

BMC Clubs' Committee meeting 30th January, 2014 – Report for the BMC Yorkshire area

Before the meeting, there was a 'Drop-in day' to which all 233 affiliated clubs had been invited to send a representative. There were 16 club members there representing 12 clubs.

An hour was spent introducing those 16 to many of the BMC staff who explained their rôles in connection with the clubs. Lots of questions were asked and answered.

The next hour was an open forum with the 16 members, 6 BMC staff and one of the Perkins Slade team to answer questions on insurance. This was an extremely useful session with a wide range of topics covered. A BMC / Perkins Slade document was issued giving full details of the insurance cover to all club members.

This was followed by a light buffet and then, rather later than planned, the meeting of the Clubs' Committee. The following are the major items from that meeting:-

1. **Representatives from National Clubs.** Only one National Club (the Climbers' Club) had nominated a member (Fiona Sanders) to the Clubs' Committee but the committee proposed, seconded and agreed that John Farrow, Secretary of the Rucksack Club, should continue as a National Clubs representative as he had been since the committee was formed.
2. **What the BMC does for clubs.** Dave Turnbull gave a presentation based on the Clubs Fact Sheet that was sent out to all clubs earlier in the month. This was partly in response to the next agenda item.
3. **Increase in BMC affiliation fee.** Despite a circular from Deirdre Collier to all Yorkshire-based clubs, there was not a single reply and so I was not able to offer feedback from this area. The original proposal was for an increase of £2 across the board (with a £1 increase for students) but, following much disquiet and discussion, the BMC said that it had found savings of £45k - £50k in its administration and that the proposed increase (to be put to the AGM in April) would be £1-50 across the board (students £1). There was much discussion, but no clear agreement, about whether there should be a small annual increase (based on, for example, RPI) rather than a bigger one at longer intervals. The Clubs' Committee is to recommend to the National Council that smaller, annual increases would be preferred. The current increase does not include for any cost-of-living increases for BMC staff, although this is still under discussion.

The BMC agreed to look into the phased payment of the affiliation fee from clubs whose AGM date prevented agreement to increase subscriptions to cover the increased affiliation fee in time for March 2015 when the fee is normally payable.

4. **The future rôle of the Clubs' Committee in the BMC.** The committee felt strongly that the 33% of BMC members who are in clubs should be represented and that the committee was an extremely useful conduit for passing clubs problems, requests and needs to the National Council and Executive Committee. We felt that the Clubs' Committee should give guidance to the NC and EC in matters relating to clubs and, to this end, should have sight of the agenda for the National Council for discussion and feedback. This would mean that the Clubs' Committee would have to meet within the two weeks before the NC as that was when the agenda would be available. There was concern that the Clubs' Committee had not been invited to comment on the proposed increase in affiliation fee.

The major rôle of the Clubs' Committee in future should be to influence BMC policy with respect to clubs rather than be involved in the operation of clubs.

5. **Marketing strategy.** There was a great deal of discussion about the ways in which the BMC could help to market clubs and thereby increase membership. The BMC is to e-mail Individual Members suggesting that they may wish to join a club. Any positive replies would be routed, via the Regional Development Officers, to clubs. From the June issue of Summit onwards, there is to be a feature on clubs in which different clubs would be invited to write about themselves – this has been done in Scottish Mountaineer, the MCofS equivalent to Summit – for some years. There was discussion about a reduced affiliation fee for new clubs for their first year.

Paul Exley 31st January, 2014