

Full Board Meeting Approved Minutes

3pm, Thurs 4th November 2021 – Online via Zoom

Directors: Brian Shackleton (President & Chair); Nigel Clark; Jo Dytch; Kat Jones; Lucy Fraser; Ron Neville; Ilona Turnbull; Hazel Meehan; Dominic Hall; Alistair Todd

CEO & Company Secretary: Stuart Younie.

Observers: Megan Griffiths (sportscotland);

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

- Apologies from Ron Neville and Kat Jones.
- Ilona Turnbull also sent apologies as she would be delayed in joining the meeting.

2.0 Declaration of Interests

No additional declarations of interest were submitted.

3.0 Draft Minutes of the Full Board meeting of 5th August 2021

The minutes were agreed after being proposed by AT and seconded by NC

- Action Note from Interim Board meeting on 16th Sep 2021
A suggested change to item 5 to clarify projected year end position was approved.
The action note was agreed with this amendment after being proposed by AT and seconded by NC.

4.0 Actions and matters arising not tabled elsewhere in the agenda

Full Board

- SY progressing the insurance complaint with Hiscox and the annual renewal of the current three-year agreement.
- Actions relating to Anti-Doping including the discussions with the BMC were in progress and covered on the agenda.
- HM continuing to work with HG and DL to develop the additional financial information for presentation in advance of the AGM.
- Delay noted in relation to the updated risk and cyber security policies at the Nov meeting hope to submit for the Dec meeting.

- SY confirmed it was not planned to hold the Mountaineering Scotland Awards this year due to very low nominations last year. Plan to relaunch in 2022

Interim Board

- Action carried forward on getting the staff and board together informally.
- No further update on the possible local campaign in Glencoe to commemorate Hamish MacInnes SY to monitor and update directors.
- SY had located remaining stock of promotional cards and offered to post them out to directors.
- SY looking into costs to refit the meeting room with new furniture and IT required to hold hybrid meetings.
- Board meetings to continue online until a hybrid option can be offered at the Granary.
- Proposal to hold informal meeting of directors prior to the AGM to be picked up under Item 8.2.
- Timescale of the new strategy to be 3 years to mirror the sportscotland investment cycle.
- No further comments on the pathway infographic received.

5.0 Call for AOCB

No additional items submitted.

6.0 Operational report

SY reported that membership had exceeded 15, 000 for the first time with the up-to-date figure sitting at 15,150 at end of Oct with strong return of the University clubs driving a healthy increase in club affiliations. A face-to-face meeting of the CEO forum was held at the national centre Inverclyde and as a result of attending and the work of the outdoor group SY had been invited to join the executive group representing the outdoor and adventure sports sector. A positive meeting had also taken place with Stewart Harris CEO of sportscotland to explore some of the opportunities and challenges the outdoor sector is facing. SY had also met with the CEO's of the BMC and Mountaineering Ireland where topics covered included organisational governance, climate change and also restrictions on taking climbing kit onto the Eurostar train service.

Staff had been successfully returning to the office on a part time basis and SY was pulling together costs to complete the refurbishment of the meeting room to take to the FAG. SY commended the team on the work they have been doing and conveyed his thanks to LF for the support provided in getting the Youth Climbing Series competitions up and running under the new format. The events had been well received although there were some improvements to make for next year. Mountain safety courses had been extremely popular and some additional courses had been delivered by BG who had carried time forward from lockdown in 2020. The St Johns mountain safety programme had also restarted

SY reported challenges with arranging a meeting with the Braulen estate to discuss the winter vehicle access arrangements for glen Strathfarrer and explained the additional restrictions which had been requested. Communication was ongoing with the estate factor at Bidwells to arrange a meeting. A number of concerns were raised by directors regarding recent high profile access issues which included the legal case against two members of Ramblers Scotland, the closure of Dalwhinnie level crossing and ongoing challenges in Glen Lyon.

BS raised the issue relating to the distribution of the August edition of Scottish Mountaineer. SY reported that these had been communicated to the Herald and Times at a recent meeting and they had indicated that Royal Mail was still being impacted by staff absences which can vary from area to area and this delayed distribution. The current position for the November issue was looking positive and it was hoped that no further financial contribution would be required to enable the print edition to go ahead.

AT asked whether additional training would be required for the new membership system particularly for club secretaries. SY said he would double check this but his understanding was the front facing system will not change significantly with the main changes taking place at the back end of the system providing greater flexibility for the team to make changes without having to contact the developer. AT offered the services of someone to test the system if required.

