



Strategic Plan

2009 - 2012

Approved by the BMC National Council on 14 September 2008

Climbing - Mountaineering - Hill Walking

British Mountaineering Council
The Old Church
177-179 Burton Road
West Didsbury
Manchester
M20 2BB

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The BMC is the National Representative Body for climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers and ski mountaineers in England and Wales. The organisation was established in 1944 and now has 64,000 members and 25 full time staff¹ based in Manchester. The BMC's formal role, remit and operating procedures are laid down in the BMC Memorandum & Articles of Association available on www.thebmc.co.uk. The BMC is a Company Limited by Guarantee.
- 1.2 The BMC relies on well developed structure of voluntary specialist committees - supported by staff - to develop and oversee much of our technical work for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers. These are shown in the organisation structure chart in Appendix i. The staff structure chart is shown in Appendices ii.
- 1.3 This document sets out the BMC's key strategic areas of work for 2009-12. In achieving the strategic aims described, the BMC will work in close co-operation with key partners including Mountain Leader Training England (MLTE), Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK), and the National Mountain Centre (Plas y Brenin), but above all with its membership, developing policy through representatives on the BMC National Council.

Appendix iii provides further details of these organisations.

¹ This includes 5 staff who are directly involved with trading activities (particularly Travel Insurance) which generate income for the BMC (see Section 4.3).

2.0 SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

2.1 The BMC's remit covers a broad range of climbing and mountain sports activities; the title 'British Mountaineering Council' is historical and no longer indicates the range and complexity of our activities. The BMC's work and services covers the following main disciplines:

- **Mountain Walking¹ & Scrambling (summer and winter):** Challenging walking in Snowdonia, the Lake District, Scotland and worldwide. Requires physical fitness and mountain skills (navigation).
- **Rock Climbing:** This typically involves roped climbing on natural and quarried cliffs both at home and abroad.
- **Bouldering:** This is unroped climbing on short, often steep and technical crags and isolated blocks of rock.
- **Climbing Walls:** This involves roped climbing and bouldering on artificial (usually indoor) climbing walls; it includes recreational climbing, competitions and climbing under instruction. There are 300+ public climbing wall facilities nationwide.
- **Winter climbing:** This refers to climbing snow and ice covered rock faces, ridges and gullies in the Scottish Highlands, Snowdonia and the Lake District. This demands a particular understanding of snow and ice conditions, weather and objective dangers.
- **Alpine Mountaineering:** This involves climbing snow, ice and rock faces, ridges and summits in an alpine mountain environment, typically the European Alps.
- **Ski Mountaineering:** This combines mountaineering and skiing disciplines, usually in an Alpine setting, within Europe, the Caucasus or further afield.
- **Mountaineering in the Greater Ranges:** This involves high standard mountaineering and exploration on major faces and summits in the Himalaya, Central Asia, South America including Patagonia, Greenland, Alaska and elsewhere.

2.2 Whilst many people undertake several, or many of these activities, an increasing number of participants focus on particular disciplines.

2.3 Indoor climbing has significantly increased in popularity over the past 10-15 years and today many people – often based in the major cities – climb only on indoor climbing walls treating them much like a gym; some indoor climbers may never make the transition to outdoor climbing.

2.4 Bouldering for example is virtually a separate sub-sport with its own terminology, image and media.

- 2.5 There are also many serious mountain walkers in England and Wales; mountain enthusiasts with considerable aerobic fitness, mountain sense and skill, but who may have little interest in venturing on to terrain requiring roped climbing.
- 2.6 All aspects of the sport offer considerable challenge, reward and a sense of personal achievement in what is often a lifelong activity.

¹ Classified as Hill Walking in the BMC Memorandum & Articles of Association.

3.0 STATISTICS & TRENDS

3.1 The BMC represents a growing and vibrant range of climbing and mountain sports activities. Our total membership currently (July 2008) stands at 64,049 comprising 38,755 Individual members and 25,294 Club members. Appendix iv shows the trend in BMC membership over the past 10 years.

3.2 In 2005/6 and 2007/8 Sport England commissioned a new series of national surveys – the Active People Survey¹; this provides the most accurate information we have ever had on national (England only) sporting participation rates and trends.

The results of these surveys suggest the following:

- 0.36% of the population (147,000 people) participate in climbing or mountaineering; of those 103,000 are male and 44,000 female; 7,300 are from black and minority ethnic communities and 7,300 have some form of limited disability or illness. 4.1% (129,000) of young people aged 11-15 regularly participate in climbing or mountaineering.
- 0.4% (163,000) of adults in England regard climbing or mountaineering as a sport they would like to do more often.
- Participation in climbing or mountaineering by region (based on Sport England's regional boundaries) is as follows:

• North West	28,000
• Yorkshire	17,000
• North East	7,000
• East Midlands	14,000
• West Midlands	13,000
• East	10,000
• London & South East	41,000
• South West	17,000

8.5% of active participants are members of climbing / mountaineering clubs.

