

# **Ibex Mountain & Hillwalking Club**

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Coach & Horses 5 Bruton Street, Mayfair W1J 6PT.

**Committee Members present:** Karen Goepfert (President), David Merry (Treasurer and Vice President), Viv & Jim Nevill (Weekend Planners), Jan O'Brien (Day walks), Maggie Maloney (Membership Secretary), Edna Calvo (social media), Peter Ramell (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Natalia Diaz Burlinson (Weekend Coordinator), Heather McGill (Newsletter Editor)

**Members present:** 24, making 32 total including the committee members

**Apologies:** Chris and Julia Hilton, Irena Valouchova, Natalia Diaz Burlinson, Susan Watts, Heather McGill, Mark Williams, Clive Sinnott, Sally Taylor, Matt Moore, Rachel Bracha and Steve Jary

### **1. Welcome and approval of 2022 AGM minutes**

Karen Goepfert welcomed all to the 2023 AGM.

The minutes of the 2022 AGM were agreed.

### **2. Reports from the committee**

Committee members gave their reports.

#### **President (Karen Goepfert)**

It is great to see so many of you, and well done for remembering and finding the new venue. (Sadly, our usual venue has been transformed into a bistro and is no longer available for these events.)

It is hard to believe that almost a whole year has passed since our last AGM in November 2022. The time seems to have flown by in an instant! We have had a very busy year on the committee exploring and adopting many new things which we will touch on tonight. As many of you are aware, I have been on a sabbatical from work for the latter part of this year and spending a large portion of my time in the US taking care of a few family projects - so first off I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone and especially the Committee for their patience and support this year during my periods of absence. I will be back in full action in January and am very much looking forward to engaging in the fabulous programme we have in store for 2024!

As highlighted, we have been very busy on the committee putting into action the various action items discussed last year at our AGM - plus a few extra items (such as finding a new AGM event space for 2023, and planning a special AGM for next year's 40th), as an added bonus! Most significantly, following our discussion last year, we are happy to announce that courtesy of David Watts and Edna a new website has been developed and will be ready for launch on 1 January! More on this to come.

We have also followed through on plans to open a new bank account with Metrobank which will incur fewer fees than our prior account with HSBC - David Merry will provide more on this in his report.

As usual, we offered a wide range of activities, including:

1/ Our traditional weekends away, including to:

Yorkshire - Ribbleshead

Camping in Devon

Peak District - Bamford and Castleton (December)

Lake District

Wales - Berwyn Mountains and Rhayader

and Dartmoor, Pembrokeshire, Shropshire and Dorset

with the last couple to Rhayader (mid Wales) and our traditional pre-Christmas event in the Peak District (Castleton) this year. There are still a few final places left on each of these trips. I am pleased to report that following on some low attendances last year, several of our weekends this year reached capacity and almost all reached the breakeven point - only one weekend required some last minute renegotiation with the owners to avoid a loss. This reflects the fine planning done by our weekend planner team.

2/ Several Scottish weeks - winter to Newtonmore; trips in May to Achnasheen and Durness, and the recent one to the Trossachs in October.

3/ Two small trips to the Alps one involving day walks in Courmayeur, and the other near the Aosta valley

4/ A variety of monthly day walks in the South-east - ranging from the Chilterns to the South Coast and Kent.

5/ A range of well-attended club nights with topics ranging from rockclimbing to via ferrata to travel in Romania and Saudi Arabia - just to name a few! We also had an enjoyable photo competition which generated a great calendar for 2024. If you are interested in one, please contact Susan Watts

I am pleased to report that notwithstanding all these activities, we did not seem to have suffered any major incidents - at least reported to the committee! Thank you all for taking care on the hills and looking out after one another. All this means we can continue to safely offer exciting and varied programmes going forward!

You all may have seen my email regarding Nina's map collection - there are still a number available, so if you have an interest in any of them, please let me know. We just ask that you make a donation to Nina's fundraising page if you have not already done so.

