say
- Members who reported having a disability **2%** / **86%** without / **12%** prefer not to answer
- Black, Asian, African, Mixed, other ethnic group **2.5%** / White non-UK **5.1%** / White Scottish/British **76.7%** / Prefer not to answer **15.7%**

TOTAL MEMBERS

16,193

+0%

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

7,695

-2%

CLUB MEMBERS

8,498

+1.8%

NO OF CLUBS

135

**AFFILIATED
CLUBS**

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

The **18-25 membership** was introduced in 2024 to encourage young people to become members and gain access to the full range of skills training on offer. The new membership category is digital-only ie no printed digital card or magazine, and offers membership at a reduced cost for people in this age group.

Two new workshops were also on offer for members in 2024. A Wildlife Tracks & Signs webinar with wildlife tracker Dan Pupplett gave members a fascinating insight into what we might see on the hills and trails and some top tips on spotting wildlife and birds.

The Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS) delivered 6 weather workshops for members at our head office in Perth with 59 members attending. The classroom-based sessions covered the basics of mountain weather forecasting with a second workshop focusing on winter mountain weather. Weather workshops will be running again from November 2025 onwards.



SUPPORTING CLUBS

Quarterly club zoom calls continued, providing the opportunity for clubs to discuss hot topics such as websites, membership recruitment and insurance. The annual club survey allowed clubs to highlight any challenges they were facing and what areas of support would make the most difference.

One of our key goals for 2024 was to facilitate the return of the Huts Advisory Group after John Leftley stepped down after more than 20 years as Huts Convenor for many years, and the first meeting was held early in 2025. The aim of the group is to provide a forum for clubs that operate huts to work together to address common issues and stay up to date with the latest developments in legislation and good practice.



OUR COMMUNICATIONS

WEBSITE VISITS PER MONTH
42,852

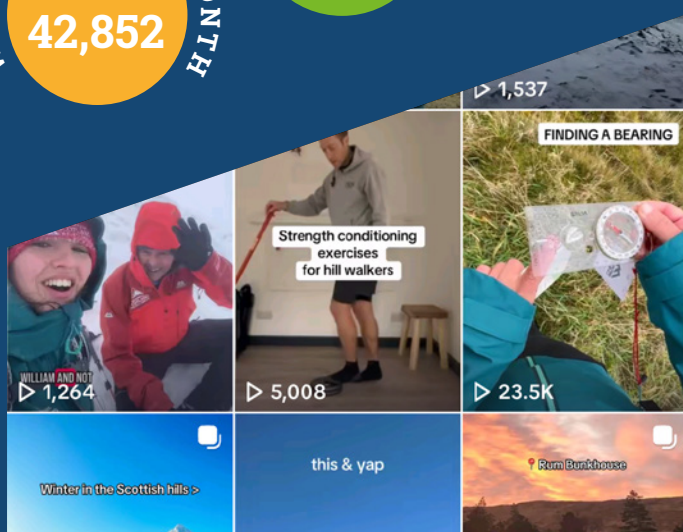
E-NEWS SUBSCRIBERS
17.5K

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS
3.75K

FACEBOOK PAGE LIKES
37K

TIKTOK FOLLOWERS
1.7K

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS
17K



ADAPTING OUR MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

With some key staff changes and continuing budget pressures, a review of our publications took place to look at ways of reducing cost while continuing to provide members with valued member benefits. While our new digital publication, Mountain Matters, had been well received, the decision was taken to pause publication and focus on producing two high quality print issues of Scottish Mountaineer a year. This would allow us to manage costs and develop other content to share through existing channels including email, social media and on our websites.

To align with this proposal, the Communications Team began publishing content on TikTok and LinkedIn, two very different social networks with very different audiences, but ones we were keen to reach out to and which complement those of our established Facebook and Instagram presence.



ThinkWINTER FOR EPIC MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES

With winter weather and conditions becoming increasingly unpredictable, the challenge for the annual ThinkWINTER campaign team is how to adapt to the messaging and content to remain relevant no matter what the weather, temperature or snow cover.

At a planning session in August, the team, comprising Communications staff from Mountaineering Scotland, Scottish Mountain Rescue, Police Scotland, Glenmore Lodge and Mountain Training Scotland developed a resource and graphics pack that could be shared with other organisations to help promote the key messages in a simple, sharable format. The pack was shared with retailers, mountain rescue team and key individuals and partners, to signpost followers and customers to the ThinkWINTER hub, a landing page with links to relevant information for winter walkers, climbers, skiers, mountain bikers and trail runners.

Also as part of this year's ThinkWINTER campaign was the new guidance and an infographic on the use of microspikes in the hills – see page 19 for more details.

EVENTS



TakItHame LIVE!

Our long-running litter campaign – TakItHame – got a new lease of life in September 2024 when staff, board and members met up with staff from the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park and National Trust for Scotland to do a litter pick on Ben Lomond.

As well as picking litter on the way up the hill, it was also an opportunity to interact with the public in the busy car park and on the hill path. We even had some help from a few very kind hill runners who took bags of litter down with them!



