



Mountaineering Ireland AGM

**Virtual Meeting delivered by Zoom Technology and in person
at - Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
Tuesday 10th May 2022**

Present: As per attendance list.

Mountaineering Ireland's CEO presented a brief introduction into how the virtual/in person AGM would commence and then proceeded to go through the confirmation of delegates present to ensure the required quorum was reached, which it was at 53 eligible voters. The meeting was chaired by David Pollard, Chairperson of Mountaineering Ireland who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Agenda:

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

Adoption of the Agenda:

The Agenda was adopted by the members present with no objections noted.

Adoption of Standing Orders:

These were adopted by the members present (**Vote Results were: 51 - Yes / 0 - No / 2 - Abstain**).

Adoption of Minutes of the last AGM:

These were adopted by the members present (**Vote Results were: 43 - Yes / 0 - No / 10 - Abstain**).

Address by David Pollard, Chairman of Mountaineering Ireland:

Overall, I believe that 2021 was a very positive year for Mountaineering Ireland even though our activities were once again impacted by the Covid pandemic. While the level of activity on the mountains generally returned to normal in the latter part of the year, we still saw the cancellation of organised events right through 2021. It is great, therefore, to see us return to at least a hybrid model for this AGM and we are very optimistic that we will meet in person at our autumn gathering later in the year.

2021 was a very special year for Mountaineering Ireland as it marked 50 years since its formation as the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland (FMCI) in 1971. While Covid prevented us from celebrating in the way we would have liked, a special edition of the Irish Mountain Log was published to celebrate our 50th anniversary. This included some really interesting contributions from members and staff, who have been involved in various capacities with the organisation over the 50 years. A very special thanks is due to all involved.

I am pleased to see that membership numbers during 2021 returned to 2019 levels. We are hopeful that this marks the resumption of the steady membership growth which we had been seeing over the years up to 2020, when restricted club activity impacted on our membership. It is a pleasure also to welcome the new clubs, which affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland during 2021.

A key task for the organisation during 2021 was the development of the 2022 – 2025 strategic plan. This involved widespread consultation with members, staff and other stakeholders and we are confident that this plan will serve our members and grow our organisation into the future. The plan sets out clearly our ambition that Mountaineering Ireland continues to be the 'go-to' organisation for all hillwalkers, climbers and mountaineers on the island of Ireland. The plan was launched last week and will soon be available on the website. I would encourage all our members to take some time to have a look at it.

Sport climbing made its debut as an Olympic sport in Tokyo in 2021. I believe this is a really important development for our sport and that it bodes well for future investment. It also raises the profile of climbing, which we hope will lead to greater participation. As an organisation we have included in our 2022 – 2025 strategy specific objectives focusing on high performance and the development pipeline. I would like to note at this point the commitment of our national coach and the support received from the parents of our young competitors.

During 2020, Mountaineering Ireland played a very active role in the development of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy. This stakeholder-led strategy aims to guide and facilitate the sustainable development and management of outdoor recreation. I believe our participation in this important project gives us a real opportunity to influence the management of our mountain areas going forward. The Department of Rural and Community Development has recently launched the draft strategy for consultation, and I would encourage you to have a look at this.

With the support of funding from Sport Ireland, a series of training events for club leaders were run during the year. These were intended to upskill and support clubs in their return to the mountains after the pandemic. I am pleased to note these were very well supported and that the feedback from clubs on these events was very positive.

During the period of the pandemic, we saw many new people coming to the Irish mountains. While this increased interest in our sport is very much to be welcomed, it comes with both challenges and opportunities. Some of these newcomers, for example, were poorly equipped and skilled and our challenge will be to continue to promote safety on the mountains and to protect our precious mountain environment. In this regard I would like to compliment the “Happy Hiking” initiative led by our Hillwalking Committee. This increased interest of course also brings many opportunities including to grow our membership, to further develop our clubs and to make the case for increased funding.

