



Updated
2020

Club Handbook

To Support Club Growth & Development
Best Practice & Governance

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Section 1 - Introduction

Introduction

Clubs were the founding members of Mountaineering Ireland in 1971. There are now more than 180 clubs (climbing, hillwalking and mountaineering) throughout the island of Ireland affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland.

From the perspective of Mountaineering Ireland as the National Governing Body for the sport, a club is a group of like-minded people that come together to enjoy walking and climbing in Ireland's uplands, crags and coastlines. The members all share in the club's rewards and responsibilities.

The Mountaineering Ireland office is also at hand to give advice on club development, training, access, conflict or other general queries.

All clubs are different and many have unique qualities and traditions. Mountaineering Ireland affiliated clubs range in size from locally based clubs made up of small gathering of friends to extremely large national clubs with over 700 members. The entry requirements for club also vary considerably. Some are clubs focused on the work place, while others are within universities and 3rd level institutions with a focus on college students. The vast majority of clubs, however, have an open policy membership and draw their membership from a broad cross-section of society usually within the surrounding locality.

The activities member clubs participate in also vary. Some clubs have members who focus on only one aspect of the sport of mountaineering – usually hillwalking. Others undertake the full range of recognised mountaineering activities, rambling at low level, hill walking in summer and/or winter, indoor climbing, rock climbing, winter climbing, scrambling, mountaineering, ski-touring, alpinism and path repair.

Some clubs operate simply as a loose collection of 'friends' meeting up for weekends or even only meeting up occasionally on an ad-hoc basis while others have a highly organised yearly calendar with trips throughout Ireland, Scotland, the Alps and elsewhere. Clubs may also have mid-week meeting points where arrangements for the next weekend or trip are planned and, especially in winter time, slide shows, guest lectures and other social events take place.

While there are a growing number of youth clubs, many clubs in Ireland do not cater for individual children without the active participation of their parents / guardians. Mountaineering Ireland encourages parents to take an active role in their children's participation in the sport. Every individual member of a Mountaineering Ireland affiliated club should show respect and understanding for each member's rights, development, safety and welfare. In the case of under 18s, clubs should ensure that they have adopted and fully comply with Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy.

CEO
Mountaineering Ireland
October 2015

Chairperson
Mountaineering Ireland
October 2015

About Mountaineering Ireland Our Mission

Mountaineering Ireland exists to represent and support the walkers and climbers of Ireland and to be a voice for the sustainable use of Ireland's mountains and hills and all the places (coastline, crags, forests) we use.

Our Vision

For all walkers and climbers to: Enjoy secure and responsible access to those places we use in Ireland;

Have the opportunity to improve their skills, to explore, to be adventurous, and to maximise their potential within our sport.

Our Values

Responsibility - To take personal responsibility for our actions. To foster the development of personal skills within clubs, groups and individuals.

Respect - To respect the wonderful, but fragile, environment that we enjoy and to be a strong voice for its protection.

Partnership - To recognise that relationships and trust are vital within our activities and in helping realise to our vision.

Recreation and well-being. To recognise and promote the contribution our sport makes to the physical and mental health of participants.

Strategic Objectives

1. To represent the interests of walkers and climbers.
2. To be a voice for Ireland's mountains; to protect and encourage responsible and sustainable use of the mountain environment.
3. To improve and secure ongoing access to those places we use in Ireland.
4. To maintain high standards in mountain training and support skills development.
5. To support and promote the participation of all age groups, especially youth, in every aspect of mountaineering.
6. To provide a talent development pathway to high performance.
7. To promote a spirit of adventure and self-reliance.

Each of these Objectives has been assigned key actions, which in turn have been assigned to those deemed most relevant to take responsibility for making them happen. A timeline and associated performance indicators have also been included. Please refer to Mountaineering Ireland's Annual review a more in-depth look at the implementation of our current strategic plan (2014 to 2017).



Section 2 – Club Governance

The Club Constitution

A Club constitution is the primary document of the club. It should clearly set out the club objectives and procedures and be agreed by the members (see Appendix 1).

The club constitution provides a framework within which a club can be operated and managed by the Committee. The Constitution should detail how the activities of the club are conducted such as membership, formation of the committee and sub committees, club property, general meetings, etc.

A club can amend its constitution as it sees fit and as the club evolves over time, but these must be passed by way of a motion(s) at a General Meeting (Annual or Extraordinary). When a club updates their constitution they should forward a copy to Mountaineering Ireland.

General Meetings

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is the most important meeting of the year. The Secretary plays a vital role in organising a successful Club AGM. The Secretary should be familiar with the rules governing the setting up and conducting of the AGM. See sample Agenda (Appendix 4)

Planning your Club's Future

All clubs should plan ahead for the future. It is useful to map out a structured approach to developing a plan. Getting your membership involved from the outset is critical and Clubs should invite all members to attend a planning session to discuss all aspects of the club's activities.

Appendix 1 provides a template for a club plan and further resources and advice are available on www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs

Ingredients and Principles for an Effective Committee

Governance

How a club is run or governed will largely determine how successful it becomes. 'Governance' refers to how a club is run, directed and controlled. Good governance means a club will put in place policies and procedures that will make sure the club runs effectively.

