

President's Message

By Mike Watson
MCofS President

It has been a good year for mountaineering and the Scottish mountains.

Membership – the last ten years

2006
9,806

2007
9,926

2008
10,275

2009
10,415

2010
10,849

2011
11,165

2012
11,348

2013
12,120

2014
12,509

2015
12,718

OUT of all the things that the MCofS does, nothing is more important than mountain safety and training. A Scottish Mountain Safety Group has been established under our chairmanship, to pull together the range of interests involved, including some from outside Scotland, providing a more joined up approach to future development.

The charity St John Scotland has given generous support to our winter course programme for students, allowing the appointment of a professional mountaineering instructor to run the courses and link to the clubs. Many other courses, targeted at both supporting clubs and individual members, have been run throughout the year with high satisfaction ratings. All of this has been underpinned by a collaborative approach, particularly with the National Outdoor Centre at Glenmore Lodge.

Indeed collaboration is a theme that runs through many of our activities. Encouraging wider interest in Scotland's mountains and participation in mountaineering is one of the key themes in Respecting Scotland Mountains. The value to the individual of the experience of mountain areas is heavily influenced by the quality of the landscape and the last year has seen significant progress in restricting industrial scale developments such as wind farms in these areas.

In a survey this spring, 88% of members told us that our campaigning on landscape and access matters is very important to them, so we are redoubling our endeavours and working more closely with a range of

organisations that share our interests. New legislation such as the Land Reform Act is opening up debate on how land should be managed in the future. We will actively contribute to this.

We supported the John Muir Trust in the judicial review of the Stronelairg wind farm decision,



and were disappointed that the Scottish government chose to appeal the judge's decision and that the appeal subsequently overturned the decision, giving

the development the go-ahead. Several applications for developments in inappropriate areas have been declined at the planning stage, but more can be expected and this will continue to be an important source of work for our landscape team.

The ClimbScotland initiative, targeted at young people, firmly establishes our interest in and commitment to the indoor climbing scene. Increasing popularity of indoor climbing walls, particularly among young people, is reshaping our approach and opening up opportunities. Training and coaching standards and facilities are improving. More young Scottish climbers have participated in our climbing competitions than ever before, with many progressing in national and international competitions. We were also delighted to learn, as this report was being written, that climbing is to be included as an Olympic sport at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

Our continuing challenge is to develop ways to encourage the transition from this indoor activity to a wider interest in mountaineering and the mountains. So the increasing popularity of our REALrock outdoor climbing sessions is an encouraging trend.

Our communications have improved over the last year with social media to keep members up to date with news and our new look members' magazine remaining extremely popular.

We look to the future with confidence. Our new strategy, to be launched in the autumn, will emphasise the importance of our core values, irrespective of the current political uncertainty.

Our staff and volunteers have displayed huge commitment and hard work. I would like to personally thank them for this and look forward to continuing to work with them, our membership and partners in growing and energising the Scottish mountaineering scene.

MCofS people

6,734 members of clubs
5,984 individual members
137 affiliated clubs
54 associate members
25 ClimbScotland partners
10 staff

Get skills and training

£4000 awarded in bursaries to international expeditions and climbing competition competitors
1,020 attendees of winter skills lectures and other safety talks
282 participants in MCofS mountain skills courses
166 student club skills course participants
86 students and 10 university clubs trained by St John Scotland Mountain Safety Instructor

MCofS comms

43,000 website unique visits per month
10,500 email newsletter subscribers
8,685 MCofS and ClimbScotland Twitter followers
6,960 MCofS and ClimbScotland Facebook likes
1,455 Youtube subscribers
55 entries to our Mountain Writing Competition
32 press releases issued, all achieving media coverage


Get campaigning

11,630 signatures on our wild land petition
128 access queries or issues dealt with
33 planning responses including objections
9 refusals or withdrawals of major planning proposals in favour of mountains and wild land