2025 WINTER CLIMBING MEET

The Scottish Winter Climbing Meet has been one of the highlights of the international climbing calendar for more than a quarter of a century. After a break of five years, the meet made a welcome return in March 2025 with international connections, skill-sharing and a battle with Scotland's ever-changing weather. Despite a deep thaw midweek, some impressive routes were climbed and, more importantly, friendships forged.

Behind the scenes, Mountaineering Scotland spent almost a year planning the week-long event, with support from the BMC, Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Alpine Club, and some demo kit provided by DMM.

More than 60 climbers gathered at Glenmore Lodge for the start of the meet, with over 20 countries represented including Greece, South Africa, South Korea and China as well as several from Europe. UK host climbers were chosen for their knowledge and experience of Scotland's winter mountains, along with a group of less experienced climbers who were mentored throughout the week.

The race to get some winter climbs in before a thaw mid-week produced some epic climbs of some classic routes in the Cairngorms and the North Face of Ben Nevis. Rather than viewing the warmer conditions as a setback, the climbers turned to rock, with the UK climbers showcasing the vast range of climbs that Scotland is known for.

The success of the week was thanks to the amazing teamwork of both the organisers and climbers. One of the key goals was to encourage more women to take part, and our thanks go to our Mountain Safety Adviser Kirsty Pallas who supported this with a blog piece about her own experience of taking part in the 2020 Meet and taking part a webinar in advance of applications opening.. It was fantastic to bring together so many people from so many different nations who all share a common interest, at a time when there is so much division in the world. See you next time!

Adapted from an article by Alistair Todd in Scottish Mountaineer Issue 103 – read the full article here.



PROTECTING ACCESS & ENVIRONMENT

This year has seen a busy and productive period for our access and environment work, as we continue to stand up for your rights to access the hills and protect the mountain landscapes we all value. In the year 1 April 2024- 31 March 2025, we have responded to nearly 60 access enquiries from members, and looked at over 150 planning proposals, with objections to 4 windfarms and 24 other planning proposals submitted.

NEVIS RANGE TO AONACH MÒR WALKING ROUTE

Following an initial approach to the Nevis Range in 2019 asking for pedestrian route directions to Aonach Mor through Leanachan forest, we have been in ongoing discussions about how to secure an agreed route which will have minimal impact on the mountain bike trails.

Thanks to the new Director at Nevis Range, a route has been agreed and mapped. There have been a few delays along the way, but installation of waymarkers was due to take place in Spring 2025, and details of the route published on the Nevis Range website - both of which we will be following up on.



REIFF PARKING

Following protracted correspondence with the Highland Council about the long-running matter of blocked verge parking, including direct correspondence with the Council Leader, we wrote to the Assistant Chief Executive of Place in Nov 2024 about their agreement to remove the obstruction and the lack of progress. We received a reply that he would investigate it and we are still waiting for a response.

In the meantime, a local community buyout of the Badentarbet Estate by the Coigach Community Development Company has taken place. Details of the extent of this are not yet known, but we hope this may offer an alternative solution to the current situation.

SNOWSPORTS TOURING - ACCESS THROUGH SKI RESORTS

Ski centre operators have been raising concerns over recent winter seasons about snowsports tourers damaging groomed ski surfaces, interfering with downhill skiers by ascending/crossing pistes, and skiing down without paying, as well as digging snowholes within fenced areas.

Constructive discussion took place with one of the Scottish ski centre operators who intended to ban access for snowsports tourers from pisted areas completely. With support from Access Authorities, an understanding was reached that skiing down a piste is permissible under the Land Reform Act (section 7) and there is a right to take passage, but not necessarily for other activities (eg snowholing).

Working closely with Snowsport Scotland, it was agreed to create specific access routes through managed ski areas that snowsports enthusiasts could use to get to the backcountry and return to the car park, and that don't interfere with centre activities. Signs have been prepared along with updated access guidance and we expect these to be deployed this season to help manage access once the snow arrives.



WELCOME TO GLENSHEE SKI CENTRE BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS AND FACILITY USAGE



SCOTTISH TOURING CODE

- Pay attention to warning signs and stay out of roped areas
- Be aware of downhill skiers/boarders who have right of way
- Avoid travelling across or up pistes on foot or ski
- Keep dogs under control and in your sight at all times
- Stay clear of grooming machines - they operate 24 hours a day and can have very long cables attached

NORTH FACE CAR PARK

At Ben Nevis, we've been monitoring developments at the North Face car park and have been in ongoing dialogue with Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) about the proposal to extend the existing parking area.

FLS manage the parking and surrounding forest and have been trying to address the implications of around 40,000 visitors to the car park each year. There are many challenges including managing the number of vehicles in and around the car park, some of which have been poorly parked, toileting issues, and an ongoing major timber harvesting project in the forest, with many large lorries on the forest road.

Members will have noticed that there is now a charge for parking cars in the North Face car park. The FLS policy is for the car park to be managed for day visitors, and the funds raised from this are to assist with managing the facilities there. Following introduction of the charges FLS informed us that there is a 'pay later' option with the parking app that allows climbers to retrospectively pay for their stay if unable to pay at the time. We also ensured the informal acceptance of cars being left for those heading our overnight and particularly users of the CIC hut.