I am particularly pleased to note that *“Irish Peaks”* won the 2021 Guidebook Award in the prestigious Banff Mountain Book Competition. The production of this book was a real community effort with Mountaineering Ireland with members the length and breadth of the island contributing routes and wonderful photographs. The book, I believe, is not only a celebration of our mountains but also represents the very best of our organisation.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff team, my Board colleagues and the volunteers across all of our committees and clubs for your commitment and dedication throughout the year.

David Pollard

Chairman,

Mountaineering Ireland,

Election to Full Membership of Aspirant Clubs:

The following clubs were proposed to be granted full membership of the organisation and agreed by the members present. **(Vote Results were: 51 - Yes / 0 - No / 2 - Abstain).**

1. Belfast Youth Climbing Club
2. 12 O Clock Hills Recreational & Heritage Project
3. East Clare Walking Club
4. WKD Wolves

Report of Company Secretary, Murrough McDonagh:

In summary, Mountaineering Ireland’s broader governance activities during 2021 were:

- The last Annual General Meeting was held on the 29th March 2021, hosted from Mountaineering Ireland Head Office, Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, via Zoom online.
- There were 8 meetings of the Board of Mountaineering Ireland in 2021.

- We have continued to review our governance policies in the past 12 months and are currently updating and improving some of our processes and structures to reflect best practice in governance.
- All legal and procedural requirements have been followed, including reporting and submissions to the Companies Registration Office.
- Mountaineering Ireland is a company limited by guarantee and is a sporting organisation supported by both Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland. All the directors are extremely focused and clear about their duties to Mountaineering Ireland. The Board of Directors act at all times in the best interest and to the best of their capability with regard to the Mountaineering Ireland organisation, its members and other stakeholders.

Murrough McDonagh

Company Secretary

(Vote Results were: 47 - Yes / 3 - No / 3 - Abstain).

In the absence of the Chairperson of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, the Company Secretary Presented the 2021 Audited Accounts and Approval of Financial Statements for 2021:

2021 continued with the same performance as in 2020, with was a strong Financial Year for Mountaineering Ireland in terms of continuing to introduce new financial structures and processes during a challenging period and having an end of year surplus figure.

Financial Statements presented for the year ending 31st December 2021 were:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Income	€1,179,270	€1,285,456
Expenditure/Administration	€1,167,878	€1,240,941
Net surplus / (deficit)	€11,392	€44,515

Points of interest noted:

- Sport Ireland Core funding amounted to €235,000 and and Women in Sport €40,000
- Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland funding for Get Ireland Walking programmes amounted to €300,000.
- Sports Inclusion grant (Get Climbing Programme) amounted to €50,000.
- Sport Northern Ireland funding amounts to c.£48,500 per annum. This fund is specifically for youth engagement and club development initiatives in Northern Ireland.

During 2021 Mountaineering Ireland has continued to operate appropriate financial processes, which included:

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

Special thanks to the FAR Committee Members, Board Members, our Accountants IFT and Whiteside Cullinan (Auditors).

Special Point of Note - Update on Audit 2021, as led by KOSI Co-operation Auditors

It was noted that Mountaineering Ireland was one of a number of NGBs and LSPs selected for Audit by Sport Ireland. That the KOSI Audit had commenced in April 2021 and was completed in November 2021. That the audit found items that needed attention surrounding policies and the way we operated. The audit presented a list of 16 actions in total needing addressing. 13 actions were completed by the end of 2021 and early in 2022. It was confirmed that the remaining 3 actions were at an advanced stage of completion and will be issued to Sport Ireland within the next two weeks (for a Board Meeting on 23rd May), where they need to be approved by the Board. It was confirmed that Sport Ireland will close off the Audit once they have reviewed all completed actions.

Murrough McDonagh

Company Secretary and staff representative to the FAR Committee

(Vote Results were: 47 - Yes / 2 - No / 4 - Abstain).

