



MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND

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Board Meeting – Approved minutes

Thurs 28th February 2019 – The Granary, Perth, 5pm

Directors: Jonathan Binny; (Chair). Jennifer Cardno; Jo Dytch; Steve Gough; Kat Jones; David Montieth; Ron Neville

CEO & Company Secretary: Stuart Younie. **Observers:** Megan Griffiths (sportsotland); Alistair Todd (Associate for Snowsports Touring), Nigel Clark (Associate for Mountain Safety), Davie Black & Helen Gestwicki (in attendance for item 7)

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were noted from Mike Watson and Avril Gall

2.0 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interests were noted

3.0 Draft Minutes of the meeting of 25th November 2019

The minutes were approved.

4.0 Actions and matters arising not tabled elsewhere in the agenda

- SY reported that in response to comments at the AGM an article highlighting the relationship between sportsotland and Mountaineering Scotland was planned for the May edition of the Scottish Mountaineer.
- Under item 8.2.2 a response was expected on the application for funding to the SMT for the P/T Mountain Safety post following their next meeting.
- Under 8.3.3 SY confirmed that the recommendations following the ClimbScotland review had been incorporated into the operational plan for 2019/20.

5.0 Call for AOCB

- SY - Update on insurance cover under item 7.1
- SY – Succession planning for board under item 8.3

6.0 Finance Report

6.1 Treasurers Report - Management accounts Quarter 3 2018-19

The management accounts show a surplus of £78k for the 9 months to 31/12/18. The full year projections show a budgeted deficit of £10.7k but based on current actual results for the 9 months, it is expected that the full year deficit will be reduced to £1.7k. assisted by membership income increasing by £6k. Increased costs relating to the delivery of the AGM and insurance were noted and non-committed reserves are forecast to be £211k at the year end.

6.2 Budget 2019 – 20

The forecast deficit for 2019/20 is £23k as a result of increased costs across the business although it was noted that this is based on static levels of income. The effects of a 1%, 2% and 3% salary increase have also been shown in the spreadsheet. Committed reserves are budgeted to be £122k. There is currently £133k in the savings account to cover this. Non-committed reserves are forecast to decrease in part due to the refurbishment and the budgeted deficit. Whilst this was acceptable in the short term, it was noted that care will need to be taken in planning activities to avoid a situation where cash reserves do not meet committed reserves in line with the company policy. KJ asked what the minimum reserve figure was and SY would confirm. MG added that most NGB's operate on an amount that would allow them to continue to function for 3 mths.

It was noted that the FAG had discussed staff salary increases for 19/20 and although a figure had been suggested this had yet to be confirmed and needed to be considered as part of the overall budget position. MG confirmed that other NGB's had dealt with salary increases in different ways and some had also taken the impact of increased pension contributions into consideration. The issue of performance related pay was raised although it was noted this was not on the agenda.

The draft budget was agreed and SY would review and update the figures to identify options to deliver a balanced budget for reporting to the board in May.

Action: SY

HG and DB were invited to join the meeting

7.0 Strategic & Operational reports

7.1 CEO Report *by Stuart Younie*

SY recommended that a short life working group was established to review the mountain safety programme including the current staffing arrangements and salary grading. The proposal was agreed and DM,NC & SG would form the basis of the group and any other members of the board wishing to be involved should note their interest with SY.

In relation to the office refurbishment it was confirmed that the move to Microsoft Exchange on line had taken place and the transfer to a new cloud-based phone system was on schedule. Two quotes had been received for the building work and following discussion at the FAG it had been agreed to increase the budget to allow a preferred contractor to be appointed and SY to take forward discussions on possible areas where savings could be made. SY also confirmed that he had sent cards to the family of Andy Nisbet and Steve Perry on behalf of the staff and board of MS.

SY explained that the Mountaineering Scotland had been made aware of an insurance claim made against the BMC policy during discussions with Howdens as part of the annual renewal process. At this point the policy for 2019/20 has been renewed at the current level of £10m without any significant impact on Mountaineering Scotland members. SY explained that as that the BMC increased their level

of liability cover to £15m last year, at the request of some members, and on the advice of Howdens, MS was looking into the possibility of increasing cover to match that position. SY was awaiting further information from Howdens. SY would monitor the situation closely with colleagues at the BMC to understand the impact of the final settlement in relation to the claim against their policy and whether or not this will have an impact on Mountaineering Scotland in the future.