- Climbing is predicted to grow by 0.1% from 0.7% to 0.8% of the total population (England) between 2005 and 2013. This represents a 14% predicated increase in participation over this period. In the 2 years between the two Active People Surveys, participation in indoor climbing increased from 0.11% (45,000 people) to 0.15% (62,000 people); this represents a 39% increase. Participation in rock climbing did not increase significantly over this period.
- Participation in climbing and mountaineering by age group is very evenly spread compared to the average across all sports (see Table 1 overleaf); the figures show that participation rates amongst 25 – 29 year olds are double the national average.

¹ The Active People Survey is the largest ever survey of sport to be undertaken in Europe. The 2005/6 survey involved a telephone survey of 363,724 in England (aged 16 plus) and provides reliable statistics on participation in sport for all 354 Local Authorities areas (a min. 1,000 interviews were completed in each).

Table 1. Participation rates based on age group

AGE	CLIMBING / MOUNTAINEERING	AVERAGE ACROSS ALL SPORTS
16 - 19	14%	12%
20 - 24	15%	10%
25 - 29	18%	9%
30 - 34	15%	11%
35 - 44	20%	22%
45 - 64	16%	24%
64+	2%	11%

4.0 THE BMC, MLTE & SPORT ENGLAND

4.1 The BMC and MLTE receive funding from Sport England to support certain work programmes. In 2008 Sport England produced a new 4 year strategy for the period 2009 – 2012. The London Olympics in 2012 has led to a re-focusing of Sport England's function and priorities; Sport England's key focus is now 'Community Sport'. The BMC and MLTE will work closely with Sport England on those areas that align with our own strategic aims.

4.2 The components of Sport England's 2009-12 strategy that most closely align with the BMC's work relate to the following:

- **Clubs:** Sport England regards clubs as being critical to sustaining participation in sport, it aims to encourage a 'quality experience' for people who join clubs.

Alignment: This strongly aligns with the BMC's aim of improving the support, guidance and services we offer to clubs.

- **Volunteers:** Sport England acknowledges the importance of volunteers within sport and is keen to encourage volunteers.

Alignment: The BMC relies very heavily on volunteers; we would benefit from further support to improve the quality and volume of training offered to volunteers and the level of office support.

- **Membership:** Sport England has an aim of increasing participation in sport as a whole.

Alignment: This aligns with the BMC's goal of increasing membership, particularly amongst the younger age groups.

- **Coaching / Training:** Sport England aims to increase the amount of coaching (training and instruction in our case) available to participants.

Alignment: This directly aligns with MLTE's aim of developing the Climbing Wall Award, the Mountaineering Councils (BMC, MCofS and MCI) work on developing coaching and Plas y Brenin's delivery of training courses for coaches and leaders.

- **Talent structures:** Sport England wants to create structured talent development programmes in sports - to support high performers as they progress through the sport.

Alignment: Talent structures are generally quite poorly developed in climbing and mountaineering compared with many other mainstream sporting activities; support is needed in this area.

4.3 Financing our work and services will be based on a combination of self-generated income and income from Sport England. Currently 89% of the BMC's income comes from membership subscriptions and commercial activities (particularly travel Insurance) with the remaining 11% coming from Sport England. It is anticipated that the BMC will continue to fund the bulk of core work through income derived from subscriptions and commercial activities.

The MLTE will continue to derive income from the Mountaineering Awards system and will utilise any income from Sport England to develop and promote the Awards to a wider audience.

5.0 BMC/MLTE STRATEGY 2009 – 12

5.1 Introduction

Over the next 4 years the BMC will work in a very diverse range of activities. In undertaking this work we will rely on a staff team of 25, a network of several hundred dedicated volunteers and working closely with partner organisations including MLTE, MLTUK, Plas y Brenin and the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC).

Section 5.2 highlights the BMC's overall strategic aims and Sections 5.3 to 5.11 give the specific aims based on our key areas of work for members.

5.2 Overall strategic aims

The BMC and MLTE are mature organisations with clear views of our roles and responsibilities within 'British Mountaineering'. Our main priorities – or *core work* - are also well established.

From 2009 to 2012 our overall strategic aims are to:

- Improve the range and quality of services and support we offer to club and Individual members and volunteers with a focus on online services.
- Grow our membership by at least 2.5% per year and encourage younger people to join the BMC.
- Increase the profile and understanding of climbing, hill walking and mountaineering activities within central government and relevant government departments, agencies and NGOs.
- Improve access to the cliff, mountain and coastal environment; promote habitat and species conservation and provide information on access and conservation issues for new and existing members.
- Ensure the new people entering the sport have a quality infrastructure of clubs, climbing walls and training opportunities to enable their progression through the sport.
- Provide opportunities for quality mountain training and instruction and expand the range of courses and awards; ensure that all participants receive quality information and advice on safe practice in mountaineering.