Get climbing

1,911 competitors in our youth competitions – highest ever!
575 participants in our outdoor climbing activities
288 members at climbing coaching and route-setting events
160 members at climbing academies for young climbers
35 delegates at our coaching symposium
5 Scots in GB youth team, all ranking in world top 30

Top 3 reasons for being a member

- 
- 1** Protecting Scotland's mountain landscapes
 - 2** Championing responsible access
 - 3** Being part of Scotland's hillwalking, mountaineering & climbing community

Highlights

Mountain skills and safety

- Led a new strategic Mountain Safety Group with partners from Glenmore Lodge, Mountain Training Scotland, Scottish Avalanche Information Service, Scottish Mountain Rescue and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors, the purpose of the group being to monitor and review

mountain safety strategy and collaborate on mountain safety issues.

- St John Scotland provided funding in 2015-16 for a mountain safety instructor to deliver mountain training to university clubs – a key part of our mountain safety strategy. Based on the success of this pilot

project, St John Scotland has confirmed a further two years of funding.

- Represented mountaineers' interests in response to media enquiries regarding mountaineering incidents and conditions. Achieved media coverage on a wide range of mountain skills and safety subjects.

Respecting Scotland's mountains

OUR online petition to gather support for protecting wild land reached nearly 12000 signatures and our campaign was supported by high profile figures including author of the popular TV series Outlander, Diana Gabaldon.

Contacted over 250 candidates in the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary Elections with our Manifesto for the Mountains, including our six priorities for political action, and received responses from the five main political parties.

Campaigned to prevent the spread of roads and vehicle tracks in the hills in the face of a planning system that sees them as necessities of economic growth, including supporting Scottish Environment LINK's campaign to monitor new hill tracks. We also wrote to local authority and national park planning authorities and to Scottish ministers seeking to confirm they would enforce planning conditions on post-construction reinstatement of hydro scheme access roads.

Many successes in lobbying against developments that would have a negative impact on mountain landscapes including the Monadhliath, Angus Glens, Rannoch Moor, near Ben More Assynt and near Ben Wyvis.

Cultivated old and new alliances to press the Scottish Government to develop a strategic vision and land use strategy for Scotland's uplands in partnership with all interested parties.

Despite a reduction in subsidies for major onshore wind farm developments, planning proposals continue to be made at the same rate as before, threatening the quality of mountain landscapes and resulting in us making a significant number of responses to planning consultations.

Championing access

- Represented hillwalkers' and climbers' interests at meetings with Scottish Government ministers, SNH, the National Access Forum, National Park Authorities, Heading for the Scottish Hills Group, The Scottish Sports Association Outdoor Pursuits Group.

- Campaigned against Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park's imposition of draconian camping byelaws (coming into force in March 2017) and to improve access

to Carn Mairg Hills via the North Chesthill Estate, avoiding 'closure' of the area for one month a year during the stalking season.

- Contributed to plans for A9 dual carriageway upgrade to ensure appropriate infrastructure for safe crossing by walkers and climbers, improved parking facilities and paths alongside the new road.

- Worked with the Raptor Study Groups, SNH and Ranger Services to provide information to climbers on nesting bird locations.



Growing participation and developing clubs

WE welcomed three new member clubs – Glasgow Walking and Hill Walking Club, the Cairngorm Geckos and Glasgow Youth Outdoor Club.

Our Director of Clubs met with many clubs to offer support and advice on member recruitment and retention, volunteer development and growing participation, plus many more local matters.

87 clubs participated in our Clubs

Survey providing us with a snapshot of their views, needs and shared challenges.

Investigated how clubs might use online communication tools like Meet Up for organising their activities and appealing to a wider audience.

We have signed up to the Scottish LGBT Sports Charter and established an Equality Working Group showing our commitment to reducing barriers to participating in hill walking, climbing and mountaineering.

Developing the sport of climbing

- Launched ClimbScotland in September to give extra focus to our efforts to get young people climbing and give their parents, schools, youth organisations and climbing walls the skills and support to meet kids' climbing needs. We have now have 25 key partners and 20 youth focused climbing clubs/groups.

