



Regional Meetings

—

Consultation on draft Strategic Development Plan

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Introduction

This report was developed to support the development of a member led Mountaineering Ireland *Strategic Development Plan* for the years' 2014 – 2017.

The planning process for the SDP began in late 2012 by the staff and board of Mountaineering Ireland. In early 2013 a *Mission Statement* was published and feedback was sought from the membership. This *Mission Statement* was taken to the Spring Gathering's members' forum where 3 focus groups considered it. The feedback from the focus groups and other independent members' feedback were incorporated into the *Mission Statement*.

The next stage involved the preparation of a *Consultation Draft Strategic Development Plan* and the scheduling of 6 regional meetings. The regional meetings were structured and included two groups and predetermined questions to stimulate debate and focus on the draft objectives and proposed actions.

This report provides the feedback from all regional meetings but generally does not reflect any congratulatory comments. This report then informed the board of Mountaineering Ireland who considered changes and decided upon the final draft to be put before the membership by way of EGM.

An EGM will be held on Sunday, 20th October 2013 in the Carnegie Arts Centre, Kenmare at 9.00am. This will be followed by a Members' Forum.

Executive Summary

The regional meetings were held in Galway, Kilkenny, Killarney, Cork, Dublin and Belfast. They were attended by a total of 104 members, drawn from 40 affiliated clubs and other individual members. There were also more than 40 apologies received.

All regional meetings were conducted similarly with an introductory presentation, followed by group discussions on set questions, which focused on the draft Strategic Development Plan. Copies of the draft as well as other information were available both online and at the regional meetings. With the exception of the Belfast meeting all groups were broken into two focus groups. At the end the groups came back together where the group discussions were summarised and agreed to be accurate and fair.

Common feedback (responses from more than 2 meetings) included;

Mission Statement, Values & Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Protection' should be in Mission Statement • Include 'hills' in Mission, don't use 'etc' • Health and well-being benefits should be highlighted • Respect value should be expanded. • Partnership value should be extended. • Landowners should be mentioned. • Greater focus on youth. • More support for Mountain Rescue (possibly include in objectives)
Objective 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell members more about what Mountaineering Ireland does • Videos on training / good practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online forum would be useful • Almost unanimous rejection of volunteer award • Link better with MountainViews
Objective 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective should read 'a voice' not 'the voice' • Mountaineering Ireland has a role to influence how mountains are managed • Promote good practice amongst walkers and climbers. • Provide training and support so that Environmental Officers will be more active • Promote Events policy, especially to charities
Objective 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information needed on access points to hills. • Essential to maintain relations with landowners. • Landowners concerned about liability. • Clubs avoid problem areas. • Commercial activity a concern for landowners. • More fences and gates in the hills. • Better access needed at lower level and coast. • Action on Coillte viewed positively.
Objective 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a post Mountain Skills mentoring process • Rock climbing skills training scheme welcomed • Training opportunities need to be more local / regional

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in clubs is a key issue and further supports required.
Objective 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building programmes and links with schools a priority • Need promote the huge benefits of our sport to younger and support clubs recruit new adult members. • Forming partnerships with other organisations to bring people to the sport. • Market & advertise in the appropriate places where existing walkers and climbers congregate / read.
Objective 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worth supporting but should never become the primary focus • All facility / climbing wall managers should be supportive of the programme and not create barriers
Objective 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support clubs to clearly communicate this to new members with appropriate leaflet / videos. • Accept that many will never be self-reliant.
Policy / Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountaineering Ireland should not make policy without appropriate research. • Research on how to attract all ages to walking and climbing. • Research to show the economic impact of walking and climbing.

Galway Regional Meeting – 14th May 2013

Comments Group 1

- 1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?**
 - Mission statement- discussed use of word 'training' instead of or as well as 'Support'
 - Concern raised regarding 'Mountaineering' as name of organisation not being representative of majority of members, most of whom are hillwalkers. Mixed views on this, overall it was felt the mission statement was all encompassing.
 - Suggestion that 'landowners' should be mentioned in 'Partnership' value. Decided against this as brevity was needed in statement

- 2. Are there services that you would like to see Mountaineering Ireland deliver that are not currently available?**
 - Videos for training
 - Online forum to avail of local knowledge, access etc
 - Link to 'mountainviews' website
 - Club handbook being developed. Templates for club forms will be included, e.g. getting next of kin details etc.

- 3. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications? Can you provide any suggestions?**
 - Generally felt this was adequate.
 - Some people not aware of e-zine
 - Suggestion of 'streaming' the Great Outdoors Alpine meet information evening as Dublin on a weeknight doesn't suit people outside of Dublin.

- 4. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more to formally recognise the contribution of so many volunteers in Clubs?**

- Overall feeling of no need to do so nationally, this should be done / is done within clubs.
- Concern that larger clubs would dominate voting etc.

5. Do you feel the Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support and empower Clubs, especially on environmental matters?

- Environmental Officer role was outlined and discussed.
- People accept the environment for what it is. Change goes unnoticed over the years. Suggestion that Environmental Officers should start building photo archives to show how their local walks have changed over the years.
- Query regarding new fences and abundance of fences, especially around Leenane. Suggestion that more stiles are needed.
- Proposals for upland measures under next CAP were outlined, overgrazing and undergrazing discussed.

6. Do you believe that Mountaineering Ireland has a role in lobbying and campaigning on members' behalf?

- Resounding 'Yes'
- Examples discussed were Coillte and Quad damage

7. Do you believe there's a need for better co-ordination in the management and use of Ireland's mountains? Do you want Mountaineering Ireland to influence how Ireland's mountains are managed?

- Discussion around who manages the mountains, and who makes decisions, e.g. if path repairs need to be done, currently nobody doing this, partly due to complex ownership.
- Upland agri environment programme could influence how mountains are looked after.
- Local groups could be formed as suggested in Leenane.

