

Annual report 2024

Report from the Board

2024 has been a busy year.

During 2024 we welcomed six new directors and trustees onto the MTUKI Board; myself, Lynn Robinson (Vice Chair), Kevin Redmond (Treasurer), Richard Tiplady, Richard Chapman, and Graham Hassall who joined Sean Wood, and Lucy Vincent.

We developed and presented our strategy, which was accepted by the Council. We returned a deficit of approximately £51k, slightly better than the budgeted deficit of £53k. We now move forward with a financial plan budgeted for a slight deficit of £8k in 2025 before a return to a surplus in later years, all because of the excellent work done by the Finance Planning Group's review of registration and provider fees in late 2023. The new Board has agreed a reserves policy that ensures we maintain sufficient reserves to manage our risks.

We appointed an Operations Officer, Rich Jones, who has undertaken an operational review of MTUKI, and is now involved in a wider review of the Mountain Training network.

We held review meetings relating to the Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor scheme and the International Mountain Leader schemes. In the Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor review much time was given to learning from the Rock Climbing Development Instructor incident investigation and considerations of the range of mitigations that we have in place. For the International Mountain Leader, the Union of International Mountain Leader Associations (UIMLA) have introduced a revised standard. Initial meetings were held to begin to understand the new requirements, and how that will impact delivery. This will continue into 2025.

We also ran our second Women in Mountain Training conference, which saw 77 delegates, 17 delivery staff, and 4 Mountain Training staff spending the weekend learning from each other, and developing their networks to support their careers in the adventure activities sector.

Towards the end of 2023 we saw surprising increases in MTUKI scheme registrations, and attendance of training, and assessment. However, this trend does not appear to be

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sustained, influenced perhaps by the implementation of agreed rises to registration costs and the general cost of living crisis.

The Mountain Training Association membership continued to grow. The 2024 Autumn MTA Conference hosted 72 members at Plas y Brenin over the two days in October. Work has progressed to produce a digital version of the Professional Mountaineer, an online archive of issues and articles going back to 2020, and a digital membership card. Members will be encouraged to use the digital only offering, and that will reduce our costs and administration effort in these areas.

Finally, I would like to thank our dedicated staff team in Siabod Cottage for their excellent work, responding to demands, producing high quality output, and being the backbone of our service.

Steve Davies
MTUKI Chair, June 2025

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Mountain Training UK & Ireland 2024 Member Organisation and their representatives	
Mountain Training Board of Ireland (2 votes at MTUKI Council meetings)	Kevin O’Callaghan, Jacquelyn Moore, Jane Carney (Training Officer)
Mountain Training Cymru (2 votes at MTUKI Council meetings)	Andy Newton, Simon Patton (Executive Officer) Andy Bevan
Mountain Training England (2 votes at MTUKI Council meetings)	Pete Stacey, Sue Manns, Kelvyn James, Guy Jarvis (Executive Officer)
Mountain Training Scotland (2 votes at MTUKI Council meetings)	Mhairi Crawford, Marie Dignam, Pamela Lomoro, George McEwan (Executive Officer)
BMC (1 vote at MTUKI Council meetings)	Cressida Allwood
BMC Cymru (1 vote at MTUKI Council meetings)	Neal Hockley
Mountaineering Ireland (1 vote at MTUKI Council meetings)	Dave Ayton
Mountaineering Scotland (1 vote at MTUKI Council meetings)	Stuart Younie, Ross Cadie
Association of Mountaineering Instructors	Rob Pugh, Andy Barker
British Association of International Mountain Leaders	Steve Davies, Kev Sidford
British Association of Mountain Guides	James Thacker
Glenmore Lodge (Sport Scotland’s National Outdoor Training Centre)	Ian Sherrington, Shaun Roberts, Derek Bain, Jon Jones
Plas y Brenin (Sport England’s National Outdoor Centre)	Dave Evans, Fiona Saunders
Tollymore (Sport Norther Ireland’s National Outdoor Centre)	Kieran O’Hara

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MTUKI Trustees & Mountain Training Publications Directors	
Chair	Adge Last /Steve Davies
Vice Chair	Ellie Ablett / Lynn Robinson
Treasurer	Philip Anderson/ Kevin Redmond
Trustees/ Directors	Lucy Vincent Stephen Saddler Sean Wood Richard Tiplady Richard Chapman Graham Hassall
Staff	
Chief Executive	John Cousins
Finance Manager	Annette Greenwood
Media and IT Development Officer	Nicola Jasieniecka-Evans
Digital Engagement Coordinator	Huw Jordan Tatlock / Emily Law
Governance and Equity Officer	Cath Luke
Operations Officer	Rich Jones
MTA Membership Strategy and Communications Officer	Mike Riley
MTA Development Officer	Belinda Fear
MTA Co-ordinator	Megan Griffin
Customer Service & Operations Manager	Becky Jeffrey
Customer Service Team	Laura Griffith / Rich Snaith / Megan Griffin