But good governance is not about rules, it is a commitment to understand and operate by a set of sound principles and behaviours. It is about the culture of the club and the behaviour of those on the club committee.

The Governance Code (www.governancecode.ie), now recognised as the code of practice for the community, voluntary and charities sector, provides a framework that clubs can use to support their governance journey. Mountaineering Ireland affiliated clubs are categorised as Type A organisations.

Club Culture and Volunteering

Every club has its own culture. Club culture effectively is the way we behave and expect others to behave, conduct themselves and how we respond to others. Culture is a determining factor in the cohesion, the commitment and loyalty members have for the club.

Everyone comes from different backgrounds, families and traditions. Having a shared culture in the club gives a sense of unity and understanding towards one another, promoting better communication, better friendship and greater trust. It promotes equality by ensuring each member is treated equally.

If members see themselves as part of the club's culture, they are more eager to want to contribute to its success. They feel a higher sense of accomplishment for being a part of a club they care about and work harder without having to be coerced – they will be great volunteers!

Supporting volunteers is important to help them understand and feel comfortable in their role. Simple role descriptions will help greatly. Role descriptions will help to break down myths about the role, the time commitment expected, the training needed, etc. Also, a buddy system for new volunteers will help to pass on lots of experience from long standing experienced members.

The role descriptions below may be of assistance for your Club, however, Clubs should make it work for them, but be mindful that the key responsibilities and tasks are not forgotten about.

Recruiting Committee Members

Joining a committee can be the last thing that a club member wants to do, after all, getting into the mountains is about getting away from structures! Therefore, it is really important to provide people with the information of what it is they would be expected to do, how much time it might involve and an assurance that others will help them too.

It is always important to have an eye on the future and try to plan for succession. Some members will stand out as having a really good set of skills to take on a role in the future. Gently 'targeting' them about how the committee functions and the responsibilities of the role they might be considered for, would help to do away with some of the barriers when they are finally approached.

No matter who joins a committee it is important that they are inducted. That they have a reasonable understanding of what the club is about, its history, any policies and decisions that will have a consequence or need to be considered in the future. Having a set of minutes and any other reports available will help to bring new members up to speed.

All committee members must be able to appreciate that they are on the committee for the good of the club in its entirety, not to 'fight' for their corner, their grouping, etc.

Skills and Commitment

Depending on the size and scale of the club there will be different skills required. It is important for committees to reflect and evaluate if and what the skill gap(s) is and if it can be compensated for by co-option or by planning for the future.

The following skills / competencies might be beneficial for your club;

- An ability to chair meetings
- Good budgetary awareness
- Knowledge of good governance
- Leadership
- Administrative skills
- Planning skills

Club Accounts / Financial Management

Club's should ensure that there are appropriate internal financial and management controls in place to provide appropriate lines within which money is received, lodged, retained in cash and expended. It is important that income and expenditure is monitored by the Committee against the budget on a regular basis.

There should always be a yearly report of income and expenditure presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting.

Every club should consider how they are managing and recording the following:

- Money in / out
- Cash
- Online payments
- Bank account / other accounts
- Reporting
- Audit

Dealing with Conflicts of interest

No matter how big or small an organization or club is, there is always the potential for a 'conflict of interest' to arise. Declaring a conflict of interest means, you admit that you may have a financial or other personal interest in a decision going a particular way.

Consider how you would behave in the following scenario?

'An item needs to be purchased and I (or my family / best friend) will be the supplier'

- Paddy: 'I will say nothing and I will give them the nod!'

- Patricia: ‘I will make sure to tell them that I have an interest in this and offer to leave the room while this item is being discussed. I will ask the Secretary to record it in the register of conflicts.’

Obviously, Patricia did the right thing. Acknowledging a conflict, no matter how minor it may seem, may help avoid disagreements in the future. It also helps to foster an honest and positive relationship between committee members.

Collective Decision Making – ‘everyone is in it together’

Most committees base their decision making process on an informed consensus.

Consider how you would behave in the following scenario?

‘A decision needs to be made but I don’t want to put my name to it’

- Paddy: ‘I will, send my apologies, avoid the meeting and blame others if anyone asks and make sure I tell them I wasn’t at that meeting!’
- Patricia: ‘I mightn’t fully agree with the outcome but I will row in behind it now.’

Here, Patricia does the right thing. All committee members share equal responsibility for the decisions made by the committee. Once the committee makes a decision all members of that committee are expected to stand by the committee’s decision – this is collective decision making.

Role Descriptions

It is important that every volunteer knows what is expected of them. This small detail can be empowering for a volunteer giving them a sense of purpose and a full understanding of what is expected and the breadth of their role.

A role description should be written simply, reflective of the actual role and realistic.

The Committee - Role Descriptions

Some clubs have many people on their committee; others have a few doing many things. It is best practice to have a full complement to share the workload, burden and success of the committee’s efforts.

