

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 20th November, 2013. The Maynard, Grindleford.

1. **Present and Apologies:** – same as for the AGM.
2. **Actions from the last meeting (held on 9th September 2013)**
None.

3. Update on Stanage

Henry gave an overview. It is a 1,400 acre estate bought by the Peak District National Park Authority in 1971. In 2000 a Stanage Forum was formed whose remit was to write a management plan. There is a concern regarding conflict between recreation users and between recreation use and conservation. Some parts are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There is a farm on the land, whose land management is effectively determined by Natural England. It mainly farms sheep, with cattle recently introduced. The future of the campsite, where climbers stay, is under threat.

North Lees Hall is let to the Vivat Trust but a wing referred to as the 'farm house' and associated barns are not. It seems these barns have gone to the new farming tenant, and the suspicion is that the camp site might follow suit. This denies the National Park Authority (NPA) the opportunity to generate income itself from what is potentially the best income source on the estate. There has been no regard to conservation, recreation or engagement with the visitor community from what the NPA has yet proposed: complete priority has been given to resourcing the farm even though the Estate was acquired for purposes of recreation, conservation and landscape. The corollary is that where the NPA is seeking to recover its costs and the only avenue open to it will be the visitor / recreation community, and any non CRoW permitted activity. With agricultural subsidies set to decline due to CAP reform, charges to the visitor / recreation community can only increase over time to balance the books.

Thanks to everyone who signed the Stand Up For Stanage campaign. The threat to its future continues and the BMC will continue to keep a close eye on it.

4. Peak Rock

Graham Hoey and Phil Kelly brought along copies of Peak Rock that had been delivered from the printers that day. It looks magnificent. It has been produced as a 'not for profit' book, with half of its sales going to the Mountain Heritage Trust and the other half to the family of Giles Barker. A reminder that the official launch will take place in the 1st December at The Climbing Works. Tickets are required. Profit from the evening will go to Climbers Against Cancer.

5. Access Areas Updates:

Detailed access information is available in the latest Peak Area Newsletter which can be found here: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/latest-online-news-from-the-peak-area-nov-2013>

Rick Gibbon:

Dovestones Quarry – Chris Tan has organised a series of clean ups liaising with the RSPB.

Den Lane – this is a series of quarries. It has been bought, but not sure by whom. It is worth visiting, but we are unsure of its future.

Holmfirth Edge – A few years ago there were public meetings, and with the support of the BMC the case for building on the land was lost. A draft lease is going to the BMC Land Management Group.

Agden Rocher – need to look at access rights, following some changes to the road and parking.

Louise Hawson:

Nature Improvement Area – in March 2015 the programme comes to an end. Various surveys will be taking place and volunteers to carry them out are needed. A vegetation survey will take place. Training will be given so that people can recognise one bit of grass from another. A woodland bird survey is also taking place, and experts are required. There will also be a visitors survey.

Henry Folkard:

Derwent, Bamford, Moscar and Hallam – closures 12th May to 13th June 2014 – public rights of way remain open

Stanedge Pole – heather cutting ongoing.

Longstone Edge – it has been determined a prohibition notice will be served on Longstone Edge East.

Ravensdale and Natural England (NE) – following a meeting with NE, they have agreed to put from guidance on their website regarding climbing on areas of SSSI.

Conies Dale – a rare plant, *Asplenium viride*, is growing on the crag. Please don't disturb it.

Horsehoe & Sheffield University Volunteers – work meet on the 30th November.

South-west Peak – any ideas for better access, please let Henry know.

A boulder just a few hundred metres from the Surprise View car park has been painted white with a smiley face on. This is worrying, if people think it is OK to paint on boulders.

An Occupiers' Liability Leaflet has been produced, which is an important resource for Access Representatives.

An amendment to the Anti Social Behaviour Bill which, as it stands, could potentially have serious consequences on access was due to be tabled this afternoon in the House of Lords

6. Update from the BMC Office

The BMC Office has started to produce briefings on its main activities for the previous quarter. These will be circulated with the minutes and are available on the BMC website.

7. National Council Report

There are no agenda items on the agenda of the next meeting that need debating. The Terms of Reference for all BMC Committees are being reviewed. Dave added that the Fixed Equipment Policy, that has been debated at the Peak Area, will be ratified and also the BMC Dry Tooling Position statement agreed.

Dave gave an update that there be a proposal that from the 1st January 2015 there will be an increase of £2 per year in BMC subscriptions. There hasn't been an increase for 6-years. Next year the BMC is facing a £150,000 deficit.

8. Peak Area Newsletter

Anyone can contribute - and people are encouraged to write articles, send it photos. It is our newsletter to communicate what we think are the important issues.

9. Any other business

Friends of the Peak District – Andy Tickle explained that Friends of the Peak District works alongside the BMC on issues such as quarry access, Stanage and campaign against off-roading. John Horsecroft has been organising a series of lectures to raise funds. The next one is taking place on the 26th November, at 8pm at The Lescar, Sheffield. Entry is only £5.00 and there'll be a raffle.

Don Whillans Memorial Hut – there is a new on-line booking system for the DWMH. Please go to the website: www.donwhillanshut.co.uk

BMC Landscape Charter – Cath Flitcroft sent through the following information:

The charter sets out a framework to ensure members and local groups will have all the tools and information necessary to make representations on developments in their area that pose the greatest impact on our wild areas.

The BMC will be producing a series of informative guidance notes on specific topics, starting with: energy and its infrastructure, minerals and quarrying, and recreational development. These will be circulated in due course. For more information go to: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/landscape-charter-launched>

10. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

12th February, 2014 at 7.30pm, The Maynard, Grindleford.

Many thanks to Toby and Nige for another fantastic quiz. Despite the UKB team winning again.....Neil Foster and Graham Hoey have agreed to do next years quiz.....so you never know, some of us may get a look-in!

Also a very big **THANKYOU** to the following people/companies who kindly donated prizes – they were very much appreciated, and the quiz just wouldn't be the same without them:

Alpkit, Awesome Walls, BMC, Cordee, Dan Lane, David Simmonite, Heason Events, John Beatty, Keith Sharples, Paul Diffley (for Distilled DVDs), Rab/EquipUK, Rockfax, The Climbing Works, The Depot Nottingham, The Edge, The Foundry & Crag X, and Vertebrate Publishing.

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NEWSLETTER REMINDER

We are always looking for items for the newsletter, to put alongside the usual access issues. Please send articles/photos to the newsletter editor, Martin Wass at peakarea@gmail.com

The deadline for the next newsletter is 29th January 2014.

AS ALWAYS:

- Chair of the Peak Area is Neil Foster – neil.foster@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Access issues/access volunteer work please contact Henry Folkard – henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- With regard to the meetings, agenda items or any other issues please contact Lynn Robinson, Peak Area Secretary – lynn.robinson@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Check out the Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/bmcpeakarea> and 'like' us if you can.