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	Sue Gathercole/ Sam George / Ashley Cartwright
Our representatives	
Mountain Training Trust – MTUKI's nominated Director	Stephen Saddler/ Emily Thompson
BMC National Council, Partners Assembly & Funded Partners	John Cousins/ Guy Jarvis
SRA Outdoor Pursuits Division	Jon Garside
Snow and Avalanche Foundation of Scotland	George McEwan
British Association of Mountain Guides Board of Directors (observer)	John Cousins
Association of British Climbing Walls	Guy Jarvis
Adventure UK & Adventure Activity Industry Advisory Committee	John Cousins
MTT and BMC Safety Committees	John Cousins
BMC Safeguarding and Equity steering groups	Cath Luke
Funded Partners Equity Diversity & Inclusion Group	Guy Jarvis, Cath Luke

Mountain Training UK & Ireland

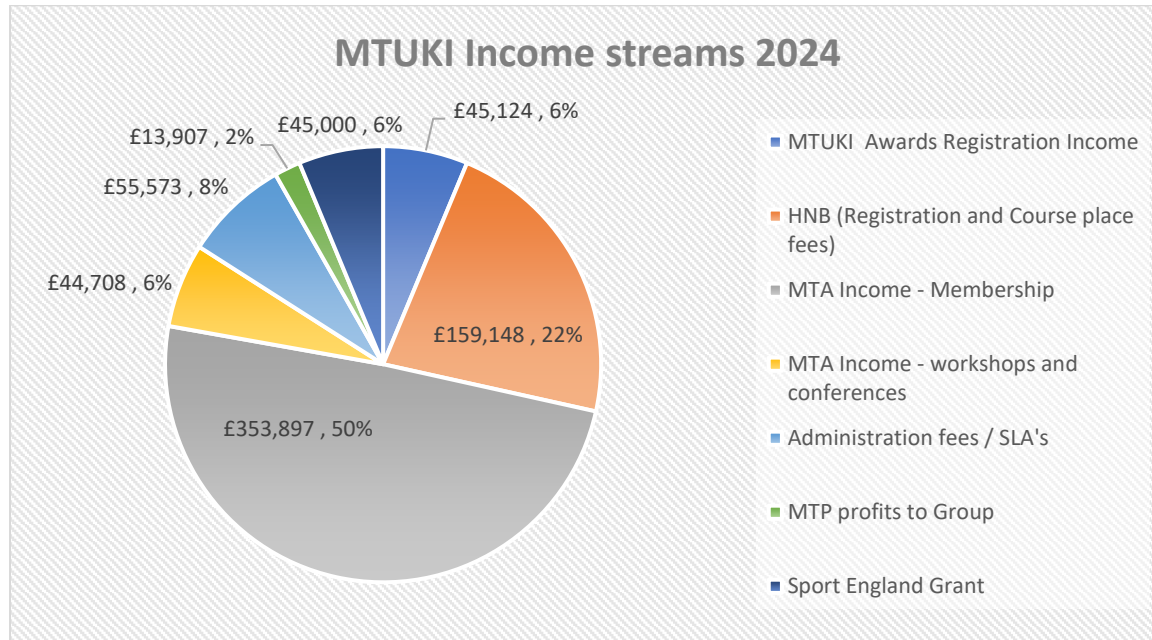
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Chief Executive report - John Cousins

Firstly, my thanks to our MTUKI Trustees for their immense help and support. We said thank you and goodbye to Adge Last and Steve Saddler in June after six very committed years on the board. Lucy Vincent and Sean Woods have continued as trustees and provided continuity as we welcomed Steve Davies, Lynn Robinson, Kevin Redmond, Richard Tiplady, Richard Chapman and Graham Hassall to our board; they are all both Directors of Mountain Training Publications and Trustees of Mountain Training UK & Ireland. Thanks also to Ian Sherrington and Cath Luke for their help with trustee recruitment.

Financial review: Having secured our investment funding from Sport England for the period of April 2022 to March 2027, in our joint bid through the BMC, along with Mountain Training England, the Association of British Climbing Walls, and the National Indoor Climbing Award Schemes, we have allocated funds to support digital resources and workforce development.

Overall, we delivered an actual deficit of £51K against a planned deficit budget of £53K. Income was made up memberships, subscriptions and course registrations of £656K, up £125K (24%) and grants and gift aid income of £59K, down £3K.