Chairperson

The Chairperson is the chair of the Club Committee but the role stretches beyond chairing committee meetings. The Chairperson should have an overall view of the ambitions of the club. The Chairperson is generally the public face of the club and should understand the club’s constitution, its’ aims, policies and ambitions and financial situation.

When it comes to committee meetings, the Chairperson is responsible for the overall planning and running of the meeting and so encourages full participation from all committee members and ensures all topics for discussion are covered and appropriately recorded.

Club Children's Officer

The Club Children's Officer creates a child centred ethos within a club ensuring young people have a voice in the running of their club. The CCO name and contact details must be easily and clearly available for all members.

At least one Club Children's Officer is required in each club, two are recommended for clubs with large junior memberships where one CCO may not be able to engage with all the young people. Where the junior members are of mixed gender it is recommended that a CCO of each gender is appointed.

Club Treasurer

The Club Treasurer is the person with responsibility for the financial affairs of the club. Any person with responsibility for club money has a duty to account for it responsibly and ensure that transactions are transparent and legitimate. The Club Treasurer is responsible for the income and expenditure of the club. It is critical that the Treasurer leads any budgetary planning and is always in a position to inform the committee on the state of finances.

It is equally important that other club members who might have a delegated responsibility for organizing, for example, an event, work within the budget set. A Treasurer's job can become unmanageable if others do not support their efforts.

Club Secretary

The Secretary is the chief administrator in the Club. The Club Secretary should be a good organiser, be well organized themselves and be reliable. The duties dovetail with those of the Chairperson and it is essential that both officers work as a team of which the Secretary will very often be the more active person. The main duties of the Club Secretary are summarised as follows:

- Communication between the committee members, with Club members and with Mountaineering Ireland
- Meetings
 - Preparation for and follow up on assigned tasks
 - Accurate recording of meeting minutes
 - Notifying Club members of the Annual General Meeting
- Administration:
 - Correspondence and keeping records
 - Any insurance matters, reporting of incidents

Club Administrator/Membership Secretary

The Club Administrator is generally the Club Secretary or a Membership Secretary. Their primary role is to manage membership renewals and new members, including collecting affiliation fees, updating the online membership management system and forwarding affiliation fees to Mountaineering Ireland. The secretary is also a point of contact for Mountaineering Ireland's Hillwalking Development Officer.

Club Training Officer

Club Training Officers tend to have one of two roles. They are either a coordinator of the upskilling of the club's membership, whereby they develop a training plan / schedule and bring in experienced club members or use external course providers to deliver this training. In scenario two, the Club Training Officer delivers training to members. Club Training Officer Workshops are provided by Mountaineering Ireland annually. The point of contact for Club Training Officers in Mountaineering Ireland is the Training Officer.

Club Environmental Officer

The Club Environmental Officer should be a champion for the mountain environment and a point of contact for Mountaineering Ireland's Access and Conservation Officer. Club Environmental Officers are not expected to be environmental experts. Their responsibilities might include:

- enthusing others about the environment, chatting with people about how we reduce our impact on the uplands, introducing the idea of Leave No Trace etc.;
- ensuring that conservation and environmental considerations are taken in to account in the planning of club events;
- arranging an annual club litter-pick, a day with Mountain Meitheal or similar events;
- arranging a guest speaker to give a talk on some aspect of the upland environment;
- liaising with Mountaineering Ireland regarding any access or conservation issues that arise in the areas where you do your activities.

Public Relations Officer

The main function of the PRO is to communicate with and present a positive image to the general public on behalf of the club. The Club PRO uses various forms of communication such as the club website, newsletters and local radio to keep members informed and publicise the club to the general public.

Other roles

President

The President is often an honorary member with an important presence in the club. In some clubs the President acts as the Chairperson.

Activity / Meet / Hike Coordinator

Many clubs have a committee member(s) responsible for scheduling activities, meets and events.

Equipment Officer

Clubs that have their own equipment should appoint an Equipment Officer. They should be responsible for the management of equipment and, especially, accounting for its state of use. See Appendix 2 for guidance on equipment.

Committee Meetings

A Club should hold regular committee meetings. The Secretary usually calls a meeting, having consulted with the Chairperson.

Agenda and Conduct

There should always be an agenda for a meeting. It can be beneficial to address agenda items by ‘items for discussion’ and ‘items for decision’. See sample Agenda (Appendix 4). At the first Club meeting of the year, the committee should agree to a schedule of meetings for the year.

The Secretary should prepare any supporting papers / information that may be needed and should also check back on the minutes of the last meeting to see that action has been taken as required.

The item ‘Matters Arising from the Minutes’ is intended to report on progress on minor matters. Matters of importance should form separate items on the agenda.

It is important to work to the agenda and avoid too much informal discussion. Meetings should not drag on, the Chairperson should manage the agenda so enough time is available for each agenda item and that everything is dealt with. Meetings should start and also close formally so that everyone, including the Secretary, is quite clear when the ‘business’ is concluded.

Meeting Minutes

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to record the minutes of a meeting. Minutes are the written record of the business at a meeting and specifically record the date of the meeting, those present, apologies, the main points in the discussions held and any decisions taken. The minutes should always record the proposer and seconder of a motion and the subsequent outcome.

