

Wessex Mountaineering Club

Minutes of 65th Annual General Meeting

Held 11th January 2025 at The Empress of Blandings, Copythorne, Hants

1. The meeting started at 7:30pm.

Attendances & apologies

2. Attendees: Steve Wales, Chris Cumming, Dave Johnson (DAJ), Alan Blanchflower, Andy Cumming, Clare Johnson, Daniel Pollard, John Hayes, Kathryn Hayes, Malcolm (Max) Streeton, Charlene Gibson, John Whitfield, Jill Whitfield, Norman Wright, Charmian Wright, Paul Stevens, Jill Stevens, Helen Wales, John Wooler, Roy Fisher, Sue Fisher, Matt Shrimpton, Jon Coutts, Brian Graham, Craig Dooley, Martin Saberton, Chris Horan, Ben Allen, Zoe Allen, Emma Horsey, Dave Milner.
3. Apologies: Ian Rowe, Frodo Stickel, Hannah Mackinnon, Anita Christensen

Minutes of the 64th AGM

4. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Committee Reports 2024

President

5. DAJ covered the roles of the committee members this year and gave thanks to all those serving on the committee for their contributions. The additional members not covered in the individual reports (Norman Wright and Martin Saberton) have respectively been contacting new members and looking to resurrect the Wimborne Climbing wall.
6. DAJ highlighted concerns with the Newsletter, which Dave Milner had stepped in this year, but has little content to produce a Newsletter resorting to skimming content from whatsapp groups, and longer articles seem to be dying out.
7. DAJ announced that the 60th Anniversary edition is now finally ready.

Secretary

8. Steve reported that there had been four committee meetings over the year, held on Zoom and had been looking at issues surrounding the clubs legal status to be covered later in the meeting.

Treasurer

9. Chris reported on the club's finances and went through the annual accounts. As of 31st October 2024 the club had 151 members (down from 155 in the previous year)

10. The clubs net assets stand at £65,108.33 (including PYC valued at cost). There was a loss of £179.09 On the hut account and a profit of £1,741.62 The profit on the General Account is due to reduced meet losses compared to previous years and interest on a 2yr bond with Cambridge and Counties. The hut income reduced this year due to fewer members using the hut, and with increasing expenses on the hut there was a small loss this year.
11. Subs and donations of £325 include payments to the Ogwen Valley rescue team, the Ramblers and Dorset Bolt Fund.
12. Chris expressed her thanks to Jack Crewe who had kindly audited the accounts.

Meets

13. In Ian's absence Steve reported on the meets. Meets were generally well attended. The Scottish Winter Meet in the Cairngorms was well attended. There was good attendance at the Somerset, Cornwall and Peaks meets. There are 22 confirmed for this years Scottish Winter Meet, and the new approach to booking and publicising this meet means no financial loss to the club.

Social

14. Charlene reported on the social events last year. Emma Horsey had organised an impromptu BBQ at Swanage, DAJ had organised a slideshow in November. DAJ reported he had found it difficult to get people to present.

Programme

15. Jon discussed the programme. Jon has kept to the same strategy as the previous year of minimising the exposure to the club when making bookings. He reported on the meets survey he carried out to ascertain what meets members are interested in. From the 25 responses he received the most requested was via Ferrata/Alpine meet. Navigation and First Aid training, along with a pub meet were also requested. Jon was to hold a Zoom call for all those going on this years Scottish Winter Meet.

Membership

16. Membership figures were reported by the Treasurer and these were 151 members at 31 October 2024.

Newsletter

17. Dave Milner had taken on producing a Newsletter, however he hadn't managed to finish this and Steve/DAJ were in the process of editing with the intention to publish this later in January.

Hut - Pen y Clogwyn

18. DAJ reported on the hut in Frodos' absence. A few trees came down during a storm at New Year, and blocking the path to the hut. There are some trees close to the hut that should be felled and the intention was to find a local tree

surgeon to do this. The Waterloo Hotel has kindly allowed the club to leave empty gas bottles by the bins prior to a delivery of gas bottles.

19. There was some discussion on the ownership of the trees around Pen y Clogwyn. Steve had looked at the deeds and there is nothing to state that the club doesn't own them, or any other body (Forestry Commission) has rights to the timber. There is specific mention in the deeds of planting trees.
20. Andy reported on hut bookings. Fewer members are using the hut. Andy was considering increasing the fees for the hut from £5 to £6 for members, and £10 to £12 for non-members.