5.3 Providing a 'national voice' for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers

As the sole representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales one of the BMC's most important functions is to represent members' interests at a local, regional, national and international level; to be the 'voice' or advocate for the sport.

The BMC will:

- Work with central government, government departments and agencies, and conservation and land management bodies to promote the interests of members. To improve understanding of mountaineering activities and to spell out benefits of our sport to those in positions of authority or influence.
- Campaign against policies, legislation and other actions and developments that threaten the upland landscape, or restrict, limit or control our rights to enjoy the cliff and mountain environment in a responsible manner.
- Further the overseas interests of British climbers and mountaineers by working with the world bodies of the sport (the UIAA and the IFSC) on legal issues, access & conservation, youth development, mountain medicine, major events and the development of equipment standards.
- Promote the physical and mental benefits of climbing, hill walking and mountaineering in the specialist and national media.

5.4 Improving access - promoting cliff & mountain conservation

This work is related to 5.2 above but focuses purely on natural resources i.e. our crags, mountaineers and coastal land. This core area of work involves campaigning for access improvements and legislation, working with landowners, National Park Authorities, the National Trust and conservation bodies to resolve local and regional access issues and promoting environmental awareness amongst climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

The BMC will:

- Campaign for a statutory right of access to coastal land under the Marine Bill and will work closely with Defra, Natural England, the Welsh Assembly government and CCW to ensure that the needs of recreational access are reflected in the ensuing Act.
- Manage our land holdings (Tremadog Rocks, Craig y Longridge, Stone Farm Rocks, Alderly Cliff and Horseshoe Quarry) in a responsible manner; establish best practice and promote positive examples amongst other landowners.
- Maintain and update the Regional Access Database on the BMC website as the definitive source of access information for climbers and mountaineers.
- Develop and promote the Access & Conservation Trust (ACT) and the BMC Crag Care Fund as vehicles for funding environmental and landscape projects.
- Promote the landscape value of our crags and mountains and work constructively with landowners to actively manage cliff habitats in a way that benefits both climbers and conservationists.
- Produce publications and information resources to ensure that people visiting our crags, hills and mountains are aware of any sensitive habitats, species of conservation concern and broader environmental considerations.

5.5 Promoting BMC membership & developing the services we offer

This is a critical part of the BMC's strategy. As a membership organisation we rely heavily on income generated from subscriptions to support our office infrastructure, staff and wider organisational running costs. Continually improving, fine tuning and expanding the range of services we offer to club and individual members is essential if the BMC is to continue to develop and grow.

The BMC will:

- Review our membership structure and membership categories, with a view to making it more equitable and to attract younger people.
- Improve our membership retention rates and save on administrative costs. To further promote direct debit membership.
- Implement a strategy targeted at Indoor climbing walls and the specialist online media in order to encourage younger people (18-29 year old) to join the BMC.
- Provide a quality 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday telephone response service, covering all membership, insurance and mountaineering related queries.
- Fully implement the Integra membership database including the introduction of online services.
- Develop the BMC website with a members log-in area, a redesigned Travel Insurance sales module and specific climbing and mountain walking related features. To develop creative ways of communicating with members through the wider electronic media.
- Expand the range of services offered to members – particularly retail and trade incentives and discounts.

5.6 Supporting clubs

The BMC was set up in 1944 by the leading clubs of the day. We now have 311 affiliated clubs, many of which are vibrant and growing in membership. Clubs face many challenges and the BMC is determined to provide quality support services and information to ensure that clubs can continue to prosper and grow. Appendix vi provides further information on affiliated clubs.

The BMC will:

- Continually review and improve our club membership renewal process in order to minimise the administration burden placed on club secretaries and officials.
- Increase the volume of staff time allocated to supporting clubs, clubs officials and club management. To provide 9am – 5pm telephone and email support for clubs via the BMC Membership Services Team and a dedicated 'Club Support Co-ordinator'.

- Revise and update all technical guidance documentation produced by the BMC for clubs; this includes technical and policy related information on child protection, facilities (huts), equality, leadership, liability and insurance issues.
- Run an annual technical seminar for senior clubs and a 2 day safety and good practice seminar for student clubs. Provide training opportunities and workshops for club officials on issues such as young people, pooled equipment and legal matters.
- Promote club membership in Summit magazine and on the BMC website to make full use of the club section on the website. To encourage more climbers and mountaineers to join clubs.
- Operate and administer a Club Working Group within the BMC to constantly review and improve the services provided to clubs and club members.
- Work with Sport England to identify other ways of supporting 'quality clubs'; this may include offering instructor support to facilitate new/novice member meets or u18s within clubs.

