

THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

DRAFT MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at GLENMORE LODGE on SATURDAY 18TH JUNE 2005

Present.

John Allen, IM; John Armstrong, AMI; Fred Belcher [Vice President], Cairngorm Club; Tommy Bishop, Strathspey Mountain Club; Alan Brenner, IM; Elsa Brown, Culter Hill Walking Club; Ian Bryce, Cairngorm Club; Airlie Bryce, Cairngorm Club; Ian Cameron, Huntly Hill Walking Club; Rita Connell, MCI [Guest], Neil Cuthbert, JMCS Edinburgh; Anna Cuthbert, JMCS Edinburgh; Mike Dales [A&C Officer], MCofS; John Donohoe, IM & Glasgow Glenmore Club; Derek Edge [Hon. Treasurer], IM; Anna Feist, Culter Hill Walking Club; David Gibson, Grampian Club; KC Gordon [Guest], BMC Committee for Wales; Duncan Gray [MCofS Webmaster], IM; Nick Halls [Hon. Secretary], IM; Morna Harper, Aberdeen Mountaineering Club; Kevin Howett [National Officer], SMC; Alfie Ingram [Exec. Member] MRC of S; Joy Ingram, Carn Dearg MC; Susan Jensen [Exec. Member], JMCS Edinburgh; Helen Lawless [Guest], MC of I & IM; Beryl Leatherland [Vice President], JMCS Edinburgh; John Leftley [F&A Sub Committee], IM; Susan Low, Culter Hill Walking Club; Alan Macbeth, IM John Mackenzie [President, in the chair], SMC; Dave Macleod, SMC; Lorna Macleod [Exec Member], *sportscotland*; Alec Macmillan, Cairngorm Club; David McLellan, Upperward Mountaineering Club; Alison McLure [Exec. Member], Ladies Scottish Climbing Club; Roy Mitchell, Paisley Hill Walkers; Scott Muir, SMC & IM; Mike Newbury [A&C Sub Committee], Forth Valley MC; Declan O'Keefe [Guest], MC of I; Patrick O' Sullivan [Guest] MCof I; Ali Odds, Culter Hill Walking Club; Jane Palmer, Cairngorm Club; Bill Park, IM; David Pearkes, Aberdeen Mountaineering Club; Iain Peter [Guest], MTT; Jenny Purvis-Smith IM & Aberdeen Mountaineering Club; Bill Renshaw, IM; Margaruite Robertson, Upperward Mountaineering Club; Derek Shannon, Glasgow Caledonian University; Lynn Sigley, IM; David Smeaton, IM; Linda Smith, Aberdeen Mountaineering Club; Richard Spencer [Exec. Member], IM; Chris Squire, IM; Ken Thomson, IM & Cairngorm Club; Chris Townsend [Exec. Member], IM; Mark Valance [Guest], President BMC; Tim Walker [Exec. Member], Glenmore Lodge; Garry Wardrope, Cairngorm Club; Mary Webster [Vice President], Ladies Scottish Climbing Club; Roger Wild [MSA], SMC; Peter Willimott, [Exec. Member], Kirkintilloch MC; Susan Wishart, IM.

All those attending were provided with a voting card coloured to indicate voting rights as Individual Members or Club Representatives.

The President, John Mackenzie, welcomed everybody to the meeting. He gave notice of additional business or motions that members wished to have considered during the AGM.

The Hon. Sec. rehearsed the constitutional provisions under section **14 Conduct of General Meetings**, Para [a] '*Business or motions not on the agenda for the meeting may only be taken at the discretion of the chairman*'

Para [b] '*Any member wishing any business or motions included on the Agenda for any year's Annual General Meeting may require its inclusion by giving written notice of such to the Honorary Secretary not later than 31 March in that year.*'

He explained that the latter provision is essential to allow papers to be distributed and adequate notice given to members so that they can consider business to be addressed.

The Chairman agreed to include the motions on the agenda if those present wished to consider them. He drew the following motions and business to the attention of the meeting.

Proposed by Ian Bryce [Cairngorm Club]:

“The MCofS together with as many clubs and individual members as possible should:

1 Object to the proposed new 400 kV transmission line through the mountains with 50 metre high pylons from Ardmair Bay to the north of Ullapool to Beaully and then to Denny. This route would affect Ben More Coigach, Ardmair Bay, Ullapool, Loch Broom, Beinn Dearg, the Fannichs, Fort Augustus to Errochty, the Correyairack Pass and the Laggan Hill, to name but a few.

