

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 11 September 2013, The Globe Inn, Glossop.

Present:

Neil Foster (Chair)
Martin Wass (Acting Secretary)
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)
Rob Adie (BMC Officer)
Phil Ashley
David Brown
Ross Burnage
John Coefield
Stephen Coughlan
Dean Dalton
Edward Dalton
Rebecca Ellis
Rob Greenwood (BMC Officer)
Grimer (BMC Officer)
Graeme Hammond
Neil Hewertson (Part-time BMC Officer)
Simon Lee
Adam Long

Caroline McCann
Marjorie Mortimer
Mike Mortimer
Geoff Nichols
Graham Parkes
Chris Radcliffe
Gill Radcliffe
Clare Reading
Phil Robins
Andy Tickle
Dave Turnbull (BMC Officer)
Mark Valla
Tim Waterhouse
Jayne Wheeler
Paul Wheeler

33 people signed in

33 people present

1. Apologies:

Lynn Robinson	Ed Douglas	Paul Juler
Alan James	Steve Clark	Tim Grice
Malcolm Baxter	Mitch	Alex Thompson
Louise Hewson	Gordon Stainforth	Freda Raphael
Rick Gibbon	John Clennell	Adge

Neil welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Actions from the last meeting (held on 5 June 2013)

Completed.

3. Stand up for Stanage – Q&A Session

Henry Folkard gave an overview of the reasons for the Stand Up for Stanage petition. Over 8,000 people had signed up before this meeting, including most of those present. It will provide valuable support in the campaign against the current intentions of the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), which appear to be to run Stanage as a money-maker to fund the Authority's own costs.

Question and Answer Session

Q – Is it worth writing to your MP?

A – Yes. Although they have no direct influence, MPs can galvanise others into action. A letter sent by post has more effect than an email.

Q – Have there been any planning applications for car parks?

A – No.

4. Dry Tooling paper

Some background was provided by Dave Turnbull, based on the position paper provided at the meeting; The BMC National Council have been considering a policy on Dry Tooling, but meanwhile the Works

(OSGB NY 313 017) was de-bolted by activists. There are a few places in the Peak Area where it has gone on. The debate focused on outdoor dry tooling during the summer and a lively discussion followed with representation from all sides. There was concern about the damage that could be caused to traditional routes. However, 'Dry Toolers' mostly have a strong ethical stance and activity is generally restricted to agreed areas of rock tucked away and not easily accessible and/or which is 'shockingly poor' for traditional climbing. It was stated that dry tooling routes can and do co-exist with traditional climbs on some crags with little or no value. Similarities to discussions on bolting were mentioned, with an expectation that everyone will do it but actually not many do. However, there was concern that the current low participation might grow, causing increased problems. There was also concern over the environmental impact. Winter climbing is beyond the scope of the BMC paper, but was identified as an issue. The overall mood of the meeting was that dry tooling was a legitimate activity, that locations needed to be identified that were appropriate for dry tooling, that the impact on habitats and plants should be considered, and it was not acceptable to climb on established routes.

5. Peak Area Limestone Guide

Ian Carr, with Grimer on backing vocals, passed around sample chapters and explained that good progress was being made but help was still needed. Working from North to South, the intention is to keep going through the winter. There will be 2 books; North, in print next Spring/Summer and South, arriving about 18 months later. To keep cost and size realistic the 'lesser' crags and blow-by-blow historical details would be provided on the web but not in the books. A Devil's Advocate posed the teaser, 'Do we need route descriptions for bolted locations like Horseshoe, if there are good phototopos?'. Opinion in the meeting was divided but trending to 'Yes'. However, in the work so far, good routes have longer descriptions than lesser routes.

Martin Kocsis has resigned from the guide book committee and a volunteer is needed to take up his place. Guides need proof-reading, an arduous business but with great satisfaction. Volunteers should contact Ian or Grimer. The Lancashire Guide scripts are being updated and photos are urgently needed. Modernity continues to impinge and the guide book committee are actively investigating porting guide book data to Android/Iphone apps. Sales of guide books are generally low at the moment. This may be due to the poor UK economy.