With no further ado, I will hand over to the rest of the Committee to deliver their respective reports.....

**Weekend coordinator** (Natalia Diaz Burlinson- report read by Karen Goepfert)

- We are reducing the weekend advert time in the newsletter back to 2 months. 3 months did not appear to generate more interest and may even have been detrimental to members committing to weekend attendance.
- We are proposing removing the reserved places for members who have not been on a weekend for 6 months. Difficult to organise on the new website and for weekend organisers to know who hasn't been on a weekend recently. This could though be revisited if places were to get booked up quickly.
- Following a member suggestion, I have created a google events calendar for 2024 events – to be shared as a link. Will be sent to all members before the end of the year. It is not essential to use this – it won't be replacing the newsletter or other social media / communication channels, just an extra help for members who (like me) manually add every event in their electronic diaries. Feedback welcome once it's shared for any improvements.

- I am updating the weekend organiser documents in line with new website, removal of Covid measures & new logo. Weekend organisers will be sent the latest version so please don't use copies you have saved from previous weekends or download from the current website as these are likely out of date. When they have all been updated, the latest versions will be uploaded to the new website (and I will try and keep them current with any future updates!).
- I've been avoiding posting ibex signs to weekend organisers wherever possible; using members to pass them between weekends. I have quite a few signs so if regular weekend attendees would like a set and haven't already got one, this is possible so please let me know.

### **Weekend planner (Jim and Viv Nevill)**

Locations for the 2024 programme cover a wide variety of areas: the Lake District, Yorkshire, Peak District, North and South Wales and Dartmoor/Devon, plus of course the Scottish trips.

Currently no Alps trip is planned.

As in previous years we have booked accommodation for every month of 2024, with the exception of July which is a camping trip with the added option of staying in a B & B. This is felt to be sufficient bearing in mind that this year the weekends did not reach full booking capacity around this holiday period. As usual there are two events in May, the early and late May Bank Holidays, but we have been mindful of the trips to Scotland that are also planned for that month which reduces the number of participants on the weekends

We have tried to avoid booking large and/or expensive places so as to minimise the financial risk to the Club. A number of locations are therefore for 10—12 people, though several of these can be expanded to include more if demand exists. YHA block bookings have become much more expensive from next year which means we are no longer able to use them given the £35 pppn price cap we operate

Ibex celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in November 2024 and we have booked a Peak District location. A subcommittee has been formed. We are considering having a ceilidh but research so far finds that this could well be too expensive. We are though looking further into this and would welcome any ideas.

We have already booked for Easter 2025, Rydal Hall near Ambleside. This has been renovated since our last visit some years ago.

Many thanks to the members who have come forward to organise a weekend. However, we are still looking for volunteers to organise weekends in March in Earby (near Skipton in Yorkshire), Early May BH near Blaenau Ffestiniog (Moelwyn Mountains), August BH in Little Langdale, Lake District, and November in the Peak District for the 40th anniversary weekend, though the volunteer's role on this last would just be the 'usual' duties for a weekend - the subcommittee would plan the other items for the weekend.

### **Day Walks (Jan O'Brien)**

2023 has enjoyed a walk each month of the year in a variety of locations within reach of London.

Attendance has varied from a handful to 15. I have offered a joint advance recce with those who have been less confident regarding the route or navigating and this has helped in more than once instance. The walks have varied in length from about 9 miles to 14 at the upper end. A train strike enforced a late change of date for one walk however it still went ahead successfully. Our thanks go to all the walks leaders who have contributed to a varied and most enjoyable year of day walks.

Navigation training has been scheduled for the February weekend. A workshop helping people get started with the OS app or improve their use of it has been scheduled for the November club night.

For the year ahead we are very much in need of volunteers to lead more walks.