2 Express concern that the Government’s proposed new compulsory planning powers might be used to force through building pylons and wind farms in wild mountainous areas.”

The meeting agreed to consider the motion.

The Chairman determined that it should be addressed under Item 10 Any Other Competent Business

Proposed by Neil Cuthbert [JMCS Edinburgh]:

“I believe the current methods of consultation with members regarding policy are failing to gain a true consensus. I propose that the MCofS discuss and investigate an operational system of gathering members views on policy issues”

The meeting agreed to hear Ian Cuthbert’s justification for the motion.

The Chairman determined that the issue should be addressed under Item 10 Any Other Competent Business.

Proposed by Neil Cuthbert [JMCS Edinburgh]:

“That the MCofS should in addition to looking into becoming incorporated also look into the becoming a charity.”

The meeting agreed to consider the arguments for and against such a proposal

The Chairman determined that this matter should be considered under Item 8 Proposed Changes to the Constitution.

1 Apologies

The Hon. Sec. presented the apologies of:

Dave Turnbull [BMC]; Nick Colton [BMC]; Laura Alexander [Exec. Member]; Keith Miller [Exec. Member] and Irene Wade.

He read out the letter received from the Secretary of the Strathaven Climbing Club, Michael H. Dunn, giving the reason for the non-attendance of members of the Club, that

“It has become difficult to motivate members to attend, as it cannot now be combined with a full day on the hill”.

The Hon. Sec. expressed his sympathy with this position, and took it upon himself to see if the disincentive could be addressed.

2 Introduction of Guests

The President welcomed and introduced the following guests:

Mark Valance [Guest], President BMC; Rita Connell, MC of I; Helen Lawless, MC of I; Declan O’Keefe, MC of I; Patrick O’Sullivan, MC of I; K.C. Gordon, BMC Committee for Wales; Lorna Macleod, *sport scotland*; Iain Peter MTT; Tim Walker, Principal Glenmore Lodge.

3 Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM of 2004 **The full Minutes were adopted as a correct record.**

4 Matters Arising

The Hon. Sec. gave notice that the Executive did not wish to raise any matters from the previous minutes and reported that everything has been acted on as agreed.

No further matters arising from the minutes were raised.

5 Annual Report for 2004/2005

The Chairman referred to the report, which was circulated to all members in *The Scottish Mountaineer*, Issue 27, published on the web site and copies made available with the papers for the meeting.

It was observed by a number of people that only one Club Secretary News Sheet had been received. The N.O. admitted that at the time of composing the report he had intended to issue a further News Sheet but had failed to get round to it. He apologised for the oversight.

The Hon. Sec. as Trustee of the Alex MacIntyre Memorial Hut, drew attention to an error in the report concerning the current overnight charge for the use of the hut. After he composed the entry for the annual report the AMMH Management Committee agreed to raise the overnight charge from £3.50 to £5.50 - in order to ensure sufficient income to meet the costs of substantial repairs and upgrades. The Hon. Sec. defended this increase as essential to ensure that the hut quickly becomes exemplary in the quality of accommodation it provides and the standard of its external appearance. He apologised for not picking up the error when he was asked to review the final draft of the entries in the Annual Report for which he was responsible.

The Annual Report was accepted.

6 Presentation of Accounts and appointment of Auditor

The Hon. Treasurer referred to the Accounts for 2004/2005, included in *The Scottish Mountaineer* and distributed with papers for the meeting.

He drew attention to the increase in expenditure on computers, which has been required to bring the IT system, on which the MCofS is becoming totally dependent, up to a satisfactory standard of reliability and capable of getting the best from the UK IT project. He emphasised that investment will be required year on year to ensure cost effective administration.

It was observed from the floor that the reserves of £28,986 seemed barely sufficient bearing in mind the number of employees and the employment costs of £70,453.

The Hon. Treasurer reported that the MCofS has been advised by *sportscotland* that the strategic reserves should be increased substantially. This is being addressed by increased subscription income, arising from recruiting more members and making the subscription rates match as closely as possible the costs of the services provided to members.

The accounts were adopted.

The Hon. Treasurer expressed his thanks to Alastair Sutherland CA for acting as Honorary Auditor and reported that Alastair wished to step down and get on with the more pleasurable business of hill walking.

The Hon. Treasurer reported that as a proposal to become a Company Limited by Guarantee was to be considered later in the meeting, it would not be appropriate to appoint an Honorary Auditor, as if and when the MCofS becomes incorporated the accounts would have to be audited professionally and at full economic cost.

The AGM thanked Alastair Sutherland for all his assistance, and wished him well for the future.

