

Speleological Union of Ireland – Corporate Governance

INTRODUCTION

Speleological Union of Ireland (SUI) is the national governing body responsible for the management, coordination, development and promotion of caving on the island of Ireland. SUI represents the interests of caves and cavers to all sections of government and the public.

SUI is a limited company (without share capital) primarily governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association ("the Articles"). It is the recognised National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport on the island of Ireland. Dedicated volunteers are responsible for all aspects of governance and administration of the SUI; therefore, it is important to set out the roles and responsibilities of the pertinent committees, sub-committees and members.

This policy document sets out and explains SUI's governance procedures and processes. It is designed to inform and update members (and/or aspiring members) on governance arrangements. The business of SUI is managed and its powers exercised, by an elected committee ("the committee"). For some subsections of the SUI's day-to-day activities, tasks may be delegated to a sub-committee consisting of at least one committee member.

PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING SUI GOVERNANCE

- Commitment to a strategic plan
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Effective financial control

Governance overview

The Committee in the organisation is the primary group entrusted with, and accountable for, leadership and governance. At the AGM, the Committee is elected by members.

SUI currently has two sub-committees covering the training structure and the expedition fund. These sub-committees shall have common terms of reference, setting out how they operate, conduct their affairs, and report to the Committee.

Committee

Members of the Committee have collective responsibility to ensure that a good governance culture pervades, to pursue SUI objectives and actively contribute to the organisation's success. In accordance with the Articles of Association, the SUI Committee is required to meet at least twice between Annual General Meetings.

Committee Membership

All SUI fully paid up members aged 18 years and above are eligible for membership of the Committee. The Committee comprises up to 12 members as follows:

Elected Positions

- Chairperson
- Honorary Secretary
- Honorary Treasurer
- Membership and Insurance Officer
- Training Officer

- Safeguarding Officer
- Conservation and Access Officer

Co-opted Positions

- Public Relations Officer
- Additional Conservation and Access Officer
- Development Officer
- Student Liaison Officer
- Anti-Doping Officer

Co-opted positions are decided by the newly formed Committee after the AGM without being elected by the general membership.

The duration of each elected Committee member's position is 4 years. Co-opted positions automatically expire at the following Annual General Meeting.

NEED TO DESCRIBE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson is the nominal head of Speleological Union of Ireland and in this capacity and in accordance with the Articles of Association, s/he will undertake the following:

- Prepare agendas and chair meetings of the Committee and general meetings.
- Provide leadership on policy and decision making.
- Exercise control over proceedings, making judgments where issues of division arise.
- Have few routine tasks other than assisting other officers in their duties.
- Liaise with Irish Cave Rescue Organisation (ICRO).
- Sign off on newsletter publication.
- Represent SUI at national and international levels.

The Chairperson must be:

- Well informed of the activities of SUI, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the current financial position of the organisation.
- Well informed about the agenda of the meeting and the items to be covered
- Able to ensure that the agenda is followed, that all business is completed and that all decisions are understood and recorded.
- Able to keep a debate focused and avoid deviations
- Able to ensure that planning and budgeting are carried out in accordance with the wishes of the members.
- Unbiased and impartial and if personally involved in a matter then prepared to give up the chair during that particular discussion.
- A good listener who is able to summarise the main points of a discussion
- Diplomatic and helpful and able to get the best out of the other members
- Able to keep the harmony of the group even where there is disagreement

HONORARY SECRETARY

The Honorary Secretary is the primary administrative officer of Speleological Union of Ireland and in this capacity may be assigned various administrative duties not explicitly outline here. In addition, s/he is responsible for preparing for committee meetings, any EGMs and the AGM - ensuring that all members get the necessary information. This may include;

- Liaising with the Chairperson to plan meetings and decide agendas
- Arranging venues, dates and times
- Collecting reports from other members
- Notifying members of dates, times and places of meetings
- Recording and distributing minutes of meetings
- Distributing other information to the committee
- Inviting and receiving nominations for the election of officers
- Arranging for the printing of the annual report and the statement of accounts
- Arranging catering and hospitality
- The filing and maintenance of SUI records.

HONORARY TREASURER

The Honorary Treasurer is responsible for the financial management of the organisation and does so in conjunction with members of the Committee. S/he acts as reference point for the Chairperson and other Committee members providing clarification on the financial implications of certain project proposals. The Honorary Treasurer is responsible for:

- Maintaining SUI financial accounts in good order
- Collecting all money due to SUI
- Paying bills and recording the information
- Issuing receipts for all money received
- Ensuring that funds are properly spent
- Raising invoices
- Ensuring the accuracy of bank records by carrying out bank reconciliations
- Hiring accountants and assisting them in the preparation of year end accounts
- Arranging for the statement of accounts to be audited as necessary
- Presenting an end-of-year financial report to the board of directors and Sport Ireland
- Preparing a mid-year report on expenditure against budget for Sport Ireland
- Financial planning – producing and maintaining an annual budget
- Helping the accountants to prepare and submit any statutory documents required – tax returns etc.
- Monitor SUI bank accounts, using dual authorisation and appropriate systems for payments, lodgements and petty cash in conjunction with the other members of the Committee

MEMBERSHIP AND INSURANCE OFFICER

The Membership and Insurance Officer is responsible for the day-to-day management of membership details and benefits. This extends to:

- Managing the general membership database and insurance databases
- Liaising with the British Caving Association (BCA) and Federation Francais Speleologique (FFS) to obtain insurance on behalf of members
- Producing and issuing membership cards and welcome letters
- Lodging membership subscriptions taken in and maintaining accurate records of those payments
- Regularly sending out updates to the general membership regarding the activities of the SUI

TRAINING OFFICER

The Training Officer is responsible for overseeing the training structure provided by the SUI and is the main point of contact between the SUI Committee and the training team sub-committee. As part of this role s/he will:

- Chair and coordinate meetings of the training team sub-committee
- Ensure that minutes of the training team sub-committee are recorded and sent to the SUI Committee
- Deliver the overall training strategy of the SUI with the assistance of the training team sub-committee
- Plan the annual training calendar

- Advise the SUI committee of any proposed changes to the training structure offered by the SUI such as new courses or qualifications

7 Concluding comments

Governance is about representing the will or interest of groups of people (members) and it guides management. A key pillar of effective governance is the level of participation and engagement by organization members, stakeholders and committee members. This is often influenced by internal and external factors, but an important one is the level of transparency which exists across the organisation, and the communication strategies employed. Recent advances in technology make it possible to communicate with all stakeholders on SUI plans, programmes, activities and events. However, it is essential to design media messages (including social media) to meet the needs of the target populations/sub populations so that their engagement and involvement in SUI is deepened and enhanced. The SUI Annual General Meeting (AGM) is an important forum for members as they get updates on SUI organization developments and plans. It is also the forum where members can pass judgement on SUI and more particularly on the performance of the Committee. The procedures for the organisation and management of the AGM are set out in the Articles of Association.