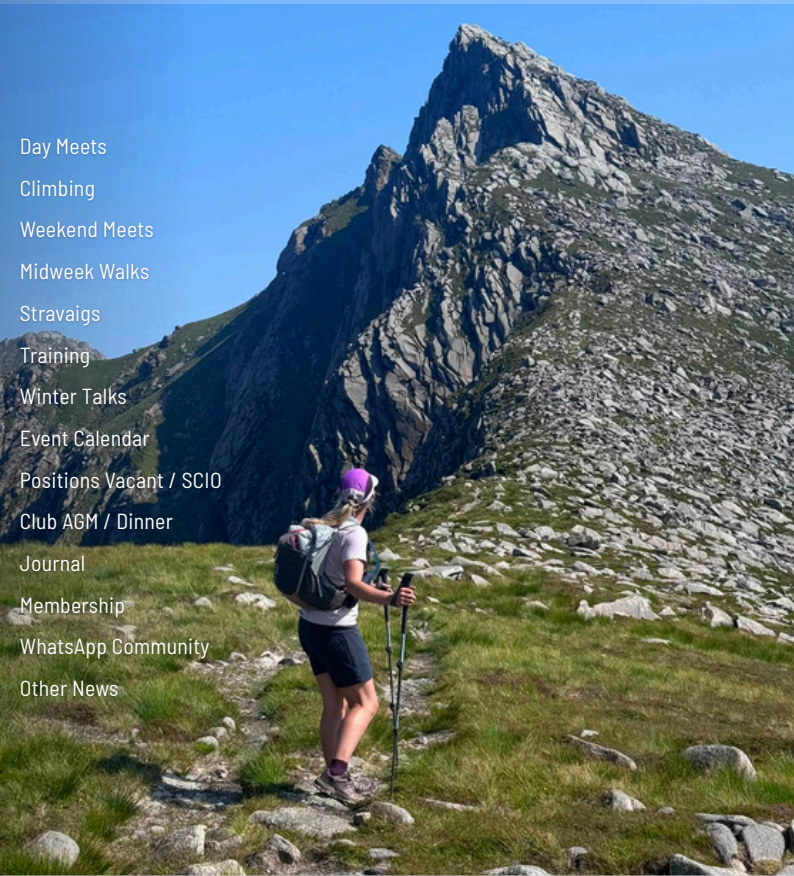
Cairngorm Club

Newsletter October 2026

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Cìr Mhòr, Arran

Day Meets

Over the summer there have been some fine outings for members attending our day meets, and all have been A to B traverses. Trekking cross country (and mountain) and finishing at a different location to where we start seems to be popular with our day meet walkers. Back in June a traverse of An Socach was completed, starting at Baddoch on the road to Glenshee and ending at Inverey. A fine summer's day in July had members hiking from Glen Clova/Glen Doll over to Spittal of Glenmuick.


Setting off for An Socach on a scorcher


Down at The Colonel's Bed; still accessible despite rumours to the contrary

Corgarff through to Keiloch was the route of the August overnighter with attendees camping out and opting to take in various surrounding peaks. Then the Cairngorm traverse in September followed a north to south route crossing Ben Macdui and over Carn a' Mhaim, where a pre-arranged cake stop was enjoyed. October saw us return to Glenmore for the first time since the large wildfire, and we took in Meall a' Bhuachaille and visited the Green Lochan and Ryvoan bothy on a cracking autumn day.


Up to An Socach


Heading to camp near Loch Builg


Down to Ryvoan

Between now and the end of the year we have two more splendid days out planned. Another traverse goes ahead on Sunday 15th November, when we will cross Hill of Wirren, down Glen Esk way.

Then the last meet of the year on Sunday 13th December will be a shorter day (departing Aberdeen slightly later than usual). An interesting route up through a rocky nook to Culblean Hill is planned followed by a late afternoon stop at the Boat Inn in Aboyne for a festive bar supper. A flask of hot mulled wine usually makes an appearance on the hill during our December meets, so this pre-Christmas outing is well worth signing up for!