Writing of the minutes should be done as soon as possible after the meeting. Do not try to write everything down, but note the main points of the discussion and the decisions taken. If in doubt about decisions during the meeting, always seek clarification.

Approval of Minutes

At each meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting should be reflected upon and agreed as being accurate (amendments made if necessary), proposed and adopted.

After the Meeting

The Secretary plays a key role in ensuring that the decisions taken at the meeting are followed up, especially the tasks assigned to themselves. This ensures that progress is made from meeting to meeting.



Section 3 – Membership Management

Membership Management

Membership of Mountaineering Ireland includes members of clubs affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland, those who join as individual members and associate organisations. Mountaineering Ireland's membership fee includes three components; affiliation fee, insurance and the Irish Mountain Log postage. Mountaineering Ireland's club year runs from 01 November to 31 October annually.

All renewals / new members must be administered online on the Membership Management System. This is the responsibility of the Club Administrator. It is up to the club to inform Mountaineering Ireland of who the Club Administrator is in order to provide them with access to the club records. The Membership Administrator is very often the Club Secretary though some clubs have a specific Membership Secretary / Administrator role. Visit www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs for more details, video tutorials and to log on.

Existing Club Members

November is the primary renewal month, however, Clubs can begin the renewal process online from the 1st of September. The club's Secretary will then receive membership cards for all renewed members. It is the responsibility of the Club Administrator to distribute the cards and to ensure all information on the system is accurate.

New Club Members

Clubs can also add new members from 1st September. In this case a new member can benefit from membership for up to 14 months in their first year of membership. Therefore a new member added online during September or October will enjoy membership of Mountaineering Ireland from the 1st of September (or the date after the 1st of September when they pay their fees to the club) until 31st October the following year.

Associate Members

Members of other Mountaineering Ireland clubs may wish to join other clubs as associate members which can be arranged by way of a reduced fee to the club. Provided the person is already a paid full member of another club, associate members can be added with no additional charge from Mountaineering Ireland. Clubs should link associate members through the online system.

Recruiting New Members

Every club needs to attract new members if it is to sustain itself. Recruiting new members is not that different from recruiting employees, you need to let people know you want new members, tell them what the club is like, tell them how they will be inducted into the club, how they will develop their skills, etc.

The timing of this campaign is important. It can be beneficial to have an annual routine for recruitment, when existing members can support the recruitment drive and induction of new members for example set up introduction to climbing or hiking. Mountaineering Ireland will also advertise club open days through their website and social media on request.

Why Prompt Renewals are Important?

It is important that clubs have good procedures for membership renewals. Prompt renewals will make the workload of the Club Administrator much easier if fees are paid when requested.

What to do when a member refuses to pay their membership fees?

While there can be reasons why someone may not be able to pay a membership fee and while a club could decide to sponsor someone's fees, in general when a person consistently refuses to pay the membership fee they are choosing not to contribute to and support the club. They are also choosing not to share in the responsibilities of the club. The club should agree a process for formally dealing with this situation. Once the committee has agreed and membership has not been received, the club should inform the person that they are no longer a member and are not welcome at club events, etc.

Membership Benefits

As a Mountaineering Ireland affiliated club you can access a range of benefits, including:-

- The Irish Mountain Log, delivered by post to your home address;
- Discounts in all good outdoor shops and a variety of other related retailers;
- Civil Liability and Limited Personal Accident cover insurance policy;
- A personalised membership card;
- A committed staff team to provide advice and information;
- Access to training schemes and awards for hillwalkers and climbers;
- Access to Mountaineering Ireland Training Grant schemes;
- A channel for your access, environmental and other concerns;
- Annual Summer Alpine and Winter Meets, which include training courses and workshops for all;
- Spring and Autumn Gatherings that include member forums;
- Access to the vast Mountaineering Library Collection;
- Expedition grants and advice;
- Skills and environmental workshops;
- Annual indoor climbing competitions;
- Eligibility for UIAA Reciprocal Rights stamps to Alpine Huts;
- Access to Travel & Activity insurance for walking and climbing trips abroad;

Club Insurance

Mountaineering Ireland's clubs (except for a couple of clubs that historically have their own cover), club members and individual members are insured for public liability (€13,000,000) and limited personal accident cover.

Cover under Mountaineering Ireland's Insurance Scheme provides for:

- Clubs' activities; these activities are noted as mountaineering, hillwalking, climbing, walking, bouldering, scrambling, path repair and maintenance, alpinism, ski mountaineering, ski touring,

coasteering, canyoning, kayaking, mountain biking. Please note, the use of kayaks and mountain bikes is restricted to the incidental use when they are used to enable a member to reach a particular starting point or route. If you wish to discuss this aspect of the insurance cover please contact the Mountaineering Ireland office.

