



Press Release

2 February 2017

For immediate release

Mountain safety scheme expanded Student mountaineering clubs targeted in joint project

The success of a ground-breaking winter mountain safety partnership between St John Scotland and Mountaineering Scotland has led to its expansion into the autumn months as well as winter.

The project, funded by St John Scotland, is aimed at young people, with an experienced mountain safety instructor working directly with members of Scottish university mountaineering clubs.

The scheme began in the winter of 2015-16, when Nick Carter MIC took up the new post and over the season attended 11 weekend meets with 10 different university mountaineering clubs.

He worked with the clubs, giving on-the-hill training to 86 students, teaching them about winter skills, winter mountaineering and winter climbing, depending on their existing levels of experience.

He also gave evening winter safety lectures to 181 students and gave informal advice to many more as they discussed their plans and preparations.

By the end of the first season St John Scotland was so impressed by what the project had achieved that it was extended to include this winter and next.

Now the organisation, which also provides substantial levels of funding for Scottish mountain rescue teams, has agreed to expand the scheme into the universities' autumn term.

This will allow pre-winter training which will prepare often inexperienced students in advance of the less forgiving conditions in winter.

Nick said: "Feedback from students who took part last winter was that more days of training would be very welcome. Winter weekends were already fully booked, so I suggested to St John Scotland that I could work with student clubs on their autumn weekend meets. This will allow me to give instruction to more young people and to teach general hill skills which will make a good foundation for the winter season.

“It will also give some opportunities to teach other important aspects of mountaineering, like scrambling and rock climbing, which cannot be done in the winter.”

Training weekends have already started for this winter and are fully booked. Now St John Scotland has confirmed that in addition to next winter’s sessions, they will fund 20 days’ training for clubs through September and October this year.

Angus Loudon, St John Scotland’s Executive Director, said: “Following the success of Nick’s mountain safety training for students, St John Scotland is delighted to confirm the expansion of his post to include the autumn months, providing more training for Scottish university mountaineering clubs.

“The work he does with young people is critical, and ensures climbers are equipped with the necessary skills to deal with Scotland’s often treacherous terrain and conditions. We look forward to continuing to work with Nick, and wish him all the best for the exciting year ahead.”

David Montieth, Mountaineering Scotland’s Director for mountain safety, said: “The extension of the mountain safety instructor programme into the autumn months provides an opportunity to further improve the basic hill skills of Scottish students so vital for their forthcoming winter adventures.

“Nick Carter is a hugely experienced MIC who blends the vital components of technical competence with an approachable personality, which enables him to relate so well to the students. As such he is the ideal man to front this ground-breaking collaboration between St John Scotland and Mountaineering Scotland.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

Photos to accompany this press release can be downloaded here:

<http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/P1020519.JPG>

Practicing ice axe breaking

<http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/P1020531.JPG>

A group of students at the summit of Cairngorm

<http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/P1020555.JPG>

Navigation practice

Further information contact:

Neil Reid, Communications Officer, on 01738 493941 or 07788871803 or

neil@mountaineering.scot

Cait Thomson, Communications Officer, on 0131-556 8711 or

cait.thomson@stjohnscotland.org.uk

About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The MCofS is a membership organisation with over 13,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the new name for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS), which acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.
- Mountaineering Council of Scotland remains the registered company name.
- The MCofS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- Mountaineering Scotland, The Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP

About St John Scotland:

- As a Priory of the world-wide Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, St John Scotland can trace its history and traditions back to the time of the Crusades, but today its members concentrate their work on very modern services and issues, and supports a range of live-saving and medical support to the community including patient transport and first responder services.
- It is the biggest contributor to Mountain Rescue in Scotland, having donated £3 million over the past two decades for the purchase of 14 bases throughout the country and a rolling programme of buying and replacing vehicles for all 25 volunteer teams.
- Each year St John Scotland holds an annual Organ Donor Award ceremony with NHS Blood and Transplant, for the families of donors who have given the gift of life to

others. Internationally, St John Scotland supports the St John Eye Hospital Group in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, and health care projects in Malawi.

- For further information about St John Scotland please contact the Communications Officer, Cait Thomson, by email at: cait.thomson@stjohnscotland.org.uk or by phone on 0131-556 8711.