Marketing & Website

21. Max reported that malware had been present on the website causing some unavailability. He had created an electronic membership card downloadable from the website.

Walking Group

22. John Whitfield spoke about the walking group who organise local walks on a monthly basis.

Nomination of scrutineers

23. Charmian Wright and Jill Whitfield were appointed as scrutineers.

Election of the committee

24. Dave Johnson was elected as President, proposed by Chris Cumming, seconded by Max Streeton.
25. Steve Wales was elected as Secretary, proposed by Andy Cumming, seconded by Charlene Gibson.
26. Chris Cumming was elected as Treasurer, proposed by DAJ seconded by Max Streeton.
27. Ian Rowe was elected as Meet Secretary, proposed by Martin Saberton, seconded by Jon Coutts.
28. Zoe Allen was elected as Membership Secretary, proposed by Chris Cumming, seconded by Norman Wright.
29. Jon Coutts was elected as Programme Secretary, proposed by Alan Blanchflower and seconded by Chris Horan.
30. Frodo Stickel was elected as Hut Secretary, proposed by Emma Horsey and seconded by Clare Johnson.
31. Newsletter Editor Position Vacant.
32. Social Secretary Position Vacant

33. Marketing Secretary Position Vacant
34. Martin Saberton was elected as Ordinary Committee Member, proposed by Jon Coutts and seconded by Charlene Gibson
35. Norman Wright was elected as Ordinary Committee Member, proposed by DAJ and seconded by Max Streeton
36. Andy Cumming will continue as hut bookings secretary.

Subscriptions for 2025

37. Chris presented the committee proposal for the subscriptions, which was to increase the subscription to cover the increase in BMC Capitation which is due to increase inline with inflation.
38. The committee proposal was to increase the ordinary member subscription to £40, and that the student member and U18's subscriptions would increase to £25. The joining fee would remain at £10, but is not applied to U18s . The half year membership rates would be £25 for Ordinary members, so as to cover the £10.00 average cost per member of running the club and the half year BMC capitation. Half year subscriptions for students and U18s would be £15.00 to just cover their BMC capitation for the half year.
39. Jill Stevens asked if the club has perennial students. Chris replied in the negative.
40. Max queried why the U11s subscription had increased so much as there is no capitation due for U11s. Chris explained that whilst the BMC has an U11s category, the club only has an U18s category.
41. Martin Saberton asked whether the joining fee represented an actual cost. Andy replied that the joining fee was introduced to stop people leaving and re-joining. Jill added that the joining fee encourages people to pay their yearly subscription promptly.
42. A vote was held with unanimous acceptance of the committee proposal.

Appointment of Auditor

43. Jack Crewe was standing down as Honorary Auditor and John Whitfield was duly appointed as auditor.

Open Floor

44. Steve talked about the legal status of the club and an option to change this should it be deemed worthwhile. From a legal perspective the club is an Unincorporated Association meaning that all members potentially have some liability for club debt were this to arise. By converting the club to a Company Limited by Guarantee this would limit members liability to a nominal amount, usually £1. It would require converting the club Constitution to Articles of Association and appointing Directors. Pen Y Clogwyn could be sold to the company, removing the need for Trustees. Steve reported that many clubs have

been converting to Companies Limited by Guarantee. DAJ proposed that Steve was to look into this further and report back at next years AGM.

45. With the Newsletter position remaining vacant, there was some discussion on the Newsletter. Helen suggested a blog on the website as an alternative to a Newsletter.
46. Jill Stevens commented that the Newsletter was a historical record of meets, and DAJ accepted that yes, the club is losing this record.
47. Emma Horsey raised the idea of having an annual glossy publication. There were several suggestions about how to generate content. Martin Saberton suggested videoing the slideshow and writing this up. There were some comments about using AI to generate content. Chris Horan suggested that after each meet posting a meet report on the whatsapp group for the meet and then collate at the end of a year.

WMC Literary Prize

48. With no Newsletter produced this year there were no entries for the WMC Literary Prize.

WMC Photo Prize

49. The photo prize went to Clare for her photo taken on the Fontainebleau meet in May. The runners up were Clares' photo of DAJ hanging off the Cantilever Stone, and Naimas photo of kayaks on the Isle of Raasay.

AOB

50. There were no AOB items.

The meeting closed at 10:00pm.