To accommodate the number of visitors now using the North Face car park, FLS are proposing to increase the size of the parking space, with an option of a space for toilets when the funding issues have been resolved. A plan has been drawn up and planning consent being sought with The Highland Council, however the application has stalled due to concerns raised by Transport Scotland about the junction with the A82 at Torlundy.

Mountaineering Scotland is continuing to work with the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who manage the CIC hut, FLS and the Nevis Landscape Partnership to seek sustainable solutions for these difficult challenges in providing a larger car park with toilet facilities.



PROTECTING MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPES

Following the adoption of NPF4 in 2023 there has been a growing number of planning applications that could impact on mountain access and wild land — particularly large-scale forestry planting, windfarm developments, and two large scale pumped hydro storage schemes.

As well as visual impact, these developments often affect paths and upland areas regularly used by hillwalkers and climbers, and we ensure that your voice is heard in planning decisions and that access rights are respected.

PUMPED HYDRO – A GROWING CHALLENGE

With the rise in pumped hydro proposals — especially in Highland areas — we've been taking a closer look at the potential impacts.

The Earba scheme, lying in the hills between Loch Laggan and Loch Pattack, was the first to hit the planning system. The proposed upper reservoir is a massive expansion of a natural loch at altitude. This is more than attrition of wild qualities around the edge of the wild land boundaries, the construction and landscaping will be deep into the heart of this mountainous area. The need for high-capacity hydro to balance the vagaries of onshore wind is without question, and it is difficult to say 'not here', because where else would it be built? Whilst Mountaineering Scotland did not object, a decision based on the response to our members survey, we submitted detailed comments on the scheme which has now been granted planning permission.

The Fearna scheme proposes expanding a natural loch in a Wild Land Area by Loch Quoich. Again, the storage capacity is needed to buffer erratic electricity generation from wind power, but here it is close to a major transmission powerline upgrade, and with clusters of windfarms creeping closer to the east of it. Following a site visit and close assessment of the planning proposal, Mountaineering Scotland submitted an objection to this scheme given the visual impact and the impact on access to the two Munros Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach.

WINDFARM PROPOSALS
63

POWERLINE CONNECTIONS
22

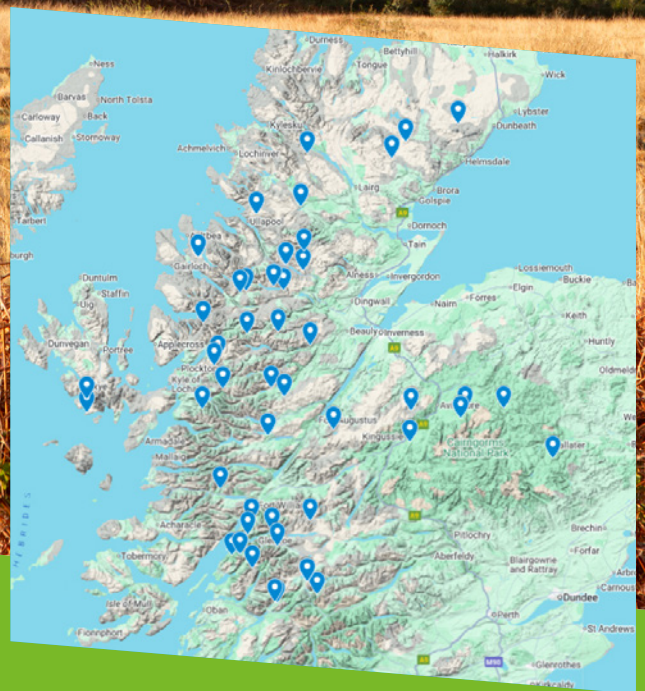
DIGITAL TELECOM MAST PROPOSALS
32

FORESTRY PROPOSALS
26

HYDRO PROPOSALS
3

PEATLAND RESTORATION PROPOSALS
4





SHARED RURAL NETWORK

As part of the Coalition of Concern, we have continued to maintain pressure and object to phone masts proposed in some of our most wild and remote landscapes, developing a new interactive map (see above) to show where planning applications were being made.

Working closely with the John Muir Trust, over 46 different signatories supported a letter that was sent in September 2024 to Chris Bryant, the Minister for State for Digital and Data Infrastructure, to raise our concerns.

The SRN programme is now claiming the original target of 95% coverage is now being met and it has been reported that a cut in funding will significantly reduce the number of new masts proposed, with a focus on targeting areas which will benefit the most people.

We continue to monitor the situation, but it looks like our campaign efforts have been successful and that common sense has prevailed.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE



STEP UP TO SAVE OUR
MOUNTAIN PATHS

PATH CAMPAIGN MARCHES ON!

It's Up to Us - our path campaign, in partnership with the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) and with generous support from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT) and Cotswold Outdoor - continued to grow in it's second year.

