



MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND

The Granary
West Mill Street
Perth PH1 5QP
Tel: 01738 493947
email david@mcofs.org.uk

Board Meeting – Approved Minutes

Thursday 23 November 2017 – The Granary: 17.00

Directors: Jonathan Binny; Jennifer Cardno; Jo Dytch; Avril Gall; Steve Gough; Kat Jones; David Montieth; Chris Todd; Mike Watson (Chair).

CEO & Company Secretary: David Gibson. **Observer:** Megan Griffiths (sportscotland).

Present: Jennifer Cardno; Jo Dytch; Avril Gall; David Gibson; David Montieth; Chris Todd; Mike Watson (Chair)

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

MW noted apologies from MG and KJ. SG had sent his apologies and MW noted that this was the third successive meeting at which he had been absent, which was entirely due to calendar clashes with pre-planned commitments and therefore unavoidable.

2.0 Declaration of Interests

There were no new declarations.

3.0 Draft Minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2017

The minutes were approved without amendment.

4.0 Matters arising not tabled elsewhere in the agenda

No items tabled.

5.0 Items actioned since the meeting of 7 September 2017

DG discussed the paper as tabled. The action relating to the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 is carried forward.

6.0 Call for AOCB

The future of the SSA and the date of the next meeting were noted for discussion.

7.0 Finance Report

7.1 Management accounts to 30 September 2017

JC noted that the forecast for membership income had been revised but whilst the year to date position was slightly adverse to budget by 1.6%, year on year performance was ahead by 16.2% and that this probably reflected timing of receipts. The grant income forecast was revised as a result of the timing of the SMT grant, and this would now be included in 2018-19 following confirmation of the grant and related conditions. The salary forecast reflected an adjustment for the Access & Conservation Officer with an assumption that the start date would be January. Forecast costs included minor adjustments relating to insurance and repairs. A provision related to a wind farm appeal had been released from the balance sheet and office costs relating to the proposed refurbishment had been capitalised. There was a surplus of £153.5k which was 63% positive to budget and 6.6% ahead of the prior year, although this would reduce over time as sportscotland investment had been received at the start of the financial year. Without this investment there was still a surplus of £46k.

Information Item

7.2 SMT grant for landscape and access work

DG stated that an offer of a grant in the sum of £13.6k had been received for access and conservation work, which was conditional upon the grant being claimed six months after the appointment of the officer and the claim being accompanied by a report on the officer's activities. He had written to the Trust thanking trustees on behalf of the Board for the grant.

Information Item

7.3 Timetable: sportscotland investment application; operational plan, targets & budget

DG referred to the paper as tabled and noted that it was important for the draft plan and budget to be provided to sportscotland by the deadline of 12 January. He invited directors to contact relevant staff members to discuss proposals for 2018-19 and to ensure that input was made to the first draft input by no later than 3 December. MW noted that it would be necessary for directors to approve the application by email prior to its submission.

Action ALL

7.4 Introduction of Employee Assistance Programme

DG referred to the paper as tabled. Following discussion the meeting approved the introduction of the scheme as recommended, subject to clarification of the position relating to taxable benefit, a satisfactory outcome of enquiries relating to the skills base of Health Assured staff and there being a two-year trial period followed by a review. The meeting agreed that SG as the director with responsibility for HR should monitor the scheme and report back to the Board annually.

Action DG / SG

8.0 Strategic & Operational Plans

8.1 Strategic plan: membership drive

JD summarised the current position in that two meetings had been held and that a number of new elements were being considered, although more time was needed to develop an overarching strategy which should include both clubs and individual members and that a clear social media strategy would be important. She intended to communicate with clubs with the aim of establishing what they want. In terms of timing she anticipated that a paper could be presented to the Board during January.

DG suggested that prior research with clubs be considered. He felt that it would be important to ensure that any future strategy was appropriately resourced if it was to be successful.

Action JD

8.2 The Granary

DG referred to the initial quotation, which had been obtained as a basis for consideration of indicative costs for the refurbishment. Based on the initial design proposal it was clear that costs were significantly higher than the notional budget previously discussed. Following discussion the meeting agreed that in the present economic climate such expenditure would inevitably reduce reserves, and that a more prudent approach should focus on key priorities. There was agreement that these included electrics, IT cabling and relocation of the server, improvements in lighting, introduction of audio-visual and Skype facilities in the meeting room, storage requirements, and redecoration with a ceiling for total expenditure not exceeding £20k including VAT.

Action DG

8.3 Team leader's report – ClimbScotland

DG referred the meeting to the report as tabled. He felt that the report demonstrated significant and ongoing progress against a range of outcomes including investment agreement targets, development of clubs and partners, and partnership working with MTS, AMI, SSS, the ABCTT and Urban Uprising. He had been impressed by the professionalism of staff under the Team Leader's guidance and felt that ClimbScotland was performing well and this sentiment was endorsed unanimously by the Board.