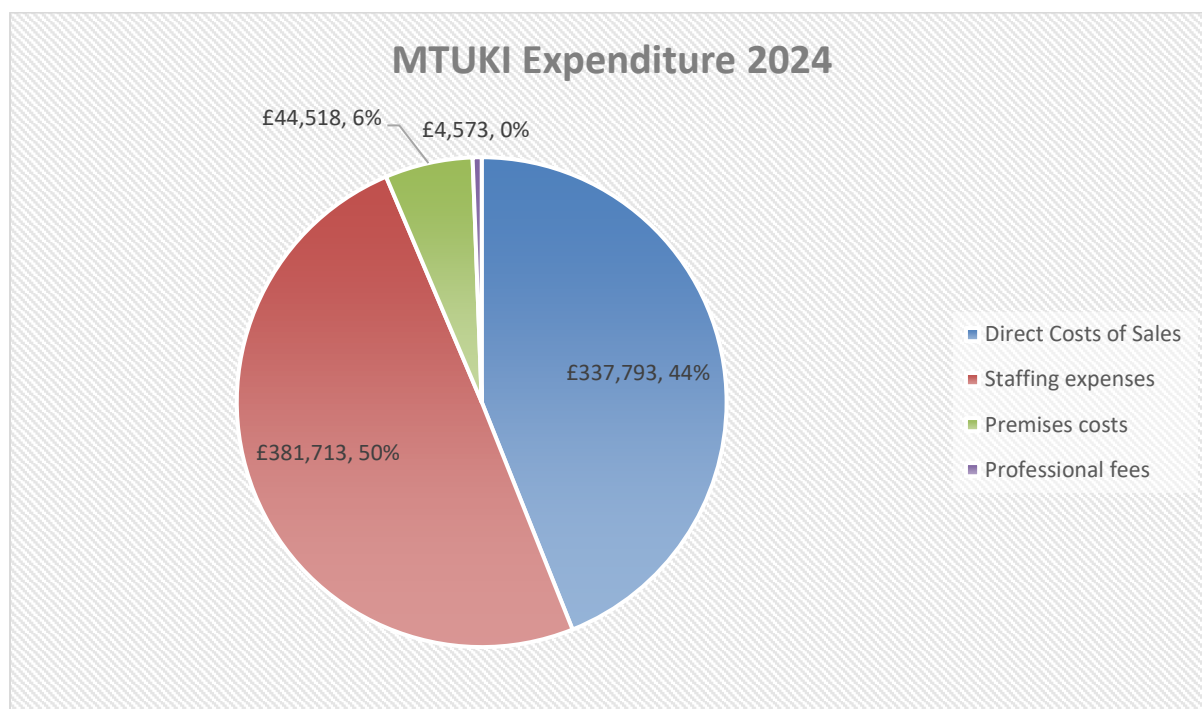


Overall expenditure was £768, 595 and included investment in the development of the in-

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house candidate management system, the association's regional coordinators, digital developments- and coaching development schemes of £75K, and higher governance costs, including staffing and consultancy, of £22K. Staffing costs are the largest single item. Our direct costs include all tahdah fees, membership cards, magazine and product sales, marketing, award scheme development and ICT.



It has been the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to six month's expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been achieved.

Digital resources: We employed a full time Digital Engagement Coordinator, Huw Jordan Tatlock for much of the year and then welcomed Emily Law into the role. They support our digital strategy and create resources that support our providers, candidates, association members, and the public alike. We also allocate some of their time to collaborating with and supporting the National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme, sharing resources with one of our

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funded partner organisations. We continued to develop micro learning resources, launched our rebranded logos and website and attended a conference of digital developers from across the adventure sport sector.

Digital and communications highlights, as well launching a new rebranded website include our attendance at the Outdoor Expo in Birmingham (March) and our second Women in Mountain Training conference (November). <https://www.mountain-training.org/help/resources/blog/women-in-mountain-training-conference-2024/>

Our free to access micro-learning went live on our website <https://www.mountain-training.org/help/resources/e-learning/> and include:

- Tying-in to a rope using a rethreaded figure of eight
- Taking a Bearing
- Setting the map
- Tying-in with a bowline

Digital membership cards for Association members in tahdah went live in May

In terms of communications, we collaborated with a number of organisations in a joint ThinkWINTER campaign (Jan-March). We created accessible candidate handbooks (April), launched a 60th anniversary – history of Mountain Training <https://www.mountain-training.org/about/what-we-do/history-of-mountain-training/> (September), and developed and launched our new online shop that supports advertising through Meta (Facebook and Instagram) (December)

For BMC's Summit magazine we contributed articles on Top tips for mountain efficiency (Autumn edition) and Top tips for bouldering, including Bouldering Wall Instructor promotion. (Winter edition)

Other Sport England funds have been used to support the development of the Coaching Scheme and in particular the Performance Coach, as well as reviewing the Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor pathway and the International Mountain Leader scheme.

