



MOUNTAINEERING SCOTLAND

The Granary
West Mill Street
Perth PH1 5QP
Tel: 01738 493947
email stuart@mountaineering.scot

Board Meeting Approved Minutes

Thurs 14th May – Online Via Zoom, 2pm

Directors: Jonathan Binny; Jennifer Cardno; Nigel Clark; Jo Dytch; Lucy Fraser; Steve Gough; Kat Jones; Ron Neville; Brian Shackleton (President & Chair).

CEO & Company Secretary: Stuart Younie.

Observers: Megan Griffiths (sportsotland); Alistair Todd (Associate for Snowsports Touring),

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and tabled a note of thanks on behalf of the board to the all the staff for their work since the start of lockdown and the move to remote working following the closure of the Granary.

2.0 Declaration of Interests

No additional declarations of interest were noted and a new declaration form would be sent out with the notes for all directors to complete and return to the CEO.

3.0 Draft Minutes of the meeting of 6th February 2020

The minutes were approved.

4.0 Actions and matters arising not tabled elsewhere in the agenda

It was noted that a number of the actions agreed at the February board meeting had been postponed / put on hold due to lockdown. It was also confirmed that the recommendation from AT had been to accept the application to affiliate by the Alpine Ski Club and this was being processed.

5.0 Call for AOCB

MG was asked to provide an update on sportsotland funding and investment process under item 7.

6.0 Strategic and Operational updates

The combined operational report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted for information. No questions had been received in advance from directors other than from LF and a response had been provided by SY.

SY provided a brief overview of activity since lockdown and highlighted the challenges caused by the break into the office and theft of items from the premises. An insurance claim was being progressed. SY had provided regular updates to the board following lockdown, and he conveyed his thanks to the staff and paid credit to the

way they have adapted to remote working to keep the organisation functioning whilst also coming up with different ways to engage and communicate with the members during lockdown.

Planning was now underway for the exit from lockdown and the focus had been on meeting with partner organisations including the National Parks, Mountain Training, the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, the BMC and Mountaineering Ireland to discuss how they were preparing and to identify any key issues. A working group of outdoor sports had been set up with the support of sportscotland to assist in planning for a return to outdoor activities and an initial submission had been sent to Government via sportscotland outlining a phased plan to resume hillwalking and climbing activity. It was agreed that a collaborative approach with other sports would be a sensible way forward in the circumstances.

Action: SY should progress discussions working with the other outdoor sports with the aim of securing an early return to activities in exit from lockdown.

7.0 Finance Report

7.1 Treasurers Report - Management accounts to Q4 and year end to 31st March 2020

JC reported that membership income was 6.4% higher than budget for the full year and is 5.7% higher than last year which is due to affiliation of the Eagle Ski club otherwise club membership would have been close to budget. Grant income was 5.6% below budget due to the loss of the SMT grant which will be applied for again in the current year. Overall, total income is in line with the budget and is 1.2% higher than last year. Overall, there is a £10k deficit this year compared to a £2k budgeted deficit which is largely due to not factoring in the 2% salary increase in the original budget. Also included were one off costs of £6k for the office relocation this year. Going forward, it is proposed that a 2% salary increase is included in the budget to give more accurate forecasting but subject to final approval from the board.

The full year accounts show a decrease in cash of £57k this year due to the office refurbishment. It was agreed that it was a worthwhile long-term investment for the organisation but it does mean that there should be a focus on ensuring sufficient cash is maintained to meet our reserves policy.

Action: The accounts for 2019/20 were approved and were to be sent to accountants for external review.

7.2 Budget 2020/21 & Scenario Planning Covid 19

MG provided an update on sportscotland's position confirming that the first 6 mths investment funding would be awarded with no set conditions or targets and to assist Scottish Governing Bodies to preserve jobs. An impact analysis had also been completed to establish the position that the sports sector was in as a result of the lockdown and the pressure being put on reserves. Megan also reported that lottery income had declined following lockdown however was improving although uncertainty remains about the longer-term economic impact on Scottish Government finances.

The FAG meeting had been brought forward to the 30th of April to consider the financial impact of COVID-19 on the budget, and a follow up meeting took place on the 8th of March to agree a revised budget for submission to the board for approval. It had also been agreed that the FAG would now meet on a monthly basis to monitor the financial impact and also the membership performance.

The original budget prior to lockdown had projected an £6k deficit and JC confirmed that the FAG were planning for a worst case scenario involving a 20% drop in membership income and a cancellation of all courses and activity this year. It was noted that this figure had been adjusted down to a £25k deficit however this also included reducing expenditure in areas which included the website redesign, staff expenses, marketing and a proposed deferral of the staff annual pay award.

During discussion it was highlighted that the planning assumptions needed to be carefully monitored as there was a risk they could be worsen, whilst opportunities were also identified due to the number of people taking up walking as a result of lockdown and the focus on domestic tourism. It was suggested that if the position improves then the marketing and website budgets should be reinstated to help attract new members. A separate survey was being conducted with clubs to identify the impact of lockdown. The board also highlighted the longer-term impact of the insurance increases which was to be discussed under item 7.3.

