



## Mountaineering Council of Ireland - Annual General Meeting 2007

Saturday 10 February 2007, Moran's Red Cow Hotel, Dublin

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**Attendance:** As per attendance list

**Apologies:** John O'Callaghan, Sé O'Hanlon, Dawson Stelfox, Tomás Alyward, Jerry O'Dwyer

1. Declan O'Keeffe (President) welcomed everyone present to The Mountaineering Council of Ireland AGM 2007. At the start of the meeting DO'K gave an overview of the standing orders of the meeting which were proposed by Harry O'Brien and seconded by Ross Millar. All in favour.

### **Standing Orders**

The Proposer of a Motion or an amendment to it may speak for 5 minutes but not more than 5 minutes.

A Delegate speaking on a motion or an amendment to it may not speak for more than 2 minutes.

The Proposer of a Motion or an amendment to it may speak a second time for 2 minutes immediately before a vote is taken, but other Delegates may not speak a second time to the same motion.

When the Chair considers the matter has been sufficiently discussed, the Proposer may be called upon for a reply and when this has been done a vote must be taken.

A Delegate with the consent of the Chair may move "That the motion now be put". Then, when the Proposer has spoken, a vote must be taken.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the last meeting – Simon Stewart pointed out that in his recollection the AGM did not endorse item 9, membership of committees. It was noted that these names were put forward as candidates. Helen Lawless pointed out that MCI took the opportunity to be open and honest about all appointments. Some of these positions have become redundant. This was noted by the meeting.
3. The President, Declan O'Keeffe gave his address, Sé O'Hanlon, Secretary sent his apologies that he could not be present. DO'K took a moment to stop and remember all of those members of MCI who had passed away during the year. It has been a busy turbulent year for the MCI, however we have become a stronger organisation and now have a Chief Officer in post. Stuart, our new Chief Officer has offered to go out and meet with individual and club members of the MCI. Even though it has been a tough year we have seen an increase in funding to the organisation from the Irish Sports Council.

Thanks were given to Helen Lawless and the members of the FSG – Financial Strategy Group for their hard work during the year. We are now half way through our current development plan focusing on communications, access, resources, training and youth. There was much regret at the loss of Tiglin. However we do want to ensure that training takes place through independent providers, outdoor centres and to local clubs. Thanks were expressed to Colin Gibbon and BOS for their work on the draft training policy and we have a Training Officer in post shortly.

The Irish Sports Council previously gave monies to Tiglin for training and we hope that a portion of this money will now go to the MCI for training.

D O’K welcomed Angela as the new full time Youth Officer for the MCI based at Tollymore Mountain Centre. We do need to get more young people involved in our programmes. Likewise there is a core group of volunteers involved in a number of projects in MCI. We need to broaden this group to encompass more volunteers within the organisation.

4. Access is a big issue and it is with regret that D O’K informed those present of the imminent sad departure of Helen Lawless from the MCI. Helen will be taking up a post with the Wicklow Uplands Council and has decided to relocate to Wicklow where she currently lives. D O’K said our loss with Wicklow Upland Council’s gain and we wish her the very best in her new position. Helen has been working with the MCI since June 2001. She has been instrumental to the development of MCI as an organisation and bringing to a point where we now have a Chief Officer. A presentation will be organised for Helen in the coming weeks at her leaving party. Our Chief Officer has drawn up a recruitment and selection timetable for the post of Access Officer and we hope to have someone in post as soon as possible, the advertisement for the position will go in the newspapers this coming week.
5. With regard to communications we aim to be the effective voice of all we represent, to this end we will be looking at our communications strategies and policies in the coming months.
6. With regard to resources we need as many volunteers as possible with a wide range of talents to take up position within the MCI, but we believe MCI can be a stronger organisation with a stronger board.

## **7. Treasurer’s Report**

It gives me great pleasure to present the Mountaineering Council of Ireland’s accounts for the financial year November 2005 – October 2006, as MCI’s finances remain relatively secure, despite the somewhat turbulent year that we have been through. We have ended the year with only a slight surplus but we have emerged a stronger organisation that will be well situated to benefit from the increasing emphasis on participatory sports and the need for strong National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to represent those sports. Our financial reserves remain intact and we can look forward to progressing significantly as a representative body and financially in the coming years, under the stewardship of our new Chief Officer, Stuart Garland.