8. Are you satisfied with the current access situation? Can you suggest the type of solutions you would recommend / support?

- Report form should be filled (available on website) if access issues encountered. It may be best to deal with issues locally, with support from MI.
- Suggestion that a 'Seasonal' info tab or News on MI site could inform people of sensitivities at various times of year e.g. lambing time, nesting time.

Objective 3

- 3.1 – State needs to show leadership in this.
- What can clubs do to help? - Open the chain of communication, fill access report forms, MI needs evidence of situation on the ground.
- MI can insure stiles if erected in agreement with landowner and maintained by local club. Goodwill gestures go a long way. Examples provided.
- 3.2 – Discussion regarding one farm organisation rejecting indemnity proposal. Liability fears discussed, including increased insurance premia.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- It's good, not much more you could do.

Comments Group 2

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- The group generally agreed that the mission, vision, values and objectives were appropriate.
- There needs to be a greater community emphasis
- Safety is not mentioned – look at Diamond Hill. One mountain in every area should be accessible
- I don't want Ireland's mountains over-run.
- Need to put something in place like the Greenway. There is a need for good quality tracks and those need to be maintained better than at present.
- Tracks need to be off-road, in a nice place. Newport to Achill a good example.
- Benefit for tourism – “what's Mountaineering Ireland's role in terms of tourism? Should that be part of mission?

2. Would you like to comment on these objectives? Is there any key element missing from the objectives?

- There is not enough focus on youth and access for young people to the sport.
- There need to be models developed, connecting with community based centres and groups.
- There should be a youth model for schools
- There needs to be a lot more information encouraging youths
- Transition year is an opportunity to engage with youths.

3. What are the supports you or your club needs in terms of skills development and training? Are these currently available to you?

- Many members go and do Mountain Skills but come back to the club and lose those skills again
- There is a need for more encouragement, mentoring or coaching

- There are cultural issues in clubs – hard to consolidate skills
- Clubs should have an attitude to encourage everyone to develop skills
- There needs to be a more localised focus. The likes of Women with Altitude but in local areas
- Lack of leaders in clubs and people won't lead
- The Leadership article in the Mountain Log was very useful, got people thinking. There needs to be more of that. Individuals need to take more responsibility in clubs and not leave it to leaders
- Need to build confidence. Mountain Skills is personal proficiency, need to build upon that.
- There needs to be a support package – how to overcome issues
- A forum might help
- In one club the size of a group tends to be no more than 5, helps to build confidence.

4. Do you feel the current training schemes and awards are appropriate? If not, what is lacking or what would you suggest?

- More training opportunities in the west.
- Support within clubs, club programmes and follow up needed.

5. Should Mountaineering Ireland have formal relationships and support other like-minded organisations to provide a variety of starting points for hillwalkers and climbers?

- Yes
- Need to influence The President's Award
- Promote a positive ethos on the hills
- OECs? This would need to be a two way thing.
- Multi-sport clubs could be a good thing.

6. Do you feel that Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support greater participation by all ages? Is there a need for greater development work, especially for youths?

- There is a need to appeal to the younger target groups

- Children need to be encouraged in Primary schools
- Target Transition year students and schools
- The day of the teacher taking kids out is gone
- It needs to be done through parents and communities
- President's award
- Communities of practice; OECs should play a role in their community
- If a 12 year old wants to go hillwalking, what does (s)he do, where does (s)he go? We are all talking about the need for youth being involved but how many of our clubs actively encourage and give youths those opportunities?
- Child protection – perception gone wrong
- Reality is that most clubs are not interested
- Totally disagree; great to give youths the opportunity of being outside in nature, it only takes a couple of people.
- Clubs should all appoint a Junior Officer
- Should we spend large amounts of energy on this when youths don't really want to go hillwalking.
- Important also to encourage older age groups.
- Highlight the fact that everyone can do it forever.
- People going away in groups or doing different long distance walks - this should be promoted in the Log
- More organising and bringing people together.

7. Should Mountaineering Ireland be providing greater opportunities for talented young participants to achieve more, including potential Olympic participation?

- Yes
- There is a need to get the likes of NUI Galway's wall open to the public and create the opportunities for young people in the west to be part of this scene.
- The Burren is so close, with such wonderful climbing that it can be another way of increasing young peoples participation
- Youths are more likely to see this as a good way to get involved

8. Is the promotion of personal responsibility and self-reliance something you consider important? What would you suggest can be done to support greater personal responsibility and self-reliance?

- Is it a problem?
- This is up to individual clubs. All clubs need to be encouraging it.
- People are self-interested, some just want to turn up and be lead around the hills. They won't learn skills, they won't take any responsibility. They think you are there to look after them.
- More articles need to be published promoting this.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- Yes
- What more could you do.

Kilkenny Regional Meeting - 23rd May 2013

Comments Group 1

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- Mission should include protection, maybe 'sustainable use and conservation...'
- General observation that Mountaineering Ireland should co-ordinate with other mountain users, mountain-bikers etc.
- Partnership value reflects this but not explicit, also too many 'withins' in wording of partnership value.
- Objective 2 - Should be 'a voice for Ireland's mountains', not 'the voice', that could appear arrogant to landowners and other interests. Do we even need 'the voice' part in this objective?
- Objective 2 – suggest 'To promote, protect and encourage...'
- Need to have accessible options for people at entry level in their use of the outdoors, e.g. access along rivers.
- Club has two walks on Thursday nights, one is to encourage people in.
- Rural Recreation officers doing low level stuff, Mountaineering Ireland should concentrate on the uplands.
- National Trails Office should be proactive in supporting trail development.
- There should be greater integration from walking to climbing.