5.7 Supporting the BMC Areas & our volunteer network

The BMC has a structure of eight regions or 'Areas' comprising: the North East, the Lake District, Yorkshire, the North West, the Peak District, the Midlands, London & South East, and the South West. In addition Wales is represented on the BMC National Council by BMC Cymru/Wales. All of the officials who run the Areas are volunteers. Volunteers are vital to the operation of many aspects of the BMC. A total of over 100 key volunteers serve on the BMC's 'Specialist Committees' which cover issues such Training & Youth, Competitions, Climbing Walls and Access & Conservation. The successful functioning of the BMC is based on a solid partnership between volunteers and staff.

The BMC will:

- Provide administrative and management support for Area based initiatives including Area Meetings and events and the production of quarterly newsletters.
- Provide a package of skills and technical training courses covering relevant issues such as 1st Aid, Health & Safety, the handling and use of equipment, child protection and environmental legislation.
- Actively promote, support and publicise voluntary activities and acknowledge and reward exceptional effort.
- Support the development of locally run volunteer action groups which take on practical projects of benefit to mountain walkers and climbers.
- Focus staff and office efforts in the Areas where it is most needed, in particular London & South East, South Wales and the South West.
- Implement an interactive regional volunteer section on the BMC website.

5.8 Mountain Leader Training

MLTE and MLTUK are responsible for the national Mountain Leader Training awards i.e. the Walking Group Leader Award, the Single Pitch Award, the Mountaineering Instructor Award (MIA), the Mountaineering Instructor Certificate (MIC), the International Mountain Leader Award (IML) and the Climbing Wall Award (CWA).

MLT will:

- Work with partners to ensure that the current award offer is relevant and of high quality; this to include a programme of award scheme reviews and ongoing quality assurance.
- Continue to develop the award structure for those working on climbing walls to ensure wide take-up and increase relevance.
- Work with partners to investigate the potential development of a more specialised coaching strand of awards. Support the implementation of such development and liaise with agencies such as SCUUK to ensure wide acceptance.
- Develop training and supporting material to increase the ability of current award holders to work with under-represented participant groups; encourage potential leaders from BME groups to gain experience and qualifications to act as community champions.
- Develop systems of CPD delivery to support continued good practice from current award holders.
- Deliver a Conference every two years to disseminate good practice amongst award staff and others; support the BMC Student Safety Seminar annually.

5.9 Education, safety & good practice

This important aspect of the BMC's work involves staff and volunteers with specialist knowledge of climbing walls, mountain training, access and environmental issues and technical (engineering) disciplines. The BMC encourages all participants to accept the risks inherent in climbing and mountaineering and to take personal responsibilities for their actions and involvement. Whilst this is fundamentally understood by the majority of existing participants, there is an responsibility to provide new and improving participants with the information and advice they need to make the transition to 'outdoor climbing' in a safe and responsible way. The BMC also has a role in providing impartial advice on mountaineering equipment and its use.

The BMC will:

- Improve the quality and manufacture of mountaineering equipment, and equipment standards by investigating equipment failures and contribution to the development of UIAA / EN standards.
- Raise awareness of the latest developments in mountaineering equipment technology through a biennial technical and skills conference.

Provide direct training and technical support for clubs, BMC regional groups and individuals on technical and equipment issues.

- Create a technical resource base on www.thebmc.co.uk to provide a definitive pool of information on mountaineering equipment.
- Investigate options for replacing and monitoring fixed equipment (bolts) on crags across England and Wales; update technical documentation for users and those who place fixed equipment.
- Expand our package of educational and inspirational events (lecture series, courses, seminars etc), and produce educational resources (in different media) covering the various activities within the BMC's remit (see Section 2.0).
- Work in partnership with the ABC on the development of the National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme (NICAS), the production of safety information resources and the promotion of BMC services climbing walls.

5.10 High performance

The BMC supports elite level performers by running a series of national climbing competitions - the British Lead Climbing Championships (BLCC), the British Bouldering Championships (BBC) and the BMC Youth Climbing Series (YCS) and providing administrative support for the senior and junior National Climbing Teams. Historically the BMC has also funded major international climbing and mountaineering expeditions through grant support from UK Sport.

The BMC will:

- Continue to run an annual calendar of competition climbing events, specifically the BLCC, BBC and BMC YCS; to develop and roll-out the National Leading Ladder.
- Provide administrative, technical and financial support for the National Climbing Team.
- Introduce a regional talent identification and development programme centred on key indoor climbing walls around England and Wales.
- Undertake research and produce information resources on injury prevention and high performance training.
- Provide grant funding (£10k/year) for climbers and mountaineers attempting significant international climbing and mountaineering objectives.
- Run an annual International Meet to showcase British climbing.

