

Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Clubs Advisory Group

Clubs Questionnaire Analysis

In 2008 we carried out research with our membership which provided us with valuable information on which to base our ongoing strategy and operational plans. There remained a considerable gap in our understanding and knowledge of our Member Clubs. On assuming the role of Director of Club Affairs last September I determined to extend our research efforts to clubs in the form of a questionnaire in which I was assisted by the members of the Clubs Advisory Group, and Officers and Directors of the MCofS.

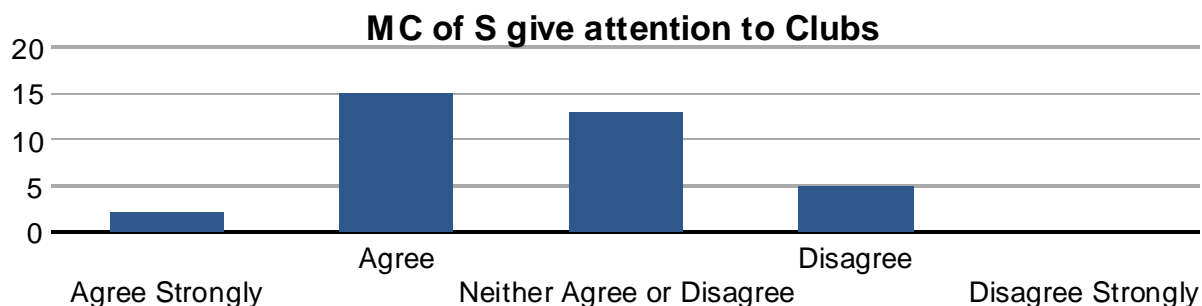
The response by Clubs has been most encouraging and I am grateful to all those club secretaries and officials who took the time and effort to provide the information on which this analysis is based. 36 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 27% which gives a statistically valid result.

Attitude to the MCofS

This is fundamental to our understanding of our member clubs. The two part question posed was:-

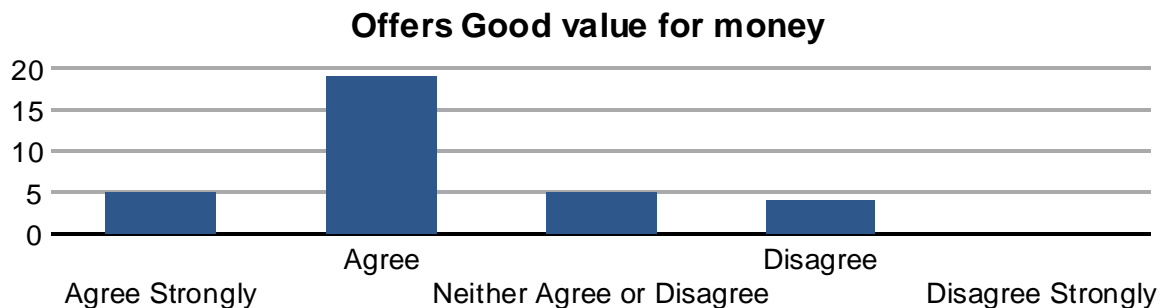
Thinking about the PRESENT state of MCofS – Club relations, please consider the following statements and underline or highlight your response.

'The MC of S currently gives adequate attention to it's member mountaineering clubs' :-



and second:-

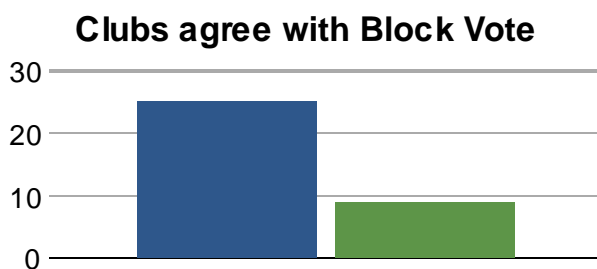
'The MC of S offers good value for money' :-



The response to the first part reminds me of my old school reports, could do better! The recent enhancements to Club representation within the MCofS, such as the Clubs Advisory Group and a Board Director, have yet to work through fully and are a work in progress. The second part was perhaps slightly more surprising and positive given the capacity of member clubs to endlessly discuss the value of the MCofS. It is encouraging to find that most actually do consider we give value for money.

The Club Block Vote System

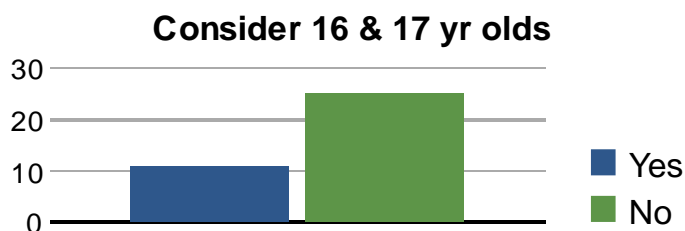
At the AGM in September 2009 a Voting Review Working Group (VRWG) was set up to examine the Club Block. It concluded that we should retain the status quo. This question was an opportunity to see how clubs viewed the outcome of the VRWG.



There was strong support for the continuance of the Block Vote with some minority views not dissimilar to those found in the VRWG.

Children and Young People in Clubs

The MCofS provides support to clubs to enable them to recruit children and young people. This section was designed to test the willingness of clubs to avail themselves of this service.