Green Lochan


Ben Macdui


Carn a Mhaim

In September, your intrepid meet organisers got their heads together (and had a pint or two) and planned the monthly trips for 2027. Here's where we'll be going and when....

- **Sunday 10th January, our annual Lochnagar trip.**
- **Saturday 6th February, Spittal of Glenshee to The Cairnwell.**
- **Sunday 7th March, Derry Cairngorm.**
- **Sunday 4th April, Ben Vorlich.**
- **Sunday 9th May, Glas Tulaichean and Carn an Righ.**
- **Sunday 20th June, Bynack More.**
- **Sat/Sun 10th/11th July, White Mounth overnighter.**
- **Sunday 8th August, Glen Isla to Glenshee over Glas Maol.**
- **Sunday 5th September, Cairngorm traverse, south to north.**
- **Saturday 9th October, Ben Vrackie.**
- **Sunday 14th November, Beinn Bhreac.**
- **Sunday 12th December, Ben Newe.**

So there's plenty of exciting day meets to look forward to in 2027.
As always, a big thank you goes to the meet organisers for all this year's outings, and who continue to organise our day meets for the coming year.

We're still looking for a new Day Meets Coordinator, as Craig is stepping down in November. Please get in touch with **secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk** if interested.

Climbing

With another dry summer, teams of club climbers have been very active on the local outcrops and in the fabulous Cairngorm mountain crags over the summer months.



We will still try to climb outdoors if the weather allows (especially the day-time climbers) but even they will soon be forced inside for our weekly meet at the Transition Extreme (TX) indoor wall in Aberdeen.



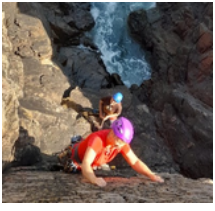
The most regular TX meet will be on Wednesday afternoons but other evening or weekend wall meets can be organised via the Climbers WhatsApp group.

Any club member is welcome to join the WhatsApp group, just contact the climbing secretary (Chris) for details at **climb@cairngormclub.org.uk**.



The indoor climbing season is a good opportunity to get to know other climbers before we head outside next spring. For those new to climbing it is a chance to hone basic climbing skills and climb with more experienced climbers.







Weekend Meets

The weekend meets continued to be popular over the summer. In July members were blessed with great weather when camping in Arran. This was followed by a trip to Inver Lael near Ullapool in August, and in September a few members went down to the Lakes and stayed in the Fell and Rock Climbing Club's Raw Head cottage in Langdale. The club meets planned for the rest of the year are as follows:-

Nov 6-7: Members' weekend at Muir Cottage

Nov 20-21: Riasg Roy Bridge

Dec 4-5: Corran

Next year's dates will be up on the club events calendar soon; these reach capacity well in advance of their dates, so if interested contact **weekend@cairngormclub.org.uk**


Arran weekend


Arran weekend


Arran weekend


Inverlael weekend

Weekend Meets


Inverlael weekend


Beinn a Bha'ach Ard


Inverlael weekend

Midweek Walks

This longstanding series of Club meets has as its usual parameters:

- the last Thursday of each month (except December)
- car-sharing from the lower section of Kingswells Park & Ride
- a drive of no more than an hour and a quarter
- 4 to 5 hours of walking including stops, usually involving a hill if not coastal, and
- a visit to a local café afterwards.


Carnferg

Walks for the rest of 2026 are as follows:

26 November - Tap o' Noth - Marj Ewan
11 December (joint with a Stravaig) - Finzean - Eilidh Scobbie

The programme for 2027 is currently being planned; offers and ideas for locations and Meet Organisers are welcome.


Carnferg

We're still looking for a new Midweek Walks Coordinator, as Ken is stepping down
Please get in touch with **secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk** if interested.

Stravaigs

Stravaigs continue to thrive, often having around 20 members joining us. We're always very pleased to welcome guests, and love seeing existing members join us for the first time. The walks are no more than 6 miles on undemanding terrain, often with a shorter option, and last 3-4 hours including stops for lunch. We always adjourn for a coffee at some nearby café afterwards.


