**MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 2018 – RESULTS**

**Introduction**

The survey was a follow-up to the 2013 survey and was intended to help the committee to ensure that the touring programme and other services offered by the club continue to meet the needs of members. Some questions were the same as in 2013, several were modified and some new ones added.

The survey was run through SurveyMonkey and the questions were designed by a sub-group comprising John Barnard, Richard Davison, Pete Lancaster and Susie Amann. A final draft survey was tested amongst a number of people, some of whom weren’t involved in the design work.

The survey was promoted through an email to all subscribing members, the e-newsletter, the Facebook secret group and the website. It was open from 29 September to 15 October.

The report below lists some headline results and then looks in more detail at the responses for groups of questions. There were 740 comments across the 10 questions that invited them. The report below attempts to summarise the main themes/points coming through from these comments. This was a challenging exercise, so the committee might wish to look in more detail at the individual comments to see the frequency and depth of feeling on various points.

A summary of the responses for each question and the comments from members is available separately. A report on the survey, together with the reports generated by SurveyMonkey, will be placed on the website.

**Headline results**

There were 294 responses, which gives a response rate of 20%. The 2013 survey was completed by 439 members (36% of the total membership at that time).

The 2018 survey sample is roughly representative of the membership as a whole (small bias towards older and more experienced members, and towards male members).

Our membership is getting older and more experienced, but the average age of those joining (with membership of one year or less) is 45 years (against a club average age of 56 years).

Members are more active skiers outside the club, but do more of their hut-to-hut touring and instructional / training trips within the club.

More people have gone on instructional / training trips, day tours and hut-to-hut tours in the official club programme in the three years up to the 2018 survey compared to 2013.

The touring programme is well supported but there are concerns about the timing of its publication, the need for more information about trips and leaders, and costs.

Future demand is strongest for instructional / training trips and unguided day tours and hut-to-hut tours. Some members want to see more unguided and member-led tours, more lower-grade tours and one or two more low-cost trips.

The most important services were the touring programme, yearbook, training courses, website, newsletters and member to member tours. The least important services were summer weekend meets, social events and grants.

People strongly support the club’s role in providing training. Many people are pretty active in training and about 76% are interested in doing more training in the next 3 seasons.

It’s important to train tour leaders and to subsidise this. Members also thought the Club should do more to keep people up-to-date on new ways of doing things and do a bit more on informal training and practice.

Lectures and social events are not very popular, partly reflecting our dispersed membership and because people have other networks/memberships for non-skiing activities.

Symposiums appeal to about a third of members, but getting the focus and location/activities right is important.

Climate care continues to be pretty important to the vast majority of members, but there is some uncertainty about the value of carbon offsetting.

Finding good ways of helping members to contact other local members seems to be more important than striving to be more inclusive and “bottom up”.

Remember that the club works well, is healthy and we should be proud of it – but you can’t please all of the members all of the time!!

**Analysis of results**

**Profile of membership (Q1 – Q4)**

The 2018 survey sample is roughly representative of the membership as a whole. There was a small bias towards older and more experienced members, and towards male members:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2018** | | **2013** | |
|  | **Membership** | **Survey** | **Membership** | **Survey** |
| Male | 77% | 81% | 79% | 83% |
| Female | 23% | 19% | 21% | 17% |
| Aged 50 years and over | 66% | 74% | 58% | 64% |
| Member for 5 years or less | 34% | 34% | 40% | 46% |

In analysing the results, a quick comparison was made between the **membership** in 2013 and 2018:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2018** | **2013** |
| Male | 76.6% | 79.2% |
| Female | 23.4% | 20.8% |
| Aged 34 or less | 8% | 11% |
| Aged 35 - 49 | 24% | 31% |
| Aged 50 or more | 66% | 58% |
| Average age | 56 years | 52 years |
| Member for 5 years or less | 37% | 41% |
| Member for 6-10 years | 22% | 21% |
| Member for more than 10 years | 41% | 38% |
| Average length of membership | 11.7 years | 10.5 years |

Although we’ve made some progress in recruiting more females to the club, the % and number of younger members has decreased since 2013. The average age has increased from 52 years to 56 years and the length of membership from 10.5 years to 11.7 years. However, the average age of people who have been a member for one year or less is 46 years.