2. Are there services that you would like to see Mountaineering Ireland deliver that are not currently available?

- Mountaineering Ireland trying to provide too many services; there are private people who provide training, e.g. GPS training.
- Do more to promote how people can help the mountains.
- Promote the idea that it's not something free to walk on. We don't pay for access, but we will have to pay for conservation in the long run.

- Club has promoted good relations with landowners by erecting a gate for farmer in the Blackstairs.

3. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications?

Can you provide any suggestions?

- Use Twitter.
- Important that we as members act on communications that we receive, the action that follows communications is important.

4. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more to formally recognise the contribution of so many volunteers in Clubs?

- General recognition that it's all about volunteers, don't pick out individuals.
- There are different perspectives within clubs – some people eat and drink mountains, it's their hobby, do training courses etc; most don't want to give that much time, just want to go for a walk on Sunday.
- Mountain Meitheal and Mountain Rescue help maintain the mountains for all of us.

5. Do you feel the Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support and empower Clubs, especially on environmental matters?

- If you ring Mountaineering Ireland, e.g. about a windfarm, you get support, helpful when needed. Balance is right, acting as back-up to clubs rather than taking a top-down approach.

6. Do you believe that Mountaineering Ireland has a role in lobbying and campaigning on members' behalf?

- Definitely. That's one of the major points of having Mountaineering Ireland, as national lobby group and advisory group. Need to keep in contact with members and Mountaineering Ireland does that.

7. Do you believe there's a need for better co-ordination in the management and use of Ireland's mountains? Do you want

Mountaineering Ireland to influence how Ireland's mountains are managed?

- Yes, but Mountaineering Ireland couldn't look after it all.
- Be a leader, try and influence how our mountains managed instead of being directly involved.

8. Are you satisfied with the current access situation? Can you suggest the type of solutions you would recommend / support?

- Access in Blackstairs is good. New EastWest map helps, shows better where to go.
- Lot of info out there now, e.g. lanes shown on Googlemaps, but you need to use maps with care.
- You wouldn't know where to go if not in a club, no signs, people wouldn't be able to find their way up Shannon's Lane. [Comhairle na Tuaithe's pilot mountain access project was outlined, also national indemnity scheme].
- Access routes need to be well thought out, clubs cleared a route on Blackstairs and it changed the flow of traffic onto the hill.
- New houses and changes in land ownership also affect access, e.g. at Brandon Hill.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- You're consulting and getting feedback.
- Is it enough?
- Hard to get people out.
- It's uncontentious, the majority are fine with it and don't see it affecting them.
- Good that Mountaineering Ireland has a vision and plan.
- Would be good to have an outline or update on this process for club AGM in September.

Comments Group 2

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- There are members that don't know what it is that Mountaineering Ireland does.
- Education – we need to educate people, members and the general public, in what we do.
- Is there a need for a regional network?
- This would be creating another tier and it is difficult to get people involved. Most people give priority to their club, busy, but would get involved in a campaign, e.g. Coillte.
- Key people in clubs give back to their clubs.
- Mountaineering Ireland will never have the resources to have regional officers.
- 'Sustainable use' – use the membership card to give information
- The whole Coillte movement has been done very well
- When an issue affects a member you see them engaged.
- Pick key words and put them on membership card

2. Would you like to comment on these objectives? Is there any key element missing from the objectives?

- Mountain Rescue is missing.
- Need to promote the work of Mountain Rescue, when things go wrong they get the call.
- Supporting like-minded organisations could be included and giving them practical support.

3. What are the supports you or your club needs in terms of skills development and training? Are these currently available to you?

- Training for club committees and officers.
- Governance workshops for clubs.

- Clubs need that advice. Some clubs rely on one person, the responsibilities need to be shared.
- Encourage clubs to have a full range of officers.
- Make governance courses available but do not force others to participate.

**4. Do you feel the current training schemes and awards are appropriate?
If not, what is lacking or what would you suggest?**

- Need to ensure a strong environmental part in all courses.
- Providers need to commit to promoting a strong environmental message.

5. Should Mountaineering Ireland have formal relationships and support other like-minded organisations to provide a variety of starting points for hillwalkers and climbers?

- What does 'formal' mean?
- Mountaineering Ireland should be engaged with organisations that share the same values, as with Scouting Ireland.
- Other potential partners; Presidents Award and Duke of Edinburgh.
- MOUs – you need to know what you want to get out of it.
- Important to get new blood and younger people on boards and committees.
- Opening windows – informing members what's available.
- Tell me, show me, and involve me.

6. Do you feel that Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support greater participation by all ages? Is there a need for greater development work, especially for youths?

- Yes.
- 'Greater participation' or 'greater membership'? The aim should be to bring existing mountain users within the community not increase participation.
- Target the pubs and car parks that existing mountain users frequent.

- Would members be willing to pay for it [greater publicity, etc.]?
- An increase would go down like a “Lead balloon”
- Work with and have relationships with other organisations the best way to influence many.
- Why would we reinvent the wheel [in terms of Scouts support youth participation in hillwalking]
- Unless an OEC has a climbing wall they won’t engage
- Important to reach out to college clubs.

7. Should Mountaineering Ireland be providing greater opportunities for talented young participants to achieve more, including potential Olympic participation?

- Is Mountaineering Ireland not about the outdoors? Is this leading to an indoor versus outdoor divide. Worry that focus could switch to this.
- Great to see young people achieve, look at the Irish Cricket team.
- This is important also from a perception point of view. Look at the golfers – a few golfers and Ireland is the capital of the golf world.
- This helps in the battle for youth participation.
- Scared that an Olympic focus could move the focus and funding of Mountaineering Ireland to a different level and space.

8. Is the promotion of personal responsibility and self-reliance something you consider important? What would you suggest can be done to support greater personal responsibility and self-reliance?