7 Proposal to Increase Subscriptions

The Hon. Treasurer explained the increases, with particular reference to supporting the funding for the A&C Officer's Post and the need for capital expenditure on IT systems.

He reiterated that the increase imposed by the MCofS is shown separately from the increase imposed by Perkins Slade for the Civil Liability Insurance Premium, over which the MCofS has little control. He highlighted the fact that to be entitled to Civil Liability Insurance Cover, young people must be in membership and must pay the Civil Liability Insurance Premium, and drew attention to an additional membership category '*Club Member under the age of 16 yrs*'. He reported that the estimate increase in the Civil Liability Premium for 2005/2006 had been £3.90, but the actual increase agreed is £3.65, and the increase in MCofS subscriptions are less than those estimated in the previous year.

A question was raised as to why there is such a disproportionate difference between the subscription rates for Individual Members as distinct from Club Members. The Hon. Sec. explained that due to the contribution made by the clubs own organisation, the costs incurred by the MCofS in collecting subscriptions is less for club members than Individual Members, and Individual Members have individual voting rights. He gave notice that as all members are now served as individuals the disparity would have to be narrowed as time progresses, and that the relative disparity would be reduced progressively.

The increase in subscriptions was proposed by Fred Belcher, and seconded by Richard Spencer.

The increase in subscriptions was supported by 138 votes in favour, with no votes against.

The subscriptions agreed for 2005 - 2006 were:

	2005 / 06	2006 / 07
	[Excluding CLI]	[Estimated] [Excluding CLI]
Individual Member [Ordinary]	£23.10	£23.10
Individual Member [Youth] ¹	£10.10 ¹	£10.10 ¹
Concession	£12.10	£12.10
Joint/Family ²	£37.10 ²	£37.10 ²
Club [per head]	£ 6.90	£ 7.00
Club [under 16] ³	£ 4.90 ³	£ 5.00 ³
MLT	£18.10	to be agreed
MLT candidates registering [concession]	£10.10	to be agreed
Associate ⁴	£60.00 ⁴	£60.00 ⁴
Civil Liability [CLI] per head.	+ £3.65	to be agreed.

¹ Must now pay CLI

² Must pay 2x CLI

³ New Category, must pay CLI.

⁴ Do not pay CLI

8 Proposed changes to the Constitution

The proposal that the MCofS should become a Company Limited by Guarantee, to give it a legal identity, in accord with recommendations from *sportscotland*, was presented for consideration.

The suggestion from Neil Cuthbert [JMCS Edinburgh] that the MCofS should become a charity was also considered.

Richard Spencer spoke in support of the proposal to move towards becoming incorporated.

Neil Cuthbert spoke to his suggestions that the MCofS should look into becoming a charity. Richard Spencer expressed the opinion that it would not confer any financial benefit but would keep an open mind.

It was noted that while the costs of conversion would be met by *sportscotland*, the year on year costs of operating as a company would be considerable, in the order of £5,000 per year, to meet additional bureaucracy and auditing costs. Incorporation would give some measure of protection to office bearers [Directors] but change the manner of operation of MCofS.

Iain Peter observed that he had experience of making the transition to incorporation and he was not convinced that it conferred real benefits but does increase costs and bureaucracy.

The President recommended support of the move towards incorporation, and confirmed that conversion to a Limited Company would be presented to a Special General Meeting, at which a draft Memorandum & Articles of Incorporation, together with a more accurate assessment of the costs to be incurred will be presented.

The proposal to move towards incorporation was supported by 87 votes with no votes against. It was agreed that during the process, the possibility of the MCofS becoming a charity would be re-investigated.

No further changes to the constitution were proposed.

9 Election to the Executive

[The Executive Committee is composed of 6 Honorary Office Bearers; The President & 3 Vice Presidents, an Honorary Treasurer and Secretary and 9 Ordinary Members, of whom at least 7 must represent clubs and at least 1 represents Individual Members.]

The Chairman presented the Officers Bearers and Ordinary Members eligible to continue to serve.

Current Office Bearers:

President: **John Mackenzie**, elected in 2003, eligible for a further term of 2 years.
Re-elected unopposed for a further two years.

Hon. Treasurer: **Derek Edge**, elected in 2003, served for 2 years, eligible for re-election annually for a further 3 years.
Re-elected unopposed for a further year.

Hon. Secretary: **Nick Halls**, elected in 2002, served for 3 years, eligible for re-election annually for a further 2 years.
Re-elected unopposed for a further year.