The team were delighted to bring It's Up to Us to the audience at the Fort William Mountain Festival in February 2025, with OATS Projects Manager Ewan Watson, Mountaineering Scotland CEO Stuart Younie and It's Up to Us ambassador Keri Wallace (Girls on Hills) bringing the project to life and providing a call to action to support the campaign through donations and volunteering.

PATH WORK PROGRESS

Work continued on the An Teallach path project over the winter months, with the team from Cairngorms Wilderness Ltd now having completed nearly a kilometre of the lower section including 237 of stone pitching and 500m of aggregate path. The majority of materials have been sourced from the nearby hillside, meaning the new path blends in perfectly with the surroundings. Beyond the path itself, a huge effort has gone into re-landscaping old desire lines — eroded routes left by years of footfall. Restoring these areas encourages natural regeneration of fragile mountain habitats, guiding walkers to stay on the new, sustainable route.

All work has been carried out entirely by hand, including stones weighing up to a tonne moved into place using a manually operated winch — the heaviest load the equipment can safely handle.

PENNIES MAKE PATHS!

Donations have continued to come in from businesses in the outdoor sector, clubs, individual donors and public donations. In autumn 2024, the project was delighted to benefit from being part of the Pennies scheme in all Scottish Cotswold Outdoor stores. This generated nearly £6,000 in micro-donations for the campaign over 4 months.

Thanks to this generous support, we've now raised over £250,000 towards urgent mountain path repairs— helping protect the places we all love to walk and climb. This is a powerful example of what we can achieve together when skilled path builders, years of experience and knowledge and public support come together.

THE FINAL PUSH

To begin the final phase of work on the An Teallach path project requires another £50,000 to be raised by the end of 2025, and we need your help! Donate today and help us continue restoring Scotland's mountain paths for future generations to enjoy.

Visit savemountainpaths.scot to make a one off donation or set up regular giving.



DONATE
STEP UP TO SAVE OUR
MOUNTAIN PATHS

MOUNTAIN SAFETY PROGRAMME

551

MEMBERS TOOK PART
IN 31 MOUNTAIN
SKILLS COURSES

154

LEARNED BASIC
NAVIGATION
SKILLS

59

PEOPLE ATTENDED
MWIS WEATHER
WORKSHOPS

18

PEOPLE ATTENDED
SCRAMBLING
COURSES

12

MEMBERS DID THEIR
SUMMER MOUNTAIN
LEADER TRAINING

244

WOMEN ATTENDING
MOUNTAIN SKILLS
COURSES

148

MEMBERS ATTENDED
WINTER SKILLS,
WINTER NAVIGATION
AND AVALANCHE
AWARENESS



KIRSTY PALLAS AND MAX HUNTER FROM OUR MOUNTAIN SAFETY TEAM

CLUB TRAINING

18

CLUB TRAINING
DAYS

8

AFFILIATED
CLUBS

108

CLUB
MEMBERS

STUDENT SKILLS AND SAFETY TRAINING

465

STUDENT CLUB MEMBERS BENEFITTED
FROM SKILLS TRAINING

ST JOHN
SCOTLAND
SKILLS
TRAINING

327
STUDENTS

STUDENT
WINTER
SKILLS

59
STUDENTS

SMART
WEEKEND

65
STUDENTS

STUDENT
WINTER
CLIMBING

14
STUDENTS

Mountaineering Scotland's support for student clubs remains high with annual student-specific events including the SMART weekend, Student Winter Climbing weekend, and the Student Winter Skills weekend which delivers student-focused skills and training for safer adventures to over 135 students across Scotland.

10 YEARS OF ST JOHN SCOTLAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

2025 will be the 10 year anniversary of the Student Mountain Safety Instructor position which is fully funded by St John Scotland. We would like to thank St John Scotland for their generosity and continued commitment to supporting the student safety programme.

Mountain Safety Instructor for students, Malcolm Airey, continues to deliver bespoke training and support to student clubs on their weekend club trips through our partnership with St John Scotland, with the majority of the training happening in the autumn and winter months.

In total, Malcolm worked with 327 students from 15 student clubs on the hill in 2024-25, and more than 500 students attended his evening safety lectures. As well as practical skills training, some of the key needs of clubs and club members addressed through their interaction with Malcolm include:

- Understanding how to support new members to gain experience whilst maintaining a culture where everyone is responsible for their own decision making and risk management.
- Gathering information relevant to their planning in an age when there is a lot of information available from a variety of sources.
- Assisting members who have done a basic skills course, but are unsure of how to progress and balance challenge vs risk.
- How to access further training through Mountaineering Scotland's skills courses or other training providers
- Providing guidance to students who may wish to progress to gain mountaineering qualifications or volunteer using skills learned at university eg medical students.



St John
Scotland



NEW GUIDANCE FOR USE OF MICROSPIKES IN WINTER HILLS

Thanks to the 1,300 people who filled out the microspikes and crampon survey at the end of the previous winter, we were able to develop clear guidance around what people should consider when choosing whether the use of microspikes is appropriate in the hills in winter conditions.