- This is fundamental.
- It should be infused in everything Mountaineering Ireland does.
- Need to promote personal experience and self-reliance.
- There needs to be a capacity [in clubs] to support those who want to develop their skills to do so.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- Yes.

- Perhaps using a survey monkey tool or the likes could help to get wider and more feedback.
- Location not the easiest to find.
- Critical that Mountaineering Ireland's actions are based on evidence and research. We don't want Mountaineering Ireland to be caught out.
- Emphasise 'our voice'.

Killarney Regional Meeting - 29th May 2013

Comments Group 1

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- Values – like Responsibility coming first.
- Liability is an issue; need to get information out to farmers.
- Does Mountaineering Ireland represent commercial operators?
- Partnership value should include landowners.
- People that are not affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland can cause problems, e.g. sponsored events.
- Dogs and issue – people walking with dogs don't read signs.

2. Are there services that you would like to see Mountaineering Ireland deliver that are not currently available?

- Travel insurance.

3. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications? Can you provide any suggestions?

- Guidebook writers should talk to farmers, farmer on Dingle Peninsula outraged to see walk on his land included in guidebook.
- Promote the new access & liability leaflet to the IFA.
- Need to get to the fundraisers, direct charity walks to lower ground. 300 people loose on Brandon recently, no degree of stewarding.
- Continue with Walk Safely, like the Water Safety campaign. Get it on Radio Kerry, Frank Lewis show good.
- Limit numbers on charity events.
- We can't be stewards of the hills.

4. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more to formally recognise the contribution of so many volunteers in Clubs?

- No need, too much bureaucracy.

5. Do you feel the Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support and empower Clubs, especially on environmental matters?

- Good job being done.

6. Do you believe that Mountaineering Ireland has a role in lobbying and campaigning on members' behalf?

- Yes, as on the Coillte issue.
- Make public representatives aware that walking brings money to an area. West Highland Way worth £1 million a day. Heard through Outdoor Recreation NI event that £1 invested in walking generates spend of £17.
- Make accommodation providers aware of needs like drying rooms.
- Break-ins to parked vehicles at Torc car park.
- Also at Cush car park in the Galtees.

7. Do you believe there's a need for better co-ordination in the management and use of Ireland's mountains? Do you want Mountaineering Ireland to influence how Ireland's mountains are managed?

- [This question was not addressed as the meeting included a separate update on consultation with a view to forming a management body for the MacGillycuddy's Reeks.]

8. Are you satisfied with the current access situation? Can you suggest the type of solutions you would recommend / support?

- What does public land in 3.1 mean? [Agreed that publicly-owned land is a better phrase].
- There are issues with large groups and commercial groups. Farmers have an asset and there is an underlying current of resentment towards commercial use of that asset, this has increased in last two years.

- Essential that we maintain good relations with landowners [the proposed national indemnity scheme and Uplands Working Group proposals were outlined].
- It's about basic respect, consulting people.
- Mountaineering Ireland should do more to get the message out about land ownership, along with dogs issue.
- Saw a bus driver go into a field and take a lamb in his arms so people on his bus could take pictures.
- There are visiting walkers too who don't understand.
- Talk to clubs in the area, they know the ground and sensitivities.
- Farmer saw a woman with two dogs off lead, he asked her to put the dogs on leads and she asked him where was the lead for his dog.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- It's good.

Comments Group 2

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- There is no mention of the people that own the land
- A word of recognition would look good
- There is more to be done on the values in terms of the lack of respect walkers show landowners; sticking to verges, climbing gates on the hinge side, dogs are a serious issue.
- Signs for dogs too small
- Gates should be closed after going through them. If there is a piece of wire on it, put it back on. Leave as you find it.
- Walkers breaking down fences.
- Need to do more to make people aware of they need to behave
- Educational campaign is required
- Connect with dog walkers, especially, perhaps through veterinary clinics. Do like the smoking adverts and produce leaflets
- Use Tracks and Trails and Ear to the Ground to get the message out there
- Messages need to be well worded
- Vital that we get youth involved. Linking with scouts locally.
- It only takes a few to be committed to make it [youth effort] work. If we get a few involved we could get Sleibhteoirí Óga Chiarraí back up again.

2. Would you like to comment on these objectives? Is there any key element missing from the objectives?

- No comments on this question.

3. What are the supports you or your club needs in terms of skills development and training? Are these currently available to you?

- Youth Training Workshops and enabling clubs get into schools.
- A connection with Transition year students
- First Aid training (REC 2) can be difficult to find.

- Support after MS1 and MS2 or otherwise you fall back into following
- Hard to develop leaders.
- In Slieve Luachra everyone is involved, everyone has their map and compass and it's more enjoyable
- Navigational days and links with other clubs, it would be a way of doing things together and making it less expensive.

4. Do you feel the current training schemes and awards are appropriate? If not, what is lacking or what would you suggest?

- The ML is extreme, it should not have the camping in it.
- Need to have support after MS1 and MS2.

5. Should Mountaineering Ireland have formal relationships and support other like-minded organisations to provide a variety of starting points for hillwalkers and climbers?

- Yes (comment generally by all)
- Scouts and schools key places to start but clubs have a role in that too.
- The huge importance of relationships with landowners was again put forward by the group
- Relationships with the media were also highlighted as important.

6. Do you feel that Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support greater participation by all ages? Is there a need for greater development work, especially for youths?

- Yes but there is not a willingness to pay for this.
- Suggestion that there are lots already out and the focus should be on youth.

7. Should Mountaineering Ireland be providing greater opportunities for talented young participants to achieve more, including potential Olympic participation?

- Youth competitions are generally still social gatherings and a way into the sport.

