

# **EUHWC Committee Updates**

13/02/17, Monika O'Shea

President: Monika O'Shea  
Secretary: Rebecca Meacham  
Treasurer: Adam Carnall

MO: Meet Organiser  
WO: Walk Organiser  
SU: Sports Union  
MSL: Membership Solutions Ltd

## **Trip and membership prices:**

We decided to **reduce** full-year membership by £5 for all members joining in **September 2016 only**. Following the SU's introduction of an online £5 "SU membership fee", we lowered our membership at the start of the year *for all members* in order to offset this fee and incentivize early membership. We are financially secure and can afford the loss. We will evaluate our financial situation to determine if we can/should repeat this reduction January 2017 and/or September 2017.

During Semester 2 we will be trialing a **£20 discount** instead of a £10 discount for **car drivers** (with their own cars) on **weekend trips only**. We decided that the discount for car drivers should be higher to cover the wear and damage that occurs to a personal car during travel. Minibus and rental car drivers do not have to pay for the maintenance of their vehicles, so we did not increase their discount. We hope a £20 discount will lead to an increased number of car drivers on trips, which would keep us from having to rent cars, as we have done on many past weekend trips.

## Signups:

We do not guarantee places on trips for those who arrive first, but we do encourage a **queuing system**. We have returned to a queue system, because the no-queue system we trialed last year led to shoving and unmanageable crowding around the signup table. Meet Organisers should start signup at 8:30pm, ask that all members queue in order that they arrived, but give no preferential treatment to members who claim to have arrived earlier. It is up to the members in the queue to arrange themselves fairly and orderly. Committee are able to sign up other members (*not* pre-sign) if the Committee members queue at signup like non-committee members. Proxy signup is still allowed, but the member may only sign up one other person, and must have their money.

## First Semester Trips:

The Freshers' weekend trips were majorly **oversubscribed**, as we predicted from 2015. To deal with the predicted numbers, we planned to book out the Glencoe SYHA (50 beds) for both Freshers' weekends in October, but the hostel was already booked seven months in advance by others. Rather than change dates, we decided to book the Blackwater Hostel (39 beds) and the Crianlarich SYHA (64 beds), allowing us 103 beds in total for the two trips combined.

However, even with 103 beds we still had 68 on the reserves lists combined. Compared to 89 beds with 52 reserves in 2015, 88 beds with 28 reserves in 2014, and 89 beds with 15 reserves in 2013, it is clear the interest in the Freshers' Weekend Trips is growing alongside membership numbers.

Due to rising membership numbers, we **added a weekend trip** over the last weekend of October, which became the Halloween Trip. Due to timing we moved one November day trip to become the Pentlands Navigation day and the other November day trip to become the second December day trip. We received feedback that we were not offering enough day trips, and although the Glencoe Halloween Trip was oversubscribed, we will consider changing that weekend back to two day trips next year.

## **SU Membership and MSL System:**

As mentioned above, the SU installed a **£5 membership fee** on their MSL site. The SU introduced the £5 last year (2015/2016 academic year) after a large cut to their own funding, but took the cost per person directly from the Clubs accounts instead of from the individual members. We absorbed the cost in the form of a 20% grant cut, instead of raising our membership price by £5 as the SU expected we would.

However, this year the SU set up the £5 fee online for each individual member, so we could not absorb the cost. We offset the fee for the members who joined in the first month by offering a discount of £5 on EUHWC full-year membership.

The SU collects their £5 membership online only, while we collect our £25 membership in-person only. We have kept in-person signup even when all other Clubs moved online because:

1. We didn't want our members to pay an online transaction fee when purchasing membership.
2. We wanted to push people to come to the informational presentation (New Members' Night) before committing to membership.
3. We feel the community atmosphere that people enter when they come to the pub to buy membership is a more personal way to welcome members than a website.
4. We keep our own membership Excel databases that the MSL system cannot (yet) incorporate.

Now that all of our members must purchase SU membership online, they are no longer able to avoid the transaction fee. Using two different systems has only caused difficulty. Therefore, we are considering **changing our membership to the SU's MSL system** so that there is less confusion when purchasing membership. We would still run **trip signup in person**. The Committee will continue to discuss this issue and make the change over the summer if we decide so.

## **Membership Numbers:**

We have again **increased in popularity**, with our membership numbers at 379 as of February 6<sup>th</sup> (in 2015/16 we were at 320 members on the same date, and in 2014/15 before we didn't even hit 300 members). At the end of October we added a 50-person weekend trip to compensate for the rising numbers. We decided we will not cap membership to our club, as we want to be inclusive and many of the members that become WOs, Committee members, and/or drivers enter in second semester – however, our current 13 person Committee and loyal driver pool cannot support a 30-50 person member increase per year. We have discussed advertising less enthusiastically during Freshers' Week in September. We could increase the number of Committee members but we would struggle to increase the number of drivers. The £20 discount for car drivers will hopefully encourage more car drivers to come on weekend trips. **We will still encourage members to buy membership *only* once they sign up for a trip**, as we have for the past year, to reduce the number of members who sign up but cannot secure a place on a trip.