7.1.1 Directors report - Human resources and Equality

SG proposed that following discussions about the review of the mountain safety programme with SY it would be useful for the board to review the current staffing structure with SY providing a summary of the current structure and any proposed changes or issues he would like to highlight. This was agreed. SG also confirmed that discussions were progressing in preparation for applying for the next equality standard and he was due to attend a workshop on 21st March with SY. MG confirmed that there was no rush to apply for the next standard and this would normally happen at the end of the period applying to the previous level of award. Noted there was an opportunity to discuss the application process with staff running the workshop on the 21st.

Action: SY/ SG

7.2 Mountain safety

7.2.1 Directors Report – Mountain Safety

DM highlighted the MTUK meeting due to take place at the end of March in Aviemore and the next Mountain Safety Group Meeting scheduled for the 2nd April. It was noted that the weather conditions had impacted on course delivery and the cancellation of the ski – touring weekend however most winter courses had been delivered. JD raised an issue about members attending courses with inappropriate kit and it was acknowledged as an ongoing issue and could be looked at as part of the review of mountain safety.

7.2.2 Operational report

SY reported that it had been a very successful winter season despite the conditions, with courses sold out. Through the work on the membership strategy it had been identified that a significant proportion of new members were signing up to access a course but then not renewing their membership which needed further investigation. SY fed back that he had attended one of the night navigation courses in Jan which had been an extremely useful experience and he noted the professionalism and skill of the staff involved in delivering this type of experience.

Ian Stewart had made a successful start in post and dates were being set for the spring lecture series and the additional planned courses. An issue had been identified in relation to lone working which would be picked up under the Health and Safety item. An opportunity was also being explored in relation to providing a training course focused around planning linked to weather forecasts.

MG highlighted the opportunity for MS to support other NGBs with Mountain Safety advice which could be considered as part of the review process.

7.3 ClimbScotland

7.3.1 Directors report – ClimbScotland

The report circulated by AG was noted.

7.3.2 Operational report ClimbScotland

The report was noted and SY highlighted the key focus for the team was on progressing the indoor climbing membership offer and also the participation pathway work with sportscotland. Progress was being made with the school clubs in piloting that approach but this was being led at the pace of the school volunteers. There had been a number of operational challenges in delivering the competition programme this year and as a result of increased costs the event due to be held at Ratho had to be moved to the Edinburgh University facility.

7.4 Member Services and Communications

7.4.1 Directors report – Membership

KJ provided a verbal update on the “Into the Mountains” programme and confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the team to deliver a legacy project from the event which would assist 2 females to undertake leadership training in hillwalking supported by Mountaineering Scotland.

7.4.2 Directors report – Clubs

JD tabled a report and outlined the work she had been undertaking to engage with clubs by attending meets and club functions. Both JD and SY were attending the Grampian Club dinner on the 1st March. The club survey had gone out with 47 responses and a number of common themes were noted in the report. The feedback from clubs would also inform the proposals for organising club meets in 2019.

7.4.3 Operational report Member Services and Communications

HG confirmed that individual membership was performing strongly however club membership was starting to drop and this would be a focus under the membership strategy. Other highlights included the success of the #ThinkWinter campaign, the new Instagram account which now had 1200 followers and continued positive feedback about the Scottish Mountaineer. Objectives for the future included a branding refresh, updated communications plan, development of core messages and looking to develop additional online content using video and podcasts. MT commented on the success of the #ThinkWinter campaign and HGs role in coordinating it with the different agencies involved.

7.4.4 Membership Strategy – Final draft

HG presented the final version of the strategy which had been restructured using the strategic plan objectives as a framework. Much of the original content has been retained with some additional detail and objectives added following discussions with SY which included a Member Journey flowchart. The different elements of the strategy were explained and the proposals to focus during the first year on

club memberships given the current figures. The proposal in year 2 would be to focus on the member journey and experience and specific campaigns around the 50th year celebrations. Costed action plans for each year of the strategy had been included and JB confirmed that although it was a 3-year plan there was an opportunity to review progress annually. The final draft was received positively by the board and approved for implementation.

