



THE UPHILL SKI CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN 44th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in person at Bearsden Snowsports Club, Glasgow and virtually via
Zoom, 1pm 9th November 2024

Present:

Trustees: Shona Marsh (Chair), John Patchett (Treasurer), Lauren Henderson (Vice Chair), Anne Simmons, John McMillan, Baden Knifton, Josh McDonagh, Peter Rankin, Rachel Ducker, Debbie Mooney, Robbie King (Company Secretary)

Members: Peter Thorpe, Elaine Boyd, Elisabeth Greene, Tony Greene, Brett Millett, Ruth Millett, Peter Finlayson, Calum Finlayson, Janet Finlayson, Lauren Dyer, Edward Jones, Claire Wilson, Shona Tate, Alan Armstrong, Carmel Teusner, Ryan Armstrong, Clark Ribertsons, Kenneth Moyes, John Saffell, Lisa Hall, Duncan Spink, Leanne Richardson

Staff in attendance: Ben Adlington, Virginia Anderson (CEO)

Apologies: Robbie King, Paul Masters, Kimberly Martin, Innes & Partners (auditors).

1. Welcome, apologies, declarations of interests

SM welcomed everyone to the meeting and VA introduced voting, how questions would work, and other housekeeping.

The meeting was agreed to be quorate with 33 people in attendance, and met the requirement of a quorum of 15 members as outlined in the Articles of Association.

It was highlighted that current employees would not be able to vote, and no other conflicts of interest were noted.

2. Chair's report

SM opened the formal business of the meeting and thanked members, trustees and staff for joining the AGM.

SM invited the meeting to approve the minutes from the 2023 meeting. The minutes were approved by a show of hands and online votes.

SM highlighted the chair and CEO report. She noted the following key points;

SM thanked the trustees who have reached the end of their term or stepped down during the year; Shona Tate, Carmel Teusner, Edd Jones, Jonathan Medlock and Gordon Ritter. She noted a formal vote of thanks to them for steering the charity through the pandemic and Brexit challenges that the charity has faced.

SM welcomed the new trustees Rachel Ducker, Debbie Mooney, John McMillan and Baden Knifton.

SM thanked LH for stepping into the vice chair role, PR for taking up audit & risk committee chair and AS for becoming nominations, remuneration and governance committee chair

SM noted the continued and long-standing impact of the pandemic and Brexit on the charity, and the considerable efforts of board, VA and staff team towards seeing improvements.

The risk register and risk management has been significantly improved during the year.

The fundraising has a new manager and income generation remains a top priority during the year.

Financial performance is still monitored by monthly finance meeting to help ensure the future of the charity.

The existing strategy has been extended by 6 months to March 2026 due to the change of financial year end last year. The strategy is available on the website. The next meeting will invite input into future strategy.

The four strategic pillars in the strategy remain at the heart of our work:

- A strong adaptive snowsport community
- An inclusive snowsport sector
- Fundraising with purpose
- A sustainable, resilient organisation

SM hopes that the year ahead will continue to see improvements in the impact of covid on the charity and planning for the future.

3. CEO Report

VA thanked SM and reiterated her gratitude to members for attending in person and online. It is an important meeting.

Over the last year a big change we faced was the retirement of Steve Smaje, Technical Director, which challenged us to look the structure of the organisation and individual responsibilities. All school managers have been promoted to become Regional Managers who look more broadly at work in their regions working with partners, local groups, their schools and each leads on a key aspect of DSUK's work. For example, Liz Clifford leads on additional needs support and learning and Ben Adlington leads on assets and equipment to ensure we make best use of resources.

This way of working thematically across the UK has helped improve standards and staff learning from each other's across the teams making the best use of the resources we have. She thanked the Regional Managers for embracing this way of working and taking on these responsibilities.

The four key pillars for work in the strategy helps us ask the question 'what does success look like?' to help us meet the objectives of learners and keep us focussed on our core purpose and what people need from DSUK. Having a sustainable and resilient organisation covers aspects of our work that focus on what good looks like through good practice, policy and implementation.

The organisation has seen an increase in lesson numbers, with more than 4,500 lessons delivered last year, exceeding the set goal by 19% after building from zero at the end of the pandemic. DSUK provided more than 1,000 lessons than the previous year benefiting more than 900 individual learners as well as those attending as part of groups and partnership working.

VA noted the success of group of activity as it's affordable, sociable and fun, and drives recreational activity over time. VA shared the example of Our Club in Tamworth where young people and siblings attend as volunteers, and families take part together. The closed slope sessions in Manchester allow a safe and welcoming space, where skiers and snowboarders at all levels come together to share and learn. Many examples of this type of working are happening across the country and shared experiences help people stay active in a sustainable way.

