



**Mountaineering Ireland AGM**  
**Ritz Hotel, Lisdoonvarna**  
**Saturday 05 March 2016**

**Present:** As per attendance list.

The meeting was chaired by Irene Sorohan, Honorary Secretary of the board of Mountaineering Ireland. Irene welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Agenda:**

1. Adoption of Standing Orders
2. Adoption of Minutes of the last AGM
3. President's Address
4. Honorary Secretary's Report
5. Presentation & approval of Financial Statements
6. Appointment of Auditor for 2016
7. Election to membership of Clubs and Associated Organisations
8. Nomination of Representatives to other organisations
9. Motion(s)

**Present:** As per attendance list.

**Adoption of Standing Orders:**

These were proposed by Mick Maunsell and seconded by Alan Tees.

**Adoption of Minutes of the last AGM:**

These were proposed by Ross Millar and seconded by Mike Maunsel

**President's Address:**

I welcome you all to the Mountaineering Ireland Spring Gathering, hosted by Clare Outdoor Club. The Burren itself is reason enough to visit this superb area – your organisation of this event just adds to that, and has added significantly today. My thanks to all involved (speakers Friday night, walk leaders, organisers, everybody including MI staff involved).

The Annual Review 2015 (you should all have a copy) which includes an introduction from our CEO Ruairi Ó Conchúir, and address from Ross Millar, our Chairperson, serves to highlight the breadth and depth of work undertaken by Mountaineering Ireland, including our dedicated staff team, our membership and volunteers, our Board, and others. The Annual review also serves to highlight achievements over the past year, and I think we can take time to acknowledge and celebrate those achievements this weekend.

At this point I acknowledge the significant contribution made by both Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland, who continue to strongly support Mountaineering Ireland's work. I particularly welcome Colin Atkinson from Sport Northern Ireland to this AGM and weekend – our Annual Review I hope demonstrates the significant impact of SNI support to this all island National Governing Body.

Our Annual Review though isn't simply about our achievements. Even a cursory read through will provide awareness of the continued and growing challenges that we, and more particularly our upland areas, face. If some of Mountaineering Ireland core objectives are to be the voice for Ireland's mountains, to protect and encourage responsible use, and to improve and secure ongoing access, then we need always to speak loudly and clearly. I'm proud of our work in this area, largely through our Access and Conservation Committee and our A and C officer on the staff

team. Through them, MI has adopted an approach of inclusion, and of recognising that there are many users of the upland environment, whether for reasons of recreation or livelihood, or increasingly, both.

Over the past four years I have referred at each AGM to the growing numbers using our hills, and the ever growing variety of reasons for being in the hills. One expanding phenomenon has been the increase in mass participation events, whatever their purpose.

While participation is to be welcomed on many levels, our challenge is to ensure continued development of awareness of the need for responsible, sustainable use, and ways to support this. Continued work in building our membership can assist in this, as can continuation of our policy of partnership based approaches.

Responsible mountaineering in all its aspects relies on sound practice and knowledge, and experience, leading to individual competence and confidence. I continue to encourage all members to recognize the value of, and avail of the very sound training provision of MI, whether for personal skills development or leadership capability. Our training provision is currently developed through BOS and the committed work of our Training Officer and staff, delivered by approved providers.

I particularly refer you to a rapidly developing aspect of Mountaineering Ireland's work, that of Talent Development . No matter what your interest in mountaineering, whether hillwalking, rockclimbing, bouldering or Alpine, please do read this section. It is bursting with activity across all age groups. The report highlights significant and very impressive individual achievements at all levels, but importantly it highlights the importance of this path to development of youth mountaineering. It also acknowledges the very hard working support of a truly dedicated group of people, who along with our Talent Development Officer, make this tremendous activity at all levels possible.

This brings me to youth mountaineering in all its facets, and one of the highlights of the past year, the Youth Alpine Initiative. This initiative involved enormous volunteer effort throughout, by some of our most competent and experienced training members. The whole initiative really served to emphasise the importance of our youth members to the future relevance work and indeed success of MI. The initiative for which credit is due to Jane, Dave and all those so ably and generously involved, and of course the young participants themselves, truly was a highlight during my term as President.