Action: SY follow up with HG to confirm any changes that would require additional training for club volunteers and mention the offer of support to test the system

BS formally noted thanks on behalf of the board to SY and the team for all the efforts they had put in to reach the milestone of over 15,000 members.

7.0 Finance Report

7.1 Treasurers Report - Management accounts for Q2 to 30th September 2021

HM reported that the impact of the growth in individual and club membership figures was reflected in the financial statements. The forecast was a net surplus of £6,275 for the full year which was very positive. Some elements of the budget had been reforecast due to the improved position for mountain safety and ClimbScotland. Staff expenses continued to be monitored. Overall, the position is positive which will assist in offsetting the existing budget pressures which can be communicated to members at the AGM

SY added that the increase in energy prices was also being reflected in the electricity costs which were due to increase by around 60% and consideration may have to be given to replacing the existing electrical storage heaters with more efficient modern units.

BS queried the current position on staff expenses and whether they were going to remain on target and HM confirmed that although some staff had increased expenses due to the delivery of courses they are being closely monitored and there were no concerns about exceeding the budget at this point in the year.

NC asked if the delivery of the additional mountain safety courses was building up additional TOIL or costs which may impact on the budget. SY confirmed that the bulk of the additional training was being delivered by BG who was taking a flexible approach by using time accrued during lockdown.

NC proposed the approval of the financial report which was seconded by LF

8.0 Governance

8.1 Review of Strategic Plan and sportscotland investment

8.1.1 sportscotland Investment Application

BS highlighted the amount of work which the staff had put into the investment application and thanked them for their efforts. BS and SY had attended the review meeting on the 20th Oct and following that meeting MG had provided a set of bullet points with feedback and points to address in advance of the next stage in early Dec. The application would then be considered by the sportscotland senior management team with an update on the outcome expected early in the new year. BS reported that the application had been positively received, the only element which was not supported was the request relating to support for Ski – Mo.

SY reported that following discussions with GB Climbing on support for Ski-Mo he had been informed that a request for funding support was under consideration by the BMC. A draft role description for the additional post requested for ClimbScotland would be need for the next stage and the post would be renamed “Talent and Pathways Officer”. MG fed back two considerations for the Board the first of which was the high-level outcomes and how success would be measured providing some examples which included evidencing organisational development, and work with target groups. The second was the next phase in consultation and engagement around the new strategic framework to identify partners that can assist with delivery.

BS and SY had given some consideration about the next stage in the consultation and engagement and how it would link into and inform the operational plan and this may require input from some of the Directors.

NC asked whether reporting on performance would be on an annual basis or over the course of the funding cycle. MG confirmed that Mountaineering Scotland would be expected to have a set of annual measures which contribute towards a 3-year

strategic target. MG added that that as well as the sportscotland measures there was an expectation that a suite of additional targets and measures would be put in place to evidence progress in delivering the overall strategy. BS outlined the direction the Board were taking with the reports and the intention to align these more clearly with the strategy and operational plan.

8.1.2 Consultation on strategic framework

SY outlined the proposal to undertake online consultation with members and partners on the strategic framework and highlighted a range of organisations that would be invited to engage around the delivery of the plan. The next step was to engage with a designer to represent the existing slides in a more presentable format

JD agreed that the current slides need to be reviewed and also highlighted a recent conversation with the Grampian Club regarding pathways and their desire to engage with more children and young people through organisations such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

BS identified the untapped resources within the skills and experience of the current membership and the possibility that some of them may be willing to support the work of Mountaineering Scotland on a voluntary basis. LF highlighted that ClimbScotland had been oversubscribed by volunteers coming forward to support the return to competitions which had been a positive experience and there was a lot of learning that could be shared across the organisation relating to volunteers.

AT picked up in the sportscotland investment application the issue of the term “mountaineer” and whether this was relevant to younger people and should be reviewed. BS referred to the use of the walk climb ski strapline as a response to that and JD highlighted the importance of positioning and communication in reframing the brand.

Action: SY to progress the next phase in the strategy consultation with members and engagement with stakeholders.