- Would this mean a move away from the recreational side?
- It would surely work both ways but important to ensure that participation always remains the priority.
- Always important to have people at all levels involved.

8. Is the promotion of personal responsibility and self-reliance something you consider important? What would you suggest can be done to support greater personal responsibility and self-reliance?

- If there could be a leaflet for new members that could be included in clubs welcome pack. Let them know what their responsibilities are.
- Big articles in magazines. Get the message out there.
- More advertising.
- We could all do more to promote it within the walking community.
- Have plenty of low level looped walks.
- Work with the hotels locally to get the message out there.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- Yes (Comment by everyone)
- It would be good to see some research done on the mountains and the erosion.

Cork Regional Meeting - 30th May 2013

Comments Group 1

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- Vision – it's comprehensive.
- Responsibility value - should 'hillwalking and climbing' be 'walking and climbing'?
- Not always a collective responsibility, some only have a rough idea where they are.
- Some don't want to lead.
- The size of the group affects how involved everybody can be, better chance that all involved in decision-making if group is less than 10, but not possible with a group of 35.
- Someone needs to lead.
- How do you cope when people are not prepared? Had a situation where leader had to change walk because of concern about ill-equipped people then didn't end up in right place.
- Respect value – some people believe it's OK to leave banana peels.
- Saw a flying banana skin recently, it wasn't a new walker, it was a Mountaineering Ireland club member.
- Put it in the Mountain Log, have a bullet point in each issue.
- People want it easy – tracks and trails
- Respect value - only about the mountains, should it be wider than that?
- Training objective – have standards become looser since Tiglin closed?
- Was to do Mountain Skills Assessment, course cancelled three times (two different providers, one cancellation at three days' notice), the most unprofessional thing ever.
- There are minimum numbers required, can't run Mountain Skills Training with less than four people [subsequently clarified that this has changed].

2. Are there services that you would like to see Mountaineering Ireland deliver that are not currently available?

- Landowner asked 'why can't Mountaineering Ireland sort out insurance issue?' [updated group on development of access and liability leaflet].
- Gear reviews in the Mountain Log are like an advertisement, you need the pros and cons, a bit better in last issue.
- Forum on website.

3. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications? Can you provide any suggestions?

- E-zine keeps people up to date [some of those present haven't been receiving the e-zine, explained that it will go to all in future, with option to opt out].
- Information on tonight's meeting didn't come to club email.
- Events in Mountain Log can be over when you get magazine.
- Can be difficult to find information on website.
- Ever think of doing the Log online?
- People would download it and not read it. Broadband not good in some places.
- Put youth competition climbing results on Mountaineering Ireland website.

4. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more to formally recognise the contribution of so many volunteers in Clubs?

- People do a lot of good work, good to recognise it.
- Maybe not a bad idea, but how would you judge it?
- Local Sports Partnerships do it.
- Leaving yourself open to criticism.
- Could end up rewarding clubs with big numbers.
- [Agreed to report that there were mixed views in group on this suggestion].

5. Do you feel the Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support and empower Clubs, especially on environmental matters?

- Some clubs don't have Environmental Officers.
- Send soundbites to Club Environmental Officers.
- Some Environmental Officers don't do anything.

6. Do you believe that Mountaineering Ireland has a role in lobbying and campaigning on members' behalf?

- Yes, good to have support of a big body.
- Some erosion caused by quad bikes, other users of the mountains need to be influenced.
- All hillfarmers have quads.

7. Do you believe there's a need for better co-ordination in the management and use of Ireland's mountains? Do you want Mountaineering Ireland to influence how Ireland's mountains are managed?

- Good when there's a central body to go to; hard to get anything done the way things are at the minute.
- Need somewhere central for advice, e.g. best route to take on Carrauntoohil.
- Lot of festivals and charity walks, counted 10 events on Galtymore this summer, most could have 300 people, many now becoming annual events.
- Need a management group in each area like is being done in the Reeks.
- Commercial providers have a responsibility.
- People don't know or don't want to know about Mountaineering Ireland's Events Policy.
- There is good, bad and ugly in events, I wouldn't do things like four peaks etc; some people have a conscience, you can appeal to that.
- Communities and businesses get more back from lower level walkers they will go into pubs. The business in the Lake District coffee shops is not from people going to the top of the mountains.

- The guides using the Reeks, what do they give back? You should contact college clubs about their impact. Be more hard-hitting in the magazine.
- King's Yard and Cronin's Yard – there's security, break-in recently at Bay lough in Knockmealdowns, also at Cush in the Galtees, it's happening everywhere, hitting cars parked at sportsfields too.
- People need to be responsible about not leaving stuff in cars.
- Put articles in the papers on erosion and mountain matters; that would be promoting Mountaineering Ireland too.

8. Are you satisfied with the current access situation? Can you suggest the type of solutions you would recommend / support?

- Lady's View on Moll's Gap road, fenced of, signs up, drilled into rock.
- New fencing in Gap of Dunloe.
- Fencing getting more substantial.
- Knockmealdowns, near the Vee, saw a 'no walkers' sign but we had come from the other side.
- Need for access at lower level. The coast is a problem too.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- Yes, everybody is getting a chance to say what they want.

Comments Group 2

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- Other places, should it not just be the mountains?
- The coast is important too.
- The Coillte forests shouldn't be sold because they are important to access to the mountains.
- Access to the coastline should be included in the Cork County Development Plan. There needs to be better access to the coast.
- Youth Development should be in the values.

2. Would you like to comment on these objectives? Is there any key element missing from the objectives?

- Youth development [in hillwalking and climbing] should be part children's schooling.
- The education system should do more to introduce youths to the outdoors. What are the outdoor education centres doing?
- Should there be an objective about clubs having youth walking sections?
- On access, there is uncertainty there needs to be more information available.
- There needs to be a huge effort to open up paths where to walk in the countryside. Not everyone wants to or has the time to go to the mountains.