5.11 Equity

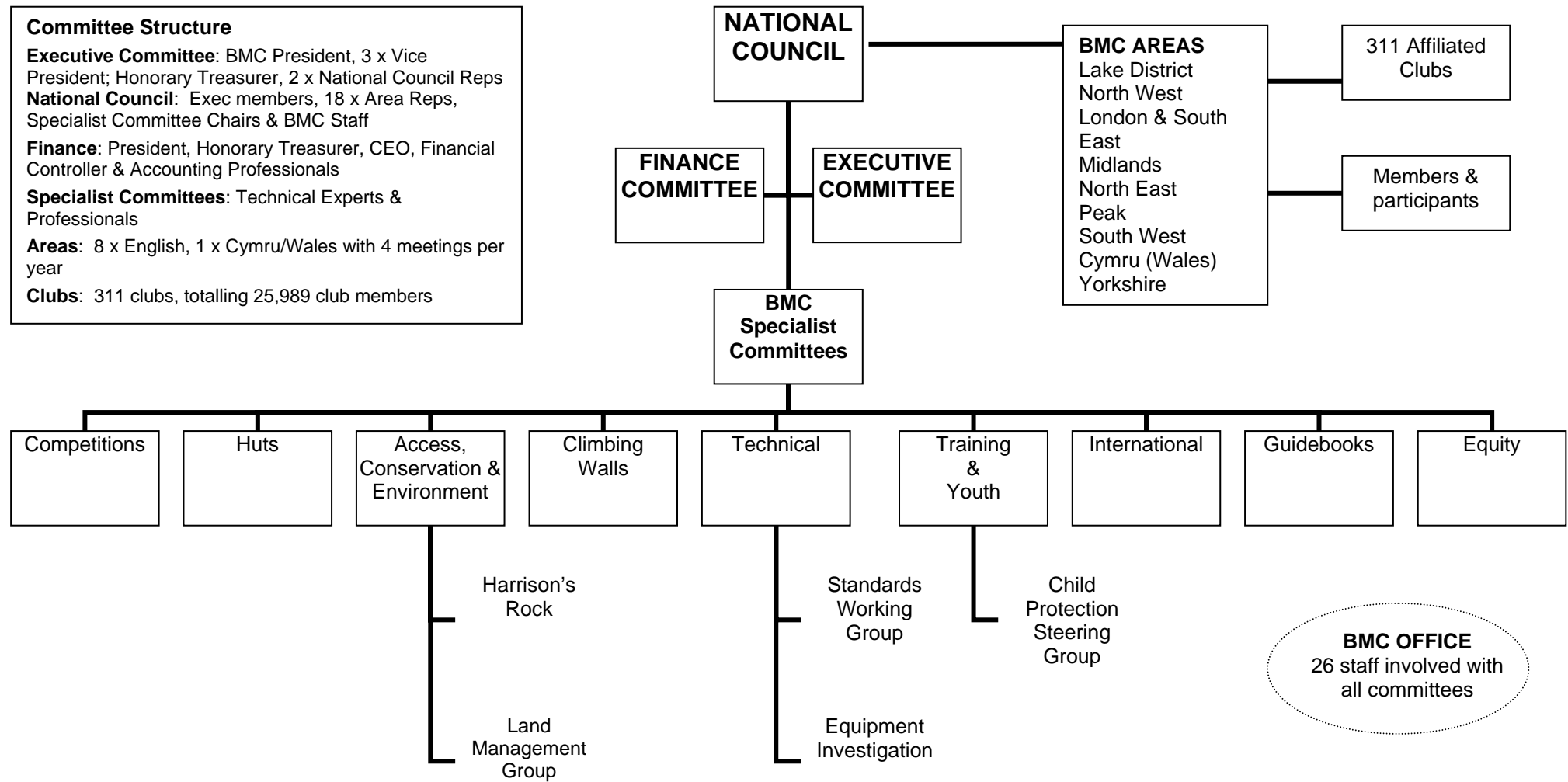
The BMC is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of our work and services. The Equity Steering Group oversees this area of work; its role is to ensure that the BMC achieves all necessary national equality standards and works towards removing any barriers to participation faced by under-represented groups.

The BMC will:

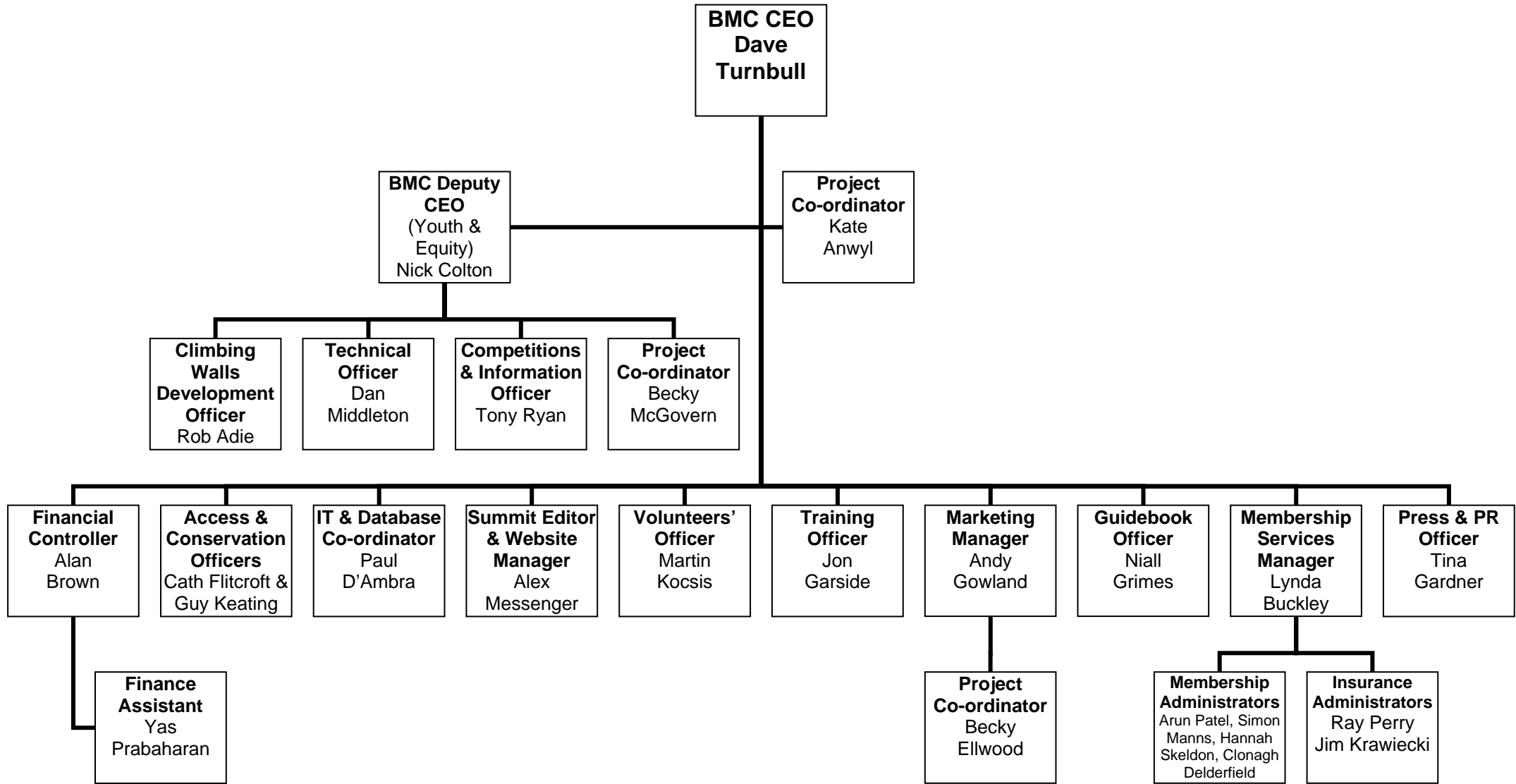
- Reach black and minority ethnic people, women and girls, people from differing age ranges, and people with disabilities with information about climbing and mountaineering using positive images and role models.
- Develop initiatives and support participation from underrepresented groups in an Equity Action Plan for the period 2009 – 2013, a series of events that support participation for people from underrepresented groups.
- Ensure that staff receive continued and appropriate training in equity issues.

Appendix i – BMC organisational structure (July 2008)

Committee Structure
Executive Committee: BMC President, 3 x Vice President; Honorary Treasurer, 2 x National Council Reps
National Council: Exec members, 18 x Area Reps, Specialist Committee Chairs & BMC Staff
Finance: President, Honorary Treasurer, CEO, Financial Controller & Accounting Professionals
Specialist Committees: Technical Experts & Professionals
Areas: 8 x English, 1 x Cymru/Wales with 4 meetings per year
Clubs: 311 clubs, totalling 25,989 club members



Appendix ii – Staff structure chart (July 2008)



Appendix iii – Roles of the MLTE, MLTUK, and Plas y Brenin

Mountain Leader Training England (MLTE)

MLTE was set up in 1964, in co-operation with the BMC and the CCPR. It operates from an office based at the National Mountain centre, Plas y Brenin and employs 4 full-time staff. MLTE aims to provide nationally recognised training and assessment schemes for leaders of groups participating in mountain walking and single pitch rock climbing. The schemes are recognised by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Adventure Activities Licensing Service.

MLTE administers the Mountain Leader Award (ML), the Single Pitch Award (SPA), the Climbing Wall Award and the Walking Group Leader Award (WGL). It also approves some 180 Providers to deliver these schemes. All MLTE courses are designed to teach the skills required to lead groups on the mountains, hills and crags of the UK. Great emphasis is put on learning by practical experience that naturally leads to self-confidence and competence.