- Completed a Facilities Strategy to identify gaps in climbing wall provision with the aim of increasing capacity for indoor climbing in Scotland and advised the Forestry Commission on design of a new outdoor

bouldering park at Cuningar Loop, Glasgow.

- Attracted 110 competitors to a new Scottish National Bouldering League with six rounds at climbing walls across Scotland.

- Developed two new climbing coaching workshops in partnership with the BMC: Fundamentals 3 and Physical Training.

- Provided greater climbing opportunities for people with disabilities, organising the Paraclimb Scotland competition event at EICA Ratho and giving coaching to partners such as Sense Scotland.

Bouldering at Cuningar Loop



Member services

RELAUNCHED Scottish Mountaineer magazine with a new look, feel and features.

Launched a new online membership portal which is now used by a large proportion of members and clubs to join, renew and manage their membership, update their details and book events.

Over 1600 members participated in our Members Survey: 80% of them are completely or very satisfied with their membership and 77% think it is excellent or good value for money.

Launched two new awards - Volunteer of the Year and Young Climber of the Year - to celebrate outstanding contributions to Scottish Mountaineering, with a creative competition to design the award winners' trophies.

Improving our organisation

ACHIEVED financial growth with both an increase in income from individual memberships and increased sportscotland investment.

Landscape and access work continues to be supported by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT) and the BMC.

Two new Team Leader roles - one for member services and one for ClimbScotland - have enabled us to focus better on our priorities and work together more efficiently.

ClimbScotland, one year on!

It is hard to imagine that it was just a year ago that we launched our new strategy to get young Scots climbing: ClimbScotland. In this time it has grown from a plan with worthy intentions to a thriving hub for those individuals and organisations who are passionate about giving young people in Scotland the chance to try and progress in indoor and outdoor climbing activities. Here's the story so far...

Where it all began

The MCofS has promoted climbing to young people for many years, running competitions and training courses, but with recent growth in the sport, we felt it was time to really focus on what we do to inspire and support young climbers.

We wanted to find a way to connect and communicate with a much younger target audience. So, thanks to financial support from the Sporting Chance Initiative and the creativity of the Institute of Design and Innovation at the Glasgow School of Art we were able to commission research with our young audience. This provided the inspiration for the ClimbScotland visual design and new information services like our ClimbScotland website and social media.

Thanks to investment from sportscotland, the national agency for sport, we have been able to expand the ClimbScotland team who can offer free expert advice and resources to those looking to develop climbing activities, events, clubs or facilities for young people, from grassroots level up to national competitions.

Who we are



JAMIE SMITH
ClimbScotland Team Leader



PAUL CALTON
Regional Development Officer
(East)



MICHAEL JEANS
Regional Development Officer
(West)



KEV HOWETT
Sport Development Officer

ClimbScotland in numbers

1,911	competitors took part in youth competitions
575	young people took part in 19 club/partner outdoor events supported by us
538	young people took part in 29 club/partner indoor events supported by us
160	members took part in youth climbing academies
26	ClimbScotland youth climbing competition events
25	ClimbScotland partners established
20	youth-focused climbing clubs and groups

Please pass on our appreciation of the tremendous work Jamie, Michael and Paul have done here. As a result we are now going to start a club. ClimbScotland has had a very positive impact here in the Wester Ross area and you should all be proud.

Jim Sutherland, Head of Outdoor Education, Gairloch High School

ClimbScotland Partners

We work with a range of organisations that introduce young people to climbing, from schools to youth groups to national organisations. By working together, we can support participation pathways into climbing for young people, raising awareness of opportunities. Since September 2015 we have worked with:

- 16 schools
- 4 climbing walls
- 2 national partners - Boys Brigade and Scouts Scotland
- 2 local authorities
- 1 charity

ClimbScotland clubs and groups

We have 20 youth-focused clubs/groups who we work with throughout Scotland, from affiliated clubs to youth-focused climbing groups. These clubs/groups provide a fantastic opportunity for young people to get together and climb, either indoors or outdoors. Our team gives support to volunteers/staff in these groups with the aim of enhancing the opportunities and experiences they offer young people.