**Current ski touring skills and activity (Q5 – Q8)**

About one-third of respondents rate themselves as E3 S3 M3 (no big change since 2013). Those responding to the 2018 survey rated themselves slightly higher on off-piste ski technique (37% rated as S4 against 32% in 2013) and mountaineering skills (69% rated as M3 and above in 2018 against 65% in 2013).

49% of respondents had been ski touring/mountaineering for more than 15 years (43% in 2013). This is longer than most people have been members, suggesting most members start ski touring some time before joining the club.

As in 2013, about half of respondents go ski touring for 2 or 3 weeks a year. However, there has been a slight move towards more weeks per year (66% for 3 weeks or more in 2018 against 59% in 2013; 26% for 5 weeks or more in 2018 against 22% in 2013).

Generally, people are more active skiers outside the club than within the club, i.e. skiing with the club is only part of their overall skiing experience. One exception to this is for hut-to-hut touring (30% had been on an official club hut-to-hut guided tour compared to 21% outside of the club, and 37% had been on an unguided hut-to-hut tour with the club compared to 28% outside of the club). Day tours are more popular outside of the club (particularly for unguided day tours). More people have been on instructional / training trips with the club (38%) than outside of the club (32%).

**Club touring programme (Q8 – Q12)**

A few changes in the questions between the 2013 and 2018 surveys makes it difficult to compare results.

The % of respondents stating that they had been on official club trips increased between 2013 and 2018 (the fact that the number of trips on the official programme increased from 53 to 59 and the number of Scottish trips from 6 to 10 in this period may partly account for this).

In 2018, 36% said that they had been on instructional / training trips compared to 23% in 2013. Day tours (guided and unguided) had increased from 33% in 2013 to 49% in 2018, and hut-to-hut tours (guided and unguided) had increased from 40% in 2013 to 55% in 2018.

Most respondents felt that the balance within the official programme was about right. There were more people thinking that there weren’t enough trips compared to the number thinking there were too many (similar figures in 2013 and 2018).

Over a third of respondents don’t know whether the balance within the overall programme is about right or not.

The club touring programme is important to 82% of respondents (there was a change in how this question was asked between 2013 and 2018: in 2013, people were asked how important it was for the club to provide a touring programme and almost everyone – 99.5% - said it was important; in 2018, people were asked to rate services as important on the basis that they used them or expected to).

In terms of possible future demand, Q11 asked if people would be interested in joining particular types of trips (the roughly equivalent question in 2013 was about whether people had or would consider different types of trips so the answers aren’t comparable).

People expressed stronger demand (likely + possibly) for unguided day tours (72%) and hut-to-hut tours (72%) than for guided tours (57% and 63% respectively).

Demand (likely + possibly) was strong for instructional / training trips (76%).

Demand (likely + possibly) was fairly strong for more adventurous trips or expeditions (53%).

Comments were provided by 115 people. A lot of people thought the touring programme was good. The main comments/themes were:

* The timing of the programme needs to be reviewed. Asking people to book up to 10 months in advance when they are working is difficult. Have a second tranche of tours available from September onwards.
* Continued concern about how quickly the programme fills up.
* A need for more transparency (e.g. information about leaders who are members, who is going on a trip, who a trip is aimed at, what the costs will be).
* Some uncertainty about member-to-member tours (e.g. what they are, how different they are/are not from unguided tours in the official programme).
* More unguided/member-led tours needed – some view this as the core of what the Club is about (its USP) as you can get guided tours from outside of the club.
* More lower-grade tours are needed – need to watch that the programme doesn’t go too far up the grading standard.
* A few less expensive tours are needed to appeal to younger members and those on lower incomes.

**Club services (Q9)**

There was a change in how this question was asked in 2018 so a direct comparison with results from 2013 is not possible.

Based on **use or expected use of club services**, the most important services were the touring programme (82%), yearbook (74%), training courses (70%), website (66%), newsletters (56%) and member to member tours (52%).

The least important services were summer weekend meets (11%), social events (15%) and grants (16%).

Comments were provided by 69 people. Overall, people are satisfied with the services provided by the club. The main comments/themes were:

* There should be more tours graded 2 or below and some should be available from September onwards.
* There is a need to “modernise” the website and make more information available to members through the newsletter (e.g. on lectures and events being provided by others), and to help members contact other members in their area.
* Older members may not ski very often but they are keen to support the club and its activities through continued membership.