3. What are the supports you or your club needs in terms of skills development and training? Are these currently available to you?

- What is the Trail Walk Leader? [A low level or trail walking leader course for those that want to lead groups in the countryside rather than in the mountains]. That's what lots of people want.
- It would be good to see the NICAS scheme available throughout the country. It is a great way of introducing young people to climbing. And,

they will go on from there to be involved in all aspects of mountaineering.

- There needs to be regional workshops on things like rope skills. Our hillwalking club has never done one of these and it would be great to do but it would need to be held close by. [Noted the workshops advertised for this summer]
- There is no committee in our club. Would there be a way to have a workshop on how clubs should be run. [Noted that at the Spring and Autumn Gatherings there are often Club Development workshops]

4. Do you feel the current training schemes and awards are appropriate? If not, what is lacking or what would you suggest?

- There needs to something offered to encourage those in their 20s and 30s to get involved. There is a high percentage of older people in many clubs and they need young members.
- It was asked if the club had recruitment campaigns. They won't join if we don't tell people what's on offer, what the club does, where it goes and what age group you are looking for. The club should have an induction plan for new members as well – get them interested.
- There should be more social occasions for people to use maps.
- There needs to be mentoring for people who learn the skills but don't get to practice them.
- It is good to see Rock Climbing Skills in there. Nice thing to progress into.
- That [Rock Climbing Skills] has been lacking for a long time. It should have a syllabus people can work to.
- Skilled climbers also have a role nudging others to get people rock climbing.

5. Should Mountaineering Ireland have formal relationships and support other like-minded organisations to provide a variety of starting points for hillwalkers and climbers?

- Links with the scouts and guides are way more important.

- It would be good for groups [scouts and guides] to be endorsed by MI.
[Noted the partnerships that already exist]
- Could MI promote itself through the Orienteering competitions?
- It would be good to see a better link with schools.
- Look for volunteers in their areas to connect with others. They need the training to be able to do it.
- Whoever the links are with they need to have respect for the outdoors.
- Transition year is an opportunity to get young people into the outdoors.
- The OECs have a role to play in this with MI.

6. Do you feel that Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support greater participation by all ages? Is there a need for greater development work, especially for youths?

- Schools with Mountaineering Clubs should be encouraged. There is the school in cork with the club. Every school should have one.
- All it takes are 1 or 2 adults locally to get something started it doesn't need to be big. And, it shouldn't be left to MI to do.
- We are a club with 80 odd members and we're 'comfy walkers', I can't see us having a youth wing.
- Huge amount of young members interested in club trips. They are a great way of getting people committed.
- Older people want to get involved too but we probably need to go and recruit them.
- There are lots of 'older youths' out there.

7. Should Mountaineering Ireland be providing greater opportunities for talented young participants to achieve more, including potential Olympic participation?

- Absolutely, definitely. It lifts the whole profile of the sport to have young people out there competing.
- Climbing walls and sport climbing provide a great facility to get young people involved in the sport.

- It is really important that youths are introduced to trad climbing. It is a great cross over.
- Be instrumental in letting young achievers achieve.
- Clubs that want to support this have to provide the environment for it.

8. Is the promotion of personal responsibility and self-reliance something you consider important? What would you suggest can be done to support greater personal responsibility and self-reliance?

- It is but we need to keep telling people that it is up to them.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- What was the process? [Explained the process, draft mission statement, Spring Gathering workshops, draft SDP and now regional meetings.] Seems about right so.
- It's great and thanks for the opportunity.
- Could it be done online? Surely, it costs a fair bit to go around the country.
- Regional meetings are important.

Dublin Regional Meeting – 5th June 2013

Comments Group 1

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- No mention of 'development', e.g. youth.
- Partnership value reads like internal partnership, needs to refer to the world outside.
- Discussion on whether Mountaineering Ireland should be promoting walking in general for its health benefits, or just supporting those involved. There is healthy tension between protecting the places we use and growing our sport; have to communicate this to politicians. Concentrate on core activities unless funded to do more.
- Re Objective 4 – gap in Training at lower levels, intermediate required between Mountain Skills Training and Mountain Leadership.
- It is one of our values to foster personal responsibility, yet training is geared towards protecting others from personal responsibility. Response from group that informal training provided directly to clubs has been all about personal responsibility.

2. Are there services that you would like to see Mountaineering Ireland deliver that are not currently available?

- Emphasise personal responsibility.
- Make more of opportunity at Gatherings to show what Mountaineering Ireland does, e.g. on access, equipment, promoting instructors; also promoting local businesses as done in Clonmel.
- The IMC has to pay for a small number of elderly inactive members within IMC to join Mountaineering Ireland, although they are not active and the club gives them free membership after 40 years in the club.

3. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications? Can you provide any suggestions?

- Good to have an online forum. Glenwalk have a forum for members with a separate area within this for leaders. Other clubs interested to know what software used to support this. IMC and climbing.ie forums are open to all to see.

4. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more to formally recognise the contribution of so many volunteers in Clubs?

- No, you'd leave so many people out. Would also increase burden of expectation on volunteers.

5. Do you feel the Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support and empower Clubs, especially on environmental matters?

- Having Environmental Officers and providing training for them is the way to go.
- Could be boring but you can make it fun – quizzes etc.
- Mountaineering Ireland role to foster responsible attitudes within clubs, but some clubs value their independence and mightn't want Mountaineering Ireland to cross a line.
- Important that Environmental Officers report back to club, some don't.
- We've come a long way in promoting responsible attitudes, Mountaineering Ireland now first point of contact for media and that helps. More Environmental Officers the better, but you can't force it.