Although many experienced hillwalkers and mountaineers have developed their own suitable thoughts on this, it was clear from the survey that straightforward advice was sought from others. Mountaineering Scotland worked with Mountain Training Scotland (MTS) and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI) to form the current guidance and an infographic for use both online and in stores by outdoor retailers.



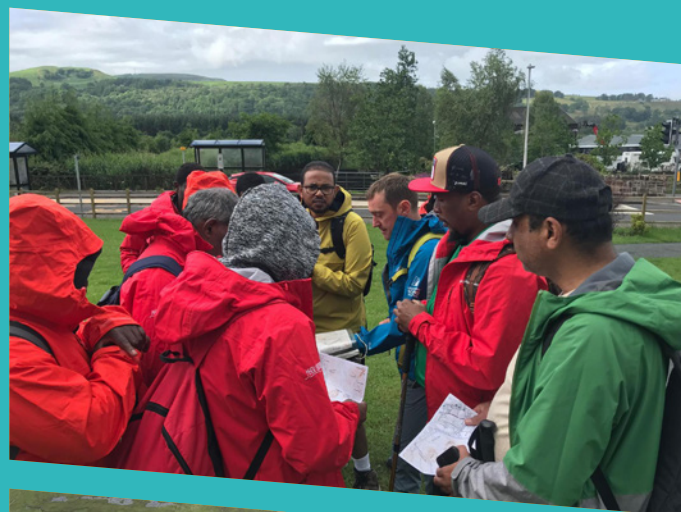
Scan for more information about microspikes:



CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE WITH THE OUTDOORS

We continue to work hard in trying to make our mountain safety courses open and inclusive to all our members - by running courses in a wide geographical area across Scotland, many with good public transport links, by answering individual enquiries before a course and adapting delivery to allow individuals to be able to feel comfortable.

However, we understand that there are still many barriers for many people, and have been actively supporting the work of partner organisations and initiatives such as Mhor Outdoors- Connect Outdoors Programme. Each Connect Outdoors session partners with a different community organisation whose beneficiaries face barriers to accessing the outdoors, taking them on weekly hill walks over a period of eight weeks. The project's goal is to introduce people from under-represented communities to the outdoors through sustainable, educational, and empowering outdoor activity that inspires long-term and meaningful connection with wild places.



DEVELOPING PATHWAYS AND POTENTIAL

13
YOUNG
ATHLETES

IN THE
SCOTLAND
TALENT
SQUAD

66
YOUNG
PEOPLE

LEARNED
TO CLIMB
OUTDOORS AT
19 REALROCK
SESSIONS

150
ADULTS

LEARNED SPORT
AND TRAD
CLIMBING SKILLS
AT 46 READY TO
ROCK COURSES

69
PEOPLE

ATTENDED
12 FUNDAS
COACHING
WORKSHOPS

42
PEOPLE

ATTENDED
3 INCLUSIVE
CLIMBING
WORKSHOPS

41
YOUNG
CLIMBERS

IN SCOTLAND
DEVELOPMENT
SQUAD

1,693 climbing competition entries in 2024-25
437 young climbers in the Fun Climbing Comp qualifying rounds
276 young climbers in the Fun Bouldering Comp qualifying rounds
240 competitors in the Scottish Youth Bouldering Championships
160 competitors in the Scottish Youth Climbing Championships
110+ entries in each round of the Youth Climbing Series
51% girls vs 49% boys

51%
GIRLS

49%
BOYS

COMPETITION ROUND-UP

2024-25 saw the biggest ever ClimbScotland competition programme and greatest number of competitors ever at 1,693. This included 437 young climbers taking part in the entry level ClimbScotland Fun comp across Scotland in January and February 2025.

The Youth Climbing Series (YCS) had over 110 entries in each round and the Fun Boulder Comp also saw record numbers with 276 competitors taking part in the qualifying rounds.





REALROCK – THE NEXT GENERATION OF CLIMBERS

After a wet start to the year making getting out to the crag tricky at times, the ClimbScotland RealRock programme came back strong. 19 sessions ran across Scotland, with 66 young climbers at some of Scotland's best outdoor climbing venues.

Through our Bouldering sessions, we got to visit some amazing locations in 2024 - Glen Lednock, Strathnairn and the world class Torridon Celtic Jumble were all on the tick list. Learning about how to access boulders safely, gaining some movement coaching and learning about our access rights and how we can respect our outdoor spaces, the young climbers took some big steps towards being great future role models for our sport.

The Roped Tasters were just as exciting. Visiting the best the central belt had to offer, our Bottom-Roping sessions let young climbers experience climbing on real rock while learning what it means to be responsible users of our climbing venues.

Always popular, the Sport Climbing RealRocks did not disappoint. With some classic venues on our schedule, and a few new, we toured Scotland introducing young climbers to Sport Climbing. With around 20 young climbers taking part in multiple sessions, we saw them achieving their first lead climbs outdoors, through to learning the daunting skills of rethreading anchors, and on to become component independent outdoor Sport Climbers that are now out climbing with friends and family and having a blast.