Only one club, which has been set up as a children's club, was interested in recruiting the under 16s. However, there appears to be much stronger support among clubs to consider the 16 and 17 year age group.

News4Clubs

This newsletter commenced in July 2009 as a service to Clubs. All Clubs reported receiving News4Clubs. It appears to have filled an information gap as over 90% of respondents regard this as a useful service. Indeed most clubs pass on the newsletter in whole or part. As to the frequency of the News4Clubs about two thirds were happy with the monthly schedule, however that left a third who would prefer it less often. Comments were generally positive. There were suggestions that it could use more colour and photographs, and expand to contain articles when there is no space in the TSM. However, on the downside it was thought by some to be turgid and contained too much repeated information.

Recruitment

Three quarters of Clubs reported that they actively recruited for new members. Those that did not gave a variety of reasons: membership standards, lack of snowy winters, club about the right size, getting old together, limited success, and word of mouth sufficient.

A series of questions explored a variety of methods Clubs might use to recruit. A third advertised in local mountaineering shops and slightly more reported that they did not. Similar proportions used a Local Library or civil facility, while only 17% used a local paper and another two thirds avoided these - perhaps a cost issue? Websites were popular and used by nearly three quarters of clubs with only a small number not so doing. Posters, word of mouth, exhibitions and local fairs, indoor meets and events, even the MCofS website were mentioned as other recruitment tools.

Just over half of clubs reported that the most effective recruitment tool was their website with 'other' methods coming a poor second.

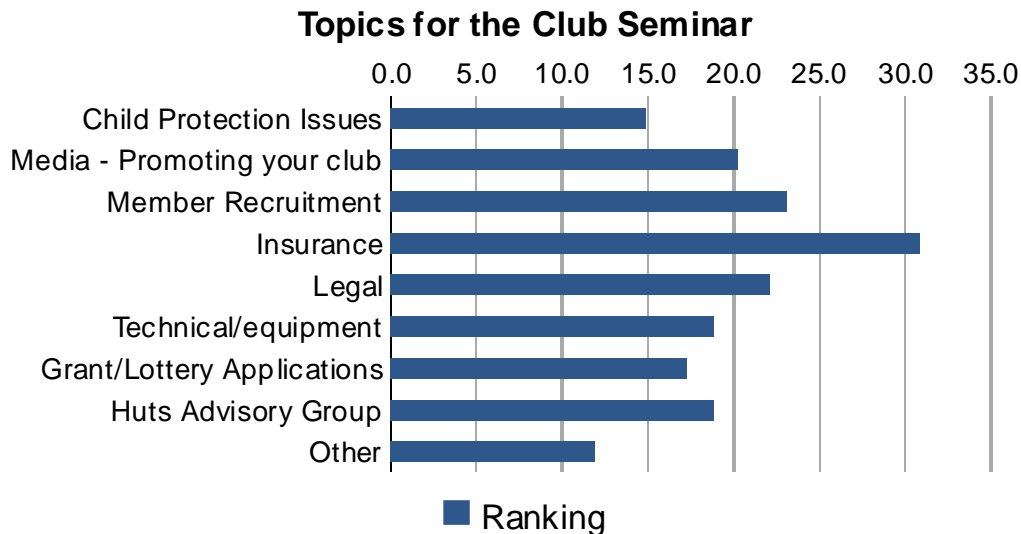
Only a third of clubs expressed an interest in MCofS recruitment initiatives with most not interested.

Web Facilities

Given the prowess of a website to generate new members it was no surprise to find that 80% of Clubs do have a website. The vast majority were open sites, with only around 15% restricted. Many Clubs did report having a members only restricted area however. Since Clubs are clearly already well catered for in the website department hardly any clubs reported an interest in a MCofS web hosting service. Given the widespread use of websites it was strange that only two Clubs reported having a Facebook Account.

Club Seminar

This question attempted to gauge the interest of Clubs in various topics for the Club Seminar. The timing of the questionnaire has not allowed for a direct influence on the planning of this year's event, however many of the more popular topics will feature.



Other topics suggested were training courses and the block vote with one club asking for Perth as a venue.

Grants

Just under a third of Clubs reported making an application for a Grant in the last five years. The grants were used for training, club safety equipment, hut development, a club handbook and a safety seminar.

New or Additional Services

A number of responses came back. Interestingly some are already MCofS services. For the record, OS maps to show recognised routes to summits, car parks at beginnings of routes, an Internet forum for MCofS members, setting up a new club hut, water sports on the CLI, group discounts, and more to promote training within clubs.

Any Other Comments

This provoked a variety of comments.

MCofS staff should attempt to go out and join occasional club walks especially newly affiliated clubs.

Positive comments on balance between Mountaineering and Hillwalking, and the practical interest in Clubs and the setting up of the CAG, News4Clubs, TSM and the work carried out by the MCofS.

MCofS to encourage mountaineers to join Clubs and to assist with recruitment and particularly advise the benefits of safety. People do not feel need to join club, but clubs have much to offer. Young people find that Clubs with mostly older members are unattractive. How to rejuvenate?

Expressed no preferences on the Club Seminar as no one will attend from their club.

Dissatisfied with membership database - not receiving TSM, and concerns about insurance.

Insurance issues - how about remove club membership and have IM only?