6. Do you believe that Mountaineering Ireland has a role in lobbying and campaigning on members' behalf?

- Resounding yes. Tell members what we are doing, especially on access, appreciate that not all this work can be public.
- Discussion on annual review, probably too expensive to send to all members, putting link on Mountaineering Ireland website is too passive, send link to all members.
- For lobbying its useful to have party political connections, parties can be influenced from the bottom up, some activists within parties may be

Mountaineering Ireland members and could be more useful than TDs, e.g. in drafting policies and persuading parties to adopt them.

7. Do you believe there's a need for better co-ordination in the management and use of Ireland's mountains? Do you want Mountaineering Ireland to influence how Ireland's mountains are managed?

- Glad to Mountaineering Ireland not going to be led by tourism interests; thought we were buying into the tourism argument to get what we want.
- What visitors want is natural look of place.
- Think we need management bodies; there seems to be no management whatsoever, up to your knees in muck in some places, more people out there so more need for management.
- As long as it's not guys in offices building more to keep themselves in jobs.
- Inclusion of landowners in management process is important.
- Mountaineering Ireland's role to influence management of hills but not to do the managing.
- Mountaineering Ireland should be doing more with Fáilte Ireland, to influence them.

8. Are you satisfied with the current access situation? Can you suggest the type of solutions you would recommend / support?

- Have never been unable to go anywhere I wanted to.
- Access seems to be getting more difficult, more gates and fences.
- If there's a problem clubs tend to avoid it.
- Tree felling affects access routes through forestry.
- Can informal routes through forestry be protected?
- This was discussed with Coillte's Social & Environmental panel and they asked for information on all informal routes.
- If landowners think activity is commercial that would cause a problem, maybe commercial activity should be licensed as suggested in Kerry.

- Access an issue at two levels, we can influence our members, but need to get the word out to casual walkers and tourists.
- Having established routes to get to the uplands would reduce potential for conflict.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- It's appropriate; not much more you can do.

Comments Group 2

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- Promotion of participation and the health benefits of the sport belong in the mission statement.
- It would also help in attracting grants.
- It is a key point that jumps out and valuable to have included.
- Another objective should be 'foster structures of value to the sport'.
There are various organisations that do various things and it is important that there is a relationship with them.
- The partnership value should be expanded (to include point above)
- The vision is aspirational, elements of making things accessible.
- 'Responsible' at the start of the vision is for community relations.

2. Would you like to comment on these objectives? Is there any key element missing from the objectives?

- MI needs to show itself to be inclusive. The culture in the MI magazine is for serious challenges. There needs to be intermediate challenges and objectives, which are appropriate. For example, Challenge walks, summiteering – this would emphasise a move into the lower level, walking rather than mountaineering. Not only targeting the aspect of adventure but target everyone. Be completely participative.
- Promotion of the sport is in objective 5.
- Very high level document, quite strategic.
- There should be access to training across other organisations in other countries.
- There needs to be info for people coming from abroad. Info about how to walk in the countryside.

3. What are the supports you or your club needs in terms of skills development and training? Are these currently available to you?

- Learn from other parts of Europe.

- There is that perennial problem of everyone going through training and pushing mentoring. It is up to every individual club.
- You have to get a few people and push them on.
- All new members in clubs should aspire to lead walks within a certain timeframe.
- Induction, if it is too extreme it just turns people off.
- You have to foster a discussion on leadership and push the message (of everyone being able to do it eventually)
- There can be too great an expectation on leaders.
- There needs to be methods to get the message across. I would be interested in an occasional symposium on these types of methods.
- GPS use makes for a better experience. Training people are rooted against it.
- Spring and Autumn Gatherings are very useful and informal setting for sharing lessons and skills. They are extremely positive.

**4. Do you feel the current training schemes and awards are appropriate?
If not, what is lacking or what would you suggest?**

- There is a need for lower level leadership awards.
- Rock Climbing Skills, unless you will be putting it into practice you will have no desire to do it.
- There is a need to support the clubs with leadership workshops.
- There needs to be greater access to training information.

5. Should Mountaineering Ireland have formal relationships and support other like-minded organisations to provide a variety of starting points for hillwalkers and climbers?

- Yes.
- Hillwalking in Ireland, support the sport. Mountain Rescue, Mountain Meitheal & MountainViews should be supported.
- It is very important to have relationships. Guidebook writers and Collin's Press. It is very important to have a volunteering structure within MI to make this possible.

- There should be a hillwalking body within MI.
- Geocaching is an example of a game and summiteering also provides that intermediary challenge.
- Broaden the appeal.
- Encouraging all this – huge difficulties putting 100s of people on a mountain at a time. The impacts are huge.
- Go the way of Europe and have developed tracks.
- Link with other sports, for example orienteering.
- It is important to be talking to the Mountain Bikers.
- There are endless charity, fundraising events and adventure races. The hills are being used as a way of mobilising people to pay a fee.

6. Do you feel that Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support greater participation by all ages? Is there a need for greater development work, especially for youths?

- Encouraging older people, would there be a point?
- MI is a lean organisation and funding I presume must be a concern but in principle I would agree.
- If you focus on youth, hillwalking is a problem. Young people don't want to go hillwalking. They want more excitement.
- Include all ages in a way that's inclusive.
- This goes back to relationships with older organisations.
- Young people will be more attracted to climbing.
- Older and intermediate ages also need to recreate.
- There needs to be extra work on this as it is currently short on specifics.
- There is scope for a study on how to target different age groups, sexes, ethnic groups, etc. in.
- For women, crèche climbing or crèche walking can be a very good solution.

7. Should Mountaineering Ireland be providing greater opportunities for talented young participants to achieve more, including potential Olympic participation?

- MI should give access to it but little by way of financial support.
- Is there much promotion of it?