Burn o'Vat circuit

They're especially suitable for those of us for whom the long hill days are not an option whether because of age, or health issues, including returning to activity from injury. We have proved to be an excellent opportunity for those rebuilding walking stamina or simply to keep walking fit. We do try to have a varied programme of venues and have covered some interesting and relatively unfamiliar areas.


Burn o'Vat circuit

Gill Shirreffs is the point of contact as part of a team of 4, including Judy Middleton, Eilidh Scobbie and Jay Turner.

If any other regulars would like to volunteer their services as walk coordinators they would be most welcome, just let Gill know.
Stravaigs are held on the Fridays that are 2 weeks before a Midweek walk; all are car meets with a meeting point at Kingswells Park and Ride for car-sharing purposes.
Stravaigs started with no high expectations but the old saying "from acorns oak trees grow" could now possibly be an appropriate metaphor, as Stravaigs have some of the highest attendances of all club activities!


Burn o'Vat circuit



Training

Navigation Course

The course assumes no prior knowledge, will start with the basics and work through the theory in the comfort of an indoors 'classroom' before culminating with a practical session on the local hills. Ideal for complete beginners and those looking for a refresh on the theory. Dates for the course are being re-considered to see if there are more convenient dates/times to those previously advertised.

Night Navigation

Save the date: **10 December** for the first of this winter's Night Navigation sessions. The venue is still to be decided and will likely also be suitable for a Night Hike for any that would enjoy a stroll under the stars.

Winter Skills

Following last year's very successful course based at Muir Cottage the Club has again arranged for Di Gilbert to deliver 2 days of training for up to 6 Club members over the weekend (**Sat 27 -Sun 28 Feb 2027**). The cost to members for two days training is £50 (subsidised by the Club) plus £12 for two nights at Muir.

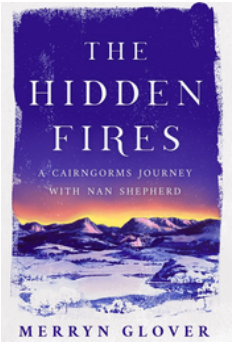
Contact **training@cairngormclub.org.uk** for further info on all of the above.

Winter Talks

With the clocks turned back and the dark evenings upon us, our winter talks season is under way - once a month on Wednesday evenings at the **Garden Room at the Cross, Queens Cross Church**, 38 Albyn Place, AB10 1YN. From the street to the room: through the Cafe entrance, then straight ahead past a chicane, turn right into a big hall, then the room at the back right.

£3 admission fee, open to all. Refreshments available: tea, coffee and biscuits.
Doors 7pm Talk starts 7.30pm

We have a range of interesting topics and presenters forthcoming - Contact Tom Litterick **social@cairngormclub.org.uk** for more info.



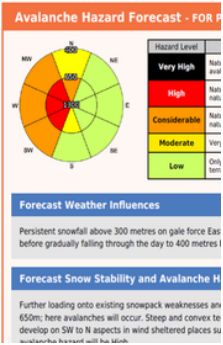
Wed eve - November 11th

Join author Merryn Glover for an evening exploring The Hidden Fires and Nan Shepherd's The Living Mountain. Discover the connections between these remarkable works, their deep sense of place, and the landscapes, people and stories of the Cairngorms.



Wed eve - December 2nd

Come along for a fascinating evening with Andrew Barr as he explores An Atlas of Scotland's Geography and History. Discover how maps bring Scotland's past to life, revealing the stories behind its landscapes, places and people.



Wed eve - January 6th

Join Mark Diggens (SAIS) and Mike Reading (Met Office) for an informative evening exploring snow and avalanche safety. Learn more about mountain conditions, avalanche risks and staying safe in winter.

