

The Cairngorm Club

Guidelines on Organising a Weekend Meet

1. This set of guidelines is intended for Meet Organisers (MOs) and for Weekend Meet Secretaries (WMSs) new to the job. Other than promoting general mountaineering “good practice”, the only relevant Club policy is that no booking for meets is confirmed until payment has been received by the MO. All that follows are guidelines which cannot cover every eventuality.
2. Usually, the WMS books the bunkhouse/hostel/campsite etc. up to a year ahead, for the Friday and Saturday (and sometimes Sunday) nights (not the Sat/Sun(/Mon) dates!). The booking is usually for between 6 (e.g. November) and 12 (e.g. May/June) people, since in general it is easier to ask later for extra places. When the MO is identified, this booking will be communicated (and transferred) to him/her. At some locations, such as youth hostels and hotels, members can book their own individual places; this may suit members who want to go for fewer or extra nights.
3. About 6 months before the meet, the Newsletter Editor should be told the details of the weekend including dates, MO’s name and contact details (a Club “meetorganiserXX” e-mail address can be arranged), cost (for the whole weekend), and location. A short paragraph describing nearby mountains and climbing will be useful. If the new (summer 2013) WebCollect payment system (<http://webcollect.org.uk/cairngormclub>) is to be used, the WMS should set this up for the MO around now, with advice from the Treasurer as needed.
4. A couple of months before a meet, a Club e-mail and a Forum posting should advertise the meet, outlining arrangements (e.g. possible room shares, whether sleeping bags etc. are needed, or a communal meal provided), plus a few suggestions as to mountains and climbing routes. Payment may be made directly, by cheque (made out to “The Cairngorm Club”) or cash, or via WebCollect (ditto, plus bank transfer etc.). A few web addresses (e.g. for the bunkhouse, or alternatives if the Club’s booking is full) may be useful, plus encouragement to car-share (see below).
5. Cancelling meets/beds at short notice may put bunkhouse/hostel owners at a financial disadvantage, especially where they have turned others away. However, it may be sensible to review likely attendance 2 or 3

months in advance, and to try and adjust it in consultation with the owner. Presumably following bad experiences, several huts etc. now insist on money up front. The Club Treasurer can provide cheques for accommodation deposits and/or final payments. It may help if a list of those attending, possibly with room allocations where relevant, can be emailed ahead to the hostel/bunkhouse. Contrariwise, a waiting list may be necessary, and should be operated fairly and transparently, e.g. a “24 hours uptake” rule, with a reminder to notify drop-outs.

6. For data protection reasons, the Club’s list of members (with phone numbers, e-mail addresses and addresses) is not made generally available. If necessary, the WMS or Club Secretary will help MOs and participants who are not on the Committee to contact participants, e.g. to organise/offer lifts.
7. The provision of communal meals is entirely optional, but should be made clear to meet participants. One problem is the possible late return of the cook, and/or diners! It is usually simpler to keep meal payments separate from accommodation payments (see below), and in cash.
8. The Club’s route sheet (available in the Miscellaneous section of the Club website) should be printed out (several copies) and used by all meet participants for both Saturday and Sunday (and Monday, if appropriate), and taken away by the MO when vacating the accommodation. In general, consider the possibility of a non-return, and what information will then be wanted by the police and Mountain Rescue, e.g. age(s), equipment. A group photo taken at the hostel entrance as everyone sets off in the morning may be useful (but is not always possible, of course).
9. In case of “incidents” (accidents, MR call-outs, “altercations”), the MO should notify the WMS and/or Club Secretary as soon as possible afterwards, and not give information to the media. A set of “Incident Guidelines” is available at the Miscellaneous section of the Club website.
10. After the meet, cheques from members and MO should be sent to the Treasurer, along with a rough account (main payments and receipts), which should also be sent to the WMS. A difficult one is how to deal with cancellation due to illness, bad weather, traffic accidents, etc. In general, refunds should not be given unless a replacement is found, and/or the Club is not out of pocket. However, this is left to the MO’s discretion.

Ken Thomson and Marj Ewan, May 2013