7.5 Access, conservation and planning

7.5.1 Directors report- Landscape and Planning

JB thanked the staff for their work on the proposed hydro developments in Glen Etive and summarised the current situation, confirming the 3 schemes MS objected to are due to be considered by the Council on the 20th March. JB reflected on the comments made at the AGM suggesting that MS should take a lead on conservation issues as it does for Mountain Safety and he felt this was a pivotal point in the history of the organisation in defense of the landscape. Regardless of the outcome it was thought in taking a strong position on the issue this may attract more people to join.

7.5.2 Directors Report – Access and Conservation

RN reflected on his first few months in post and that he had been interested to see the pattern of regular access issues linked to certain estates. He had also been encouraged that following his attendance at a recent Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance meeting MS and DB were a well-respected voice alongside the Ramblers. He felt that this places MS in a unique position to be seen as both a recreation and conservation organisation.

7.5.3 Operational report conservation, planning and access

The report was noted and DB updated on the survey carried out in response to bolts being placed at Diabaig confirming that 450 responses had been submitted with over 70% supporting the current guidance which would not support the use of bolts at this crag. AT updated on the discussions which had taken place at the Fort William Mountain Festival regarding winter ethics noting that there was some crossover of issues between summer and winter in terms of the environmental issues and the removal of in-situ gear. This highlighted the need for further dialogue and the potential role of the climbing advisory group to advise the board on these issues.

7.5.4 Conservation Strategy - Final Draft

The final version of the Conservation Strategy was tabled along with a summary report. DB outlined the 3 core workstreams that had been identified to continue to campaign on development which would have a negative impact on the landscape, to look at a new area of work promoting the regeneration of the natural tree line in the uplands and a litter campaign promoting personal responsibility for leaving no trace.

Following discussions with directors about the launch event Birnam Arts Centre was proposed as the venue with an informal presentation to invited members and key partners about the strategy followed by a led walk up Birnam hill discussing some of the issues the strategy was setting out to address. KJ

highlighted the need to have a photo opportunity as part of the launch and this would be factored into the plans as well as looking at the possibility of a specific media launch event.

The recommendations as set out in the covering paper were approved and the final version of the strategy and the proposals for the launch event agreed by the board.

Action: DB / HG

8.0 Governance

8.1 Operational Plan 2019-20

SY presented the Operational Plan for 2019/20 which had been updated following meeting with staff to deliver on the agreed strategic objectives of the organisation. MG confirmed that MS was currently at the midpoint in the investment cycle and now would be a good time to start thinking about how the next plan will be shaped and the process of engaging with other organisations as part of that process. The plan was approved.

8.2 Review of articles & voting procedure

6 clubs had expressed an interest in being involved in the working group to renew the articles of association as agreed at the AGM. SY has asked Harper Macleod to prepare a proposal to support the process and ensure that any changes to the articles meet company law. This would be submitted to sportscotland for approval of funding to commission the work.

Action: SY

8.3 AGM 2019 & 2020 50th Year Celebrations

SY outlined plans for the 2019 AGM which would be held at Glenmore Lodge on the 23rd of November 2019 following a similar format to the 2018 event with the potential to offer an informal social on the Sat night. Plans for 2019 were under development with the scope to look at an extended weekend AGM and 50th celebration event but this would need to be delivered within the available resources.

Ideas were invited for celebrating 50 years of Mountaineering Scotland in 2020 and the promotion of first ascents made in the 1970's and hosting a winter climbing summit as part of the 2020 AGM were suggested. Following a proposal from JB it was agreed to establish a short life working group to consider possible events, projects and initiatives to support the celebration. Directors wishing to be involved in the group were to note interest with SY.

The issue of succession planning for vacancies on the board was discussed. It was noted that an advertisement would need to be made for the Presidents role and that succession plans were in place for the Director for Mountain Safety subject to approval at the AGM. It was also noted that proposal to create a new post for snowsports touring would also need to be made at the AGM. SY asked for views on the whether there was value in considering the appointment of a Director for Climbing linked to the establishment of the Climbing Advisory Group rather than having a specific role for

ClimbScotland. KJ expressed concerns about the risk of losing the specialist knowledge that AG had. It was agreed that SY would contact AG to get her thoughts on the issue.