Events Calendar

November		
6	Fri & Sat nights	Muir Cottage – members weekend
11	Wed eve	Winter talk: Merryn Glover - The Hidden Fires and Nan Shepherd
13	Fri	Stravaig walk - Drumoak
15	Sun	Day meet by minibus - Hill of Wirren
18	Wed eve	Club AGM
20	Fri eve	Dinner + Ceilidh
20	Fri & Sat nights	Weekend meet - Roy Bridge, Riasg
26	Thu	Midweek walk - Tap o'Noth
December		
2	Wed eve	Winter talk: Andrew Barr – An Atlas of Scotland's Geography and History
5	Fri & Sat nights	Weekend meet - Corran
10	Thu eve	Night navigation / hike
11	Fri	Stravaig walk - Finzean
13	Sun	Day meet by minibus - Culblean Hill

Indoor climbing every Wednesday. Contact Chris **climbing@cairngormclub.org.uk** for more info.

Also in November - an evening workshop on navigation, date to be decided amongst those interested. Contact Garry: **training@cairngormclub.org.uk**

Events Calendar

January		
6	Wed eve	Winter talk: Snow and Avalanche Safety – Mark Diggens (SAIS) and Mike Reading (Met Office)
10	Sun	Lochnagar coach trip
15	Fri	Stravaig walk - Milton of Turtle
23 / 24	Fri / Sat eves	Weekend - Muir Burns Supper
28	Thu	Midweek walk - Kingshill, Countesswells
February		
3	Wed eve	Winter talk: Himalaya trips
12	Fri	Stravaig walk - Seaton Park & beach
13 / 14	Fri / Sat eves	Weekend meet - Glencoe
25	Thu	Midweek walk - Geallaig Hill
27 / 28	Sat / Sun	Winter skills weekend at Muir
March		
3	Wed eve	Members photo night

Indoor climbing every Wednesday. Contact Chris: **climbing@cairngormclub.org.uk** for more info.

Positions Vacant

President

Helen Russell's term as President will be ending at this AGM. Nominations (including self-nominations) for our next President are welcome and would best be submitted in advance but could also be raised on the evening of the AGM – contact **secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk**

Mid-Week Walks Coordinator

Ken Thomson is stepping down and would like to hand over the well-worn reins to a new coordinator. There is no expectation that the new person would provide the extensive historical and geographical context papers for the walks!

Day Meets Coordinator

Craig Thomson is also stepping away from his role, and will be happy to support a new Day Meets coordinator. It is one of the more varied of the event coordinators, and you would be working with individual event organisers - not organising them all yourself!

Anyone willing to assist the club in these important roles should make themselves known to the Club Secretary, **secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk**, or speak with the current post-holders for more information.

Not committee positions, but also important:

Assistant hut wardens - Kevin Adam would love to have lots of people that can help check in on the hut and sort out small issues as they arise. Please speak with Kevin at **huts@cairngormclub.org.uk**

Change to SCIO Status

The club has been preparing to change the club's organisation status from a charity to an incorporated charity (SCIO). The draft constitution has been through the full committee for adjustment, updating and approval, and has been distributed to the membership, in preparation for (hopefully) approval at the November AGM.

Please contact **secretary@cairngormclub.org.uk** for a copy if you've not seen this new draft constitution.

Club AGM and Dinner

The **Club AGM** will be on **Wednesday 18 November, 7:30 pm** in **Fountainhall Church Rooms**. Please come - it's a good way to hear about and help the formation of club activities for the coming year. We'll be talking about the progress towards a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation), too.

Annual Dinner
We're trying something different this year! Friday 20th November, 2026 - The annual club dinner will be followed by a ceilidh with a well-known ceilidh band: www.darkisland.co.uk.

The evening will be held at the Station Hotel, Guild St, Aberdeen, with the meal starting at 6.30pm followed by the ceilidh 8.45pm.

You can attend either one or both of those events that night - yes, you can just come for the ceilidh if you wish! Club members are welcome to bring guests.