## **Membership** (Maggie Maloney)

In 2019-22 the **number of members** was fairly steady with around the 105-107 mark, with a temporary dip to 102 in 2021 returning to 107 in 2022. It is now a little higher at 110. Some of the new members are in fact returning previous members who have been out of the club for a few years. In the past few years we've typically had about a 10% turnover each year, but in 2023 only seven members decided not to renew; most gave reasons (health issues, family reasons, things like that). Three of those had been new members in 2022. And then of course in early 2022 we lost Nina. This year 2023, ten new members have joined, including one returning old member.

We have had some discussions about how to encourage new members to join, especially younger members, including a suggestion to make use of Instagram, but have not actively implemented that at this point. And of course now and in the future we welcome any other suggestions for forms of outreach we could use – please make any suggestions you have to the committee.

**New members** get a welcome email telling them about how the club works – most of this information is available on the website but it's helpful to give people the main points in one email. Over the year we've elaborated and developed this, taking account of suggestions from members, and giving a bit more information about what we get from BMC, so hopefully it provides fairly comprehensive information all in one place.

Most new members have started by signing up as **prospective members** if they have, for example joined a day walk, or joined a weekend before committing to becoming full members. Quite a large proportion of those who signed up as prospectives during this year have not to date gone further to become full members. When membership renewals fall due at the beginning of 2024, we'll email them to ask them if they want to consider joining the Club. After a year or so people are taken off the prospective members list if they don't join.

Regarding **2024 membership renewals**, we'll need to make some special arrangements as the timing will coincide with the launch of the new website, and around this time also we'll be transferring our account to another bank (more on that from the Treasurer). We'll give you more details on how to do the membership renewal closer to the time, which will be a little different from previous years, so please watch out for that.

Regarding **membership participation** in events, we repeated the analysis we did last year of membership participation in weekends and Scottish and other trips over 2019-2022. It showed a continuation of the same pattern in that for 2022-3 up to October (the numbers are bit rounded because some people were members for only one of the years we looked at)

14 members (about 13% of members did eight or more events over the two years (including a few of these did fourteen or fifteen or more)

13 members (12%) did 7-11 events

31 members (about 28%) did 3-6 events

18 members (16%) did one or two

Nearly 40 (36%) did no trips (but it's possible they do day walks - we don't retain records for those).

(Within that, some members focus on doing Scottish trips and hardly any regular weekends)

**Membership records** During the year, as part of the preparations for transferring to the new website we've reviewed (and in some respects revised) how we hold our membership records and how these link in with the BMC's own records and the BMC indemnity insurance for the Club. (This is not personal insurance.) Having done this review we will have clearer statements to go on the new website about what we do with members' personal data, for how long we retain it after a member has left, and the rule about how many events people can do as prospective members (one day walk and one weekend within three months of each other).

### **Comment on Membership report**

Chris P suggested that it would be useful to have some form of mentoring scheme to provide information about Ibex to new members. Ibex was quite a large organisation with particular traditions, and some of its processes might not seem straightforward to new members. In response it was noted that the Membership Secretary provides new members with a considerable amount of information. Karen G said that the committee would consider this point further at its next meeting.

### **Social media (Edna Calvo)**

The Ibex Facebook group/page currently has 75 members. There was a peak in the number of visitors around 22 October. Popular days for engaging with the group appeared to be Tuesdays and Fridays. While the majority of access to the group was among older age groups, there was some access by the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups. In principle, it would be good to set up an Instagram account but that would need some work.

### **Newsletter (Heather McGill - report read by Karen Goepfert)**

Heather was pleased to have taken on the new role, and was trying to incorporate some new ideas, including highlighting main points in the covering email, to ensure people were aware of them.

The newsletter would soon start to include advertisements for events suggested by Ibex members for Ibex members, subject to some conditions, including that they did not clash with planned Ibex programme events.

### **Treasurer (David Merry)**

It's good to be here for the last time as Treasurer and as per last year I will go through the accounts summary.

### ***Increase in Club Funds***

The first point to cover is the increase in club funds. The view was to have a cash surplus of £4,000 - £6,000 and that is what we are still targeting. To counter potential situations where large amounts of deposits are out at venues and then unexpectedly have cancellations where we don't have a return of funds from the venue. As per last year, the club should have this so the participants in trips can have deposits returned. And the club remain solvent.