8.2 AGM

8.2.1 Directors period of office - Amendment of articles

BS outlined the work which had been undertaken to develop the proposed amendments to the articles following legal advice from Harper MacLeod on the best approach and wording. The amendment would be addressed in two parts firstly the change to the articles, and then should the changes be accepted the second part would be an additional proposal which would allow the Board to re appoint KJ or JD should

the wish to continue in post. Under the proposed arrangements both KJ and JD would require to formally step down from the board at the AGM with any reappointment subject to the vote by members on the special resolutions at the EGM.

8.2.2 Meeting format and presentations

BS confirmed that the meeting was going ahead as a virtual event following a similar format to the previous year but to involve more Directors in the presentation on the annual report. HM had agreed to do a pre-recorded presentation on the financial report and a series of slides would be developed to illustrate some aspects of the annual report. AT/NG confirmed availability and JD also potentially available.

Action: Helen and Stuart to work up the presentation and share with Directors for comment.

8.3 Update on UK Anti-Doping Policy ('Policy') and Assurance Framework

SY provided an update on the work which had been taking place to meet the new UK Anti-doping framework and specifically the education strategy which had been submitted at the end of October and had been circulated for information. Thanks to JS for leading the work and also co-ordinating the submission with the BMC. Next stage in the process is the implementation plan which will be based on the priorities set out in the education strategy. LF has completed the necessary training on behalf of the board and either SY or JS will undertake the necessary operational training. NC said that the document read extremely well and was clear on the educational responsibilities that Mountaineering Scotland had to fulfil.

8.3 Policies and Procedures Review Schedule status report

SY proposed a review of the current schedule which had been significantly impacted by Covid and the need for a new prioritised list of policies and procedures to be updated and this was supported by IT. NC suggested that Directors took a closer look at the current schedule and provide feedback to IT and /or the wider board on how it affects the organisation and individual Directors. BS suggested that some policies could be combined and/ or be included in a handbook rather than being formal documents.

In response to a question from DH SY suggested a two-stage approach initially reviewing the list to identify what could be removed and dealt with operationally then to prioritise the remaining list with the start point being the recommendations from the development audit. LF suggested categorising the policies under the operational areas.

Action: Directors to review the current list and feedback any specific implications for their portfolios to SY and IT. SY to review the current list and BS to review the content on the website.

9.0 Standing Agenda Items

9.1 Risk Register

SY reported that an additional risk had been added in relation to Anti-Doping.

9.2 Health & Safety

SY reported that a fire risk assessment carried out for the Granary and he was awaiting the report and recommendations.

9.3 Child Protection

SY highlighted three recent child protection cases involving climbing instructors which had resulted in convictions in England and the potential risk for climbing walls in Scotland if they were not taking adequate steps to ensure the protection of children attending their facilities. An article had been published on UKH on the subject:

https://www.ukhillwalking.com/articles/features/safeguarding_young_people_in_climbing_and_the_outdoors-13960

BS suggested a review of our current status in relation to child protection and SY confirmed that JS had worked closely with Children First on meeting their Minimum Operating Requirements. As a result, Mountaineering Scotland had been asked to be involved in piloting initiatives directed at supporting cubs. It was agreed that Mountaineering Scotland was in a position to provide proactive support and advice to the climbing walls on this issue and this should be a focus going forward. LF highlighted the next joint webinar with the BMC for UK climbing walls had a focus on safeguarding.

AT raised the issue that as a result of child protection concerns some clubs including his own had a policy that required members to be over 18 and asked if this had come up at any of the club meetings. JD said it had been raised but mainly in relation to club members taking their family along on club meets. SY confirmed that part of the sportscotland investment application was about directing resources to support clubs that wanted to develop activities for families and children and young people. AT highlighted the barrier to participation that currently exists for young people if membership of a club was not an option and more support was required.

Action: SY to progress additional support for clubs to promote participation by children and young people linked to the outcome of the sportscotland investment application

10.0 Future meetings 2021 & 2022

- **Annual General Meeting 20th Nov**
 - Intermediate FAG – Thurs 9th Dec
 - Intermediate meeting - Thurs 16th Dec

Action: SY to circulate a schedule of meetings for 2022.

11.0 AOB

JD updated on recent engagement with the Grampian club which included a discussion on engaging children and young people and a desire to connect with other clubs in their area. JD asked if the board would support the organisation of a club meet similar to the one that had taken place in 2019. It was agreed that this should be supported and JD would progress with SY and HG.

Issued by Stuart Younie, CEO & Company Secretary

Draft issued – 11.02.22