Mountain Leader Training UK (MLTUK)

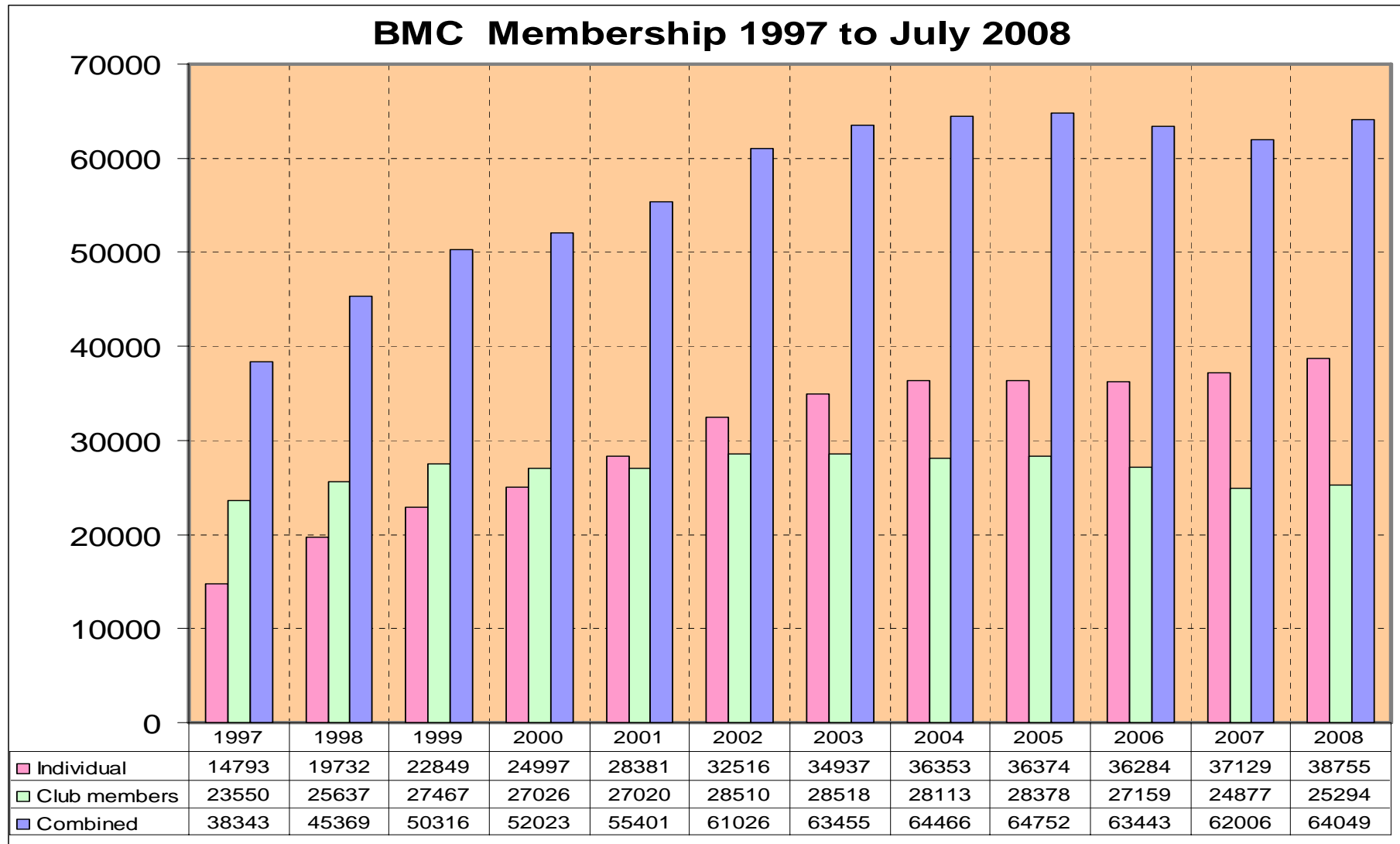
MLTUK is responsible for the Mountaineering Instructor Award (summer), Mountaineering Instructor Certificate and International Mountain Leader Awards and works closely with four home nation boards: (MLTE, MLTNI, MLTS and MLTW) and the Association of British Mountain Guides (BMG), who are responsible for the other awards. It operates from an office based at the National Mountain centre, Plas y Brenin and employs 2.5 full-time staff. Additionally MLTUK has direct links with the mountaineering councils (BMC, MCI and MCofS), enabling the training schemes to support the needs of the sport as a whole. Finally MLTUK also represents the UK internationally in matters related to mountain training, and works to secure national and international recognition of the awards.