Trad Climbing is a huge step for young people, but through our programme we saw 12 young climbers learning about what goes into being a safe and efficient Trad Climber. They learnt about gear placements, anchor building and ropework skills, but most importantly about good decision-making at the crag. They then went on to complete their first independent trad leads, building their own quality anchors and safely bringing their partners up. It's amazing to watch

the transformation from competent indoor climber to confident trad climber.

In 2024, we partnered with Mountain Training to become a provider for their Rock Skills courses, designed to provide structured, nationally recognised training opportunities for people who want to learn more skills and become independent climbers. This also gets young people started on the Mountain Training pathway, including a DLOG and access to qualifications. We trialled the new Rock Skills courses in 2024 with a two-day Trad Climbing course with great success, leading us to continue to offer this as part of our 2025 programme.



INCLUSIVE CLIMBING

We are extremely proud of our inclusive climbing programme which, although small, has a big impact. Partnerships with organisations including Urban Uprising, Common Wheel and Able to Adventure offer a range of climbing sessions and qualifications for both volunteers and participants, meaning we can provide access to climbing for adults and young people who otherwise would not have the opportunity.

'The partnership with ClimbScotland has been a game changer for Urban Uprising. It has allowed us to offer outdoor climbing days to accompany the 10 session indoor programme we run. Additionally, ClimbScotland staff initiated an idea and connection to Glenmore Lodge which resulted in a new partnership with them, allowing us to add residential weekends to our offering... Through the ClimbScotland partnership we are able to upskill our staff and volunteers through the FUNDAS and CWI training and assessment offered to us.'

The most valuable component has been the excellent experience the young people have gained through well delivered and highly engaging outdoor sessions run by ClimbScotland.'

Ben Campbell, Programme Manager at Urban Uprising

'Over the last 2.5 years, our partnership with ClimbScotland has been invaluable in improving our participants mental health through our climbing project. They have supported and developed the skills of not only our participants, but also our volunteers who in turn help us deliver our regular sessions. Most of the people we support would never have been able to access the sport of climbing alone, and ClimbScotland has been integral in breaking down barriers to the sport and making it more inclusive.'

The outdoor days are a highlight of our year. For some people they are the only time they have experienced outdoor climbing, and for others it has been an opportunity to take these skills further, and learn how to climb safely outdoors independently of our support... without ClimbScotland this wouldn't be possible for us'

Kath Pender, Climbing Coordinator at Common Wheel

ClimbScotland also worked with Able to Adventure to provide 3 Inclusive Climbing workshops which are subsidised through our SportScotland funding. The workshops covered general disability awareness terminology and approaches, accessibility of venues, route choice, supporting movement, communication, sensory impairments, side by side support, adaptive harnesses and aids, pulley systems and adaptive belaying.

"A world of para-climbing revealed!! Reassurance that lots of what we were trying was more or less right. Access to equipment makers, tips & tricks, and general confidence boosting. I'll find more too as I reread my notes in the coming months."

Inclusive Climbing Workshop attendee



SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SQUADS

The 2024 Squads took part in 15 coaching academies including an outdoor weekend in Torridon, boulder and route competition simulator days, Fundamentals coaching workshops, a joint camp with the England National Squad and an end of year Squad meet. Squad members worked hard, learned loads and had heaps of fun. National squad members went on to attend national competitions and had amazing success.

Huge thank you to all of our coaches who supported the 2024 squad programme and to all the Scottish climbing walls that have supported the squads, either through hosting coaching events or giving additional support to our Scottish Squad members. We are psyched and looking forward to the 2025 Scottish Squad year, and we can't wait to have even more fun next year!



SPORT CLIMBING SUCCESS AT THE OLYMPICS



Four GB Climbing Athletes secured their places at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Molly Thompson-Smith, Erin McNeice, Hamish McArthur and Toby Roberts competed in the boulder and lead combined climbing event, with Toby Roberts topping the leader board and winning gold in the men's combined, while Hamish McArthur and Erin McNeice each put in a brilliant performance, finishing fifth in the men's and women's competitions respectively.

GB Climbing athletes now have their focus on LA28 which will see the three Sport Climbing disciplines of Lead, Boulder and Speed all as standalone medals as well as the introduction of Paraclimbing. We are hoping to see more athletes qualify for the games and have a Scottish climber represented on Team GB.


NEW INDOOR CLIMBING FACILITIES

The Edinburgh International Climbing Arena at Ratho received £100,000 Sports Facilities Funding from sportscotland to allow development of a new bouldering facility to progress at all levels of the sport. The new state-of-the-art competition bouldering wall, designed by the Serious Climbing team at Rockcity in partnership with Dreamwall, means that EICA: Ratho is now the only climbing centre in the UK with Olympic/International standard facilities for all three climbing disciplines (lead, speed and boulder).

The bouldering redevelopment in the arena at EICA has been a strategic priority for a number of years and Mountaineering Scotland has supported the need for this through our Facilities Strategy. Over the years, EICA has supported and hosted many of our competitions as well as training events for our development and national squads. The bouldering development will support and enrich the pathway experience for future generations of climbers as well as a new canvas for setting teams to hone and develop their craft.