- Training that includes formal training, consolidation and assessment in the case of awards, coaching, instruction.
- Participation in meets, gatherings, competitions.
- Attendance by club officials, instructors, leaders, teams and members in external meets and competitions sanctioned by the club and / or Mountaineering Ireland; or
- whilst representing the club, in the participation of the sport or activity; or
- in the necessary administration and running of the club; and club publications, website and social media channels
- in path repair and maintenance with hand held tools.
- Club arranged presentation ceremonies, social events; or
- while representing the club at such events arranged or organised by third parties.

Types of cover

Public Liability

This policy protects you for legal liability following injury or damage to third party property or persons arising in connection with your club activities. All club members are covered while participating in any of the above activities on a worldwide basis either on a club activity or on an individual activity. The public liability cover protects landowners against claims arising from the negligence of our members; it does not cover the landowner's negligence or protect the landowner against claims from walkers and climbers who are not members of Mountaineering Ireland. Public Liability also provides cover for;

- Professional Indemnity, which protects (for example) the role of leaders and coaches in the event of a loss occurring to another.
- Libel and Slander Protection, which protects the club and its Officers in the event of being sued for unintentional libel/slander, e.g. emails, bulletins, website
- Directors' and Officers' Protection: This covers club officers / members of committees in their capacity as decision makers on club business.

Cover is also provided specifically for:

- Legal Defence Costs (€250,000)
- Child Welfare, Protection and Vulnerable Adults Cover

Permanent Injury Personal Accident Cover

Personal Accident cover provides members with a fixed benefit if you are unfortunate enough to suffer a permanent injury while engaged in one of the activities covered by our policy. Cover is provided for:

1. Death € 10,000 Death Under 18 €2,000
2. Loss of Limbs (two or more), Loss of Sight in both eyes, Loss of Speech and/or Loss of Hearing in both Ears €75, 000
3. Loss of Hearing in one ear/loss of sight in one eye/loss of one limb: €18,750
4. Loss of Limb and loss of sight €56, 250
5. Permanent Total Disablement*: €75, 000
6. Medical Expenses sustained in 3 or 4: €5, 000
7. Emergency Dental: €750

* There is no longer an upper age limit on the personal accident cover.

Insurance for New members

New members in your club are insured from the time they pay their subscription. A receipt should be issued to the new member. The Club Administrator can then add new members via the online management system.

Affiliation fees should be paid online or forwarded to Mountaineering Ireland within 1 month.

Guests - Club's Insurance

Guests are welcome to participate and are covered under the insurance for a maximum of 3 “taster” sessions / walks / climbs (subject to each club's own policy). A register of guests must be maintained by the club (see Appendix 3). If they wish to carry on they must join the club.

Inherent Risk

Everyone should be reminded that our activities can be dangerous and may result in personal injury or death. All members/non-members should be aware of and accept these risks.

Non-members have no entitlement to and do not benefit from any insurance cover.

Reporting Incidents / Accidents

Any incident / accident should be reported as soon as possible but must be submitted within 30 days. All incidents involving injury or damage to a member or a third party must be immediately reported to Mountaineering Ireland and the insurance brokers. (See sample incident report Appendix 7)

To submit an incident / accident report, please email info@mountaineering.ie.

Other Recommendations

Please note that Mountaineering Ireland's Insurance is not Travel Insurance. While it covers activities abroad it does not cover search and rescue, baggage loss, cancellations etc.

We recommend members take out the following:

- European Health Insurance Card (EHIC, formerly E111) - this is free and provides you with necessary healthcare while on a temporary stay in all the countries of the European Economic Area, and in one other country, Switzerland. The European Economic Area includes the 25 member states of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
- Travel and Activity Insurance - Mountaineering Ireland members benefit from access to an appropriate Travel and Activity Insurance Scheme. For instant quotes go to: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/insurance/>.

Exclusions

The following exclusions apply;

- Commercial activity and professional guiding
- Personal Accident claims arising from sickness/illness (as opposed to accidental injury which is insured), HIV, drugs, etc.
- Exclusions under the Public Liability cover include any accident involving a motor vehicle, injury to employees and the usual war and nuclear clauses.

Please note, the above insurance section is only an overview of Mountaineering Ireland insurance scheme and is subject to updates and amendments from time to time.

Communicating with Members

Good communication is an essential component of running an effective club and clubs should have a clear process of communicating with all members.

Modern technology provides many options to send easy, cost effective mass communications quickly. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of communication by all members. Emails and texts can be easily misinterpreted (emails don't have a tone) and if there is any chance that this could occur, it may be advisable to phone or meet up. Where an email or text message is received that makes you feel uncomfortable, the best course of action is to speak to the sender and resolve the situation.

Clubs have a variety of communication options available and they should consider the most appropriate methods that cater for young and older members. Such options are:

- Newsletters (hard copy or sent by e-mail)
- Noticeboards (at meeting points, climbing walls, etc.)
- Email and instant messaging
- Phone/mobile phone, especially the use of group text
- Internet and websites including social media sites

Public Relations

Building good relationships with local radio, local papers or simply the local parish newsletter can be an effective way of bringing other like-minded people into your club, re-connecting with former members or give you an opportunity to address local issues that might be of concern to the club.

