

Mountaineering Ireland AGM

Delivered online and hosted at Mountaineering Ireland's office, Irish Sport HQ, National Sport Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

Tuesday 23rd May 2023

Present: As per attendance list.

Mountaineering Ireland's Chairperson, David Pollard, welcomed everyone to the AGM and explained the running order for the AGM.

Agenda:

1. Adoption of Standing Orders
2. Adoption of Minutes of the 2021 AGM (Online Meeting – 10th May 2022)
3. Chairperson's Address
4. Election to Full Membership of Aspirant Clubs
5. Company Secretary's Report
6. Approval of Financial Statements for 2022
7. Appointment of Auditor for 2023
8. Statements regarding Safeguarding and Anti-Doping
9. Motions
10. Elections to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland

1. Adoption of Standing Orders:

These were adopted by the members present.

(Vote Results were: 50 - Yes / 0 - No / 3 - Abstain).

2. Adoption of Minutes of the last AGM:

These were adopted by the members present.

(Vote Results were: 49 - Yes / 0 - No / 12 - Abstain).

3. In his Chairperson's address David Pollard included the following:

- 2022 was the first year of Mountaineering Ireland's four-year Strategic Plan which sets out a roadmap for the organisation until 2025.
- 2022 was the first year fully free of pandemic restrictions and at the end of our last membership year, Mountaineering Ireland membership stood at over 15,000 members, the highest it's been in the history of the organisation. The normalisation of activities, from climbing competitions to challenge walks, to events such as Women With Altitude was welcome.
- During 2022, Mountaineering Ireland took a strong leadership position nationally on access and conservation issues, particularly through our involvement in the development of the National Outdoor Recreational Strategy, which was launched last November by Minister Heather Humphreys TD. NORS sets a vision for sustainable development and management of outdoor recreation over the next five years and our involvement in this gives us a real

opportunity to influence important issues such as access. The input of Mountaineering Ireland is increasingly being sought by government and other organisations, a measure of our recognition as a key stakeholder.

- Mountaineering Ireland staff and volunteers played a critical role in the Croagh Patrick path project. This project not only involves the protection of an iconic mountain, it also sets a standard for upland path work in Ireland.
- Although it occurred in 2023, the scandalous attack on a landowner in the Glenmalure Valley was mentioned. This was shocking treatment of somebody who has been a real friend to hillwalkers in Wicklow over so many years, and Mountaineering Ireland's support for the Dunne family was reiterated.
- There has been a significant growth in competition and high performance climbing in Ireland and internationally in recent years. Yet, there is still much to do, the development of a performance pathway for athletes is a key priority for the organisation as referenced under the Achieve pillar in our Strategy.

2022 saw the introduction of the four nations series with Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales coming together in collaborative climbing competitions with each nation hosting a round. This resulted in a healthy increase in competitors coming across the water and provides a wider circle for our athletes to compete against. An Irish Youth Squad was established in 2022. The aim of the squad is to develop the young athletes' skills for potential selection for the Irish Youth Team and the Senior Team and for entry into international competitions. 2022 was a very active year with Irish competitors in a range of international events.

The Donegal Climbifest, the Mourne Climbifest and the Women's Rock Festival all ran successfully in 2022 and the eagerly anticipated new Dalkey Guidebook was published.

- Mountaineering Ireland also continues to engage internationally through the UIAA. Its Youth Commission Innovation Panel is chaired by Jane Carney, Training Officer.
- We continued in 2022 to strengthen our offerings and supports to our members and clubs through the Happy Hiking and Club Leadership programmes, and through online workshops for club committees. By the end of 2022 the club leadership programme had seen over 1,100 club leaders trained from 91 different clubs. The Happy Hiking programme in 2022 ran in 20 different locations. Over 120 representatives from 38 different clubs attended the club committee workshops.
- Mountaineering Ireland's first in-person gathering in three years in Wicklow, was hosted by the Wayfarers Association, where we had a Q&A session with the team behind the award-winning Irish Peaks book, the second edition of which was published in November 2022.
- In December the annual Lynam lecture attracted an audience of over 300 people to hear Leo Houlding.
- On Christmas Eve we received the sad news that Michael Byrne had passed away following a short illness. Michael was a key member of the Irish Peaks team and was central to the production of many Mountaineering Ireland publications over the last 12 years. He will be greatly missed.

In April of this year, we also received the sad news that Noel Hanna died in his sleep when descending from Annapurna. Noel was a renowned adventurer and endurance athlete and a past recipient of the Lynam medal.

Sympathy was extended to both Michael and Noel's families.

- David concluded by thanking the staff team, his Board colleagues, and the volunteers across all our committees and clubs for their commitment and dedication throughout the year.

4. Election to Full Membership of Aspirant Clubs:

The four clubs Wicklow Wanderes, Hillwalking Radio Club, Sliabh Hiking, Viatrek Little Island were proposed to be granted full membership of the organisation and agreed by the members present. **(Vote Results were: - 58 Yes / 0 - No / 12 - Abstain).**

5. Report of Company Secretary, Siobhán Quinn

The last Annual General Meeting was held on May 10th, 2022. It was a hybrid meeting hosted at Mountaineering Ireland's Office, Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 and via Zoom.

There were 9 meetings of the Board of Mountaineering Ireland in 2022.

Mountaineering Ireland submitted a statement of compliance with the Governance Code for Sport to Sport Ireland on 23rd May 2022 and are now listed on their Register of Organisations in Compliance with the Governance Code of Sport.

All legal and procedural requirements have been followed, including reporting and submissions to the Companies Registration Office.

Mountaineering Ireland is a company limited by guarantee and is a sporting organisation supported by both Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland. All the directors are extremely focused and clear about their duties to Mountaineering Ireland. The Board of Directors act at all times in the best interest and to the best of their capability with regard to the Mountaineering Ireland organisation, its members and other stakeholders.