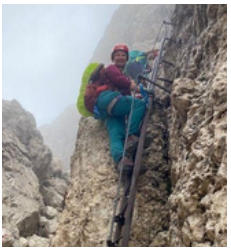
The dinner will beheld in a separate room to the ceilidh, so there will be space for people to chat after dinner. The cost of the 3-course meal will be £35 per person (+£3 suggested tip). Menu options for the evening dinner will be sent out nearer to the event date. The cost of the ceilidh per adult (guests are welcome to attend) will be £15; children are welcome at a cost of £5 per child. The Station Hotel has offered a 15% discount on accommodation booking for the night (£60 approx. for double room B&B) - book directly with them and be sure to tell them you are with the club. Booking deadline for the meal is 6th November-please make your payment to the club account (Sort:83-15-31, Acct:19165508) with reference Dinner, and email Tom at social@cairngormclub.org.uk, with a cc to treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk

Journal

Following the publication of Issue #116 of the Club Journal earlier this year in its new glossy format, we are already planning and receiving article contributions for Issue #117, in 2028.

Given the acclaim for Issue #116's cover, we will be running the photo 'competition' again for the Issue #117's 'wrap around' cover too. Articles will come from far and wide, but as ever our principal interest is in contributions from Club members. They say that 'Everyone has a book in them' - therefore an article will be so much easier! So dust off your keyboards and get cracking - don't be shy! To assist, here are some ideas/suggestions:









★ Hillwalking days
★ Mountaineering
★ Low level walks
★ Features of historical interest in the Cairngorms
★ The natural environment of the Cairngorms - flora and fauna, geology, geography
★ The life of the Cairngorms - what's happening, and characters, life/event stories
★ Mountain learning and safety. 'Near miss' tales
★ Personal stories - e.g. my most memorable mountain
★ Artistic - drawings, poems, stories
★ Topical interest - e.g rewilding, land ownership and access
★ My favourite bothy
★ New members – tell us about yourselves!
★ Book reviews
★ International trips...

Contact the journal editor
Mark **journal@cairngormclub.org.uk**

Issue 116 is available to view or download:
https://cairngormclub.org.uk/journal116

Membership

Club Subscriptions

In order to align our subscription year with that of Mountaineering Scotland, which is in April, the 2026-27 Club subscription will be due in two instalments: the first in October 2026 and the balance in April 2027. Members will benefit from 18 months membership but only pay the 12-month subscription approved at the club AGM in November 2025 (MS fee plus £13/£6.50). In addition to bringing the Club year into line with that of Mountaineering Scotland, it will ensure that Direct Debit mandates remain active.
Direct Debit payments of first instalments were collected on 1 October.
Members not paying by direct debit should pay the first instalment to the Club account now. Amounts due are:

Date	club-only		Club incl MS	
	full	reduced	full	reduced
Oct '26	£ 6.50	£ 3.25	£ 21.00	£ 18.00
Apr '27	£ 6.50	£ 3.25	£ 20.75	£ 17.25
Apr '28	£ 13.00	£ 6.50	£ 41.75	£ 35.25

The Club will continue to pay an Mountaineering Scotland affiliation fee for each active member.
The reduced rate applies to Club members who have informed the Treasurer that on 1st October 2026 they will be 65 or over, 21 or under, or in full-time education, or are normally resident and working more than 80 km from Aberdeen. Members wishing to pay at the reduced rate should tell the Treasurer of the reason.
Members who do not participate in any Club-organised outside activity and do not use Muir Cottage may, if they desire, withdraw from paying the MS Affiliation Fee. Please discuss this with the Treasurer.
Members of multiple clubs (or Individual Members of MS) wishing to pay the MS affiliation fee other than through the Cairngorm Club should tell the Treasurer their MS membership number and, if appropriate, which club it will be paid through.
All members are encouraged to pay their subscription by Direct Debit and, where possible and appropriate, to make a Gift Aid Declaration. Forms for each are available from the Treasurer.