These continue to be challenging times for the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, as we strive to keep pace with new challenges to our sport and to our organisation, and to continue to be the voice of hillwalkers and climbers in Ireland. It is important that we are financially secure to be able to continue to do this.

The fact that the MCI ended a difficult year on a positive note is a reflection of the excellent work of our paid staff during the year and, of course, the considerable amount of voluntary work contributed by our members. I would like to especially thank Helen Lawless for the huge amount of work that she has put in throughout the year to keep the show on the road, as it were. Helen's contribution, as Development Officer, to the development and success of the MCI over the years has been huge and we should wish her well in her future career. With the arrival of Stuart she has, of course, been able to focus more completely on the work of Access and Conservation Officer. Mike Dagley, who was the Administrator for MCI for 5 years, left in the summer, and we should thank him for the very significant contribution he made to the work of the MCI over his years with us. Terry Canavan, of course, continues to do excellent work as the Accounts Administrator, thankfully largely making me redundant. Her work in keeping our accounts in order, under the guidance of our auditor, Mr. Ken Whitaker, is very important to the MCI's financial well-being, of course.

The post of Members Support Officer unfortunately didn't work out and Robert Murphy left us in April 2006, though, in my opinion, there is still a job to be done in that area, particularly in working with the volunteers to facilitate and support their work. The part-time Youth Development Officer, Stewart Magill, who was based in Tollymore, left in March 2006. He has, as a result of his energy and personal commitment, developed a strong youth programme in the North. Angela Carlin has taken over where he left off and is in what is now a full-time post as MCI's Youth Development and Training Officer. After Mike Dagley left, Mairead Kennedy kindly stood in as a part-time Administrator while we recruited a new Administrator and we are very grateful to her for her assistance. Una Feeney joined the office as Administrator in November 2006 and already seems to be well in control. Staff-wise, of course as you will already be aware, the year ended on a high with the recruitment of our first Chief Officer, Stuart Garland.

**Membership:** MCI's membership fell slightly for the first time in several years and we ended the year with about 9,200 members, down from 9,500 last year. The membership is still about half female and half male. We now have 130 member clubs and in addition have about 1,200 individual members.

**Grants:** The Irish Sports Council's grant was €104,000 this year and was received in January 2006. This was an increase of approximately 15%, largely it seems to counter inflation and to assist us in the transformation that we were undergoing. This grant is a significant contribution to our central costs, while still only being around 20% of our turnover for the year, and we are grateful to the Sports Council for this level of support. We have just received notification of the grant for 2007, which has been significantly increased again by more than 50% to €159,000, to assist in funding the Chief Officer's post. We also received a grant of about £35,000 from the Sports Council of Northern Ireland to support the Youth Development Programme for 05/06. This is a 70% grant which requires matching funding from the MCI.

**Mountain Log:** MCI publishes the Irish Mountain Log itself and it remains one of the main items of expenditure for the Council. However, MCI receives the advertising income from the Log, which offsets a significant part of the costs of this magazine.

**Guide books:** No guidebooks were published this year but there are two in the pipeline and sales of books and guidebooks still contributed to MCI's income during the year. An updated Wicklow guide should be printed soon and work is also underway on updating both the Burren and Mourne guides.

**Lectures:** Overall, the lectures made a significant loss this year. Some of the lectures have had poor attendances. However, it is still seen as important to provide them and we should encourage the membership to support them as much as possible.

**Office:** We paid a rent of over €10,000 this year for our office in Sport HQ and, with our increasing staff, we have had to rent a second office for part of this year, which has increased our rental costs to almost €18,000 in the coming year.

**Youth Development Officer:** The grant from SCNI covers up to 70% of the costs of this programme and MCI has had to provide the balance. However, the programme has been generating income from the courses, etc. it runs and we have been able to include the contributions of the volunteers to offset the matching funding required.

**Staff:** MCI currently has five paid staff. During the year we have been working on their terms and conditions and have now finalised a new staff contract. With our Chief Officer in post, he will obviously be able to develop the staff appraisal system further.

