Red Rope National Committee
27th January 2025

Officers Reports

Membership Secretary (18th January 2025)

This year's membership renewal went through relatively smoothly, any problems seem to arise from people changing their band or bank, but I was able to deal with most of these prior to the automatic renewal process so there was less to do when the process had happened. A few members have decided not to renew and there are still some members who not paid their subscription as they have opted to pay by cheque and have done so. These cause the same problems every year.

On a more positive our numbers are the same as this time last year and we are still attracting new members. Also, several members have reviewed their finances and have moved up a band. Only one member reduced their band! Once everyone has paid, our membership number will return to the figure we had prior to the renewal process.

I have entered all E&W members to the BMC but will not be passing them through for payment until our insurance is discussed with the committee. I will be doing the Mountaineering Scotland figures at the end of March.

Current Membership percentage by band and Region 14-01-25

Region	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Total	% by Region	Web Collect	Cheque	Totals
Bristol	1	10	7	4	5	27	8.68%	27	0	27
East Anglia	2	8	9	3	1	23	7.40%	22	1	23
East Midlands	2	4	12	6	4	28	9.00%	28	0	28
London	4	10	16	15	12	57	18.33%	57	0	57
Manchester	4	5	7	10	10	36	11.58%	34	2	36
Merseyside	9	11	10	7	2	39	12.54%	38	1	39
North East	2	1	3	1	0	7	2.25%	7	0	7
Scotland	4	6	14	7	7	38	12.22%	38	0	38
Sheffield	9	8	6	7	6	36	11.58%	34	2	36
West Midlands	3	3	10	2	2	20	6.43%	18	2	20
Totals	40	66	94	62	49	311	100.00%	303	8	311
% by Band	12.86%	21.22%	30.23%	19.94%	15.76%	100%				

A current list of members has been sent to Regional Reps and there are only a few stragglers that have not paid yet.

I have entered everyone (*into the BMC system)* (apart from 14 new members which I'm hoping Clonagh will do for me as the system is not very user friendly) in readiness for pressing the submit button to generate an invoice for payment. This needs to be done by the end of January. ideally. I'm holding off in the light of Humphrey's investigations into alternative providers. The one issue here is if we do not belong to the BMC we can't use their huts and the LMC huts.

I'm leaving Mountaineering Scotland as they don't need to be submitted until the end of March.

Note from Janet: The discussion re BMC and membership fees is about a motion for a rise in subs for 2026 not this year, so I'm fairly sure we won't be changing provider for this year. In case you missed an email, Humphrey said to submit all our band 1s at the BMC unemployed rate.

Trips Secretaries (Becky and Sarah Bates)

Trip transport has changed this year so the review is ongoing. It had all been working ok and Hughs controversial change to capping transport charges at Band 3 seems to be having a positive impact with some evidence of higher bands opting back in to sharing cars.

Early days though and I am sure Hugh will provide an analysis for AGM.

We will also complete our annual analysis of number of members joining one or multiple trips and for this year add in band distribution on trips.

Generally, trip finances are healthy which is as it should be. We do not wish for trips other than the Gathering to receive a subsidy.

Hugh has been working hard to prepare the booking forms for each trip and is also updating website info.

Trips programme for 2025 is complete and bookings are healthy. Just two of 12 trips need an organiser. With the new booking system we have decided that bookings can only open when there is an organiser. Up to that point Sarah and I will keep an 'interested' list.

The 'two places reserved' policy is a success, newer members ask for these places when emailng us.

We are encouraged by the increase in regional trip activity

Our thanks to Hugh who has been working on booking forms for each trip and is also updating website info.

We have just begun work on a new area - writing a policy for room share on trips particularly in cottages with twin rooms. We have been aware for a year or so of trip organisers finding it difficult to allocate rooms by gender. Following individual discussion, a small group is due to meet on zoom next week to work towards guidance for trip organisers. It is likely that our discussion will widen to develop an equal opportunities policy for trips.

We are happy with trip charges as they currently are and don't see any need to put them up or change banding this year.

On-trip training – winter skills. I have enquired with Lupine about a day's training on the Killin trip – several people are new to winter trips and are interested. I have been quoted £465 for 6 participants.

Previously, several years ago, members paid a banded contribution to the cost which, I believe was subsidised from National funds.

Will this be possible again? – and, if so, how to work it out. Cost has risen partly due to inflation, but also because, previously, the trainer happened to be in the area at the same time as our trip and this will not be the case this time.

Trip is from 7th March so I need to progress this asap – with trainer and with trip members

Trips Treasurer (Hugh Wallis)

National Trip Treasurer Report (Hugh)

Overall trip finances seem fine. The table below summarises the last 2 years (excluding National Gatherings, which are financially neutral for Trips account):

	2023	2024
Bed Nights	601	728
Income	14,362	17,549
Expenditure	13,228	16,713
Surplus	1,134	837

So approximately a 20% increase in activity, with both costs and income up around £3k on previous year. A small surplus confirms no need to immediately increase rates (noting the removal of EBD for this year trips will probably lead to a slightly larger surplus for 2025).

As agreed, we have implemented the new booking system for National trips from March. The Google form automatically sends the booking info to a Google sheet (which I share with the Trip Organiser). I also input bank payments into these sheets, so it can be easily seen what is owed. The spreadsheet incorporates the Trip Treasurer spreadsheet so this can also be done online without re-inputting information. There has been an issue with one of the Organisers trying to use it with an email without a Google account (but that was sorted) and one person who refuses to use the Google form (we've agreed a compromise).

The action of the Co-op bank in removing the ability online to put references on bank transfers (and set-up standing orders) from personal accounts to Co-op business accounts (like ours) has been annoying. I have complained a number of times. Generally, people are advising me (as they have been asked) or I've chased them up.

The website and booking info elsewhere have been updated for the new booking system, the Co-op bank problems and the removal of EBD from 2025.

IT (Janet Saunders)

Everything is ticking over OK. A few changes to contact emails have been done as needed. The website is up to date apart from the trips list. This is Work In Progress.

A request was sent out on the RiseUp list for volunteers to take on this role, but with no response. One possible member was approached but they were reluctant to take on the role.

Facebook. Some discussion has taken place on RiseUp about whether we should stay there as a club presence, in light of recent lessening of fact checking and monitoring.

Simon S very helpfully suggested we wait a year to see how Facebook becomes and I agree.

MIS Editor (Jon Marsden)

The MIS continues to have a full programme of trips, with one per month both from Scotland and from the National Trips planning group, plus trips from regions. On average it runs to about twelve pages.

There have been issues with delivery for a few individuals, apparently caused by a tightening up of spam filters. In a couple of cases, it has been necessary for the recipient to use an alternative email address.

A set of example formats for entries, for Scottish, National and Regional trips, has been brought into use, facilitating the job of the MIS editor in ensuring that fonts, sizes, layouts, justification, emphases and to some extent content, are consistent across the document. Thanks to the trip organisers who have adopted this.

Trip organisers are reminded that trips should be published in the MIS four months before they take place; and that bookings for a trip should not be accepted until the trip has appeared in the MIS.

Several regions regularly submit their programme of local walking activities for publication. Please continue to do so!

No climbing activities have recently appeared in the MIS.