6. Update from BMC Quarries Development Manager

Neil Hewertson, with a background in Landscaping and Access, explained his 2-day a week role in developing and promoting climbing in quarries. New quarries could be a stepping stone for indoor climbers to make the move outdoors. Leicestershire quarries in particular had much potential. Issues focused on liability and how to create climbable rock (nowadays quarries tend to be worked in tiers with not big walls). Mineral planners are key folk and the planning process often moves fast; past emphasis has been on restoring sites as much as possible to a landscaped pre-quarried state with nature conservation a priority, with climbing and potential recreational use missing out. Quarrying companies are generally receptive to the BMC's ideas; having Horseshoe as a managed example is very useful.

7. Access updates

Henry Folkard provided an update on his report in the Peak Area Newsletter. The High Peak Moors Vision & Plan (<http://www.high-peak-moors.co.uk/>) launches next week. There are plans for a new Bridleway in the Barbrook Valley. Longstone Edge continues to raise concerns, now under new ownership, with some complex legal arguments being played out. The BMC Access Manifesto is due out soon. A new development is a loose knit assembly of outdoor activity centres and adventure sports groups in the Peaks that collectively provide economic benefit to the area, coming together to try and raise collective concerns etc. more effectively than by acting alone. Embryonic at the moment, the meeting was supportive of the BMC's offer to act as a host to the group, the Peak Adventure Sports Activities (PASA), for a few months.

8. Updates from BMC Officers

Rob Greenwood reported that he had received positive feedback on the courses designed to encourage indoor climbers to 'make the transition' to the big outdoors. A Harrogate climbing wall had put 52 people through and a women's indoor to outdoor which started in the spring (not an ideal time) was going well. A coaching award is being released later this year. On the Clubs side, Rob is starting to meet with clubs

aiming to link people beginning to climb outdoors with clubs, as potential members. Phil Robins (The Edge, Sheffield) said that, in his experience, over 75% of climbers are indoors only. Rob responded that there is interest in climbing outdoors when marketed properly.

9. National Council Report

Neil Foster explained how National Council worked, with 4 meetings a year providing a good level of debate. Each Area Representative can serve for a maximum of 4 years.

At the last meeting it was agreed to support the Mountain Heritage Trust with additional funds to safeguard it, and the valuable work it does, for the next 3 years. At the next meeting (Pembroke, 21 September), dry tooling will be a major agenda item. The drilled equipment policy is still going around the Areas.

10. Peak Area Newsletter

Submissions are always welcome, **especially from Clubs** (who obviously don't believe in the power of advertising). Please send articles/photos etc to Martin Wass at: peakarea@gmail.com

Deadline for contributions to the September newsletter is Wednesday, 6 November.

11. Any Other Business

Clare Reading informed the meeting about 2 planning applications for wind turbines near the Roaches. Deadline for objections is 27 September. [*Post meeting note: The planning application reference for Old Haytop Farm Swythamley is NP/SM/0713/0629 or go direct to the online details here: <http://pam.peakdistrict.gov.uk/?r=NP/SM/0713/0629>. The application for Higher Wetwood Farm, Meerbrook does not seem to be online yet*]

Neil Foster said that anyone interested in standing for posts on the Peak should contact himself or Lynn. Both are content to remain for another year but challengers are welcome! There is a vacancy in the access team (contact Henry for details) and Rick Gibbon has stood down as one of the Peak Area representatives on the BMC National Council, so a replacement is needed.

So, lots of volunteers needed for guidebook committee, proof-reading, Access work, National Council Representative.

12. Date, time and venue of next meeting

Wednesday, 20 November, at 7.30pm, The Maynard, Main Road, Grindleford, Derbyshire S32 2HE

AS ALWAYS:

Chair of the Peak Area is Neil Foster;
neil.foster@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Access issues/access volunteer work, contact Henry Folkard;
henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Meetings, agenda items or any other issues, contact Lynn Robinson, Peak Area Secretary;
lynn.robinson@bmcvolunteers.org.uk

Check out our Facebook Page and 'like' us if you can;
<https://www.facebook.com/bmcpeakarea>

Newsletter contributions to Martin Wass;
peakarea@gmail.com