These are some of the main points that I would like to highlight about MCI's accounts for 2006. As you will see, the MCI continues to be in a relatively strong financial position, something that is essential if it is to be able to continue to develop the services it provides for its membership in the coming year and to address any other issues that arise.

#### 8. **Appointment of Auditors**

Whitaker Associates were appointed as Auditors for 2007 / 2008  
*Proposed by Patrick O'Sullivan*

#### 9. **Election to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee**

There are currently six places to fill on the Executive / Board, nominations were requested from the floor.

Joss Lynam nominated **Jane Fenlon** who was seconded by Ross Miller  
Mary Campion nominated **Tomás Alyward** who was seconded by Ruairí Ó Conchúir  
Frank Nugent nominated **Jerry O'Dwyer** who was seconded by Harry O'Brien  
Harry O'Brien nominated **Dawson Stelfox** who was seconded by Frank Nugent  
Kieran McDonald nominated **Vincent McAllinden** who was seconded by Colin Gibbon  
Ross Miller nominated **Ursula McPherson** who was seconded by Ruairí Ó Conchúir  
Ruairí Ó Conchúir nominated **Moira Creedon** who was seconded by Ross Miller

#### 10. **Appointments to organisations**

Simon Stewart pointed out the important role that people play in representing MCI on external organisations. He felt these should be voted upon as to who represents MCI. All agreed it was important to have the right people represent MCI. There should be rigour around their work on behalf of MCI and reports should come back from all representatives.

**11. The following clubs were ratified as new members:**

Northern Ireland Youth Climbing Club  
Pirates of the Karabiners  
Irish Christian Mountaineering Club  
Owen Roe Ramblers  
Rosway Walkers

*Proposed by Ruairí Ó Conchúir and seconded by Ross Miller*

**12. Motions**

Following advice regarding good practice we need to pass the motions to change from an Executive to a board with all members of the board being directors of the MCI

**Brief summary of the changes**

The Executive Committee, Secretary and Treasurer are renamed Board, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer respectively. The timing of the Individual Members' meeting before the AGM is changed from one hour to not less than half an hour. Motions for discussion at the AGM must appear on the agenda. The Board will consist of the President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and 7 ordinary members all of whom will be Directors of the MCI. The Board may co-opt up to three additional members who will become Directors. The Board will at its first meeting elect a Chair from amongst its members. This is a positive statement of an option which already exists. Provision is made for retaining the link between BOS and the Board. The Board must meet at least 7 times each year. A Board member who misses three consecutive meetings may be deemed to have resigned.

**Motion 1**

That the Articles of Association set forth in the printed document produced to this meeting, and for the purposes of identification signed by the Chairman hereof, be approved and adopted as the Articles of Association of the Company, in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the existing Articles of Association, and that the Articles of Association of the Company be altered accordingly. (Executive Committee)

*Proposed by Ruairí Ó Conchúir and seconded by Colin Gibbon, all in favour*

**Motion 2**

That the Sub-Rules set forth in the printed document produced to this meeting, and for the purposes of identification signed by the Chairman hereof, be approved and adopted as the Sub-Rules of the MCI as provided for in Article 28 of the Articles of Association, in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, any existing Sub-Rules. (Executive Committee)

*Proposed by Ruairí Ó Conchúir and seconded by Harry O'Brien, all in favour*

### **Motion 3**

That until the new Articles come into force, the Chairman and the Board should as a matter of policy invite additional members to attend Board Meetings to fulfil the anticipated functions of the additional Board Members envisaged by the new Articles. (Executive Committee).

*Proposed by Harry O'Brien and seconded by Ross Millar, all in favour*

13. DO'K welcomed the new nominees for the Board of Directors and said he would be in contact with selected candidates in the coming weeks.
14. Once again there was much praise expressed for Helen Lawless and all her hard work over the last six years with the MCI, there was a standing ovation for Helen from all present at the AGM.

Joss Lynam added thanks to Una Feeney for her hard work in the officer and her support to C Na T. D'Ok finished off the meeting by thanking everyone for coming to the AGM and again asked people for their continued help and support during the year.

15. The meeting ended.