



ABC Training Trust

Chair's Annual Report

September 2011

NICAS has continued to prosper over the last financial year. At the end of June we had 187 registered centres in total; 33 Primary Centres and 154 Awarding Centres. We have had over 9,000 candidates register for the scheme this last year of whom 5213 achieved their level 1, 1602 their level 2 and 319 their level 3, 60 their level 4 and 3 level 5s.

Our finances are both sound and stable with an increased turnover that has delivered us a small profit after covering our increased officer costs. We have healthy reserves and are projected to grow our revenues by about 20% next financial year. NICAS is now an established and sustainable national scheme.

Two trustees have left the board – Ian Dunn and Simon Jenkins. I want to thank them both for all their time and effort. Ian was a founder member of the board contributing much of his energy and experience to guide the birth of the scheme. Two new trustees have joined the board – Neil Bentley and Neil Wightwick. Both bring enormous experience; Neil Wightwick already having worked with SQA for NICAS and Neil Bentley being a hugely experienced wall manager and having long contributed to the ABC. We have also moved to having 4 full board meetings a year, reflecting the increase in workload and liaison with other bodies.

The Trust's officers have worked hard to ensure the smooth running of the scheme. Anne Garnish and Iain McKenzie deal with a weekly deluge of issues and enquiries. Ian has spent a lot of his time visiting centres to offer training and inductions and the board will need to look at methods of supporting him in this role in future. Last year we successfully completed discussions with the GCSE boards and SQA over the harmonization of their PE specifications with NICAS.

Current initiatives that are in process are: a set of cloth badges at each level for award holders, the production of a short promotional film that will be downloadable onto centres' websites, the endorsement of an excellent cartoon illustrated beginner's guide to climbing skills by Sophie Mitchell and further development of the NIBAS scheme. All of these will help to raise the profile of the scheme and the NIBAS will allow the ABC TT to spread its positive influence into the rapidly growing area of bouldering walls. We appear to have an agreed draft syllabus for the NIBAS now so that progress to endorsement by the ABC and National Councils should accelerate.

We successfully ran 5 NICAS seminars around the country last winter including an extra one due to popular demand. More Technical Advisors are becoming interested in the scheme and with the advent of the MLT coaching awards, the introduction of the CWLA and the growth in squads and academies around the UK the outlook for the scheme and youth climbing in general is healthy.

One of our main focuses now must be quality assurance. The scheme has spread wide and the board is keen to look at the quality of provision as well as the increased participation of the higher levels. The scheme is currently undergoing its three year review and questionnaires have been sent to all our Primary Centres and Technical Advisors. We now have good data over a three

year period that shows where the strengths and weaknesses of the original design lie. Once the responses have been fully processed the task will be to:

- a) update the handbook regarding the syllabus and operating structure of the scheme
- b) update the participant log books
- c) create a clear policy for Primary Centres representing the award
- d) implement new quality assurance procedures

We have also had useful feedback from the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority which will be incorporated into the guidelines in the new handbook.

Looking ahead the future is both healthy and exciting. More is happening in the indoor climbing world than anywhere else as far as coaching in our sport is concerned and this is clearly because of the long term opportunities that this environment offers. The board may need to look at enhancing its executive in order to keep up with the demands of the growth in its provision. One tantalizing possibility is the announcement in 2013 of climbing being admitted to the Olympic Games in 2020.

Guy Jarvis 11/10/11
ABCTT Chair