Action – The budget was approved as a working budget, based on worst case scenario and the recommendations from the FAG, noting that the board and staff are unhappy about submitting a budget with a projected loss. The financial position will be monitored on a monthly based by the FAG and the staff pay award would be deferred and reviewed later in the year.

7.3 3-year financial projections and insurance costs

JC summarised the position relating to the increase in insurance costs and the need to address this in the long term due to the impact in year 2 and 3 of the financial plan. It was noted that discussions had already started with Howdens and there was an indication that MS would be eligible for a rebate taking into account the impact of lockdown. Directors made a number of comments and there was some concern that given the nature of the claim there may be a view from members that hillwalkers were cross subsidising cover for higher risk indoor climbers.

A number of different options were suggested including the arrangements that caving clubs have to take out an additional membership premium which included insurance, whilst British cycling offered three categories of membership which offered different levels of cover. Although insurance was one of the top benefits for members there was no clear view from members on the how they might react to any increase in fees and there was some agreement on the principle that members should pay for the level of cover they want. It was noted this would also have an impact on clubs as well as individuals.

Action: It was agreed that SY should progress discussions with Howdens on negotiating a rebate for 20/21 and also explore alternative cover options linked to a review in membership offer.

8.0 Governance

8.1 AGM 2020 – Planning and format

BS outlined the position confirming that a provisional date for the AGM had been set for 24/25 Oct 2020. Given that it was unlikely that events / gatherings would be able to take place for the rest of year a decision was required on whether to plan for a virtual AGM taking legal advice on this, or consider deferring the date of the AGM in accordance with the articles of association.

Following discussion, it was agreed to proceed with planning a standard virtual business meeting online covering the formal requirements as set by Companies House and to defer the proposals for the members gathering until 2021. It was also noted that the BMC recently held a virtual AGM and also that Companies House had relaxed the requirement to meet company articles to allow online meetings to take place given the circumstances. In accordance with the Mountaineering Scotland articles there was the potential to defer the meeting until February 2021 however this was not the preferred option and a date in either late Oct or November was to be agreed.

Action: SY to identify potential dates in late Oct / Nov and circulate to the board for agreement.

8.2 Joint membership proposal - snowsportsotland (sss)

SY provided an update on discussions with snowsportsotland (sss) who were interested in exploring the potential of developing a joint membership offer with Mountaineering Scotland under the MOU between the two organisations. sss have a smaller base membership than MS which is predominantly clubs, and are looking to attract more recreational skiers to join as individual members. Although it was a positive discussion there were potential financial risks, some complexities given the difference in membership fees and there was a need to identify an arrangement that would be mutually beneficial to both organisations. MG was supportive of the Ski Touring Advisory Group as a shared space for both sss and MS and reported that a survey was being carried out with the backcountry / ski touring community to establish current membership levels and also gain more general information about participation. It was agreed that the joint membership proposal was not a priority at the moment and should be deferred until later in the year.

Action: SY was delegated to explore the options in more detail with sss and report back to the board.

8.3 Online Hut Bookings

AT provided an update on discussions which had been taking place with the SMC who were looking to develop an online booking and management system for managing their huts and had approached MS to explore whether there was potential to upscale the project to include the national huts and also give the option for member clubs to become involved. A key priority of the project was to reduce the administrative burden on volunteers, and to simplify and improve booking and payment processes.

Following discussion, the potential to use an of the shelf solution such as Super Control was identified. Although there was support in principle for the project, concerns were raised about the potential cost implications given the budget situation and whether it was a priority for this year.

Action: AT to continued to develop the proposals with the SMC and report back to the board although it was unlikely funding could be found for the project this year.

8.4 Directors Vacancies

BS updated on the need develop new role descriptions for the upcoming vacancies on the board and asked if the outgoing directors could assist in developing these. The additional place on the board approved at the last AGM was also noted with the original intention that this would create a role to lead on ski touring. JB proposed that AT is put forward as the preferred candidate for that position.

Action: BS / SY to develop role descriptions and advertise vacancies.

8.6 Policies and Procedures Review Schedule status report

The report was noted this will necessary reviews actioned once normal business resumes along with recommendations from the development audit.

9.0 Standing Agenda Items

9.1 Risk Register

SY reported that additional risks had been added on the financial impact of insurance increases and Covid 19, and also business disruption due to Covid 19.

9.2 Health & Safety

Nothing to report

9.3 General Data Protection Regulation

Nothing to report

9.4 Child Protection

SY reported that a child wellbeing concern had been raised and was detailed in the climbScotland report: A child wellbeing concern was raised following a competition in England involving a Scottish competitor and parent. The concern was recorded and flagged with Children 1st who provide guidance on how to proceed with the concern. LF confirmed that the issue had been handled well by the climbScotland team and was a good test of the new procedures. No further action was required.

10.0 Future meetings

- Thurs 20th August
- Thurs 19th November
- AGM – TBC

AOB JD shared an idea to host a webinar event to engage with clubs and asked Directors to let her know if they would like to be involved or could support the event.

Issued by Stuart Younie, CEO & Company Secretary

Draft – 16 July 2020

Final Version Approved - 20/08/20