Club Events – Planning and Promotion

Many clubs host various types of events from challenge walks to climbing meets. Well planned and well managed outdoor activity events are enjoyable for participants, make a positive contribution to the rural economy and have minimal adverse impact on the natural environment, heritage features, other land users and local residents. Mountaineering Ireland has developed guidelines to help clubs host post and well organised events.

Mountaineering Ireland publishes events in the Irish Mountain Log and online that are organised by affiliated clubs (where the club is named on event publicity and information is supplied by the club) and Mountain Rescue teams. The Club or Mountain Rescue team must complete a commitment statement that their event will be planned and managed in accordance with the Mountaineering Ireland Events Policy.

It is the club organising the event that decides, based on its own planning and management of the event, whether it should or can be promoted by Mountaineering Ireland or not.

See www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/Events for full details, event policy and commitment statement.

When things go wrong – dealing with complaints

Mountaineering Ireland clubs are generally harmonious groups of like-minded people that share a passion for their sport and recreation. Many might even say, 'what could ever go wrong?' However, occasionally things do go wrong. Dealing with a complaint can be very uncomfortable and challenging.

Whatever the situation, when things go wrong it is important that everyone is treated with respect, dealt with fairly, treated with natural justice and has the right to reply.

Mountaineering Ireland has a complaints process that provides clubs with a template for addressing such issues within a club. Should your club committee be faced with such a situation, Mountaineering Ireland can provide support and advice. Clubs should also attend Club focused workshops at Mountaineering Ireland's Spring and Autumn Gatherings. These workshops aim to support good committees and good club governance.

Any complaint relating to children, the misuse of drugs, sexual misconduct or any other matter(s) considered to be of a serious nature must be reported to the appropriate authorities. (See Mountaineering Ireland Safeguarding Policy).

For more details and to read Mountaineering Ireland's Complaints Policy and Procedures, visit the '*When things go wrong*' page on www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs.

‘Active Participation’ or being ‘Led’

Many clubs arrange trips where the walks themselves are organised and graded as to their ‘difficulty’. Leaders are assigned to each walk and participants need only turn up with suitable outdoor gear and they can be led along an interesting walk. Regardless of this everyone should be encouraged to develop their own skills and, critically, they are still required to take full responsibility for themselves and their decisions. Leaders may not be any more experienced than the others and in some cases others may be more experienced than leaders – shared responsibility.

Other hillwalking clubs and virtually all mountaineering / climbing clubs, do not operate principally as led groups. Instead they act as facilitators for their members to get to their chosen walk or climb. They may organise transport and accommodation, and may suggest possible daytime excursions, but leave the decisions about the day’s objectives to the individuals. More experienced members of the club who are willing to take beginners out will do so as part of the day, but it may be less formal than in leader-operated clubs. Such clubs expect beginners to learn from their members how to become self-reliant and be able to take responsibility to make their own plans and decisions on the hill in the future.

Skills and Training Opportunities – Making it more enjoyable!

Encouraging all members to be able to manage themselves in the mountains is at the core of Mountaineering Ireland. Navigation and route finding is the fundamental skills of our sport and it is easily learnt.

Clubs should encourage members to upskill and become self-sufficient in the mountains. Putting in place a Training Plan for new members is the key to having such a practice embedded in the club.

There is a series of skills video available on the website and Mountaineering Ireland YouTube. For training plan ideas and support, contact Mountaineering Ireland at: training@mountaineering.ie .

Training Grants

There are training grants available through Mountaineering Ireland and we encourage all clubs new and longstanding to avail of them. The grant supports participation in various training schemes (Lowland Leader, Mountain Skills, Walking Group Leader, Mountain Leader, Single Pitch Award, Multi-Pitch Award, etc). For further information and requirements go to:

<http://www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/TrainingGrants/>

Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults

Mountaineering Ireland aims to promote and foster the sport of mountaineering in all its forms for young and vulnerable people. Mountaineering Ireland recognises the benefits to young people participating in sport. Walking and climbing offer the benefit of active participation for life. Our sport also has positive benefits for physical and mental well-being.

Similar to all adventure sports, mountaineering is a sport with risks. It can be dangerous and participation may result in personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement. Where under 18s are participating, it is critical that parents explicitly give informed consent for their children to participate. Where consent has not been given it is the club's responsibility to ensure that an under 18 will not be allowed to continue until consent has been provided.

Every individual in Mountaineering Ireland should show respect and understanding for each member's rights, development, safety and welfare by conducting themselves in accordance with the ethos and principles of Mountaineering Ireland and its Safeguarding Policy.

Some adults may be more vulnerable than others, for example an adult with a disability or learning difficulties may have a different understanding of danger, risk or even instructions being given. Adults with previous negative experiences will also be vulnerable. Adults in a leader role should ensure that they understand how to keep such vulnerable adults safe and free from harm. Teaching and training can be provided in accordance with the recommendations given in the Instructor training programmes. Inclusion in Mountaineering Ireland activities for vulnerable children and adults is guided by education and recommendations within Leader and Coach training – see the Mountaineering Ireland website for details.

