

SKI CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN®

Minutes of the Strategy Meeting of Council held in person on the 26th June 2025.

In attendance: Angus Maciver (Chair) (AM), Walter Macharg (Treasurer) (WM), Rick Krajewski (RK) (part of meeting), Kenny MacAllister (KMacA), Holly Boucher (HB) Chris Radford (CR), Holly Boucher (HB) Andy Lapham (AL), Mark Colston (MC), Jean Lovett (JL), Elizabeth Morrison (ELM) (Secretariat)

Apologies: Trevor Campbell Davis (TCD), David Jenkins (DJ)

Observing: James Gambrill (Chief Operating Officer) (JG), Katy Ellis (Head of Holidays) (KE) Jitendra Shetty (Finance) (JtS), (PD) Owen Chapman (Head of Membership) (OC), Pete Davis (Head of Marketing) (PD)

1 Chairman's welcome and introductions

AM welcomed all Council and staff members to the in-person 2025-2028 Strategy meeting. He opened the meeting reflecting on the need to ensure that everyone understands the current situation the Club finds itself in, including the financial context. He noted the need for Council to agree the budget this year and beyond.

AM stated the two main objectives for the day:

- Agree broad strategy and direction for the Club over the next year.
- Agree what is required for a longer look at the future.
- Approve budget for 2025/2026.

At the start, AM noted that he had thought it best to devote the entire day to the strategy meeting and there would be no "Council meeting" in the morning as had happened previously.

AM highlighted the broad context for the day:

- Club had a membership of over 30,000 members in early 2005.
- Club membership has been declining since, including in the past two years.
- The club had been a very effective early adopter and sharer of ski and snow information to members, but nowadays skiers can access the same information from a wide variety of sources.
- Significant member benefits.
- Number of rep resorts had increased, and the recent Club return to France successful.
- Focus on rebuilding member benefits over past couple of years has not led to increase in finances.
- Assumptions (including member numbers) which had been used for revenue led to an operating deficit in the past two years.
- Spending assumptions incorrect as previous budget modelled on inaccurate member data.

- Improved quality and quantity of members services has not translated into either financial success or increase in memberships.
- Website replaced and significant investment in digital services.
- New App had been launched, but scope for improvement.
- Costs under control, but revenue generation through partnerships had not increased as expected.
- Rep course and refresher courses revised and updated.
- Some Club policies updated, and others such as safeguarding launched as new policy.
- Reengaged with members.
- Belief within the ski industry that the Club is going in the right direction, but this is not observed in the member numbers.
- Team structure and performance to be discussed at the Human Resources Advisory Group.
- What would the impact of compressing the Club, and modelling the Club on a membership of 9000 be?

RK reminded Council that the Club had considerable investments that could be spent on current members. He also raised the possibility that more income could be generated by the investments which could be used for more member benefits.

MC queried what was known about the members who are not participating on Freshtracks holidays, skiing with reps or taking Platinum insurance. He highlighted the risks of not delivering good value to all members, including those not skiing with the Club or taking insurance.

KMacA suggested that the Club should invest in a youth programme and develop an affiliation with the British Ski Academy.

Council discussed the importance of messaging (discover better skiing). They also debated if the current issues related to product or positioning. They noted that while optically things seemed to be improving, and the ski industry was increasingly positive about the Club's direction, this is not being translated into Club financial performance.

AL shared a quick SWOT analysis he had completed.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments (cash) • Website • Reps • Holidays 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Discounts (confusing)
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App • User-generated content • Improvements to the join journey 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining membership • Inaccurate member numbers • Unacceptable that renewals had not been followed up

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aging membership• Resort visibility
--	--

AL indicated he would continue to develop this for a further Council discussion.

2. Situational Analysis

JG (Chief Operating Officer) detailed service delivery and remarked that despite all the work that had been done, none of the trendlines had shifted upwards. Some had, at best, flattened.

Pre-Covid around 2500 members skied with Freshtracks (this is currently around 1900 members skiing with Freshtracks). The age profile of Club membership had decreased as increasing numbers of older members are leaving (no longer skiing). It was noted that most skiers taking holidays in the industry are in the 51- 69 age bracket. Council briefly debated what would have happened if the Club had done nothing and spent no funds.

