



Press Release

25 February 2016

For immediate release

Election candidates challenged on support for Scotland's mountains

Prospective MSPs urged to speak up for “irreplaceable natural, cultural and economic asset”

Prospective MSPs of all parties are being called upon to voice their commitment to Scotland's mountains.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoS) has written to all candidates in the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary elections with a campaign briefing: **'A sustainable future for Scotland's Mountains'**.

Mike Watson, president of the MCoS, said: “Our world-renowned mountains are cherished by hillwalkers, mountaineers and climbers from all parts of Scotland and beyond, so their future should be a concern for every MSP, regardless of where their constituency lies.”

“Scotland's mountain landscapes are essential to our communities in so many ways: recreation, tourism, employment, cultural identity, wildlife and biodiversity, peat conservation and carbon storage, energy production, water quality and flood mitigation to name but a few.

“Striking a balance between these is a challenge (and an opportunity) that we need the Scottish Government and Parliament to take seriously.

In a letter to over 250 parliamentary candidates, 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 Wild Land Areas, 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, encompassing services such as public information, mountain weather and avalanche forecasts, training and mountain rescue.

Over the next three months the MCofS will be encouraging its 13,000 members and supporters to hold parliamentary candidates and their canvassers to account on these six matters and consider the responses they receive when casting their vote. The organisation also represents over 75,000 British Mountaineering Council members UK-wide on matters related to landscape and access in Scotland.

The MCofS is looking forwards to working with Scotland's elected representatives, and to ensuring that the implementation of the six priorities delivers a sustainable future for Scotland's mountains.

Ends

Notes for editors

A photo of MCofS President Mike Watson is downloadable here:

www.mcofs.org.uk/assets/media/mike_watson_image.jpg

Further information

The full text of our briefing can be found here: [A sustainable future for Scotland's Mountains](#)

Read our 2015 manifesto, [Respecting Scotland's Mountains](#)

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 over 12,000 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