“I’ve never been climbing before and it was less hard than I thought! I am definitely going to go to the wall again with my friends.”
Sam, 12, Glasgow

- RealRock sessions for young MCofS members, clubs and partner organisations help to encourage the transition from indoor to outdoor climbing
- Supported Forestry Commission Scotland with the launch of the Cuningar Loop, Scotland’s largest outdoor bouldering park in Glasgow. Thousands of local people came to the opening weekend events where we helped with bouldering taster sessions

Outdoor climbing

Highlights

- Involved in a range of events promoting climbing and training volunteers including for example:
 - Bouldering training session for Boys’ Brigade Scotland volunteer leaders
 - Scottish Student Sports climbing event at Avertical World in Dundee
 - Gairloch High School climbing weekend
 - Competition training day for Perth UHI College students
 - Climbing session with Sense Scotland for people supporting adults and young people with disabilities
- Supported the launch of new facilities, including Three Wise Monkeys (3WM) in Fort William and Spireroxx in Elgin, and encouraged greater use of existing facilities, including the wall at Carnegie Leisure Centre in Dunfermline and St Joseph’s Academy in Kilmarnock.
- Worked with Education Scotland and the Association of British Climbing Walls Training Trust to develop a resource pack for teachers highlighting the learning benefits climbing offers
- Created promotional materials for venues and organisations to advise young people and parents on how to start climbing and signpost where to go for more help

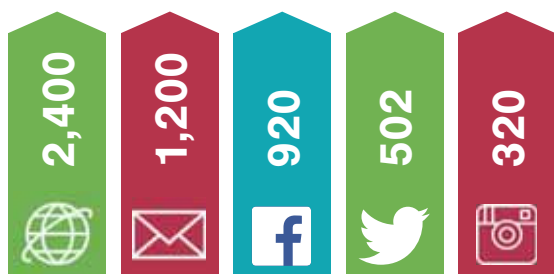
Indoor climbing

- Achieved the highest ever number of competitors in our youth climbing competitions. We would like to thank our volunteer Climbing Competition Coordinators, The Climbing Academy (TCA), Glasgow, and all members of the Scottish Climbing Wall Network for enabling this to happen!
- Organised fun local climbing competitions to encourage young people to give competition climbing a go at Speyside Climbing Wall in Aberlour, which was supported by Perth UHI college students, 3WM in Fort William and Gairloch High School
- The Scottish Schools Competition, coordinated on our behalf by Glasgow Climbing Centre, attracted 280 competitors at eight qualifying rounds at climbing walls across the country. Primary school age categories (9 to 11-year-olds) were introduced to the qualifying rounds for the first time
- 120 young climbers took part in Scottish qualifying rounds for the Youth Climbing Series. From this, a Scotland South and Scotland North team were selected to take part in the GB Youth Climbing Series finals at EICA: Ratho
- 160 young people took part in 12 climbing coaching academy events, coordinated on our behalf by TCA. These included athlete profiling, weekend camps and a Scottish Squad prep day
- Five talented Scottish climbers in the GB Youth team achieved top 30 world rankings

Competitions

ClimbScotland comms

- 2,400** average website unique visits per month
- 1,200** quarterly email newsletter recipients
- 920** Facebook likes
- 502** Twitter followers
- 320** Instagram supporters



“Thank you ClimbScotland. This has been a wonderful experience for the people we support. Not only has it built relationships within the community but given our guys such confidence. It’s something they never thought they could do.”
Rita Gallagher, Adult Day Service Manager, Sense Scotland

Challenges?

It has been an awesome year for the ClimbScotland team whose support and advice has reached young people, clubs, schools and other organisations from the north of Scotland to the Borders. With just two Regional Development Officers to cover the entire country, it has been a challenge to keep up with demand!

We have found that there is a need for innovation when it comes to organising youth-focused clubs and groups, safely and sustainably, as the traditional club approach does not always appeal to the parents, volunteers and communities we are working with.