Vice Presidents: **Fred Belcher**, elected in 2002, served 1 year of second term.
Beryl Leatherland, elected in 2003, eligible for re-election for a further term of 2 years.
Re-elected unopposed for a further two years.
Mary Webster, elected in 2004, 1 year served in first term of 2 years.

Current Ordinary Members of the Executive:

Laura Alexander, elected in 2001, served 2nd year of 2nd term, ineligible for re-election.

Keith Miller, elected in 2002, served 1st year of 2nd term.

Alison McLure, elected in 2003, served 2nd year of 1st term, eligible for re-election.
Re-elected unopposed for a further 2 year term.

Colin Simpson, elected in 2001, served 2nd year of 2nd term, ineligible for re-election.

Bob Hodgekiss, elected in 2003, served 2nd year of 1st term, eligible for re-election.
Re-elected unopposed for a further 2 year term.

Susan Jensen, elected in 2004, served 1st year of 1st term.
Richard Spencer, elected in 2004, served 1st year of 1st term.
Chris Townsend, elected in 2004, served 1st year of 1st term.
Peter Willimott, elected in 2004, served 1st year of 1st term.

Two positions were open for election:

David Gibson, was proposed by the Grampian Club, and seconded by Nick Halls.

David Gibson was elected unopposed for a first term of 2 years.

Nobody was proposed for the other vacant position.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the position may be filled by co-option.

10 Any Other Competent Business

Motions introduced:

a) Proposed by Ian Bryce [Cairngorm Club] -

“ The MCofS together with as many clubs and individual members as possible should:

1 Object to the proposed new 400 kV transmission line through the mountains with 50 metre high pylons from Ardmair Bay to the north of Ullapool to Beaully and then to Denny. This route would affect Ben More Coigach, Ardmair Bay, Ullapool, Loch Broom, Beinn Dearg, the Fannichs, Fort Augustus to Errochty, the Correyairack Pass and the Laggan Hills, to name but a few.

2 Express concern that the government’s proposed new compulsory planning powers might be used to force through building pylons and wind farms in wild mountainous areas.”

Ian Bryce spoke to the motion. The meeting was in sympathy with the purpose of the motion.

The Hon. Secretary observed that it would be difficult for club representatives casting a block vote on behalf of a club membership to vote for the motion as drafted, as they had not had the opportunity to consult their membership.

It was agreed that numerous objections from individuals would be more effective than a single objection from the MCofS, which is obliged to object in accord with the constitution. The President recommended a vote for the motion.

The motion was supported by 57 votes in favour, with no votes against.

b) Proposed by Neil Cuthbert [Edinburgh JMCS] -

“I believe the current methods of consultation with members regarding policy are failing to gain a true consensus. I propose that the MCofS discuss and investigate an operational system of gathering members views on policy issues.”

Ian Cuthbert, having listened to a process of consultation of the previous motion, intimated that he wished to withdraw his motion. The Hon. Secretary insisted that as the motion had been introduced and placed on the agenda with the consent of the meeting, he felt the reasons for introducing the motion should be rehearsed.

Neil Cuthbert outlined the reasons for introducing the motion, particularly that there is insufficient time allowed for consultation during the AGM.

The President observed that all members now receive a copy of *The Scottish Mountaineer*, which tries to bring all matters of concern to the membership, and solicits expressions of opinion about such matters. Views expressed formally and informally are discussed by the elected members of the Executive, at sub-committees, then further rehearsed at the meetings of the full Executive, at which coherent policy positions are identified. These are then disseminated in the pages of *The Scottish*

Mountaineer, with a further request for an expression of opinion. Any binding policy is submitted to the AGM for further discussion and endorsement.

It was observed that it would strengthen consultation for 'a call to consultation' to be disseminated to Club Secretaries [by Club Newsletter or group e-mail] so that they can engage the club membership in discussion of issues of concern, and then respond with 'corporate' views.

The President observed that in accord with the first Aim of the Constitution, the Executive Committee has been very concerned about how to more fully engage club members, and agreed to look into the cost and feasibility of such a process.

The meeting expressed general support for this action.

11 Date and place of 2006 AGM.

It was agreed that Glenmore Lodge, as the National Mountain Centre, has the facilities and is a suitable venue for an interesting programme for an Annual Gathering of mountaineers, and hill walkers. Subject to the agreement of the Principal, Tim Walker, it was agreed that **the Annual Gathering should take place at Glenmore Lodge, at the equivalent weekend in June 2006.** [Saturday 17th - Sunday 18th].

The President closed the meeting and thanked everybody for attending and for their contributions.