All adults involved in Mountaineering Ireland should be aware of their responsibility and obligations in protecting and promoting the welfare of children, young and vulnerable people involved in the sport to enable safe participation for fun and in the spirit of fair play. We encourage an open environment where children feel free to speak out about their concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns taken seriously. This is a key pillar in our policy of safeguarding children.

All clubs with members under 18 years of age must adopt Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy and comply with all requirements.

Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy can be found in full and summarized on the youth pages of the website: www.mountaineering.ie/Youth.

Club Designated Person

The Club Designated Person is usually the Club Chairperson but otherwise must be an appointed committee member of the club. The Club Designated Person is an essential role responsible for liaising with statutory authorities in the case of suspected or disclosed abuse. The role of the Club Designated Person also provides support to the Club Children's Officer and helps link the Club Children's Officer with the committee.



Section 4 – List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sample Club Constitution

The following is an OUTLINE CONSTITUTION which can be used in forming a mountaineering club. Italics have been used to indicate options that should be decided before finalising the constitution. Additionally clubs that are organised within a student union or company may have to include clauses that are specified by the union or employer.

1. Name

1.1 The name of the Club shall be _____ Hereinafter referred to as the Club.

2. Objectives of the club

2.1 To facilitate and increase the enjoyment of mountaineering activities by members of the Club.

2.2 To act as the collective voice of Club members.

2.3 To assist in the work of the Mountaineering Ireland aimed at maintaining access to, conservation of and protection of the cliff and mountain environment.

2.4 To encourage club members to train to be capable of ensuring their own safety in the mountain environment.

2.5 To make information on responsible use of the mountain environment available to club members

2.6 To promote the Mountaineering Ireland's Children Policy, and the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children, with the club.

3. Membership of the club

3.1 Membership of the Club shall only be open to _____ (*use this clause only if members must be members of a particular college, employees of a firm etc., nominated by existing Club members, etc.*) hereinafter referred to as the _____.

3.2 Membership of the Club shall only be open to individuals who recognise that Hill walking and Climbing are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Members shall be aware of and accept these risks and agree to be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

3.3 Club Membership is open to minors who provide written consent to their membership from their parents or guardians.

4. Management of the club

4.1 The club will be controlled by its members acting in General Meeting. One of these meetings will be the Annual General Meeting at which Officers of the Club will be elected.

4.2 Management of the Club between General Meetings shall be entrusted to the elected committee, who must act in accordance with the Constitution and the Rules of the Club. They may make

decisions on matters not covered by Constitution or Rules but these must be approved by the next General Meeting.

5. Officers of the club

5.1 The Officers of the Club shall be elected by the members at an Annual General Meeting and shall be the President/Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer (*other officers might include Environmental Officer, Training Officer, Equipment Officer, Children's Officer etc.*).

5.3 Officers are eligible to serve a term of two years on the club committee. After a term of two years Officers must step down. If an Officer wishes they may seek re-election to either the same role or another role on the Committee but they may only hold the same office for no more than two consecutive terms. (*or another suitable term*).

6. Committee of the club

6.1 The President/Chair of the Club will normally preside at and chair all meetings of the Committee and General Meetings of the Club and shall be responsible for reporting to the Membership at the Club's AGM.

6.2 The Committee shall be composed of the Officers of the Club (*plus a number of members without a specific role if desired by the Membership*).

6.3 The Committee shall nominate representatives of the Club to attend Mountaineering Ireland General meetings to represent the views of the Membership and vote on behalf of the Club.

6.4 The Club Secretary shall be responsible for all correspondence relating to Club affairs and for giving notice of General and/or Committee meetings, and the writing and distribution of minutes from those meetings. The Secretary shall give, at least 30 clear days notice of such a meeting and its agenda. Items for inclusion should be submitted at least 15 days prior to the AGM and communicated to the members at least 7 days before the AGM. (These time limits should be adjusted depending on the size and complexity of the Club and will be different for General and Committee meetings)

The Secretary shall collect subscriptions, keep records of the Membership of the Club and report the details of members to Mountaineering Ireland as required.

(in a bigger club this job may be given to a specific officer)

6.5 The Treasurer shall collect subscriptions and account for all income and expenditure of the Club. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the payment of membership subscriptions to Mountaineering Ireland.

6.6 The Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional non-voting members.

6.7 A quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be half of the elected voting members rounded up to the next whole number. The Committee shall hold at least four (*or another suitable number*) meetings each year.

7. Club subscriptions

7.1 A General meeting shall have the power to set membership subscription levels for the Club

8. Rules of the club

8.1 A General meeting shall have the power to set Club rules. Such rules shall be in accordance with the articles of the Club's Constitution and the policies of Mountaineering Ireland.

