

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of the London & South East Area Meeting Wednesday 11 September 2013 The Alpine Club, 55 Charlotte Road, London EC2A 3QF

1. Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was attended by nine members, plus Elizabeth Holley (BMC Regional Development Officer) and Mark Rogers (Met Office). Apologies were received from Damon Clark (Walls Officer) and Juan Avendano (AYC).

2. Reports from the office / area officer / National Council / local officers

Elizabeth Holley presented a quick round-up of her activities, including Ready to Rock courses, visiting clubs outside of London (e.g. Brighton) and the upcoming focus on student clubs training, and activities helping walls users transition to the outdoors through taster sessions, weekend trips and longer courses.

EH also presented a brief update on other activities within the office, e.g. moves to change or replace the CRoW act in Wales with something that included access to coastal paths etc.

Also noted was the plethora of upcoming events and seminars, including the Women's Climbing Symposium this autumn in London!

Rupert Fleming reported from the national council, with a brief discussion on the finances, and the recognition of Mark Alderson.

3. Discussion topics

3a. Dry tooling policy

There was a long discussion about whether we needed a policy or not - was it actually an issue for anyone other than the Lakes Area at present, and should we bureaucratically have a policy on everything? The mood of the meeting (although not unanimous) was that we SHOULD have a policy, that it was important.

The meeting felt that a very short paragraph would be most suitable, rather than a long policy. "Don't dry tool and ruin rock routes for other people."

Trying to come up with a better description was more difficult - some people like loose choss (Mick Fowler?), today's pointless blank wall is someone's project tomorrow and a trade route the day after.

3b. Stange access issues

The meeting was unanimously in support of the BMC's efforts, and also unanimously in support of asking National Council to approve, in principle, the spend of significant sums (10K+?) for a national campaign (e.g. newspaper ads) to further raise awareness (and turn 8,000 signatures into 800,000 signatures!) - raising the BMC's profile in the process. The meeting felt that we should approve this in principle, so that those closer to the facts could judge when it was appropriate, even if it is not required today. The meeting noted that the earlier the public outcry, the better however, and noted the price of failure.

3c. Harrison's Rocks car park / toilet

EH presented the updated facts on the ground; that the Forestry Commission (FC) are not interested in maintaining the toilet block, it is going to be demolished, and that this makes the campsite unviable.

It was noted that a significant number of local groups, including BMC members, use the campsite. There have been discussions with local groups and walls, including suggestions of finances from the same, to keep the toilet block running. However, the FC will only lease the toilet block etc. to either Sport England or the BMC.

At this stage, there was some confusion about why an arrangement consisting of money from local groups given to the BMC, and the BMC leasing and managing the block (pretty much as now?) could not be done.

The meeting asked for more clarity about the level of management that the BMC provides now, and what would be viable under any new arrangement. EH took obtaining this clarification as an action.

4. Post meeting talk by external speaker: Mark Rogers, Met Office

Mark Rogers gave a very informative and entertaining presentation.

5. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 20 November 2013 – start time and venue to be confirmed.