OUR ORGANISATION



Mountaineering Scotland have ended the 2024-2025 financial reporting period with a small surplus of £27,175 compared to a forecast deficit of £49,657. This result is very welcome and recognises the hard work to reduce and remove costs across the organisation. The main drivers of this improvement are reduced salary costs and membership levels above forecast. The pressures of operational, insurance and cost of living increases continues to challenge our financial outlook.

OUR INCOME

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 7% higher than the previous financial year, due to an increase in fees as well as a small increase in members. Membership income made up 60% of the total income for 2024-25.

Investment from sportsscotland has remained steady, making up 35% of the total income for 2024-25. 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.

Other income includes member donations, interest and online shop merchandise sales.

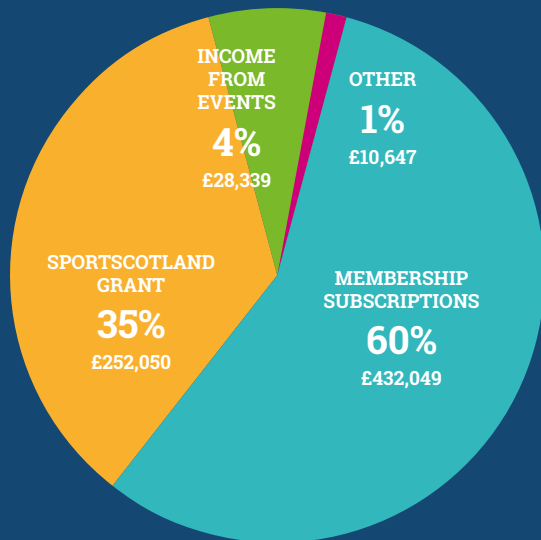
OUR EXPENDITURE

Expenditure overall is 1.8% less than in 2023-24. There has been one off savings on staffing cost due to vacancies and changes in roles. Income from Climb Scotland is higher than forecast due to the success of competitions and Academy work.

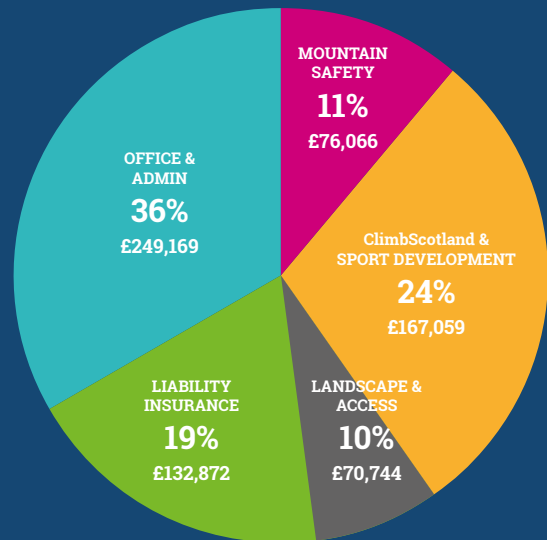
Property costs are significantly lower than budget due to an accounting adjustment from prior year. IT costs have also fallen due to previously held accruals for goods received not yet invoiced being adjusted.

Public liability insurance continues to be an area of pressure, rising 13.9% from prior year, from £116,648 to £132,872. Mountaineering Scotland remain committed to offering insurance as a member benefit, and we will continue to review options to ensure policies are cost effective and demonstrate value for money.