**Training programme (Q13 – Q15)**

Over half of respondents had received at least one form of training in the last 5 years.

The most frequent type of training done was transceiver search, with 37% having done this in the last year (seems a bit high?) and a further 38% in the last 5 years.

The least frequent type of training done was navigation (12% in the last year and a further 21% in the last 5 years).

About 76% of respondents were interested in doing more training in the next 3 seasons.

With the exception of Alps-based ski technique training (49%), more people preferred UK-based training to Alps-based training. About 25% were interested in Scottish-based ski technique training.

There wasn’t much of any significance in the comments to Q13 (other types of training). There were some mentions of SML, WML and IML. A few people emphasised the importance of practising – you don’t need to do lots of formal training courses but you do need to practice.

The role of the Club in providing formal and informal training (Q15) generated 79 comments. The main comments/themes were:

* There was strong support for the role of the Club in providing formal and informal training.
* It’s important to train tour leaders and to subsidise this.
* The Club should send out information to keep people up-to-date on new ways of doing things.
* What should be the focus of our training effort – basic core competencies rather than add-ons.
* The Club should do a bit more on informal routes for training and practice (e.g. put more information/videos on to the website, help members to contact each other to arrange practice sessions).

**Lectures (Q16)**

The vast majority of members have not attended a lecture.

Comments were provided by 83 people. The main points/themes were:

* We’re a very dispersed membership so it’s really difficult to do an effective lecture programme.
* The more local a lecture is the greater the chance I’ll turn up.
* For people who are working, weekends may be better than weekday evenings.

**Symposiums (Q17)**

51% of respondents are likely to attend a symposium every 3 years or more frequently.

For Q9, 36% of respondents thought that ski mountaineering symposiums were important to them (because they had used them or expect to do so).

There were comments from 61 people. The main points/themes were:

* Location and pricing affect attendance.
* The focus of a symposium is also important in people deciding whether to attend.
* Build symposiums around outdoor activities (rather than in the city).

**Summer weekend meets (Q18)**

This was an open-ended question and 123 people responded. There was no strong (or even moderate) support for summer weekend meets – yes, some people might turn up but only very occasionally. The main points/comments were:

* Summer meets aren’t what people joined the club for.
* People use other, more local clubs that they are members of to do things in the summer.
* Look into having a small number of meets that are provided with other like-minded bodies.

**Climate care (Q19)**

80% of respondents stated that it was somewhat or very important for the club to use its resources to promote and address climate care issues and low carbon travel (78% in 2013).

Those suggesting that this work was irrelevant has reduced from 9% in 2013 to 4% in 2018.

There were 55 comments. The main comments/themes:

* Uncertainty about how much the Club could do but more than balanced by people welcoming/supporting the fact that it was trying to do something.
* Emphasis should be more on helping people to share travel (role for tour leaders and coordinators here) and trying to group tours a bit more in terms of timing and location.
* Don’t over focus on one type of carbon offset scheme (quite a few doubts expressed about carbon offsetting) – provide more of a “menu” of possible steps and projects that people could support.

**Ski mountaineering racing (Q20)**

24% of respondents feel that it is somewhat or very important for the club to be engaged in ski mountaineering racing. Some 51% considered it to be not very important whilst 16% thought it was irrelevant.

**Newsletters and emails (Q21)**

The vast majority (88%) thought that the number of e-newsletters (8-10 issues each year) and emails to members was about right.

There were comments from 43 people. The main points/themes were:

* The Yearbook and e-newsletter are very good.
* There are concerns about increasing the use of social media (partly balanced by others who support its use).
* Look at communication differently for getting vital information out to members and building a community.
* Develop a forum for the leadership community and for peer-to-peer contact within the PTL cohort.
* Reduce the number of e-newsletters to between 6 and 8 each year.

**Any other comments (Q22)**

The survey finished with an open-ended question about any other points or suggestions. Comments were provided by 63 people. The main points/themes were:

* The club works well, it’s healthy and we should be proud of it.
* Produce a “member map” to help people sort out impromptu meetings.
* The club is good at constantly considering options for improvement and beneficial change.
* Consult the members but don’t overdo it.