Information Item

8.3.1 Climbing Development Group

DG stated that he had no further information at this stage.

Carried Forward

8.3.2 Developing ClimbScotland in the foreseeable investment environment

DG noted that the team was meeting with him, AG and MG in December to consider how to develop the ClimbScotland programme to become more sustainable in an environment where investment in sport generally was under pressure. He felt that charitable status would merit future consideration as this would enable access to grants which are currently unavailable.

Information Item

8.3.3 Operation of BMC Competition and Youth Committees

DG asked the meeting to note the contents of the email from Nick Colton of the BMC which detailed how committees operated and which provided useful information. He had asked the Team Leader - ClimbScotland and Sport Development Officer to ensure they participated in future meetings using Skype and also to attend meetings in person when appropriate.

Information Item

8.4 Team leader's update - Member Services and Communications

DG discussed the report in some detail and the meeting noted membership trends and the range of activity currently in place to stimulate membership performance to target levels. The meeting agreed that it was important that actions were clearly prioritised with targets and timescales to ensure focus was applied where effort is most likely to succeed and that the report for the next meeting should address this. The meeting thanked EB for her report.

Action DG

8.5 Mountain safety update

DG asked the meeting to note the report and stated that performance for all investment agreement outcomes was on target.

Information Item

9.0 Governance

9.1 AGM draft minutes and feedback on members' meeting

The meeting noted the draft minutes and no amendments were considered necessary.

There followed discussion about the merits of combining a members' event with the AGM and a number of suggestions were considered. The meeting agreed that DG should convene a small working group with directors CT, DM and JD to consider the purpose and feasibility of a members' event and bring recommendations to the next meeting.

Action DG

9.2 Directors' date of election and Board succession planning

MW stated that there were two issues requiring consideration by the Board.

- a) DG had indicated his wish to retire from full-time duties at the end of March 2018 but would support a replacement though transition but on a limited basis to be agreed. MW felt the time scale for recruitment was feasible but would require adherence to a strict timetable. The meeting agreed an approximate timetable as follows:
 - Job description agreed by 1st December
 - Wide advertisement of post from 4th December
 - Applications close 1700hrs Monday 8th January
 - Short listing complete 12th January
 - Interviews Monday 22nd January

The meeting agreed that a sub-committee of the Board be convened under MW to oversee the recruitment and appointment process and MW asked for nominees to come forward.

Action DG/MW

b) MW stated that the articles of association required him to demit office at the 2019 AGM; he believed that it was important and necessary that the organisation had an agreed and open process for the identification of his successor and that the successor had the opportunity of working with the Board for at least 12 months. Under normal circumstances it would be appropriate for the vice-chair to succeed the sitting chair but the present incumbent had stated that he was not in a position to take up the role due to personal plans. As a result it would be necessary for preparations to be made to advertise for a director who could be recruited as a future chair / vice-chair. The meeting agreed the principle of the advocated approach and that advertising should commence in April 2019 in advance of the May board meeting.

Action MW

9.3 Insurance review

DG stated that he had undertaken a thorough review of current insurance policies with Howden (Perkins Slade) and that renewal terms were as proposed in the paper circulated. He had benchmarked Howden's proposal against a competitor and would hold further discussion with the former concerning aspects of their proposal which had been highlighted through this process.

Action DG

DG referred to the proposal to introduce an additional policy which would provide cover for defined Business Legal Expenses. Following discussion concerning the merits of the scheme, the meeting agreed to the proposal.

Action DG

9.4 BMC governance

MW discussed the outcome of the Governance Review and how the proposals might affect Mountaineering Scotland and mountaineering in Scotland on a wider basis, and provide opportunities for improved engagement with the BMC on a range of topics of mutual interest. The meeting agreed that MW should draft a message of congratulations to the BMC on the work undertaken through the Review process and to outline Mountaineering Scotland's position on the proposals.

Action MW

9.5 Policies and Procedures Review Schedule status report

DG asked the meeting to note the current status. Outstanding issues were either in the process of being addressed through the refurbishment of the Granary, or were dependent upon the appointment of the Access & Conservation Officer.

Information Item

9.6 Safeguarding & child protection: MORs assessment & club PVG reporting

DG advised the meeting that a recent check by Children 1st acting on behalf of sportscotland had confirmed 100% compliance with Minimum Operating Requirements. Club PVG reporting was a condition of sportscotland investment and the Team Leader – ClimbScotland had implemented a process to appoint kids clubs as secondary organisations to enable effective monitoring and reporting.

Information Item

/ continued

10.0 Directors' Reports

10.1 Landscape & Planning

10.1.1 Director's report

JB provided a verbal update referring to objections made in respect of applications for the Kingshouse Hotel and Cononish Gold Mine; the scoping request for Glenshero wind farm; the appeal by the applicant against the local authority refusal of permission for Longburn wind farm; a meeting with a representative of an organisation proposing to enclose a large area of the Highlands for the purpose of operating a zoo or safari park; the status of the Upper Sonachan wind farm PLI.