Some other highlights (I say some, there have been many) include the Helping the Hills initiative, the role of our members in convincing Government not to sell Coillte harvesting rights, various MI meets – a most important part of MI's programme in supporting members – including Alpine, Spring and Autumn, Winter and Ski meets, all of which gave me great opportunity to meet and connect with members, and to really enjoy being a part of MI. Other highlights include our partnerships developed, most recently with Mountain Views and Irish Girl Guides. These all serve to strengthen MI.

So too does the involvement of volunteer members in international bodies, and the recent appointments of Jack Bergin to the UIAA Access Commission and Mike Maunsell to the UIAA Mountain Protection Commission.

I particularly acknowledge the staff of MI, all of them, Ruairi as CEO, Helen, Jane, Damien, Rozanne, Ruth, Terry in Dublin, Anne in Tollymore, the Get Ireland Walking officers Michelle and Jason, and thank them for all their dedicated hard work. There is no doubt in my mind that all are deeply committed to MI and its work, and I thank you all for that, and for the times I've enjoyed in the mountains with you.

We have many representatives on other bodies – my thanks to all of them for their time and talent.

I extend a big thank you to my fellow Board members. I have worked with them, learnt from them, and spent time in the hills with them. Over the past years the Board has met with many challenges and will continue to do so. Pulling on all skills, and the occasional dollop of humour, they take on everything in the best interests of Mountaineering Ireland and its members.

Some members are stepping down – Una Vejsbjerg, David Batt, Maeve McKeever and Frank Bradley I wish them well and thank them for their significant contribution . I welcome too those that will join the Board, and thank them for making themselves available. Particular thanks to Ross, who is stepping down after four years as Chairperson. The time and commitment that he has given to this pretty much all consuming role is greatly appreciated.

I'm stepping down now as President, and would simply say to all our members that I've had a great time! There is one nomination for my successor, and should he meet with your approval, I know that, just like my predecessor Alan Tees, his contribution to MI will be great.

It just remains for me to say – go forth, enjoy our wonderful upland places, be adventurous, mind yourselves and look after the hills!

### **Honorary Secretary's Report:**

It is the duty of the Honorary Secretary to report on the governance of MI during 2015. There were 7 meetings of the Board of Mountaineering Ireland in 2015. I would like to complement my fellow Board Members for their diligence and time that they have dedicated to MI over the year. As you will see later in this meeting there have been and will be a number of changes to the board during the year. This is a healthy thing. Good governance dictates that there should be a regular turnover of board members to ensure that there is new perspective and energy brought into the board dynamic on a regular basis. Both our Chair & President are stepping down from their roles. I would like to thank them both for their time and dedication to MI over the years. For any of you who are on boards, you will understand the huge time commitment this is – and for the President and Chair this time commitment can be easily double or trebled. For this time and energy commitment over the past 4 years, I would like to thank you both. Also, I would also like to give my thanks to Ruairi, who moved from the board to the position of CEO in June. Ruairi has been a board member for the past 10 years, including 4 years as Chairman, and has given hugely with regard to his time and energy to MI. In addition, 4 other members of our board will be stepping down – David Blatt, Una Vejsbjerg, Maeve McKeever & Frank Bradley. For their time and energy and input I am very grateful.

MI is a company limited by guarantee and is a sporting organisation supported by both the Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland. I wish to report to the Members that all the directors are very focussed & clear about our duties to Mountaineering Ireland. And with that in mind, we are cognisant that we act at all times in the best interest and to the best of our capability with regard to the MI organisation & its members & other stakeholders. Good governance is critical to the sound management and sustainability of the organisation and I believe that governance within Mountaineering Ireland is appropriate. And I believe that the new proposed board members, Chair & President will continue to uphold this focus.

To overview Mountaineering Ireland's broader governance structures during 2015, I wish to report that the last Annual General Meeting / Spring Gathering was held in March 2015 in Westport Coast Hotel, Co. Mayo and it was hosted by the Westport HillWalkers. The Autumn Gathering in 2015 was held in Glendalough and hosted by the Ramblers.

I would further assure the Membership that:

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

The Board has taken full account of the necessary skills base in terms of voluntary Governance and will continue to refine this;

The directors of MI have a very close working relationship with the MI staff, members and other stakeholders and work continuously to improve this

### **Honorary Treasurer's Report and Presentation & Approval of Financial Statements:**

Mountaineering Ireland's Treasurer, Nicky Hore presented the 2015 audited accounts.