Appointment of Auditor for 2022:

Whiteside Cullinan, Chartered Accountants was proposed for re-appointment for 2022 and the proposal was agreed.

(Vote Results were: 46 - Yes / 1 - No / 6 - Abstain).

It was noted by the AGM that the Auditors should be changed for 2023 and it was confirmed that this would be the case.

Statements regarding Safeguarding and Anti-Doping:

Safeguarding:

- Mountaineering Ireland is committed to best practice and upholding and implementing appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from young participants, officials, coaches, trainers, mentors, parents/guardians and clubs.
- Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy complements the joint Sport Ireland & Sport NI Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport.

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

The Safeguarding Statement was Read and Noted by the AGM.

Anti-Doping:

- Mountaineering Ireland fully subscribes to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) procedures and promotes a drug-free sport.
- Mountaineering Ireland references anti-doping in the rules of all national level climbing competitions.
- Mountaineering Ireland provides anti-doping education for members of the Youth Climbing Team, and other climbers who compete at international competitions.
- Mountaineering Ireland includes anti-doping education as part of relevant coach education programme.

The Anti-Doping Statement was Read and Noted by the AGM.

Nominations

Nomination for election to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland as ‘President’

It was noted that there was no nomination received for the position of ‘President’ of Mountaineering Ireland. It was requested from the floor that the minutes note that there is both an opportunity and a responsibility for members to nominate Board members.

Nomination for election to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland of ‘Ordinary Members’

“The election of:

- Dave Ayton,
- Ian Lawler and
- Alistair Wilson

to the Board of Mountaineering Ireland”

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

CEO’s Address

I would like to say a few words of thanks to the Board Members who have served the company over the past 12 months of 2021, which has been quite a challenging time, and to those who have moved onto new opportunities.

To Trish Kane, Clare O'Connor, and Paul Barron who stepped down from the board after many years of service in February and March 2021. Thank you all for your time and support to Mountaineering Ireland, particularly to Paul Barron, for his many years of service as a Board Member and as Chair of the Board, it was much appreciated.

To Kevin O'Callaghan, Paul Kellagher and Mike Maunsell, all who stepped down from the Board in October, can I wish you all the very best in the future with your busy careers and continued enjoyment on the hills. Thank you all very much for your service, particularly to Paul Kellagher who was the President and also National Children's Officer for many years and to Mike Maunsell, who was Chair of the Access & Conservation Committee for a number of years and most recently, Chair of the Board. Thank you all for your, time, professionalism and energy offered towards Mountaineering Ireland.

To Imelda Buckley for her time, energy and focus over the past number of years covering a number of new projects, as Chair of the FAR Committee, Chair of the Strategic Planning Working Group, as a Board member and more recently as Vice Chair of the Board, thank you very much.

To Geoff Thomas for his many years of service including during 2021, as both Chair of the Climbing Committee and also as Chair of the Board of Directors, thank you very much.

I want to welcome Ricky Bell to the staff team as our new Youth Development Officer for NI who started with us in June 2021 and to thank Damien O'Sullivan for his excellent service over 8 years and who was our Climbing Officer for many years, who moved on in December 2021 and I want to wish him all the very best for the future.

I want to thank Gerry Gorman, our National Children's Officer for his support and direction during 2021, to our Sub-Committees, Strategic Plan Working Group, to our members, our volunteers and to our amazing staff team, who all combined deliver an extremely high standard of work on behalf of Mountaineering Ireland – thank you all very much for your contribution during 2021 and I'm looking forward to 2022.

It has been a pleasure to work with you all over the years.

Keep well and safe and I'm looking forward to seeing you all on the 7th June at the Members Forum.

Thank you and goodnight.

Chief Executive Officer,

Murrough McDonagh.

End of the Meeting

David Pollard thanked everyone for their support in his role as a Board member and new Chairman of the Board. David thanked the Board members, sub-committees, working groups, volunteers, club/individual members, and staff for the dedication and support offered. David thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.