The Club has limited data on leavers (data such as age, gender, holidays, skiing with reps, taking insurance). It is believed that new members are more likely to leave, than longstanding members. Most of the new members joined using a credit card and are believed to be more transactional members. The suggestion of a discounted membership for over 70s was rejected.

Council discussed the role of Freshtracks holidays in a membership Club and wondered if decreasing the margin would increase passenger numbers i.e. could holidays take on a loss-leading role to drive membership. With several Council members stating that holidays are key pillar of service delivery, this was rejected. KE described plans for Freshtracks holidays in 2025/2025, including more holidays like the Tignes takeover. The importance of members of similar ability skiing together was highlighted.

KMacA suggested a LGBTQ+ holiday would allow the Club to demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion. Council agreed it might be more effective to partner with resorts running Pride events and develop an article for the SKI magazine. KE warned about the effects of spending a lot of resource on niche holidays, the idea will be considered by the holidays team for a future season.

AM reminded Council that when the Club previously lost significant funds, it was because of the loss of control of holiday finances and costs. It was noted that while the Club is not run for profit, it applies normal business management controls.

JG reported the increase in partnerships and highlighted a couple of key partnerships which are felt to be missing (Crystal and Swiss). He described the commission arrangement with some partners such as SkiSet. He highlighted other membership benefits including the SKI magazine. Council noted that while there had been an increase in partnerships and advertising, the forecast revenue in the current year had been over-optimistic, exacerbated by the drop-in advertiser activity

at the end of the season and resulting in late communication of lower than expected revenue.

JG mentioned that the rep programme is increasingly expensive to run and suggested there is a need to think differently.

JG also highlighted that overall, Platinum insurance is valued by many members. He reported that missing revenue which had been thought due to lower Platinum sales was in practice a reflection of incorrect membership numbers and the reduction in Platinum was not as great as previously perceived and reported. Council agreed there is a perception by some members that Platinum pricing is too high and when considering commission there is perhaps room for realignment.

Council noted that the SKI magazine has a lower net promoter score than reps or holidays, this indicates that in a smaller Club the magazine may need to reduce further or only be available online.

Broadly Council agreed that that increasing member participation both on and off-snow is key to retention. They also stressed the need for staff to increase focus on retention efforts, especially following up on recent joiners not renewing and in developing a better on-boarding process for new members.

Council agreed the current spend on marketing was sufficient, assuming that the paid for advertising money is reallocated. There was a suggestion that the Club use transfer bus partners as an additional marketing opportunity.

It is worth noting that this coming year has moved from a focus on member service improvement (though some will continue) to a clearer focus on member retention and recruitment.

ACTION

Develop article for SKI about Pride events in the ski industry	HJ	AM	Dec-25
Develop better on-boarding process for new members	OC	CR/AL	Aug-25

3. Finance review and analysis

WM and JG tabled a report on the financial context, with the results for the past six years and a commentary on the key trends. Considerable growth in revenue had been achieved. Costs had also increased, particularly in supporting the expanded services to members. The Club had shown operating surpluses in the two years post pandemic, but an increasing deficit in the last two years.

The paper includes a review of the Club's operating model, this proposed that, with the current structure and member offer, the Club needed membership of some 15,000 to operate at a surplus. Membership in the last two years had fallen below that level. The options were therefore:

1. Reduce scope and cost of member services, with a risk of further loss of members
2. Preserve services and seek to stabilise and grow membership levels, with a risk of continuing deficits.

WM and JG tabled a report showing how the draft financial budget for 2025/26 had been developed. This detailed the cost and service reductions to be implemented. Membership fee increases had been included from October, at 12.5% for individual and 20% for family. The starting number of subscriptions was the validated figure at April 2025, and current levels of attrition were assumed to continue.

The report also included further potential cost saving measures, which had not been included at this stage. These came with risk of further losses in members and revenue. WM noted that taking these measures would be a significant step towards the 'minimum club' option and risked making that self-fulfilling.

The Financial Context and Budget reports had been reviewed at FAC. WM noted the concerns expressed at FAC, that cutting was unlikely to enable an organisation to grow.

WM and JG reported that the draft budget was intended to cut services and costs to a sustainable extent, while increasing member fees. The aim was to keep options open, and to preserve the Club's services at a reasonable level for the coming season. Planning for a 'minimum club' would require time and care; it would be important to develop that plan over the coming months.