Treasurer's Report

by Robert McMurray

THE financial Year 2015-16 was positive for MCofS, with increased sportscotland grant support and an increase in income from individual memberships.

The end of year accounts did show a deficit of £45,981 (the first since 2010-11) although members will recall that the MCofS Board approved a budget deficit of £39,478 in 2015-16, primarily for the purpose of investing the reserves built up since 2011-12. With an unbudgeted decrease of £7,600 in SMT grant income in 2015-16, this explains the increased deficit against budget.

sportscotland investment increased to £305,100, and significant work has continued – particular reflected in the Draft Strategic Plan 2017-21 - to ensure that we reach our investment targets and can justify further levels of investment in future.

Access and conservation work continues to be supported by both the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT), and the BMC. Working in partnership with MCofS, St John Scotland have provided funding in 2015-16 for a further mountain safety instructor to assist our work with Scottish University mountaineering clubs – a key part of our mountain safety strategy. We are very grateful to sportscotland, SMT, BMC, St John Scotland and many others aside, for their continued support.

The figures contained in this report are based on the audited 2015-16 annual accounts, as certified by our accountants, Johnston & Co.

Income

MCofS income increased to £581,318; but of this, membership income decreased by 2.4%. While individual membership income has increased, there was a decrease in club membership income. In part however, this can be explained by the loss of one large employee-based club due to business closure and by the implementation by MCofS of a fairer, pro rata subscription basis for our clubs.

Expenditure

Total expenditure increased by 34.3% in 2015-16, but reflecting a 1.8% decrease in expenditure over budget. Almost all areas of expenditure were positive to budget, for the financial year.

When considering expenditure, the first priority of MCofS is to service its membership, with the surplus funds thereafter, used to fund its activities. As in previous years, in order to provide greater clarity on how subscription levels are set and where subscription monies are spent, the chart which accompanies this report provides greater detail on the cost of the main activity areas undertaken and the proportion of a member's subscription that goes towards them.

Balance Sheet

The total capital and reserves as at 31 March 2016 stood at £261,742.

Budget 2016-17

As with previous years, the Board has sought to take a comprehensive, albeit cautious and conservative approach to the budget for 2016-17, which continues to be based on a fully-costed operational plan. Most areas of the budget therefore remain unchanged from 2015-16.

To continue the investment in its sustained growth, development and future, the MCofS Board has again approved an – albeit smaller - budget deficit in 2016-17, again for the purpose of investing the reserves built up since 2011-12.

Subscriptions 2017

Despite significant investment, the Board are aware that in order to maintain activities at their current levels and justify increased spend and an increased level of MCofS activities in future, an emphasis has to be made on increasing both membership numbers and the associated income from them. Present subscription levels have not increased since April 2012, and a proposal for a moderate increase in members' subscription levels is therefore included elsewhere in this Report.

The Board are risk averse (this approach underpinning MCofS planning and expenditure in recent years) and equally, are taking action to reduce costs where possible, but on the basis of cost increases outwith MCofS control, in addition to the increased activities and responsibilities of the organisation, I am sure you will all agree that the proposals are fair, are timely and appropriate, and will assist to ensure the continued growth of our important organisation.