Donald Thomas, treasurer@cairngormclub.org.uk

Membership News since the last Newsletter

The club is sorry to note the death of Kees Witte (Maryculter, Ordinary, member since 1987; Com 09-12, Hut Custodian 12-24)

The following have transferred to Ordinary Membership:
Jeremy Foster (Inverurie)
Lauren Anderson (Lumphanan)
Ian Williamson (Banchory)

The following members have been admitted:

Kacper Wojcik (Aberdeen, Ordinary)
Katerina Gradeva (Aberdeen, Associate)
Kirsty Guyan (Aberdeen, Associate)
Lorika Strickland (Lossiemouth, Associate)
Graeme Gordon (Aboyne, Associate)
Bob Banks (Inverurie, Associate)
Eric Malcolm (Fisherie, Turriff, Ordinary)
Giada La Vite (Aberdeen, Associate)
Kari Millar (Aberdeen, Associate)
Douglas Anderson (Aberdeen, Associate)
Richard Miles (Banchory, Associate)
Michelle Miles (Banchory, Associate)
+ 13 new Interim Members

Lost contact
Ginette Dallere (Paris, Ordinary Life Member since 1953) Journal returned unknown at address
Ross Slessor (Aberdeen, Ordinary Life Member since 1966)
Please let membership@cairngormclub.org.uk know if you have any updates for either of them.

Mountaineering Scotland Membership
The Club is affiliated to Mountaineering Scotland and pays a membership fee for each active member. This entitles you to a variety of discounts, as listed at https://www.mountaineering.scot/clubs.
From 2026, this was updated to include Personal Accident insurance.

New: WhatsApp Community



The climbers have used a WhatsApp community very effectively for a year or so now. We're now introducing one for all the other stuff the club does - all our day and midweek meets, evening event, training...

So what is a "community" versus a WhatsApp chat?

A community allows different topics - so you can subscribe to stuff you're interested in, but don't have to get traffic from stuff you don't want.

It's not a replacement for any other communication method at this point - we'll continue to have the mailing list, monthly updates, and this newsletter. We hope however that this will allow for more agile discussion, without filling everybody's email inboxes.

As the community is only for members and not the public, it is important that you are identifiable as a member in your profile.

We've create a quick intro to get joined up, that covers the basics, it'll take 2 minutes and ensure you get the best out of it.

JOIN HERE: https://cairngormclub.org.uk/whatsapp/

Any questions? Contact Mike: **comms@cairngormclub.org.uk**

Online news

Mountaineering Scotland's statement on bolt placement at Creag Dubh

Outdoor residential experience now a legal entitlement for pupils in Scottish schools

Mountain Training Scotland Strategy for 2026-30

Coilltean Caillte (Gaelic for 'Forgotten Woodlands') is a project mapping over 15,000 Scottish place-names that suggest the presence of woodland, and includes some specific case studies.

Government consultation on how our outdoor access legislation has been working - ends Nov 23

Scottish Hill Names has a new updated edition released 30 years after the first publication.

Scottish Avalanche Information Service full service across its 6 areas starts Thur Dec 17th. If there are early winter conditions, it's likely they will start forecasting in North Cairngorm and Lochaber before then.

Mountaineering Scotland annual report

Ben Rinnes summit path works under way

Fundraiser by Friends of Abernethy to support efforts to improve future wildfire mitigation measures and support habitat restoration of those lost in the fire

Fundraiser by Ballater Paths Group already raised thousands towards the repair of extremely boggy sections of the path that runs behind Glenmuick House and leads to Pannanich Hill and Heartbreak Ridge, but need to raise a further £500 to let the work go ahead

The 'Unmapped places' project is mapping previously unrecorded names and stories of the Cairngorm Mountains as used by people who live or work in the hills. There are both in-person workshops, but also the possibility to make submissions online.

Indicators
Most members will be aware that replacement indicators were installed on Lochnagar in May and on Ben Macdui in August, the first in ideal conditions, the second not! Engineer Alan Holmes will be hosted at the Club Dinner in November, and thanked for his huge help in specifying the steel replacement disks and in fixing them in place. During the year, Ken Thomson has produced no fewer than three small brochures, one each for Lochnagar and Macdui (the mountains rather than the indicators themselves), and a third describing the design and installation of the replacements: anyone wishing to have a copy of any can download them here.