(Vote Results were: 59 - Yes / 0 - No / 3 - Abstain).

6. Report of the Chairperson of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, Dave Ayton and Presentation and Approval of Financial Statements for 2022:

The financial statements for 2022 were presented by Board member Dave Ayton, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee, showing a net surplus of €42,430 for 2022 and were approved by the meeting.

Overview of 2022 was a positive year in terms of finances. We saw a growth in income and expenditure also increased to scale, but we finished the year with a positive surplus of €42,430. Sport Ireland Core funding amounted to €235,000 and Women in Sport €40,000.

- Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland funding for the Get Ireland Walking programme amounted to €300,000.
- Sports Inclusion grant (Get Climbing Programme) amounted to €50,000.
- Sport Northern Ireland funding amounts to c.£48,500 per annum. This fund is specifically for youth engagement and club development initiatives in Northern Ireland.

During 2022 Mountaineering Ireland has continued to operate appropriate financial processes, this included:

- Finance, Audit and Risk Committee's oversight of Financial operations and Risk;
- Meet the financial reporting requirements of our key funder;
- Budgets in-place for all programmes;
- Improving revenue and cost income streams to ensure financial sustainability is maintained through initiatives such as Irish Peaks Project

(Vote Results were: 50 - Yes / 0 - No / 9 - Abstain)

7. Appointment of Auditor for 2023:

A tender process was carried out to select new Auditors for 2023. The outcome of that process was a recommendation that OSK Chartered Accounts be appointed. The meeting approved the appointment of OSK which will come into effect on June 21st, after the Company Law requirement of 28 days' notice to Whiteside Cullinan has been served. The Mountaineering Ireland staff and Board thanked Alan McClean and his team in Whiteside Cullinan for their professionalism and support over the past 13 years and wished them all the best for the future. **(Vote Results were: 51 - Yes / 0 - No / 6 - Abstain)**

8. Safeguarding Statements

Mountaineering Ireland is committed to best practice and upholding and implementing appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from young participants, officials, coaches, trainers, mentors, parents/guardians and clubs.

Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy complements the joint Sport Ireland & Sport NI Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport.

Mountaineering Ireland and affiliated clubs with youth members must each appoint a representative with the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young participants, ensuring Mountaineering Ireland and clubs operate in an environment that welcomes and encourages children in the sport – this role is carried out by the Children's Officer.

Mountaineering Ireland and affiliated clubs also appoint a person to liaise and report directly to the Statutory Authorities.

Anti-Doping Statements

Mountaineering Ireland fully subscribes to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) procedures and promotes a drug-free sport.

Mountaineering Ireland references anti-doping in the rules of all national level climbing competitions.

Mountaineering Ireland provides anti-doping education for members of the Youth Climbing Team, and other climbers who compete at international competitions.

Mountaineering Ireland includes anti-doping education as part of relevant coach education programmes.

9. Motions

Motion 1 proposed by the Cork Climbing Club was presented by club Secretary Janette McDonald. The wording of the motion was amended and the wording below was approved by the meeting.

We propose that Mountaineering Ireland, in consultation with NPWS, NIEA and the National Monuments Service and other appropriate authorities, investigates how best to make information available on climbing and hill walking areas that are protected for both biodiversity and built heritage, including information on how they may be protected by people in their use of these areas for mountaineering purposes.

(Vote Results were: 39 - Yes / 10 - No / 4 - Abstain).

Motion 2 proposed by Maitiú Ó Coimín, Patrick Farrington and Derek Moore (individual members) and presented to the meeting by Maitiú Ó Coimín.

Mountaineering Ireland recognises that the names of our mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, streams, and other features hillwalkers, mountaineers, and climbers encounter in Ireland are Irish in origin and that most of these original names were rendered into their current meaningless approximations during the British mapping project of the country in the nineteenth century. Mountaineering Ireland applauds other nations such as Scotland who use and promote Gaelic names in upland regions and countries such as the USA and Australia who have restored native names to landmark features such as Denali and Uluru. Mountaineering Ireland believes that proactive measures should be taken to reclaim the prominence of our Irish-language placenames and mandates to use the Irish language versions of upland features in the Gaeltacht regions of the country to help normalise their use. This mandate applies to press releases, letters, submissions, social media posts, and other publications by Mountaineering Ireland.

An amendment to Motion 2 was proposed by the Peaks Mountaineering Club and presented by William Smyth, this was supported by Brian Kennan on behalf of the Mountaineering Ireland Board.

Mountaineering Ireland recognises that the names of most of our mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, streams, and other features hillwalkers, mountaineers, and climbers encounter in Ireland are Irish in origin. Mountaineering Ireland supports the use of Irish language place-names in the Gaeltacht regions of the country and where possible will include Irish language names in press releases, letters, submissions, social media posts, and other publications by Mountaineering Ireland.

Motion 2 was discussed in great detail, with contributions from a large number of delegates. After considerable time devoted to this Motion, it was agreed that the topic requires further consideration and that this would be best done with input from the proposers, the Hillwalking Committee and staff, before bringing the matter back to a Members' Forum.

10. Elections to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland

Nomination for the election of President of Mountaineering Ireland

As there was just one nomination, Rita Connell, a current Board Member nominated by the Blayney Ramblers, was deemed to be elected to the position of President of Mountaineering Ireland.

Nomination for election to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland of 'Ordinary Members'

Noel Caffrey, Brian Kennan, Alan Lauder and Joan Mulloy were all deemed to be elected to the Board of Directors of Mountaineering Ireland as ordinary members.

David Pollard closed the meeting and thanked all in attendance.