(Such rules might include for example: Club Members shall sign for club equipment that they undertake to use entirely at their own risk minors should always be accompanied by a parent or guardian on hikes etc)

8.2 Any paid up member of the club is entitled to vote at General meetings.

8.3 Votes will be decided on a show of hands basis.

9. Amendments to the constitution of the club

9.1 This Constitution may be amended by a two thirds majority of those present and voting at a General Meeting. Notice of any proposed amendment must be delivered (*see 6.4 above*)

9.2 The Club rules may be amended by a simple majority of those present and voting at a General Meeting. Notice of any proposed amendment must be delivered. (*see 6.4 above*)

10. Dissolution of the club

10.1 The Club can be dissolved by two thirds majority vote carried out in accordance with Article 9 whereupon the Committee will arrange to discharge any assets equally amongst the Members (*or donated to Charity, Mountaineering Ireland Environmental Defence Fund, Mountain Rescue etc.*). Any liabilities at the time of dissolution shall be the joint responsibility of all Members.

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Appendix 2 – Club Plan Template

This is simply a guide on how a Club could structure its Club plan. The process to develop the plan will be as important as the final plan. It is important that all members feel part of the plan and have the opportunity to feed into it.

1. Chairman’s Address
2. History of the Club and Club Values
3. Focus Area 1: Club Membership, Structures and Administration
4. Focus Area 2: Developing Members’ Personal Skills, Being Adventurous and Coach Development
5. Focus Area 3: Governance, Recruitment and Safeguarding
6. Focus Area 4: Finance and Fundraising
7. Focus Area 5: Communication and Public Relations
8. Action Plan (Year 1 – 5)

Appendix 3 – Club Members and Guest Activity List

Hill walking, climbing and rambling are activities that can be challenging and may result in personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Petrol Contribution: Burren €5 : Galtees €10 : Kerry/Galway/ Mayo €15

Date / /	Walk:	Leaders:
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	Name	Mobile No	I.C.E. No.	Club Member
1.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
8.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
9.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
10.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
11.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
12.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
13.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
14.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
15.				Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 4 – AGM Agenda

1. Matters arising from the minutes
2. President's address
3. Committee Officers Address
 - Chairperson
 - Secretary/Club Administrator
 - Treasurer
 - Club Children's Officer
 - Public Relations Officer
 - Training Officer
 - Environmental Officer
4. Approval of Auditors Report
5. Election to the committee for the following club year
6. Motions
7. Any other business

Appendix 5 – Managing Equipment

Take Care

It is important to take good care of all equipment. Depending on how it is used a rope, for example, can last many years. Heavy use can reduce the lifetime to months or even weeks, whilst poor treatment or misuse can require immediate retirement of a rope.

For more information on caring and maintaining equipment see:

www.mountaineering.ie/Climbing/Gear/TechnicalAdviceBooklets

Recording Equipment State

It is important to maintain a record of equipment, especially when it is likely to be used by multiple people. In such cases a Club Equipment Officer should be appointed with responsibility for maintaining a register of all club-owned equipment, date of purchase, any falls taken on it / incidents reported, equipment checks and maintenance. There are many ways of maintaining this record but using an online system may provide opportunities for sharing, editing and awareness.

Equipment Standards

Almost all climbing hardware is categorised under the European Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Directive. This applies to all equipment carried on the person to be used for protecting against falls from a height (ie. harnesses, ropes, nuts, karabiners etc.), or to protect against slippage (crampons & ice axe) or head protection (helmets). To be allowed to sell an item of PPE in Europe, a manufacturer must go to an independent ‘notified body’ and have their equipment tested against an appropriate standard and their quality control procedures verified. Once approval is given, the equipment can carry the CE mark and go on sale.

Prior to 1995, the international standards to which some equipment (mostly ropes and helmets) was manufactured were those published by the UIAA* Safety Commission. Manufacturers could effectively choose whether to manufacture to the UIAA standard, and whether to apply for a UIAA label for their equipment. However, since 1 July 1995 manufacturers have been required by law to meet the requirements of the PPE Directive. The easiest way to do this is to meet the requirements of the EN standards for mountaineering equipment produced by Working Group 5 of CEN/TC 136.

Much of the active input into Working Group 5 came from members of the UIAA Safety Commission, and as a result the EN standards are largely based on the old UIAA standards, but are more rigorous with considerable revision and update. Since the publication of the EN standards, the UIAA Safety Commission has revised its own standards to be based on the new EN standards, but with a few additional requirements.

Although the PPE Directive came into force in 1995, work on the EN standards has progressed at a somewhat variable pace. Most, but not all, of the standards have now been completed and published.

Appendix 6 – Equipment Log Example

Clubs should maintain an up to date equipment log. New equipment purchased during the year should be added and any equipment considered obsolete be removed. This should also include:

Equipment Log Book					
Item		Description		Date Purchased	Retire by
Comments					
Log Out	Signed	Log In	Signed	Usage	Inspection/Comments

Appendix 7 – Incident Report

Mountaineering Ireland – Club Incident Reporting Form	
Injured Party/Parties	
Name /s:	
Membership number/s:	
Date of birth:	
Phone number:	
E-mail:	
Volunteer / Leader Details	
Name:	
Membership number:	
Phone number:	
E-mail:	
Incident Details	
Location:	
Date:	
Time:	
Activity:	
Incident Description	
<i>For additional space please turn over.</i>	
Learnings from this Incident	
<i>For additional space please turn over.</i>	
Signature	
Injured Party/Parties	Date
Volunteer / Leader	