8. Is the promotion of personal responsibility and self-reliance something you consider important? What would you suggest can be done to support greater personal responsibility and self-reliance?

- There should be a policy document for clubs on groups of people on the mountains, people getting separated, people understanding and being aware of where you are, etc.
- Mountain Rescue is a voluntary body and it is privilege to be able to phone mountain rescue teams. It is important to stress the lack of funding.
- People should be encouraged to take responsibility but accept that some will continue without.
- There should be some formal understanding of what clubs should be expected to do. A guideline of what's expected. Something written down.
- Videos would help to promote this.

9. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- Discussion has been very good.
- There should be greater transparency on submissions. They should be made public.

Belfast Regional Meeting – 6th June 2013

Comments Group

(note: one group; questions were taken from both lists)

1. Do the mission, vision, values and objectives set out fully reflect what you would expect of your representative body? Would you like to comment on the mission, vision, values and objectives?

- Should it not read 'hillwalkers' instead of 'walkers'?
- 'Hills' are not mentioned in mission, should be part of it, not in the brackets.
- Mountaineering Ireland needs to be more proactive. There needs to be a greater focus on looking after the mountains. There needs to be a passion for them and they need to be protected. RSPB does it well.
- Responsibility is a good word.
- People need to be encouraged to improve their skills. So many people wouldn't go out on their own. They are just following.
- Is that the policy, to keep tracks and trails off the mountains? There are a lot of tracks and trails.
- There are walkers that Mountaineering Ireland don't represent, how do we get through to them?
- I don't like 'etc.' in the mission.
- Youth don't want to be on the hills.
- Objective 7 is surely the main thing?

2. Are there services that you would like to see Mountaineering Ireland deliver that are not currently available? Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications?

- Facebook is very immediate and a good way to communicate.
- Would be good to see other online climbing guides like done for Donegal.
- There needs to be more done to encourage eco-tourism.
- Produce stats on value of events, e.g. Climbfest.

3. Should Mountaineering Ireland do more in terms of communications?

Can you provide any suggestions?

- Pretty good at it, good that you're on Facebook.

4. Do you feel the Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support and empower Clubs, especially on environmental matters?

- Good job on the Cooley Mountains and ensuring the windfarm development planning application was not successful.
- Belfast Hills Partnership has a policy on windfarms.
- Farmers can't be happy with the lack of dog control and scramblers on the mountains.
- It is important that clubs have Environmental Officers.
- There should be better information on climbing on sea cliffs and when we can and can't go.

5. Do you believe there's a need for better co-ordination in the management and use of Ireland's mountains? Do you want Mountaineering Ireland to influence how Ireland's mountains are managed?

- Well, in the Mourne, the Mourne Heritage Trust should have a greater role. Are the Mourne the most trafficked mountains?
- Mountaineering Ireland needs to be involved in the management of all mountain areas – there was a proposal for an uplift from Newcastle.
- There are a lot of new bike trails.
- We don't want signs up on the mountains.
- We need to keep an eye on the long term, where will things be in 30/40 years?
- We don't want to make things too prescriptive for people.

6. Are you satisfied with the current access situation? Can you suggest the type of solutions you would recommend / support?

- There aren't any access problems in the Mourne, things are alright in the Cooleys, less sure about the Sperrins.

- Our club walks all over Northern Ireland, not aware of any problems. Some areas where there is no access due to farming, farming has its role.
- There needs to be analysis of all of the island.
- There are areas where you have to go 'softly, softly'.
- A lot of farmers are concerned by the threat of public rights of way.
- Are there reasons where there are access problems? What has caused the farmer to close access?
- Break down those barriers between recreational users and landowners, visit farmers.

7. What are the supports you or your club needs in terms of skills development and training? Are these currently available to you? Do you feel the current training schemes and awards are appropriate? If not, what is lacking or what would you suggest?

- Clubs sometimes want little in the way of training. A few people to be skilled. Training without awards.
- Clubs want informal refresher type and emergency rescue training [information provided on training grants, club mentor scheme, training providers].
- Clubs need to be a bit more organised to get new people involved and you need to have enough people with skills to bring the new people on.
- Colmcille Climbfest is a great way to introduce novice climbers to the community.
- Mentoring is important too; need to be proactive in maintaining the interest of members in navigation etc.
- Training of Environmental Officers is important.
- All training schemes should be environmentally responsible.

8. Do you feel that Mountaineering Ireland could do more to support greater participation by all ages? Is there a need for greater development work, especially for youths?

- We need to break down the barriers preventing people participating. For example in the Ozone you have to be 12 to start climbing while in Dublin you can be 6, in Europe they start at 3.
- Kids love climbing outdoors too, through the Mountaineering Ireland clubs they are training well and learning good skills.
- Working with youth organisations and Gaisce / Duke of Edinburgh awards are very important.
- Bring coaches and leaders together to support their development / upskilling.

9. Should Mountaineering Ireland be providing greater opportunities for talented young participants to achieve more, including potential Olympic participation?

- Yes, it's fantastic what's being achieved by the Youth Climbing Team. The success of people like Dominic Burns inspires younger children.
- The bid to have climbing made an Olympic sport for the 2020 games hasn't succeeded, but it may happen further down the line.
- Important to make climbing more mainstream so all young people get a chance.
- Important to be developing young people.

10. Is the promotion of personal responsibility and self-reliance something you consider important? What would you suggest can be done to support greater personal responsibility and self-reliance?

- Training has a role to play in this.
- Important for people to take responsibility. Encourage them to lead a walk and get to know different walks.
- When people join they should be shown that it is an activity that requires self-reliance.
- Role of Environmental Officers is important too so they can show good practice.

11. Is the process of developing this SDP appropriate, if not what would you like to see?

- Yes.
- Will Development Plan be more detailed, with KPIs, hard to say what you have achieved without targets?