WM drew attention to appendix E to the Budget paper, which included financial projections for a further two years. These projected that a return to operating surplus could be achieved. Critical to this were: an improvement in the attrition rate, to give a modest increase in numbers of subscriptions, and continued cost control. However, the appendix noted that similar projections made this time last year had been revised downwards.

It was discussed that unless the Club attains a membership of at least 15,000 members, the cost base will need to be reduced. With 9,000 members, the club will need to find an additional £350,000. Council discussed that over a three-year period, the Club should be aiming to break even.

The Club has predicted costs well, but income has been harder to control and the model for member income incorrect, member income was predicted to be higher than actual.

As the cost base in the short-term is closely tied to member services, Council discussed assumptions and options for both immediate and longer-term action. Council agreed that both a short-term and a longer-term plan was required. A greater lead-in time for any significant changes would be required.

Council discussed increasing the membership fees. Some Council members stated they thought a bigger increase was appropriate while other Council members noted the increase should be smaller. A greater increase in fees for members wishing to ski with a rep was also proposed. This was rejected. Council members noted that proposed membership increases for individuals and families appeared to be unbalanced. After much discussion, Council approved an increase. Standard individual memberships should increase from £80 to £90 and family membership should increase from £125 to £140.

Council agreed that any changes to the removal of public liability insurance should only take place at member renewal, given that it has been part of the advertised package of member benefits.

Council debated a reinvention of the reps' programme, with fewer and more impactful resorts, such as altering months/weeks in resorts, two reps in more resorts (but overall fewer resorts). This might increase rep visibility, recruitment to memberships and facilitate more in-resort events. Council stressed the importance of maintaining relationships with resorts that would cease to host a rep.

There was a suggestion that Ski Club awards (plaques) could be issued to restaurants, bars and shops, reports from Val d'Isere suggest these would be welcomed by restaurants and helps publicise the Club.

Council agreed that a blueprint for running the Club with a considerably smaller membership base should be created and developed. Options for a changed operating model with 9000 members would be required by early February 2026 for presentation at the Council meeting in February 2026. Options should also include consideration of closing the office and all staff moving to remote working or partially closing the office and moving to smaller premises.

A hypothetical question was posed – if the Ski Club was starting in 2025, what could/should/would it look like? The importance of building communities, charging membership fees, and having a very lean model was discussed. The increased use of seasonnaires and digital solutions emphasised. The importance of member exclusive discounts was highlighted.

A recent member survey suggested there is an unmet demand for more online and regional events. Council agreed to experiment with more member exclusive events as an additional benefit of membership, and other open events to encourage membership.

There was a suggestion that events and holidays should be planned earlier, given that over 25% of members have already booked their first skiing holiday well before the brochure is launched.

ACTION

Develop a Blueprint for a 9000-member Club	JG/KE	AM	Jan-26
Map out alternative rep's programme	OC/JG	KM/AM	Sep-25
Develop proposal for plaques to be issued to restaurants, cafes, bars etc in resorts	OC	CR	Oct-25

4. Review of Strategic Objectives

Council discussed progress with the previous strategic objectives.

5. 2025/2026 Budget Proposals

Broadly Council agreed that there was a reasonable chance of membership flat lining, given the focus on re-acquiring members whose direct debits had not been taken. However, Council also discussed the need for assumptions being more conservative and cautious regarding membership and revenue generation.

Council discussed various budget proposals and agreed:

- Phasing out Private Liability Insurance at renewal.
- Reducing the price increase for families from 20% to 15%, whilst increasing standard by 15%.
- Removing one issue of the SKI magazine.
- Using the reduced Reps budget to double up on Reps in some resorts and to ensure there is an element of party budgeting in those resorts.

Taking those suggestions into account, Council did not ask for further savings or cuts in service at this time and agreed that the target range for the operating deficit should be between £0 and -£130k. Overall Council was prepared to accept a deficit of £130k in return for the increased focus on new member acquisition and the outcome of holding membership at the current level.

It was noted that changes in Platinum pricing had not been accounted for in the budget proposals. Staff and officers are continuing to investigate options for different products such as fewer ski days, this would be presented to Council for approval in August

6. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

7 Date and Time of Next Council Meeting

Tuesday 29th July 2025 at 1700 via Zoom.

There being no other business the Council strategy meeting closed at 1655.

Where the minutes contain commercially sensitive or personal information, the relevant extract will not be included in the published online record and will be marked as redacted.