



Access & Conservation



Extensive bare peat and degraded peatland near Mullaghcleevaun in the Wicklow Mountains; instead of capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in the peat, drained and damaged bogs emit large amounts of carbon dioxide.

Responding to the climate crisis

Have you been looking into the issue of climate change and considering what you can do?



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As mountaineers, we witness first-hand both the causes and impacts of climate change. For example, many of us have visited the Alps and been struck by the rapid retreat of glaciers, while in our own mountains we see the wide-scale degradation of blanket bog, turning what should be an important carbon sink into a source of carbon emissions. We believe this gives us a particular responsibility to act.

The Board of Mountaineering Ireland has approved a proposal for the formation of a **Climate Response Working Group**, led by the Access and Conservation Committee as an organisation-wide initiative.

Mountaineering Ireland's hillwalking, training and climbing committees have put people forward to participate in the working group; we have a couple of Club Environmental Officers on board and we are also opening this opportunity to other members with an interest in the subject.

Our intention is that this work will generate and guide a **programme of action**, rather than just producing a policy statement on climate change. The work will also be set in the context of mountains.

While Terms of Reference for the group are still being scoped out, we are currently considering four areas of activity:

- Building Mountaineering Ireland's members' understanding of climate change and its impact on the mountain environment, e.g., through articles in the *Mountain Log*, awareness events, online talks, etc
- Encouraging personal action on, for example, choosing our routes to avoid further degradation of blanket bog, car-pooling, sustainable travel, etc
- Advocacy – sharing our experiences and calling for climate actions such as ambitious targets for the restoration of blanket bog, more sustainable forestry, funding for upland path management, etc
- Partnering with an organisation that is addressing the impacts of climate change in a mountain area, in Ireland or abroad.

➡ If you're interested in getting involved in this work, please get in touch – helen@mountaineering.ie ■

FIND OUT MORE

➡ The MountainViews Annual for 2021 includes an article on Mountaineering Ireland's work last year on Access and Conservation matters.

This magazine is an attractive online publication with much to interest hillwalkers. You can read it at mountainviews.ie/annual/2021 ■

➡ I recently recorded a podcast with Wales-based mountaineering instructor and environmental educator **Mike Raine** as part of Mike's *Upland Lives* series. The conversation ranged across Ireland's mountains, access, and my work with Mountaineering Ireland.

The *Upland Lives* podcast series is aimed at mountain leaders, mountaineering instructors and all who walk and climb in the hills across Britain and Ireland. It is available on all podcast outlets and is worth checking out! ■