Information Item

JB referred to research findings made through work undertaken by DSG and the meeting agreed that the report should be sent to ministers and heads of planning, and that an opportunity for wide publicity should be sought if a suitable story line featuring a business affected by a wind farm can be identified.

Action DG

10.1.2 Proposal for a position statement on national parks

JB introduced his paper by outlining the background to current campaigns for the introduction of new national parks in D&G, the Borders and Argyll & Bute. He stated that a position statement was necessary to enable him as a director and staff to respond to proposals and media enquiries. Given the concerns with the management of existing national parks it was important that the position statement reflected members' views established through research. Following discussion, the meeting agreed to adopt the following position:

"Mountaineering Scotland supports the introduction of new national parks where precedence is given to the Sandford Principle in which the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage of an area is given precedence over economic and social development".

Information Item

10.2 Access & Conservation

10.2.1 Director's report

CT provided a brief update of his recent activities.

10.2.2 Recruitment of Access & Conservation Officer

DG stated that a shortlist of 6 applicants had been derived from 73 applicants, and that interviews will be held on Wednesday 29 November.

Information Item

10.2.3 Glen Strathfarrar winter vehicle access

DG stated that following protracted negotiations with the estate that arrangements had been finalised. He stressed the importance of adherence to the agreed conditions as the estate provided vehicle access as an act of goodwill to Mountaineering Scotland members and would be within their rights to refuse access to vehicles.

Information Item

10.2.4 LLTNPA byelaws

DG stated that he intended to collaborate with Ramblers Scotland to provide an end of season report which would be sent to the responsible minister, with the aim of arriving at the same time as the Park Authority's own report.

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10.2.5 Historic Environment Scotland, Salisbury Crags

DG advised the meeting that he had chased HES for a response and would have to chase again as no response was forthcoming.

Action DG

10.3 Mountain Safety and Training

10.3.1 Director's report

DM advised the meeting that the work of the Climbing Awards Review Group had concluded and their proposals were not going ahead following receipt of the views of Mountaineering Scotland staff. He noted that he had represented Mountaineering Scotland at a Scottish Mountain Rescue training weekend, and that the Mountain Safety Group was working in partnership and considering a reporting protocol in response to mountaineering incidents.

Information Item

10.4 ClimbScotland

10.4.1 Director's report

AG introduced her report and advised the meeting that a proposal for a climbing festival in 2018 was under development with EICA: Ratho. She noted that there was an opportunity for a volunteer to attend the GB selection committee and DG confirmed that the funding for this had been agreed at the Finance Advisory Group.

Information Item

10.5 Human Resources

10.5.1 Director's report

In SG's absence DG stated that he had discussed with SG that it would be appropriate to run a survey to obtain staff views concerning a range of topics. The meeting asked DG to prepare a draft survey for circulation and agreement with directors.

Action DG

10.5.2 Staff mid-year performance reviews

DG stated that all reviews had been completed and that he had sat in on all the meetings. There were no major issues to report although it was apparent that many employees felt they were working at capacity and that Team Leaders must provide clear guidance concerning key priorities.

Action DG

10.5.3 Employee handbook consultation

10.6 Equality

10.6.1 Director's report

In SG's absence DG stated that, together with Team Leaders he had met with representatives of Boots and Beards and Backbone and the discussion highlighted some of the cultural barriers and other challenges faced by the groups they cater for. He also reported the significant progress being made to establish a para-climbing club at Ratho.

Information Item

11.0 Standing Agenda Items

11.1 Risk Register

DG referred to the updates noted on the register, which were noted by the meeting.

Information Item

11.2 Health & Safety

DG stated that there were no new issues to report and that while fixed electrical testing was overdue this would be attended to at the time of the refurbishment of the Granary offices.

Information Item

/ continued

11.3 Introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation

DG advised the meeting that the Team Leader – Member Services and Communications had attended a training course. Once final details were available through the next phase of training, steps would be taken to ensure compliance and to provide information to clubs.

Action DG

12.0 Information Items

The meeting noted the following papers:

- 12.1 Contact list update November 2017
- 12.2 BMC Training & Youth Committee Minutes 12 September 2017
- 12.3 BMC Competition Climbing Committee Minutes i) 22 May & ii) 18 September 2017
- 12.4 National Access Forum draft minutes
- 12.5 Mountain Training Scotland Members' Meeting Summary Minutes 28 September 2017

13.0 Future meetings 2018 - 15 March / 17 May

AOCB

Scottish Sports Association

DG advised the meeting that the SSA had apparently been unsuccessful in seeking further grant funding from the Scottish Government and sportscotland, and it was asking member sporting bodies to write to the Minister in support. Following discussion, the meeting decided not to take any action.

Information Item

These minutes were approved by the Board at their meeting on 15 March 2018