"Snippets" from NEMT "Mountain Views", Autumn 2026
Path Maintenance
Over the summer, OATS volunteers, coordinated by Eva Kupska, have worked on several Cairngorms paths, i.e.

- Beinn a'Ghlo: Carn Liath and Return Path,
- Lochnagar: Glas Allt, Dubh Loch, Coire Chash, Callater, Jock's Road
- Lairig Ghru, Braeriach and Chalamain Gap
- Glen Clova: Corrie Fee and Kilbo Path
- Morrone, Braemar
- Coire Domhain, Loch Avon
- Glen Feshie: Carn Ban Mor and Sgor Gaoith
- Meall a'Bhuachaille, Glenmore
- Mount Keen from Glen Esk

On the Glas Allt path, a two-day effort saw 190 drainage channels cleared, silt traps emptied, and washed-out material returned to the footpath to help protect it from future erosion. A Volunteers' Get-Together is to be held at Badaguish on Friday, 13 November.

A Better "Forestry Track"
The extension of a 'forestry track' on Pitmain and Glenbanchor Estate across the hillside to the north of Newtonmore has been approved, subject to conditions covering peat, archaeology and public access. NEMT and Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group spoke at the Planning Committee meeting, and the previous application was rejected: a significant victory. Although NEMT had again objected, primarily because of lack of information, the further revised application takes a much less objectionable line alongside existing forest.

Access Issues
NatureScot commissioned Harper Macleod (HM) LLP to clarify how nature conservation law interacts with "responsible access" under the 2003 Land Reform Act, particularly for organised events on private land.
HM concludes that:

- Conservation takes priority over access rights, which local authorities uphold in consultation with NatureScot.
- Organisers need no prior permission, but landowners/occupiers must obtain NatureScot consent for events on protected sites. Organisers or participants may commit offences by recklessly causing damage.
- Landowners/occupiers must prevent irresponsible access, though the extent of this duty is unclear. A defence may apply where they lack control or organisers fail to obtain consent.
- Drones are likely excluded from access rights under Section 9(f), which prohibits access using motorised vehicles or vessels, except those adapted for disabled users. Drones are motorised and may constitute vessels or cause nuisance, but, like e-bikes, their legal status remains untested in court.

Scottish Mountain Rescue Statistics
The **2025 report** (released 2026) which covers 31 MRTs, but not the Cairngorms, Glen Coe or Lochaber ones, analyses 491 mountain incidents (i.e. 62% of all MRT incidents, which involved 1168 call-outs), and 624 persons assisted in that year. Of these incidents, 205 occurred on or near paths, and 358 and 101 related to summer and winter hillwalking respectively, almost all the rest being scrambling or climbing. Slips and trips accounted for 152 persons, lost or navigational errors 107, falls or cragfasts 65, and medical 63. Analysis of 2015-2024 data identified some trends and patterns (e.g. females much more likely to suffer ankle/lower leg fractures, but males much more likely to die), and recent divergences.

The Angus Glens
Scottish Land & Estates have produced a report on moorland management in the Angus Glens (Clova, Prosen, Esk, Lethnot and Isla). It covers 7 landholdings that account for about 60% of the 90,000ha in the Glens, mostly farmland, moorland, rough grazing, peatland and woodland. In 2025, these 7 estates employed 86.5 FTE staff, including 43 FTE gamekeepers – 30 for grouse, 13 for pheasant or partridge – and 768 seasonal staff. Almost £3 million was spent on mostly local contractors, goods and services, and £114,087 on track maintenance. The estates also provided 68 homes, 23 for families with children. 16 raptor species (4 being owls) were reported, 6 - white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, buzzard, red kite, peregrine falcon and kestrel – on each. There is little reference to hillwalking or access, other than "engagement" with walking groups, OATS and the MBA.