

## Membership Survey 2024 – Summary

The Eagle Ski Club membership survey was conducted during September 2024 using a series of questions hosted on the SurveyMonkey website. This paper summarises the results of the survey. The full (raw) results of the survey are contained in the following 2 files:

- [Basic analysis of answers to multiple-choice questions](#)
- [Written comments](#) (these have been organised into groups of similar comments; one comment has been removed but has been noted by the survey team)

### Key points

- There were 323 responses, out of a total membership of around 1,530. This is a 21% response rate which is reasonable.
- The respondents were reasonably representative of the club membership.
- 82% say that the membership fee represents good or very good value for money.
- Most members are satisfied or very satisfied with the services we provide, particularly the touring programme, Yearbook and website.
- Members would like to see more trips in the touring programme, particularly member-led trips.
- There appears to be a reasonably healthy pool of potential leaders amongst respondents and this will be crucial if we are to provide more member-led trips.
- 81% believe that it is very important or important that the club works on climate care issues, though 72% feel that what the club is doing now is “about right”.
- Possible climate care actions with the highest level of support included publicising, for information and individual choice, a carbon cost for each tour and the various travel options, adding more information to the club website about these issues and options, and refocusing club investments towards more sustainable low carbon investments.
- Options that were more about directional action (such as carbon levies or more trips where you had to travel by rail) were less well supported and generated higher levels of disagreement amongst members.
- Many comments supported the need to increase diversity within the club, particularly younger members and more female members, and make it easier for new members – and those relatively new to ski touring – to find their way in the club and get on their first tour.
- It’s very important to continue to emphasise the importance of safety and safer ski touring in everything that the club does.

### Profile of Membership (Q1 – Q6)

The profile of the members who responded to survey seems to be a reasonably representative sample of the membership:

- The split of respondents was 77.5% male and 21.5% female, which is very close to the male/female split across the membership. Just under 1% preferred not to say or identified another way.

- The survey has an over-representation of those aged 50 years or over (75% compared to a membership figure of 69%).
- The survey has an over-representation of people who have been a member of the club for 10 years or more (50% compared to a membership figure of 43%), with newer members being slightly under-represented (32% compared to 39%).

About 72% had been ski touring/mountaineering for more than 10 years. Only 10% had less than three years of experience. Membership of the club had been continuous for 97% of respondents.

### **Services Provided by the Club (Q7 - Q8)**

Over the last 3 years, the most important service (based on the use of them by respondents) has been the website (rated as “very important” or “important” by 87%), followed by the touring programme (77%) and Yearbook (73%). Other services are used by varying amounts of respondents, with the least important services being other benefits (31%), member organised activities (30%) and social events in the UK (28%).

Some services are used more by younger members (aged under 39 years), including the touring programme (89%) and training programme (63% against an average of 51%). Having the liability insurance through our affiliation with Mountaineering Scotland is particularly important for younger members.

Satisfaction ratings seem to reflect the usage of the service and are generally good or very good, with very few scores of “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”. The Yearbook ranks highest with 49% “very satisfied” and 37% “satisfied”, closely followed by the touring programme (45% very satisfied, 39% satisfied) and the website (33% very satisfied, 52% satisfied).

### **Value for Money (Q9 -10)**

47% thought the club subscription represented “very good” value for money and 35% thought “good”. However, 16% thought it was only “okay” and 1.4% “poor” or “very poor”. The value for money rating was highest amongst younger members of the club (90% satisfied or very satisfied), with those in the 30-39 (70%) and 40-49 (75%) age groups being the lowest. Women also scored it slightly higher (86%) than did men (81%).

The question about what would make the most difference to getting more out of the club generated 159 comments. Most comments were about improving the touring programme and providing more meets and events. Some 22 comments were focussed on there being more social events for people to meet face-to-face.

## **Club Touring Programme (Q11 – Q13, Q15)**

About 50% of respondents hadn't taken part in any club touring activity during the last 3 years. Of the remainder, the majority took part in one week of activity, with smaller numbers undertaking 2 weeks or more.

Of respondents who wanted to take part in the Club touring programme, 76% "Always" or "Usually" managed to get on a club trip with 13% "Occasionally". As might be expected, those aged under 30 are least likely to be able to get on a club trip (50%), whilst the figures are better for other age groups.

Looking at the next 3 years, demand is highest for member-led trips from a valley base or hut (55% would like to do this), or member-led hut-to-hut trips (53%). Instructional and training weeks are also popular at 44%.

Women are more interested in going on instruction/training weeks (59% compared to 40% for men) and less likely to go on member-led trips, particularly hut-to-hut (34% against 58% for men). There were 133 comments about the touring programme and how it might be improved. Many people were happy with the touring programme and the balance between guide-led and member-led trips, though there were also a lot of issues and suggestions raised. The main issues raised were:

- There should be more member-led club trips (as opposed to guided).
- The accessibility of the programme in terms of the timing of its publication, difficulties for some members (particularly younger) to get on a club trip, and the speed with which trips fill up.
- The programme had become a little stale, with similar trips being repeated every year – more variety was requested.
- It was noted that the number of expeditions/remote trips had decreased in recent years and although these appeal to only a small minority, they reflect well on the ethos of the club.

## **Leading tours (Q20-Q22)**

Some 16% of respondents already lead tours for the club. A further 9% thought they were ready to lead trips and 15% were interested once they had done more training and/or gained more experience. This represents 65 members who were interested in leading tours at some point in the coming years. Of these, 55 were men and 10 were women. Overall, though, the results point to a relatively healthy pool of potential leaders within the club. This is particularly important given the demand for more member-led club trips.

