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26<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## **Re: Clare LDC application for UIAA Mountain Protection Awards 2020-21**

To whom it concerns

Mountaineering Ireland, as a UIAA member federation, is very pleased to support the application by Clare Local Development Company for the UIAA Mountain Protection Awards 2020-21.

The Trail Management System developed through Clare Local Development Company, is very innovative, using modern technology to support more sustainable trail management. This helps to protect our upland and mountain environment, which is all the more important in the context of increased trail usage during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The system has evolved to meet the needs of a variety of users, including the network of Rural Recreation Officers across Ireland, community-based trail management groups and public land managers. It integrates with Sport Ireland's national trail management requirements and recent additions such as the recording of invasive species have added to its conservation value.

From Mountaineering Ireland's perspective, we are particularly pleased that a user-interface is being incorporated into the system. By touching their smartphone off a touch post at the start of the route, hikers will have direct access to a web interface with the Trail Management System so that they can report issues such as water damage to the trail surface, fallen trees or litter on the trail. This was proposed by Mountaineering Ireland last year and we are delighted that it will be completed in the coming months as it will foster trail stewardship amongst hikers. Mountaineering Ireland will encourage use of the system by our members as soon as it goes live.

The Trail Management System is already enhancing the quality of people's hiking experiences by improving the sustainability of our trail network and helping to protect the upland and mountain environment. Therefore, we believe the Trail Management system to be a worthy applicant for the UIAA's Mountain Protection Awards for 2020-21.

Yours sincerely

pp Paul Kellagher  
President

Directors: I. Buckley; N. Caffrey; P. Kellagher; C. Mahon; M. Maunsell;  
G. McLaughlin; K. O'Callaghan; D. Pollard; G. Thomas.

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