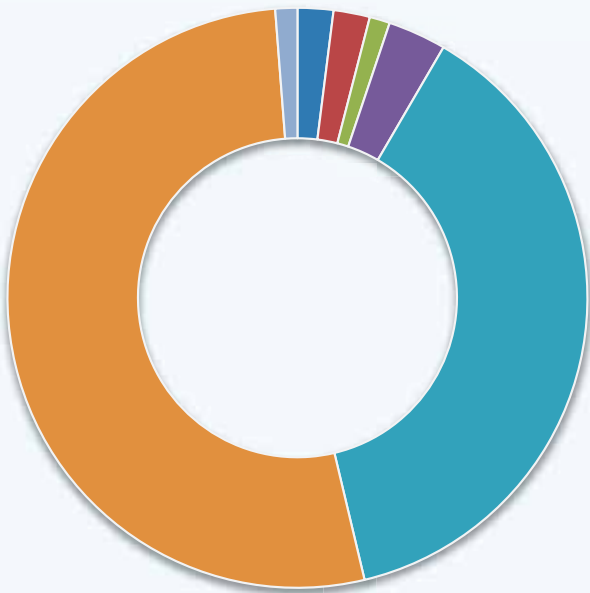
Keypoint summary

1 Financial Year 2015-16 demonstrated further growth for MCofS, with increased sportscotland investment and an increase in income from individual memberships.

2 Access and conservation work continues to be supported by both the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT), and the BMC.

3 Working in partnership with MCofS, St John Scotland have provided funding in 2015-16 for a mountain safety instructor to assist our work with Scottish university mountaineering clubs over 13 weeks – a key part of our mountain safety strategy.

4 MCofS expenditure was 1.8% positive to budget in 2015-16.

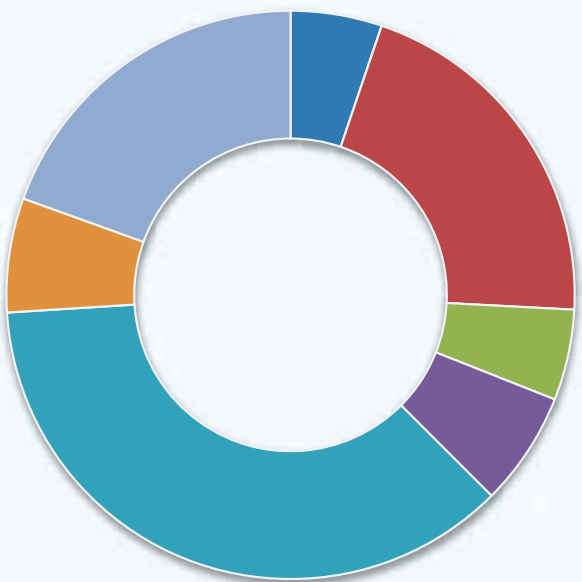
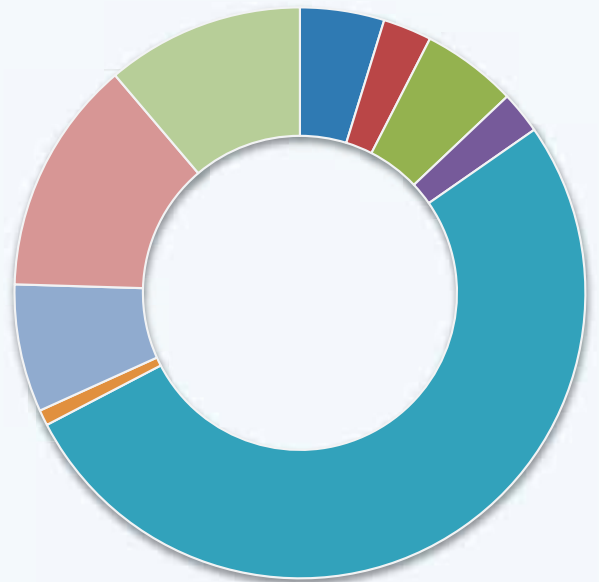


Income

- Sport development (£11k)
- Competition income (£12k)
- Club development (£7k)
- Mountain Safety (19k)
- Membership income (£220k)
- sportsScotland investment / other grant income (£305k)
- Other income (£7k)

Expenditure

- Sport development (£30k)
- Competitions (£17k)
- Club development (£34k)
- Mountain Safety (15k)
- Salaries, fees & expenses (£326k)
- L & A costs (£6k)
- Civil liability insurance (£45k)
- Office costs (£84k)
- MWIS & MTS (£70k)



Allocation of Subscriptions

- Access & landscape 5%
- Civil liability insurance 21%
- Magazine 5%
- Mountain Safety 6%
- Other member services 37%
- Sport development 6%
- Youth climbing development 19%