Ultimately on a 100 membership this represents only about £40 - £60 per person in the club

I'll go through the accounts to summarise and you will be able to see the points in the accounts PDF that was attached to the AGM invite.

As at end of Sept 2023, the club has

- accumulated surplus of £7,714.
- of that £5,039 was in the bank account and PayPal.

At the end of 2022

- accumulated surplus of £6,586.
- of that £4,728 was in the bank account and PayPal.

So an increase in the bank balances, and accumulated surplus increase.

To compare to the interim stage at 2022:

- accumulated surplus of £7,036 (- so surplus this year is up by ~ £700 overall),
- of that £4,295 was in the bank account and PayPal. So an increase in the accounts of ~ £750)

So the cash surpluses are improved. And as the same as last year, there are increases in surpluses and bank accounts.

Expenditure (excluding BMC) is:

2023: £856

2022 (full): £1,896

2021 (interim): £794

So for income, which comes from membership fees and weekend surpluses.

2023: £4,375

2022: £4,367

And Excess of income over expenditure:

2023: £1,128

2022: £343

So we are still increasing our funds.

#### WEBSITE:

One of the anticipated increased costs from last year was the new website. However the website fees have been lower than expected. There have been some initial upfront costs by paying for some fees for 3 years in advance, but this is working out cheaper than paying for one year and thanks to David Watts and Edna for getting that cost saving.

However, it would be prudent to keep reserves in case of additional costs.

#### MEMBERSHIP FEE:

The BMC fee is increasing again, this time to £23.90. (But we are not increasing the Membership fee this year.)

#### WEEKEND CONTRIBUTION

Also the weekend contribution amounts depend on number of people on weekends. And there might be losses from the weekends. Two weekends last year did have losses but none so far this year.

So in summary: We are increasing the amount of surplus and this should be reviewed again next year. And in the context of how the club funds itself (either through membership fee alone, or with weekend contribution as well).

#### **Other Matters:**

##### **£2.50 pppw contribution**

This brings in £405 on 2021, £485 on 2022 and so far on 2023, £352

We have had it a couple of years and thinking about source of funds for the club, apart from the excess of the members fee over the BMC fee, this is the only real source of funds. As per the agreed sunset clause from last year's AGM, I have put in a resolution again to include this as part of our funding for the upcoming year. And next year to have a discussion as to whether we keep it and include it as part of our overall funding.

##### ***New Bank account***

We have set up a new club bank account at Metro Bank. And this account doesn't have the £5 monthly fee that the HSBC account does. We are in the process of transferring activity across to that and will then be closing the HSBC account. Therefore, any standing orders being paid into the HSBC account will need to be stopped by the relevant members.

##### ***Cheques***

Please don't pay by cheques - it makes it harder for the weekend organiser.

And more admin for membership.

##### ***Membership***

Maggie will cover this in the membership report but please don't pay membership until 1 Jan - makes it much easier on the accounts to keep it in the same year so we can see funds coming in.

##### ***PayPal***

Please pay from a PayPal account in your name, not your friends, relatives or company. If you have a debit card or credit card in your name, set up a PayPal account in that name. It is administratively difficult reconciling when names don't match especially if a refund is requested.

Lastly, as I will be leaving the committee having served 3 years, I would like to thank all the committee members that I have worked with over this time, both on the current committee and before. And especially to Susan for inviting me onto the committee initially, and then for her help when I took over the treasurer's role.

#### **Secretary (Peter Ramell)**

The committee had met six times during the year. The website had been a major item of discussion. Because of problems in updating the website it had not been possible to put the minutes of the meetings on the website, but these had been sent to members for the AGM.

### **3. Auditor's Report**

"I have reviewed the financial statements for Ibex Mountaineering Club for the year ended 31 December 2022. In my opinion these statements have been properly prepared and give a true and fair view of the state of the club's finances as at 31 December 2022." Julia Hilton.

As part of the audit, I have also reviewed the underlying calculations and spreadsheets. I am happy to stand as auditor for the year ending 31 December 2023.

Julia Hilton

### **4. Resolutions**

#### **(i) Retain Annual Membership Fee of £35.00**

Proposer: *Karen Goepfert*

Seconder: *David Merry*

Ibex thinks:

- The BMC has raised its annual fee for associated club members to £23.90 which is an increase of £1.65.
- Despite the BMC increase, there will still be a £11 buffer on receipts to the Club with a £35 membership fee to provide liquidity.
- The Committee has decided to retain the £2.50 weekend contribution to increase its reserves.

Ibex will:

- Seek to retain the annual membership fee of £35 to ensure the club has adequate liquidity for its ongoing operations.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

#### **(ii) Continue weekend participant contribution**

Proposer: *David Merry*

Seconder: *Jan O'Brien*

Ibex thinks

- the £2.50 per person per weekend was introduced to increase funds into the club
- the £2.50 pppw has raised approximately £405 in 2021, £485 in 2022 and £352.50 (to end of September) and is one of the few sources of funds for the club

- the £2.50 pppw will increase cash flow and is paid by those active members of the club who enjoy the weekends
- the cost is low versus other costs for the weekends
- a sunset clause was agreed at the last AGM to review again at the 2023 AGM
- the weekend participant contribution should be kept for 2024 to increase the club's reserves in the bank account, especially with the introduction of the costs for the new website
- the weekend participant contribution should be reviewed again at the 2024 AGM, along with a discussion by the members of how the club funds itself in the future, whether by annual club fees or a continued weekend participant contribution

Ibex will

- continue the £2.50 per person per weekend contribution for 2024, with a sunset clause for review again at the 2024 AGM

The resolution was passed unanimously.

### **(iii) To increase the December pre-Christmas weekend maximum charge to £40 per person per night**

Proposer: *Jim Nevill*

Secunder: *Natalia Diaz Burlinson*

Ibex thinks:

- The December weekend is always popular so requires accommodation offering a large number of places. Over the years we have primarily held this event at a YHA hostel. Of the few other venues we have used in the past they have either become more upmarket and too expensive or too low a standard for us. As from 2024 YHA are instituting a steep increase in sole use booking charges where weekend costs will be £2000 plus. The current £35 pppn cap means we would need 29 people attending. In recent years we have had about 25 and last year only 22. This puts Ibex at what could be considerable financial risk and to mitigate this Ibex suggests that for this weekend alone the cap should be raised to £40pppn.

Ibex will

- Continue with the £35 cap in all other cases but use a £40 cap on the pre-Christmas weekend meet if necessary.

In discussion it was noted that the resolution did not necessarily mean that the cost for the December weekend would be £40, but that there would be the flexibility for the charge to be up to this if required.

It was also suggested by one member that there might be a case for applying the higher cap to other weekends during the year, but it was noted that this would be a separate matter.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

### **(iv) Discontinue weekend organiser reduction**

Proposer: *Karen Goepfert*

Secunder: *David Merry*



Ibex thinks:

- The new website will not be able to automatically apply a reduction to the membership fee for organisers.
- Issuing manual refunds to each of the organisers will be administratively burdensome for the treasurer.
- The fee reduction is not a primary driver for weekend organisers.

Ibex will:

- No longer offer a membership fee reduction for weekend organisers.
- Provide the Committee with discretion to implement an equivalent incentive for weekend organisers if it considers it appropriate.

In discussion, it was felt that it was important to continue to provide an incentive to weekend organisers in thanks and recognition of the work involved, although this could not in future be done via the website. One possibility would be to do this by an adjustment to the expenses spreadsheet.

Following discussion, an amended resolution was proposed, with the replacement of the words "Provide the committee... if it considers it appropriate" with the words "The committee will endeavour to implement an equivalent incentive for weekend organisers, including, if possible, an adjustment to the expenses spreadsheet." This amended resolution was passed unanimously.

## **(v) Remove reserved weekend places for infrequent weekend participants**

Proposer: *Natalia Diaz Burlinson*

Seconder: *Karen Goepfert*

Ibex thinks:

- With the new website, it will become difficult to manage holding a proportion of places on a weekend for one week for members who have not attended a weekend in the last 6 months.
- Weekend organisers also do not have access to this information.
- The reserved spaces concept for infrequent members was introduced because many weekends at the time were booking out within hours. This has not happened since resuming weekends post-Covid. Most weekends have spaces available for several weeks after advertisement.

Ibex will:

- Remove the one week reservation on places for members who have not attended a weekend in the last 6 months, starting with January 2024 weekend.

In discussion it was noted that there could be a number of reasons why some members did not attend a weekend for a considerable time, but that with less pressure on bookings the need to reserve spaces for them now appeared to have passed, though we would continue to monitor the position.

The resolution was passed with 31 votes for, 1 against.

## **5. Elections of Committee Members**

The following nominations had been received:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominee(s)</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
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<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominee(s)</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Seconder</b>
President	Karen Goepfert	Jim Nevill	Hazel Williams
Treasurer	Patrick Tehan	George Hall	Peter Ramell
Secretary	Peter Ramell	Catriona Mitchell	Hazel Williams
Weekend Coordinator (2024)	Natalia Diaz Burlinson	Peter Ramell	Mags Ruttle
Weekend Planner (2025)	Mags Ruttle	Vivienne Nevill	David Watkins
Membership Secretary	Maggie Maloney	Chris Phillips	Jim Nevill
Newsletter Editor	Heather McGill	Mags Ruttle	Vivienne Nevill
Day walks	Jan O'Brien	Catriona Mitchell	George Hall
Webmaster	David Watts	Sally Taylor	Gina Watkins
Social media	(Vacant)		

Julia Hilton was also proposed and seconded as Auditor (for year end 31 Dec. 23).

Patrick Tehan was proposed and seconded as Vice President.

All positions above were unanimously elected.

The social media position was vacant but we would continue to search for someone to take this.

Many thanks were expressed to Viv and Jim Nevill, David Merry and Edna Calvo on standing down from the committee.

## **6. New Website**

Karen G said that, with the help of David Watts and Edna, we have developed a new website. The website is now up and ready to go and the Committee has been spending time over the past few months testing it and becoming familiar with its new features. We planned to launch the new website for general use on 1 January.

The new site is based on a combination of a Wix template and webcollect for making payments. The main Wix site more or less contains the same topics as our current website - in terms of events through which one can navigate and does not require a login. It looks very flash! You will still need to apply for an event with an online application form - similar to the existing application form. It is at this stage that you will need to log into an Ibex Webcollect account which you will need to create when you first register for an event or renew your subscription for 2024. I will be sending more guidance about this (and the subscription renewal process) in the coming weeks. As with any big change, she urged patience as you learn to navigate the new site.

Although every effort had been made to retain the functionality of the existing website, it was not possible to duplicate all functionality, so some processes have been adapted for use with the new site, some the topic of resolutions included on the agenda.

David Watts would be serving as the webmaster next year to allow for a smooth transition and to assist with any niggles that may arise. However, it is the hope going forward that the bulk of the website can be operated and

maintained by the relevant Committee members and David has created a detailed user manual to assist all with developing these skills!

Many thanks to him and Edna for their hard work!

## **7. General discussion**

Advert time for weekends. It was suggested that while in general the advert time for weekends in the newsletter would be two months, for some larger weekends three months might be appropriate. It was agreed to keep the position under review.

Camping weekends It was suggested that there might be a case for having more than one camping weekend on the programme. It was noted that this would require an organiser(s).

Use of Meet Up It was suggested that the facility Meet Up might be useful in publicising Ibex activities. Karen G said that the committee is looking into this, with a view to publicising day walks and club nights.

The meeting closed about 7pm