Action: SY

8.4 Policies and Procedures Review Schedule status report

SY noted that there were a number of policies that required to be reviewed and as detailed in his CEO report this would be a key priority for the next quarter for reporting to the board in May.

Action: SY

8.5 Ski Touring Advisory Group / Climbing Advisory Group – Draft Terms of Reference

The proposals to formally establish two advisory groups under the draft terms of reference were considered by the board. MG asked why the proposals were to establish advisory groups rather than sub-committees of the board. SY explained that there had been a number of changes to the governance structures of Mountaineering Scotland over the years to reduce the number of committees and the proposals for the 2 advisory groups follow company guidance. AT commented that he was more comfortable with the approach to establish advisory groups to support the board rather than sub-committees. The proposal to establish the two groups under the draft terms of reference was approved noting these were to be finalised following discussions with the members of both groups.

Action: SY

9.0 Standing Agenda Items

9.1 Risk Register

The updated register was noted.

9.2 Health & Safety

SY reported that an issue had been identified in relation to the management of lone working for staff delivering the mountain safety programme and in particular how the team were reporting back to an emergency contact to confirm they were off the hill safely. New procedures are underdevelopment based on those currently used by MTS and Glenmore Lodge

Action: SY/ HM

9.3 General Data Protection Regulation

It was noted that correspondence to mountain safety course participants should be circulated via a blind copy instead of email addresses being included. SY to pick up with HM

Action: SY

9.4 Child Protection

The updated Child Protection Policy Statement was considered by the board. SG raised concerns about some of the wording and in particular the description of what is wellbeing. NC asked what the situation would be if a child protection issue did happen within one of our clubs and what the position

of MS would be in terms of its role to provide advice and support. SY responded that it was the responsibility of the clubs to implement the best practice as advised by their national bodies however as seen in other sports if an issue was to arise this would be likely to have a secondary impact on the sport governing body. SY also highlighted that MS had undertaken a detailed audit of policies and procedures relating to child protection and were currently meeting around 98% of the Minimum Operating Requirements promoted by Children First. JB stated that it was important we took all reasonable steps to help clubs managed their child protection procedures. The updated policy was agreed subject to amendments suggested by SG,

Action: SY

10.0 Information Items

10.1 sportscotland Investment Application 2019-20 - Update

MG confirmed that following the submission of the investment application the requested level of funding for MS had been confirmed with an additional 3% increase to assist with rising staffing costs although the funding was not ringfenced for this purpose. It was agreed that MS would write to Stewart Harris the CEO of sportscotland to convey thanks for the additional resources.

10.2 BMC update

AT updated on the proposals to hold the international winter climbing meet in 2020. He had been in discussion with Simon Richardson who was involved in organising the event and arrangements were progressing quickly with accommodation bookings already in place. Involvement and support from MS had been welcomed and it was hoped that AT would represent MS on the organising group. A request for a financial contribution of between £3-5k had been suggested and needs to be considered as part of the budget review for 2019/20.

SY reported that he and JS had attended the first meeting of the BMC Competitions Working Group on 23rd Jan following an invitation from the chair Rab Carrington. The purpose of the meeting was to outline the current situation in relation to the delivery of competitions delivered by the BMC and explore future options in response to the recommendation in the ORG review report. A briefing paper providing an overview of the approach taken by ClimbScotland had been provided to the group.

11.0 Future meetings

- Wednesday 29th May, The Granary, Perth
- Sep 2019 TBC

SY confirmed that Skye was the preferred venue following the poll of board members on the choice of venue. SY confirmed that availability in Sep could be difficult at the GMH but would confirm options and discuss with MW. SG highlighted that there was a need to prioritise the requirements for the business meeting.

- AGM Sat 23rd November, Glenmore Lodge

Issued by Stuart Younie, CEO & Company Secretary

Draft – 20 March 2019

Final version – 19 May 2019