VA also emphasised the importance of partnerships, with the DSUK working with various charities and sports organizations helping to create a community of learners. From Snowsport Scotland, the RFU, Blesma, Scope, Sense as well as other national and local partnerships make a big difference.

VA acknowledged the challenges faced in Scotland due to the closure of Snow Factor at Braehead and the shift to dry slopes. The team are optimistic about rebuilding and

working in partnership to improve accessibility. She thanked the Scotland members for joining discussion about the future and thanked BA for his leadership in rebuilding Scotland's activity despite the challenges of limited provision for people who are sit skiers or use fixed riggers. It highlights the challenges of providing accessible and affordable activity for everyone, and the challenge of suitable accessible facilities for the sector. That must be improved with partnerships. Progress is being made.

Nine local groups are running currently and we're planning for the reopening of the Edinburgh based local group. The local groups are the backbone of DSUK's work as they provide a safe place for practice, staying active and having fun. VA thanked the hundreds of volunteers who make this possible across the country. Pendle and Manchester groups have now merged their activities, and DSUK is now administering their activity to support the volunteers. Hemel and Milton Keynes are now planning for the same approach.

DSUK has a commitment to building an inclusive sector, working with businesses to support their understanding of disability issues, and is planning to form a working group across the industry to help tackle these questions.

The holiday programme has continued to run in Andorra with 6 weeks of activity during the year in Arinsal and Soldeu. Brexit regulations mean there are still limits to broadening the programme more widely again. Progress is slow, but we will continue to try to do more.

DSUK wants to be able to welcome all skiers, but we can't do everything that needs to be done. We support others like Snowsport England and Snowsport Scotland on the development pathway and we support Snow Camp apprentices across the schools supporting excluded young people build work experience and careers in the sector. Many we have employed when they complete the programme, for example Blake Rowlands should be congratulated on becoming senior instructor in Manchester.

With businesses, we help them to think through how they can include more disabled people – even in taking small steps to improve the opportunities for disabled people and build their experience. We hope to create a working group to discuss this.

We continue to work with BASI to enable more people to qualify as adaptive instructors.

Fundraising remains the most pressing challenge for the charity. The team has been expanded and work will take to build and stabilise fundraising income, which remains fairly static year on year. Fundraising income is critical to providing lessons at the same or less than non-adaptive lesson costs and provide organisational sustainability. We're

doing our best to reduce risk in the fundraising programme, for example, by reducing DSUK led events which are costly with no guarantee of a return. We are instead focussing on the biggest return on investment.

VA thanked all the organisations and donors who have provided life changing support to the charity.

On governance, VA reiterated thanks to the outgoing trustees who have made a considerable contribution to the charity who have done an extraordinary job and a belief in our mission.

VA formally thanked our auditors, Innes and Partners, for being an excellent critical friend to the organisation and have helped us do our job well.

Over the year ahead there are four key areas of focus;

- Building fundraising activity
- Creating a new certificate system to help have an accessible framework for learners to develop their skills.
- We'll also be looking at commercial activity and an innovation project to help not only generate income but also to provide additional services to members and learners
- We will focus on building connections between learners, volunteers, partners and participants across each region as well as building more partnership working

VA thanked all the board members, both current and outgoing trustees, for being thoughtful committed and competent, and doing so with good humour.

4. Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts

JP presented the slide with income and expenditure for the last year.

JP presented a summary of the performance of 2023/24 finances, and comparison to the prior years noting the change in the financial year end the previous year.

He highlighted the importance of the audit and thanked Innes & Partners for their support, particularly with changes in the personnel in the finance manager role.

	£ 18 months		
Income	2020/21	21/23	23/24
Donations	236,632	464,699	300,365
Charitable Activities	70,668	470,827	432,023
Other Trading Activities	55,795	92,304	60,781
Investments	2	97	707
Total	363,097	1,027,927	794,146
Expenditure			
Raising funds	59,562	147,044	103,275
Charitable activities	445,955	908,051	718,467
Total	505,517	1,053,095	821,742
Surplus/deficit	-142,420	-25,168	-27,596
Restricted Reserves	134,798	64,123	41,609
Unrestricted Reserves	59,436	104,943	99,861
Total funds	194,234	169,066	141,470

Key items to note:

Donations reached around £300k which were on a par with the previous year, including notable donations from Crystal customers of £80k, Garfield Weston Foundation, Britford Bridge Foundation and individual donations of £30k.

In snowsport delivery, which is shown as charitable activities', increased by about 38% and 4,536 lessons. Costs have risen but only by 18% despite increasing activity at a higher level. Good cost control has helped.