Also a concern is that although our membership has shot through the roof and our Freshers' weekend trips oversubscribed by 70 spots, **we risk *not filling* our winter hostel trips**. Christmas Trip in December had **no** reserves list, and both Ratagan (Feb) and Cannich (Mar) last year did not fill. We therefore **removed** the second March weekend trip, which was introduced two years ago. The March trip this year, our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary trip to Glencoe, has already proved popular with 35 Alumni/driver presigns, so we have booked out the Alpine Bunkhouse in Glencoe next to the SYHA on the same weekend to accommodate more regular members.

## **Safety Policy:**

We have amended our safety policy this year. The policy can be found here: [Safety Policy](#)

## **Training:**

This year we tried pairing the **EDex program** with our Pentlands Navigation training, allowing half the places on the trip to be taken by paying (£5) non-members. The members received the training for free. Although we felt gratified to have brought 50+ people navigation skills, the EDex program is mainly designed to get more people interested in the club, and as we definitely do **not** need more members, we have decided that we will run the Pentlands Navigation training next year, but **not** as an EDex event.

Training has been a success this year with many more members on Firbush Navigation, SMART, and MCoFS Winter Skills than in prior years.

## **Gear:**

We have purchased five helmets for walks that include **scrambling**. These helmets should be worn for any walk that includes scrambling and there should be no more than one five-person walk per day that requires helmets.

Tiso in Leith has **changed their winter boot hire prices**. They had been giving EUHWC members winter boot hire at 50% off £10 (so £5 per weekend). Unfortunately, £10 per weekend was a price multiple years outdated, so they updated their weekend rental cost to £20 and changed their boot hire discount for us from 50% to 10%. We negotiated the boot hire discount up to 25%. The updated prices run as follows:

1 day = £7.50

3 days = £15

1 week = £22.50

“The person who is renting the boots have to come and get the boots themselves, as you are very aware the fitting of the boot is very particular to the shape of the foot and to prevent any injury we are no longer allowing people to pick up boots for friends or anybody other than themselves.”

Because we would like to keep EUHWC as inclusive and inexpensive as possible, and fear the increased boot hire prices will affect our winter trip numbers, we are looking into **bulk buying winter boots** at a discounted rate, either to create our own winter boot hire, or to sell the boots on. There are no other shops that offer boot hire for £15 or under.

We are also looking to **bulk buy** necessary gear that we find few people bring on trips, such as survival bags and headtorches. We hope that if we make these items more accessible and less expensive, we will see a rise in members who own the items. We will also look into second-hand gear swaps within the Club.

### **Drivers:**

There was confusion at the start of the year when Clubs were **no longer able to use the CSE's 14-person minibuses** due to the CSE passing the two buses on to Firbush Outdoor Centre and EUBC. The issue was eventually resolved to result in us renting 12-person minibuses from Arnold Clarke through the CSE, which are delivered to Pfeffermill for our ease. We were concerned that the new buses would be smaller, but it turns out that although they have two fewer seats than the old buses, their enormous luggage space makes them a far better bus than the old model.

Although we are experiencing an increase in membership numbers, we are still dealing with **driver shortage**. During Semester 2 we will be trialing a £20 discount instead of a £10 discount for car drivers (with their own cars) on weekend trips only.

### **Club Pub:**

After our move from McSorelys in 2015 we have been **happy with the last 1.5 years at The Southsider**. Dave and his staff are respectful, helpful, and offer 15% off on all food and drink. They are very willing to work with our Club. We are happy to stay with them for the future.

## **Feedback Page:**

EUHWC has continued to use Lucy Nunn's anonymous feedback page, which was set up so that members could voice their honest opinions. However, automated spam has made the feedback unreadable on our side. While we increase security, please just email the President with your feedback. If you have something serious to voice, please contact the President with your issue so that you and the President can hold a discussion about it.

## **Funds:**

Due to the decrease in fuel price, EUHWC is doing well financially and is looking to make investments with the money while we have it. The investments may include bulk buying gear as mentioned before, an increased meal budget on special trips such as Christmas, Burns, Easter, and Alumni, and a Carbon Offset Plan. The Carbon Offset Plan will include purchasing the planting of ~sixteen trees to offset the carbon emissions from driving vehicles on our trips. We have also increased the Social and Training budgets.

## **Website/logo:**

After consideration we have decided to update our website to a more user-friendly Squarespace-style site so that the EUHWC Webmaster does not need to have programming experience to run the website. A new website will also allow us to modernize the look of the site and showcase members' photos.

With the change of website we feel it is appropriate to allow for a change of Club logo, which, if the Club votes to change from the current Hamish logo, will be integrated at the same time as the website, in Summer 2017. There will be a EUHWC Logo Change competition that will take the place of the usual clothing order logo competition (this year only).