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Candidate numbers: Overall, 2024 saw a downturn in overall candidate numbers, compared to 2023, though they matched pre Covid 2019 and were on a par with 2022

2019- 12,859

2020 – 8178

2021 – 10,888

2022 – 12,768

2023 – 13,788

2024 – 12,756

Walking leadership schemes (ML, LL, HML, CL MLW, IML);

4,555

Indoor climbing instruction and coaching schemes (CWI, ICA, FC, CWDI, DC & PC);

2143

Outdoor climbing instruction schemes (RCI, RCDI):

763

Mountaineering & climbing instruction schemes (MCI & WMCI)

75

Skills schemes (MS, HMS, RS)

3,163

The Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor Pathway Review continued. Five-year aggregated statistics continue to demonstrate a first-time pass rate of 45% and a completion rate of those who have been assessed of 79%. Improving the first-time pass rate remains an ongoing priority. Tracking and exploring the reasons for deferrals continues with this information being collated and shared with the Providers and the Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor Review Working Group.

Agreement was finalised for a new Bouldering Wall Instructor qualification and throughout the year preparations have been ongoing for a launch in spring 2025.

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<https://www.mountain-training.org/qualifications/climbing/bouldering-wall-instructor/> All of our rock climbing qualifications were updated with the new leadership and decision making elements, aligned to earlier work within our walking schemes

Agreement was reached for a review of our Coaching qualifications. We are grateful to Martin Chester for work over the last decade on these qualifications and waved him goodbye as he takes up an exciting new role. We were fortunate to be able to replace him with Tom Greenall, former Head Coach with GB Climbing

Safety Report <https://www.mountain-training.org/help/resources/blog/2024-safety-report/> Safety is naturally at the heart of all of our training programmes and there were a number of events during 2024 which prompted us to produce a safety report. We are very grateful to every one of our network of training providers and the care and competence that they show to all those that they work with.

Mountain Training Association: Mountain Training Association's membership increased by c.10% (from 8440 to 9245 increase of 822) over the course of 2023. However, membership was at 6648 in January of 2022 so there has been an overall increase of approximately 39%, in the last 2 years. The Association presented their second round of volunteer awards, with winners being:

- the founders of the ClimbOut Festival for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity;
- Alan Elwood for Positive Steps Outdoors a new social enterprise in Norther Ireland for Wellbeing,
- Charlotte Ditchburn for her work with the Calvert Trust for Accessibility and
- Jim Langley from Nature Works for the Environment.

Regional volunteer winners were

- David Tainton, Regional Coordinator and Philippa Sanders (Assistant Regional Coordinator) both from the England, Central and London (North) region;

and overall Volunteer of the Year winner was

- Emma Holland, one of the Association's Mentors.

The Association will hold their 2024 Conference at Plas Y Brenin National Outdoor Centre, Capel Curig the weekend of 12-13 October, 2024.

The Association currently have 50 regional Mountain Training Association volunteers throughout the UK and Ireland and have recently recruited two for the Republic of Ireland for the first time ever. Activity throughout the regions is thriving, and as well as night

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navigations and climbing socials there are sessions on Mountain Leader ropework, working on steep ground, flora and fauna, geology and specialist talks and presentations from experts in their field: recent talks have included cold water immersion, wildfire management, white tailed sea eagle introduction and soil structures throughout the uplands. We also have set-up a Lowland leader Working Group made up of regional volunteers looking to widen knowledge and understanding of this qualification and the range of specialist skills it encompasses.

Staff Team: As well as welcoming Emily Law and Ton Greenall we were very pleased to add Rich Jones, in a new role of Chief Operating Officer, to our team. This post was co funded by MTE and MTUKI and has allowed us to develop operational planning tools, risk management structures and contributions to the early stages of an organisational review.

Partnerships: The Associations Collaboration Working Group continues to engage in putting together The Professional Mountaineer magazine, but the associations have also worked together on insurance and CPD initiatives. We continue to reach out to and support new partners and community groups to engage with Mountain Training as well as reach reciprocal arrangements with commercial organisations to reach new audiences. This has allowed us to consult widely and gather feedback from numerous diverse voices across the sector on a range of changes and proposals. To assist in the promotion of our mission and to improve communication with partners, we continue to circulate a quarterly Partnership newsletter and continue to add contacts and subscribers to this in order to better disseminate information

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