Deficit of around £27k, the majority of which is depreciation. Unrestricted reserves of around £100k are around same as previous year and we would like to build on these.

The covid Bounce Back Loan funds have not been utilised and the loan balance at the end of October is £28.5k. This is paid back monthly.

Overall, the performance shows resilience in challenging economic circumstances.

Two resolutions were voted on:

1. **Resolution to adopt the accounts** – the meeting approved the accounts

2. **Appointment of the auditors** – The meeting voted to reappoint Innes & Partners as auditors and allowed the trustees to determine their remuneration. This was approved by the meeting.

SM thanked JP for giving his report.

5. Retiral and reappointment of trustees

SM introduced the resolution to reappoint the following as trustees:

- Robbie King
- Anne Simmons
- Peter Rankin
- Lauren Henderson

The resolution was passed.

Four coopted trustees were appointed by the board during the year and they were brought forward for appointment by the members. SM introduced the resolution to appoint the following as trustees:

- John McMillan
- Debbe Monney
- Baden Knifton
- Rachel Ducker

The resolution was passed.

Before SM closed the formal business of the meeting she offered a vote of thanks to Josh McDonagh for his service as he retires from the board after the AGM. She highlighted JMcD's service as co-chair of the Skiers and Snowboarders Involvement Group and his role on the board. He has made a significant contribution to the charity particularly regarding accessibility and improving diversity.

SM also thanked Lauren Henderson and Robbie King for their contribution to setting up the AGM and their support in organising the meeting.

6. Any Other Business:

1. VA highlighted the Warren Miller film screening at the Imax in Glasgow the following evening. The film tour is travelling across the UK, and contributing to DSUK's fundraising. Q&As at hosted events will include adaptive skiers and snowboarders.
2. Burns Night event is planned for Burns Night in January in Aviemore

3. There us a prize draw live at the moment, where many prizes where holidays and more can be won. VA noted her thanks to Marie McCann and Cameron Ross for making this possible. Tickets are limited.
4. VA encouraged members to renew their membership in a timely way

7. Member Q&A:

SM opened the discussion to the meeting and invited questions from members.

1. Alan Armstrong introduced himself to the meeting asked for advice about skiing in Scotland outdoors, VA assured him that the DSUK would be able to provide support and suggested that he contact them via email for further assistance on indoor snow in Manchester. She also mentioned that the DSUK would be working at Glencoe from this winter, in addition to Cairngorm Mountain. Alan, who has previously skied at various locations, also mentioned that his son Ryan, who has a mental health disorder, might be interested in joining the DSUK. VA confirmed that the DSUK supports individuals with both physical and mental health challenges.
2. VA then introduced Lisa Hall, a longstanding chair and current president of DSUK, who expressed her delight at the progress DSUK has made in recent years and noted the increased stability that is now evident. She congratulated everyone involved for their good work and helping increase lesson numbers again. VA acknowledged the challenges faced by trustees and staff, and thanked Lisa for her continued support particularly for keeping the long term knowledge and history of the organisation. SM also thanked LH for her reflection on our progress.
3. Elaine Boyd shared her questions including whether we would consider having a royal patron. VA doesn't know if that has been explored and noted that we have a group of patrons and ambassadors, including Pippa Middleton, but doesn't know if royal patronage has been explored. She also noted that we didn't until recently have any communications support and there hasn't been capacity to support patrons fully. Website improvements are a priority ahead of PR at present.
4. EB asked if we had explored the independent living fund to help members access funding in Scotland. VA noted that we could promote this more actively. EB highlighted the importance of sharing the work of DSUK and promoting disability sport more widely.

VA shared that we will be coaching the Invictus Games first ever snowsport team for Vancouver 2025 and that Able 2 Adventure will be moving into the Glenmore Lodge office so that we can create an adaptive sports hub at Glenmore Lodge. This will benefit all disabled visitors to the highlands seeking outdoor opportunities. She noted that we have a lot to do in raising further awareness.

5. EB observed the need the need to organise trips to Cairngorm to help members take part in a mountain environment and VA agreed that this is a priority for the charity. VA is hopeful that we will be able to reintroduce UK based trips now that we a new staff member in post.
6. Carmel Teusner commented on the noticeable improvements in our communications and noted her congratulations and the broader range of work and partnerships being shared. VA introduced and noted her thanks to Cameron Hall for his good work in this area. Story telling has improved considerably too so that people can see people like them to help break down barriers, removing barriers for many more people.
7. Alan Armstrong recommended staying at the Nevis Range where parking for vans and motorhomes is free for disabled skiers.

There were no other questions or comments, and the meeting was closed. SM thanked everyone for attending and offered her appreciation to the meeting for their attendance.