The main issues or barriers that discourage members from stepping forward include lack of experience, lack of time and age. A small number commented that the process for becoming a tour

leader looked complicated and some were discouraged by the need to go on member-led trips before joining the leader development programme.

The main suggestions for encouraging women leaders included organising women-only trips, increasing the overall number of female club members, more active encouragement of female leaders (e.g. dedicated female leadership programme) and a more visible presence of women in how the club is run.

### **Member to Member Tours (Q14)**

31% of respondents indicated that they had been involved in a member-to-member activity in the last 3 years. About one third of these had been on meetups in Scotland, and about half had been on day tours or hut-to-hut trips in the Alps.

There were a few comments regretting that member-to-member activities seem to have been “demoted” in the club’s priorities, particularly their visibility on the website.

### **Skills and Training (Q16 – Q19)**

Based on their own assessment, 22% considered themselves to be of beginner standard for technical mountaineering skills, 17% for first aid, 14% for use of GPS and mobile mapping apps, and 11% in the use of ice axe and crampons.

Combining both beginner and intermediate ratings provides a range from 28% for basic navigation skills (i.e. 72% consider themselves to be experienced or expert) to 62% for first aid:

Skill	Beginner + Intermediate	Experienced + expert
Avalanche awareness, assessment of snow conditions & route planning	52%	48%
Group decision-making and other soft skills	43%	57%
Transceiver search & companion rescue	46%	53%
Off-piste ski technique	33%	67%
Technical mountaineering skills (e.g. ropework, crevasse rescue)	56%	44%
Use of ice axe & crampons	40%	60%
Basic navigation skills (using map & compass)	28%	72%
Use of GPS and mobile navigation/map apps	43%	57%
First aid	62%	38%

Women were more likely to describe their skills as being beginner or intermediate, with some of the largest differences being for avalanche awareness (75% for women, 48% for men), group decision-making skills (63% v 38%) and transceiver search and rescue (71% v 40%).

In total, 48% of respondents had one or more qualifications. The most popular qualification was a two-day outdoor first aid certificate (33% of all respondents), followed by 21% for avalanche awareness & assessment (two-day) and 15% for mountain leader.

Over the next 3 years, the highest priority amongst respondents for future training was “avalanche awareness, assessment of snow conditions & route planning” with 58%, followed by off-piste skiing technique with 49% and technical mountaineering skills with 36%.

A wide range of options for delivering training were favoured by respondents. The most popular choice was for more 1 or 2 day training events in the UK (41%), followed by more online webinars on safety & skills (40%) and more online training courses (36%). The opportunity for some funding support, such as grants or subsidised training, was particularly important to younger members.

### **Climate Care (Q23 – Q27)**

81% of respondents believe that it is “very important” or “important” that the club works on climate care issues, with this being higher amongst women (89%) and younger members (82%). Only 7% thought that it was not important or irrelevant, compared to 21% in 2013.

About 72% of respondents feel that what the club is doing now is about right, with women highest at 82% and younger members lowest at 64%. However, 21% feel that the club is not doing “enough” or “nowhere near enough”. Only 7% feel that we are doing too much. This is an issue which polarises some members, as shown by the range of comments in favour of more, or less, action.

Over the last 3 years, for all their ski tours (not just ones done through the club), the % of all respondents that had taken particular action varied considerably:

Shared a car for the main part of a trip	40%
Done several tours back-to-back to reduce the overall number of short trips	33%
Travelled by rail for the main part of a journey	30%
Travelled by train to an airport to take a direct flight rather than use connecting flights	30%
Chosen a ski tour destination at least partly based on how easy it is to get to by train rather than by flying	25%
Purchased carbon credits from the Club to mitigate emissions	13%
Purchased carbon credits from another provider to mitigate emissions	13%
Stopped travelling by air entirely for ski trips in Europe	12%
Made a donation to an environmental charity after a trip	6%

This suggests that over the last 3 years, climate care actions taken by respondents on their ski tour trips have tended to focus more on travel options rather than on mitigating emissions.

By far the biggest issue or concern influencing personal decisions about possible climate care action is time and cost (particularly the additional time and/or cost of using rail travel compared to air travel). This concern was raised by 42% of all respondents.

For future actions by the club, the ones most supported by respondents are:

- Adding more information go the club website about these issues and options.
- Publicising, for information and individual choice, a carbon cost for each tour and the various travel options.
- Refocusing club investments towards more sustainable low carbon investments.

Options that were more about directional action (such as carbon levies or more trips where you had to travel by rail) were less well supported and generated higher levels of disagreement.

Overall, although respondents thought that what the club currently does is about right there is an appetite for more action, particularly in terms of providing more information to members about carbon costs and options, and ensuring our investments support sustainable low carbon options. Delivering these are likely to be an important step towards helping members take more positive climate care action for their ski touring trips.

### **Club Priorities (Q28)**

There was strong support for all current club priorities, ranging from 63% for celebrating the centenary to 98% for encouraging safety and best practice across all club activities.

### **Other Comments (Q29 – Q30)**

Many people mentioned that we are a great club that is well-run and has a strong volunteer ethos, and that people join us to go ski touring! Respondents also made a wide range of suggestions on future priorities and improving the club. The main ones were:

- More action on climate care issues but we need to acknowledge that some people have different views, and that personal choice and decision-making is important to many.
- Explore how to help members to meet up in their area (with a view to finding touring companions or gain knowledge of how the club operates – face to face).
- Increasing diversity within the club, particularly in terms of younger members and more female members.
- Make it easier for new members – and those relatively new to ski touring – to find their way in the club and get on their first tour.
- An emphasis on safety and safer ski touring is an essential priority for the club and how it operates.

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