The National Mountain Centre, Plas y Brenin

The National Mountain Centre, Plas y Brenin is run by the Mountain Training Trust (MTT), on behalf of the Sport England. MTT was set up as a registered charity in 1997 by the BMC, MLTE and MLTUK with one aim - to provide the best possible outdoor opportunities at the most cost effective price. These opportunities extend to all mountain enthusiasts from hill walkers and climbers to mountaineers and paddlers alike. Visitors to Plas y Brenin enjoy excellent instruction at the lowest rate possible, use the facilities or hire equipment, hold club meetings, annual dinners or conferences, or attend evening lectures and international symposiums

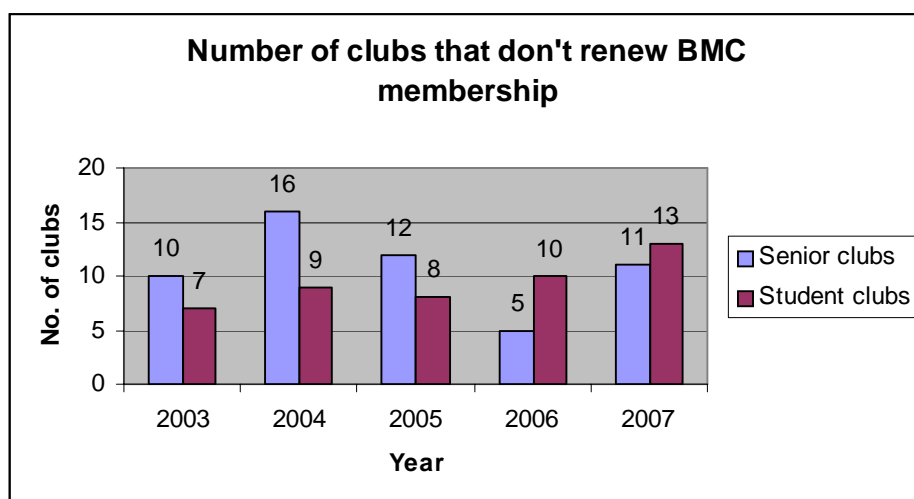
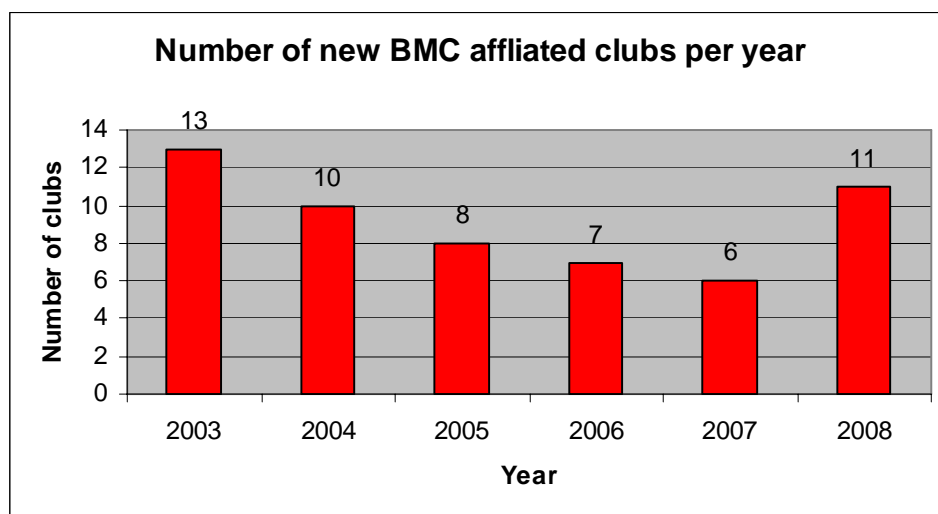
As well as managing Plas y Brenin, MTT provides subsidised training schemes (e.g. for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Scout Association), supports environmental projects, manages bursaries which contribute to the training and experience of young climbers and regularly organises conferences, international meets and symposiums for outdoor enthusiasts; it also helps introduce local youth groups and young people to mountain activities by providing otherwise unobtainable outdoor training opportunities.

Appendix iv – BMC membership statistics 1997 - 2008



Appendix v - Affiliated Clubs – statistics & trends

Year	No. of 'senior' clubs	No. of student clubs	Total No. of clubs	% Increase / Decrease
2003	270	74	344	---
2004	264	79	343	Less than -1%
2005	256	73	329	- 4%
2006	240	65	313	- 5%
2007	243	59	302	- 4%
2008	239	72	311	+3%



Club size categories

Size of club (members)	No. of clubs	As % (311 clubs total)
< 50	170	55 %
< 100	81	26 %
100 - 200	41	13 %
200 - 500	12	4 %
500 - 1000	4	1 %
1000+	3	1 %

Huts

The total number of BMC affiliated clubs with huts = 51.

The total number of huts in England & Wales = 63 (taken from BMC Hut List).

Clubs that take under 18's

Based on the information provided to us by clubs - only 12 BMC affiliated clubs have a positive policy on welcoming under 18's.

Guidebook producing clubs

- SMC - Scotland
- FRCC - Lake District
- CC - Wales, SE & SW England
- South Wales MC - The Gower
- YMC - Yorkshire
- Cleveland MC - North East England
- Northumbrian Mountaineering Club - Northumberland
- Mynydd Climbing Club - Crafnant
- Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland - Ireland

