



Press Release

5 April 2016

For immediate release

Do you deserve our vote? Political parties urged to protect to Scotland's mountains

Political parties are asked to state their views on six priorities for Scotland's mountains to help hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers decide where to place their vote on 5 May

With one month until the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoS) has written to the chairs of Scotland's main political parties urging they state their party's views and commitment to six priority areas for protecting Scottish mountains.

The organisation plans to share these responses with its 13,000 members and many more supporters from Scotland's hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering community to help inform individuals' voting decisions.

Mike Watson, President of the MCoS, explained: "We sent our election briefing, [A Sustainable Future for Scotland's Mountains](#) to over 250 parliamentary candidates and sitting MSPs earlier this year, and our members are now keen to hear parties' responses to our six priorities for political focus."

The MCoS has highlighted six key priorities:

- To develop a shared vision for Scotland's uplands, which should be treated as an irreplaceable natural, cultural and economic asset, respected and safeguarded for the benefit of all.
- To support sustainable economic development for mountain communities, which need support and investment to diversify and develop.
- To enforce existing legal powers and safeguard Scotland's access rights, which are so essential for the nation's health and wellbeing, but which are under threat of erosion.
- Guaranteed planning protection for mountain landscapes, so that development is planned and regulated to enhance rather than diminish our mountain landscapes and wild land.
- To capitalise on the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor recreation, with these being promoted in both education and health services.

- A commitment to improving safety in the mountains. A sector-wide Mountain Safety Group, led by the MCofS, is developing a strategy for improving safety in Scotland's mountains, and Government investment in safety services such as mountain weather and avalanche forecasts, training and mountain rescue plays a vital part in this and must continue.

The MCofS, which is encouraging its members and supporters to hold their parliamentary candidates and canvassers to account on these six matters, will publish all the responses it receives from Scotland's political parties on its website and in a pre-election communication to its nearly 13,000 members in the run up to polling day.

Ends

Notes for editors & further information

- Interviews can be arranged with MCofS Chief Executive Officer, David Gibson.
- The full election briefing: [A Sustainable Future for Scotland's Mountains](#)
- The [full letter to political party chairs](#)
- Our 2015 manifesto: [Respecting Scotland's Mountains](#)
- A photo of MCofS President, Mike Watson:
www.mcofs.org.uk/assets/media/mike_watson_image.jpg
- Contact Neil Reid, Communications Officer, on 01738 493941 or 07788871803 or neil@mcofs.org.uk

About the MCofS

- The MCofS acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.
- The MCofS is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- The MCofS is a membership organisation with nearly 13,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers. The MCofS also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- MCofS landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC.
- The MCofS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, The Old Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP