

Ibex Mountain & Hillwalking Club

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th November 2024

Thornbridge Outdoors Centre, Great Longstone, Bakewell, DE45 1NY

Committee Members present: Karen Goepfert (President), Patrick Tehan (Treasurer and Vice President), Natalia Diaz Burlinson (Weekend Coordinator), Mags Ruttle (Weekend Planner), Jan O'Brien (Day walks), Maggie Maloney (Membership Secretary), David Watts (Webmaster), Peter Ramell (Secretary)

Apologies: Heather McGill (Newsletter Editor)

Members present: 23, making 31 total including the committee members

Apologies: John Jennings-Mitson

1. Welcome and approval of 2023 AGM minutes

Karen Goepfert welcomed all to the 2024 AGM.

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were agreed.

2. Reports from the committee

Committee members gave their reports.

President (Karen Goepfert)

Welcome Everyone! It is great to see so many of you at an away AGM meeting. As you all know, this is a special year – as Ibex is celebrating its 40th Anniversary! We will be celebrating this milestone properly after the business aspects of our AGM with a catered meal and a ceilidh with live caller. More to come on this later.....

It is hard to believe that over a whole year has passed since our last AGM in October 2023.... I feel like it was just yesterday that we were in the Coach & Horses in Mayfair. We have been busy on the Committee implementing many of the things discussed at last year's AGM.

As probably the most significant development since the last AGM, we did (as promised) launch our sparkling new website on 1 January 2024. I am happy to report the introduction of the new website went very smoothly with just a few niggles here and there. I would like to thank everyone for their patience and willingness to adapt to the features and functionalities of the new website. Almost a year after its adoption, the website continues to work well and I am regularly impressed with its additional functionality. Also, as hoped the website itself is easier to administer and does not require any special coding skills – though does of course require users learning how to use its features. David Watts did prepare a comprehensive user guide to assist us with this! He will give a full report on the website shortly. The old website has now been retired.

As mentioned last year at the AGM, we opened a new bank account with Metro Bank which provides a cost savings as compared to the prior HSBC account. The operation of this new account has gone smoothly and we have now closed the HSBC account. Patrick Tehan will touch on this in his report.

As usual, we offered a wide range of activities in 2024, including

1/ Our traditional weekends away – including to:

Yorkshire – Earby and Hubberholme

Peak District – Edale and Thornbridge

Lake District – Lamplugh and Little Langdale

Wales – Brecon Beacons, Black mountains and Snowdonia (twice)

Dartmoor – Dewerstone

And Coastal areas – Gower and Camping in Devon

With just one more trip left – our traditional Pre-Christmas weekend (with a couple of spaces left) – in the Brecon Beacons this year – our 2024 program is drawing to a close. I am pleased to report that all of our weekends reached the breakeven point this year and several reached capacity, most some weeks after first being advertising – meaning the balance struck by our Weekend Planners when booking the program was pretty spot on. Our fabulous 2025 program launched in October has now been added to the website with the January weekend now open for booking.

2/ Several Scottish weeks – winter to Aviemore, trips in May to Glen Affric, Dornie, Spean Bridge and Courour.

3/ A variety of monthly day walks in the Southeast – ranging from the Chilterns to the Southeast.

5/ A range of club nights with topics ranging from Gorillas in the Mist to Hiking in Morocco, though attendance has been somewhat lower than previously. We also had an enjoyable photo competition with a good number of entries which generated a great calendar for 2025 – if you are interested in one – please contact Susan Watts. The cost is 13 pounds if collected.

Special announcements – We had one new Ibex arrival – David and Carmen welcomed Alexander to the world earlier this year and former member Jude Hartley had another baby this year.

I am pleased to report that notwithstanding all these activities, we did not seem to have suffered any major incidents. 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 programs going forward!

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

Weekend coordinator (Natalia Diaz Burlinson)

Relevant documents have been updated and put on the new website, and all templates stored electronically. All references to Covid have been removed.

Steps have been taken during the year to reduce the number of signs that needed to be sent, and so help reduce costs.

During the year I circulated a Google events calendar. Since there appears (from a show of hands at the meeting) to be interest in this from several people, I will do this again for 2025.

I am now standing down at the end of three years, and handing over to Clive Sinott.

Weekend planner (Mags Ruttle)

This is my first year in the role. I am very grateful to Jim and Viv Nevill for the help with the handover.

For the 2025 programme, 12 weekends have been booked in a wide variety of locations: the Lake District, Yorkshire, Peak District, North, South and mid Wales and Pembrokeshire, Northumberland and Devon. In addition, there will be a camping weekend in Devon with the option of staying in a B&B plus three, one-week trips to Scotland. We are also planning on offering a trip to the Alps in early September.

As some of the 2024 weekends very oversubscribed, I have tried to find larger accommodation for 2025. To mitigate the financial risk to the club, I have focussed on booking places that have a break-even number of 12-14 but with capacity to accommodate a larger number of people. I have committed to finding places for 2026 at the

current rate of £35 per person per night, this may need to be reviewed for bookings for 2027 as places have got more expensive.

Many thank to the members who have volunteered to organise a weekend. We still need an organiser for the pre-Christmas weekend.

The planning for 2026 has got underway with the booking of the School House in St John's in the Vale Centre for Easter.

Day Walks (Jan O'Brien)

In 2024 there has been a day walk each month of the year in a variety of locations. I would like to thank the volunteers who have led walks. A recent development - for the November walk - is the inclusion of some dusk to night navigation at the end of the walk. Mentoring is available to people wanting to lead walks.

I am now standing down at the end of my 3 years, and handing over to Cathy (Calow)

Membership (Maggie Maloney)

Member numbers. Over the five years to 2023 we've had a bit over 100 members, varying between 102 and a peak of 110 in 2023, with a fairly consistent turnover of about 10 per cent each year. This includes people who leave for a year or two (sometimes more) then rejoin. Most new members join after a period as prospective members and trying out a day walk or weekend or both.

Regarding this year 2024 – of the 110 members in 2023, 24 did not renew this year. That is a much larger level of non-renewal than before (there were ten and seven non-renewals respectively in the previous two years). Ten new members joined this year, which is about the same level of new members as in previous years. Several of them took part in the new members weekend at Edale in February, and some have joined several events subsequently. So current membership is a bit below what it has been in recent years and currently stands at 96.

Prospective members. There are currently twelve prospective members, most whom have already done a day walk or a weekend, in some cases both, but have not yet taken the step to decide to join the club.

There will be a new members Club Night in January and new members weekend in February so we hope those might interest new people.

Anyone who joins as a new or prospective member gets a welcome email explaining how the club works. Most of it duplicates information available on the website but hopefully it's helpful for them to have fairly comprehensive information all in one email which links to the relevant points on the website.

Encouraging new members/outreach. We have had some discussions, so far not very conclusive, about how to encourage new members to join, especially younger members, such as making use of Instagram, but we could perhaps pursue that more actively. Perhaps this can be something that the new committee might be interested in looking at.

New website. The new website was set up at the beginning of this year and there is now only one way to pay for membership, which is by Paypal (previously some people still paid by cheque or bank transfer).

The new website has entailed a new way of membership record keeping, both on the website itself and in the ancillary records held by the membership secretary. This has prompted us to review and clarify our rules for record-keeping from the standpoint of privacy and data protection, as well as how our own membership records link in with the BMC's records and the Club's Third Party Indemnity insurance. These are reflected in the statement of privacy policy on the website, in particular with regard to destroying personal information that is no longer needed (which is applicable also to weekend organisers), and in the more clearly formulated rule which applies to prospective members' participation in day walks and weekends.

Stepping down now. Thanks to colleagues on the committee and all of you and other members over this three years.

Webmaster (David Watts)

The new website went live on 1 January 2024, and has worked as expected. Membership renewals in January were all processed OK through the website. Two issues with the website are:

- on Webcollect, the organiser of a weekend is not always notified of a booking: I am monitoring this problem
- Paypal transactions don't include descriptions: Webcollect are considering whether this can be rectified

I am putting the write-ups of weekends on the website, and have also put all 2025 events there.

There were 80 new visitors to the website in September, and 86 in October.

The Ibex website does not show up particularly high on the list of London walking groups when Googled. This might be inevitable but could perhaps be looked at.