OUR INCOME 2024-25

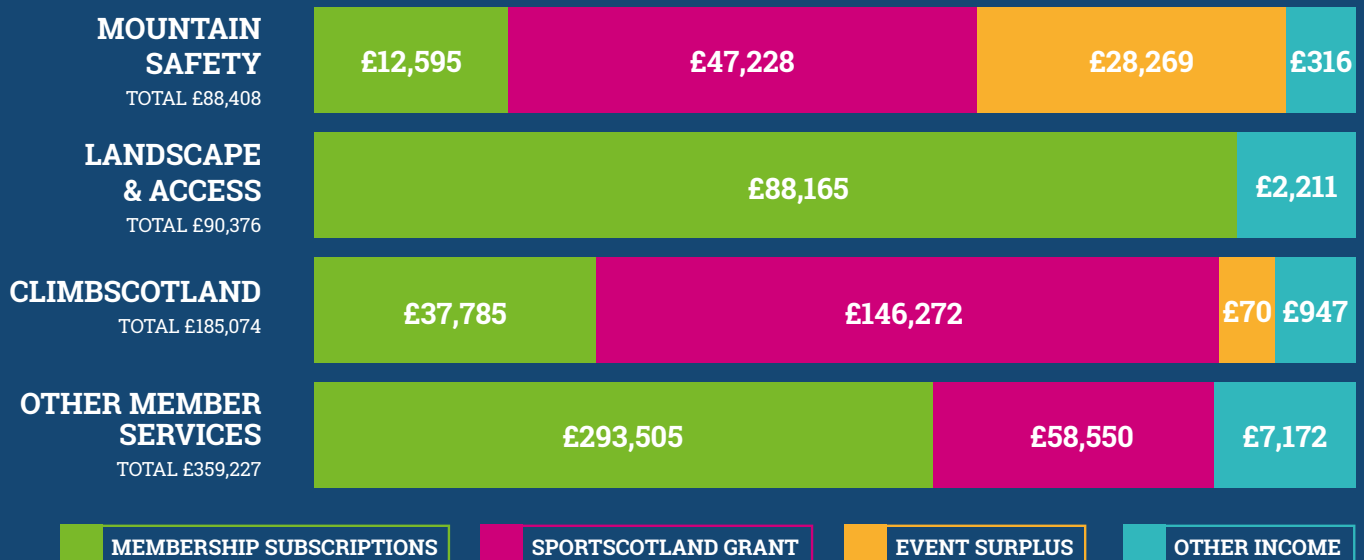


OUR EXPENDITURE 2024-25



OUR FUNDING AND HOW WE USE IT

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



INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2024-25

For the period

1 Apr - 31 Mar

2024-25

2023-24

INCOME

Membership	£432,049	£403,236
Grants	£252,050	£252,050
Other income	£38,986	£55,993
Total income	£723,085	£711,279

EXPENSES

Staff costs	£446,077	£486,378
Civil liability insurance	£132,872	£116,648
Magazine costs	£33,995	£24,626
Other costs	£82,966	£81,001
Total expenses	£695,910	£708,653
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£27,175	£2,626



OUR ORGANISATION

The board of Mountaineering Scotland undertook a strategic review in 2024 to assess the achievements and challenges faced by the organisation since the last strategy was approved in 2022. Much of the focus during that period had been on managing the recovery from the pandemic, and the strategy provided a clear framework to guide operational planning and the reporting of progress to Directors.

Much of the content from the previous strategy was still relevant, but a sharper focus was needed to address some key challenges faced by the organisation, particularly around finance and how we use our sportscotland investment. The updated strategy retains the pillars Representing, Protecting, Inspiring and Developing, and additional operational priorities have been included with a focus on four key outcomes:

- **Delivering financial sustainability**
- **Delivering our members priorities**
- **Developing our community and**
- **Growing our partnerships.**

An important consideration for this next strategic cycle was our investment proposal to sportscotland, submitted in October 2024. It has since been confirmed that our annual funding over this next period will increase by £22,000 a year, to support our talent pathway by providing additional coaching support. We understand Mountaineering Scotland is only one of only two Scottish Governing Bodies receiving an uplift during this strategic cycle, and given the funding pressures on Sportscotland, we see this as a vote of confidence in the work of the ClimbScotland team.

Another important change in how our investment is used has been the restructure of the team to align staff resources to help deliver our priorities. This year we were sorry to lose Calum McBain from the ClimbScotland team, and Karen McVeigh and Fiona McNicol from the Member Services

and Communications team. They have all made a very positive impact on the organisation during their time with us and we should note our thanks for their contributions.

We were pleased to appoint Megan Murray as Communications Officer in December 2024, and Charmaine Duthie in 2025 as our Membership Admin Officer. ClimbScotland Talent and Pathways Officer Jack Davies went part-time as he began studying for a Masters in Sports Coaching. Jack continues to support the ClimbScotland talent and performance pathway along with Heather McAslan, appointed part-time to manage the delivery of our climbing competitions, and Lucy Ross who was appointed into the new role of ClimbScotland Head Setter.

The biggest change has been the re-allocation of existing sportscotland resource into the Member Services and Communications Team with the creation of a new Membership and Club Development Officer role which will help drive our membership strategy forward and provide additional support for affiliated clubs.

One of the most significant staffing changes was the retiral at the end of March 2025 of Davie Black from his role as Access & Conservation Officer. Many of you will have come into contact with Davie, who dealt with many member enquiries about access and planning during his 7 years at Mountaineering Scotland. Davie has made a significant contribution to the work of Mountaineering Scotland, and was the first full time member of staff working in this area. He helped establish a clear policy framework for the organisation through our Conservation Strategy and Manifesto for the Mountains and has developed numerous other policy and position statements. He brought a wealth of knowledge on access, planning and environmental issues, and a measured and thoughtful approach to his work which we will all miss. We wish him well in his retirement.

With the continued support of our members the organisation is in good shape and our staff team and Directors will continue to monitor and report progress through the annual report and the regular monthly updates provided direct to members on our website and by email.

OUR PEOPLE



OUR THANKS GO TO....

All the members and freelance instructors who support our mountain safety, climbing and student courses.

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

All the coaches, route setters and volunteers that 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 Scotland, Association of Mountaineering Instructors, St John Scotland, Police Scotland, Mountain Weather Information Service, Met Office Aberdeen, Mountain Skills and Safety Scotland, Scottish Avalanche Information Service, 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, Connect Communications, Serious Climbing, SoiLL UK, Rock City, Eclipse Climbing, RedChili Climbing, Edelrid, Common Wheel, Climbers Against Cancer, Urban Uprising, Forma Designs.

sportscotland
the national agency for sport





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