He outlined that Mountaineering Ireland's accounts reflect an income of €911, 720 an expenditure of €911, 493 with a surplus of €227. Nicky confirmed that the board were happy with total turnover and reserves. He confirmed that the current reserves at €326, 726 were sound and in line with reserves policy. He also highlighted how the membership fee breakdown and stated that the online membership management system helped support cashflow and is more efficient. He also thanked Terry Canavan for her assistance throughout.

Approval of the financial accounts was proposed by Paul Kellagher and seconded by Ursula MacPherson.

### **Appointment of Auditor for 2016**

David Buggy of Whiteside Cullinan, Chartered Accountants was Mountaineering Ireland's Auditor for 2015. David Buggy was proposed for re-appointment for 2016 by Ross Millar and seconded by Margaret Tees.

### **Election to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland (2016 – 2018)**

**President** – Paul Kellagher

**Honorary Secretary** – Irene Sorohan

**Honorary Treasurer** – Nicky Hore

### **Ordinary Members**

Paul Barron

Ross Millar

Dawson Stelfox

Ursula MacPherson

Francis Hackett

Simon Walsh

Alan Tees

(At the first meeting of the new Board, the following persons were co-opted in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association - Shay Walsh, Chair of BOS, Mike Maunsell, Chair of Access & Conservation Committee and Patrick O'Sullivan, Editor of the Mountain Log.)

### **Election to membership of Clubs and Associated Organisations:**

The following clubs were elected to membership of the organisation. Proposed by Margaret Tess and seconded by Patrick O Sullivan.

- IRD Duhallow Hillwalking Club
- The Feel Good Factor

- Cavan Monaghan Climbing Club
- Cork Climbing Club
- Ballymac-Glanageenty Ramblers
- Galway Climbing Co-Operative
- The N51 Trekkers
- American Womens Club Hillwalkers

### **Nomination of Representatives to other organisations:**

The following persons were approved to represent Mountaineering Ireland on other organisations;

Adventure Sports Framework	Jane Carney
Coillte Social and Environmental Panel (West)	Sinéad Gaughan
Coillte Social and Environmental Panel (North West)	Myles Gallagher
Coillte Social and Environmental Panel (West Munster)	Derry O'Regan
Coillte Social and Environmental Panel (South Central)	Matt Joy
Coillte Social and Environmental Panel (South East Leinster)	Mick Monahan
Coillte Social and Environmental Panel (South Central - Cork)	Pat Lombard
Comhairle Na Tuaithe	Helen Lawless
Dublin Mountains Initiative	Milo Kane & Dermot Keane
FSC Ireland	Peter Norton
Galtee Steering Group	Maureen O'Brien
Irish Adventure Sports Training Trust	Ursula MacPherson
Mountain Rescue Ireland	Jimmy Barry
Irish Uplands Forum	Ruairí Ó Conchúir
Leave No Trace Ireland	Darach Ó Murchú
Leenane Development Association sub-group	Betty Gosling & Patrick O'Leary
MacGillycuddy Reeks Mountain Access Forum	Ian Hassell & James O'Farrell
Mountain Coordination Group (UK and Ireland)	Ursula MacPherson
Mountain Training NI	Dawson Stelfox
Mountain Training UK	Dawson Stelfox
National Committee for Commemorative Plaques in Science and Technology	Kevin Higgins
Northern Ireland Environment Link	Vincent McAlinden
Regulation of Adventure Activities Working Group	Tomás Aylward
Wicklow Mountains National Park Committee	Mairead Kennedy
Wicklow Uplands Council	JimSheehan

### **Motion(s):**

That the delegates approve Mountaineering Ireland's updated Bolting Policy. Proposed by the Board of Mountaineering Ireland. This motion was agreed unanimously.

### **Safeguarding and Anti-Doping Statements**

Ruairi O Conchuir outlined that Mountaineering Ireland is committed to the development and application of best practice and ensuring appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from young participants, officials, coaches, trainers, mentors, parents/guardians and clubs. Mountaineering Ireland's youth policy complements the joint Irish Sports Council & Sport NI Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport.

Ruairi O Conchuir announced James Hale as Mountaineering Ireland's anti-doping officers and confirmed that Mountaineering Ireland fully subscribes to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) procedures and promotes a drug free sport. He added that Mountaineering Ireland is

developing an anti-doping education programme for members of the talent development squad, those competing internationally and as part of coach education.

**End of the Meeting**

Irene Sorohan then closed the meeting and thanked all for attending.