Newsletter (Heather McGill - report made by Karen Goepfert)

Heather sends apologies. She is experimenting with different formats for the newsletter, seeking to reduce duplication and direct people to the website. Feedback on initial formats was that they were somewhat spartan, and that more pictures and other similar material would be desirable. For the November newsletter Heather has experimented further, using new software, and it would be interesting to get feedback on this.

Treasurer (Patrick Tehan)

Patrick presented the accounts, as circulated. The current level of reserves - about £8k - had accumulated over the 40 years. It should be borne in mind that around 5k was tied up in deposits for weekends, some of which would be lost if the venues concerned went out of business, or the weekend was cancelled. Some financial cushion was therefore needed.

In 2023 there was a surplus on the accounts of about £600. There would not be a surplus in 2024 because of expenditure on the 40th anniversary.

In discussion, Susan W questioned why, since Paypal fees were now met by members, "Paypal fees (membership)" was shown as a debit to Ibex. Patrick T said that this was an issue of presentation, aimed at showing how much of what members pay is absorbed by Paypal. However this presentation could be changed for the future.

Secretary (Peter Ramell)

The committee has met six times during the year. Major items of discussion - already highlighted in other colleagues' reports - have been the introduction of the new website, matters relating to membership, and the new programme for 2025.

3. Auditor's Report

"I have reviewed the financial statements for Ibex Mountaineering Club for the year ended 31 December 2023. 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 2023." **Julia Hilton.**

As part of the audit, I have also reviewed the underlying calculations and spreadsheets. I am stepping down as auditor and propose Stephen Jones to stand as auditor for the year ending 31 December 2024. **Julia Hilton**

I accept and am happy to stand as auditor for the year ending 31 December 2024. **Stephen Jones.**

4. Resolutions

(i) Increase Annual Membership Fee to £42.00, and discontinue weekend participant contribution

Proposer: *Peter Ramell*

Seconder: *Mags Ruttle*

Ibex thinks:

- The BMC has raised its annual fee for associated club members to £29.33 from January 2025, which is an increase of £5.40. This noticeable increase cannot be absorbed in Ibex's funds, and will require an increase in the membership fee.
- Also, the Committee considers that the weekend participant contribution - which was originally introduced as a temporary measure during Covid to meet a short-term liquidity need - should now be discontinued because Ibex has generated a cash surplus within the planned target of £4,000-6,000.
- However, Ibex still requires increased cash flow to maintain this buffer while meeting its ongoing operating expenses and other future contingencies and proposes to spread this cost over the membership as a whole through an incremental £1.60 increase (on top of the £5.40 BMC increase) in the annual membership fee.
- Reflecting these two changes, the membership fee should increase to £42 from January 2025.

Ibex will:

- Increase the membership fee to £42 from January 2025, and discontinue the weekend participant contribution.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

In subsequent discussion, it was noted that BMC had recently been through considerable difficulties. Were Ibex satisfied that we obtained good value for money from our links to BMC? Patrick T said that, on insurance, some other quotes had been obtained, and were cheaper than BMC. However caution was needed in considering a change. We would need someone with knowledge of insurance matters to advise whether we could get reliable liability insurance elsewhere. It was though appropriate to question whether we got value for money from BMC. Following discussion it was agreed that the committee would continue to monitor this.

Further points raised were:

- had we considered walking-only insurance? It was thought that it might be difficult to separate this out from cover for scrambling and similar activities, which it would be helpful to retain.
- had we considered introducing an associate member status? It was thought that this would be difficult to police
- BMC had a hut that we might want to consider using. Details were on the BMC website.

(ii) Continue to provide a payment to weekend organisers, where requested

Proposer: *Peter Ramell*

Seconder: *Mags Ruttle*

Ibex thinks:

- The new website is not able to automatically apply a reduction to the membership fee for weekend organisers, as was done previously.
- At last year's AGM, it was agreed that the committee would endeavour to implement an equivalent incentive for weekend organisers, including, if possible, an adjustment to the expenses spreadsheet.
- The weekend expenses spreadsheet is already a complex document and it has not proved practical to provide an adjustment through it.

- Organisers of weekends in 2023 and 2024 are currently being offered an optional £5 refund which they can accept or decline at their discretion.

Ibex will:

- For the future, weekend organisers will be asked, when they return the expense form, whether they wish to receive a £5 refund, and if so to provide bank details.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

5. Elections of Committee Members

The following nominations had been received:

Position	Nominee(s)	Proposer	Seconder
President	Susan Watts	Karen Goepfert	Stephen Jones
Treasurer	Patrick Tehan	George Hall	Peter Ramell
Secretary	Viv Palmer	Catriona Mitchell	Karen Goepfert
Weekend Coordinator (2024)	Clive Sinott	Stephen Jones	George Hall
Weekend Planner (2025)	Mags Ruttle	Karen Goepfert	Peter Ramell
Membership Secretary	Karen Ward	Peter Ramell	Catriona Mitchell
Newsletter Editor	Heather McGill	George Hall	Stephen Jones
Day walks	Cathy Callow	Catriona Mitchell	Peter Ramell
Webmaster	David Watts	Jo-Lorraine Johnson-Zammit	Cathy Calow
Social media	(Vacant)		

Stephen Jones was also proposed and seconded as Auditor (for year end 31 Dec. 24).

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 Natalia Diaz-Burlinson, Maggie Maloney, Jan O'Brien, Peter Ramell, and, particularly, Karen Goepfert, on standing down from the committee.

6. General discussion

Club nights It was noted that attendance at some club nights over the last year had been embarrassingly low, particularly the new members' night. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Catriona M had kindly offered to help the President in organising club nights

- It would be helpful to announce a programme for the year ahead, although this would not be easy. We might also consider getting outside speakers, though there could be a cost to this.
- It was useful if presentations had plenty of photos.
- The venue was somewhat gloomy and jaded in appearance
- We should consider whether the Club nights were primarily for members, or others. Club nights could be a way to introduce people to the Club, although a day walk might be better.
- There might be scope for more information sharing at Club nights.
- It was not clear whether we continued to need monthly meetings. Less frequent meetings might be better attended. A related point was that a considerable proportion of members now lived outside London.

It was agreed that the committee would consider future arrangements for club nights, particularly the frequency, in the light of this discussion.

Newsletter format Points made were:

- The initial reformatted version - consisting mainly of weblinks - was somewhat offputting, but the November format was better.
- Something closer to the format of the old newsletter would be desirable to give a sense of community, perhaps with the inclusion of some personal news

The committee would consider these points further.

7. Any other business - none raised

The meeting closed about 6.15pm

Following the AGM was the Ibex 40th anniversary celebrations. Karen Goepfert introduced these:

Ibex 40th Anniversary

Now that we have finished the business of the AGM, we can move on to more jolly topics. The 40th Anniversary of Ibex!

I am sure there are several of you in attendance wondering where the last 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of Ibex Club membership have gone. I think it fair to say – it has gone to fun times, good meals and great friendships.

We are fortunate to have 2 of the original founders with us tonight to share this special event – Derek Ringer and Viv Nevill. Only Viv is here now – hopefully Derek will join us later. I would like to extend a special thank you and acknowledgement to Viv who has continued to remain very active with Ibex – serving on the Committee as recently as last year jointly with Jim as the Weekend Planner creating and organizing the lovely program of weekends that we have been enjoying this year.

The idea of forming a mountaineering club, Ibex, was started by four friends who were part of a multi activity club called Intervarsity Club (IVC); Derek Ringer, Peter Wells, Paul Hildreth and Viv Nevill. They were all active participants of the Mountain and Moorland (also known as M&M) sub club of IVC, Derek was Organiser and Viv Assistant Organiser, Peter the previous organiser, and Paul was also organiser of the Rock and Ice sub club (climbing). The "seed" was planted by Peter and Derek who then invited Paul and Viv into helping them form the club. They initially met in The George IV pub in Chiswick, and later in each other's flats, and from these discussions they began to invite other people to join the Ibex committee.

We have been planning this event for over a year and I hope that you all enjoy yourselves! Many thanks to Susan, Rachel, Mags and Viv and Jim for their help in planning and organizing this weekends activities!

Please eat, drink and be merry! There will be a catered meal in the Farm House dining area and a ceilidh with live caller will take place back here commencing at 8pm. There is a cash bar available. In normal Ibex tradition, the first drink will be on the house and some complimentary prosecco will be available during the caller break.