

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 12th February 2014, The Maynard, Grindleford.

Present:

Neil Foster (Chair)
Lynn Robinson (Secretary)
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)
Adam Long (Access Rep)
Louise Hawson (Access Rep)
Dave Turnbull (BMC, CEO)
Ed Douglas (Vice-President, BMC)
Mary Bagley (PDNPA)
Sophie Milner (The National Trust)
Danny Udall (Eastern Moors Partnership)
Ross Burnage (Buxton MC)
Emily Baker
John Gresty
Robert Barton
John Horscroft (Ride Sheffield)
Sam Mitchell
Hannes Bouitz
Andy Janezko
Ian Milward
Clare Reading (FRCC)
Rick Scott
Andy Elliott
Simon Durbridge (Derby University Mountaineering)
Ashley Tennant (Derby University Mountaineering)
Andy Hayes
Martin Wass
Jenny Wass
Chris Ellis
Marcus Tierney
Bunny McCullough
John Camateras
Duncan Campbell
Claire-Jane Carter
Gill Radcliffe (Oread MC)
Mark Vallance (CC)
Stephen Coughlan
Tim Grice
Sarah Whitehouse
Phil Robins
David Cunningham
Chris Gale
David Brown (Peak Climbing Club)
Graeme Hammond (Peak Climbing Club)
Trevor Wilson (Peak Climbing Club)
Phil Ashley
89 people signed in

Ian Mateer
Rob Greenwood (CC/Alpine Club)
Chris Moor
Marie Richards
Pete Whittaker
Michael Walsh (Peak CC)
A. Sanderson (Peak CC)
D. Kitchen
John Cook (Castle MC)
Chris Allewell
Teresa Allewell
Tim Waterhouse
John Bayliss (Peak CC)
Max Kellock
Dee Naylor
Edward Naish
David Jackson
Mike Ratcliffe
Rob Woon
Marqi Bryant
Milessa Cooper
Teresa Games
Jill Whittaker
Jo Astill
Will Reffet-Smith
Tom Ripley
Dave Parry
Simon Lee (UKB)
Ed Shawcross (DPC)
Tony Coar (AAC)
Neil Roden (FRCC)
Jon Holmes (University of Derby)
Chris Radcliffe (Oread MC)
Bob Pettigrew (Alpine Club)
Richard Wheeldon (CC)
Graham Sutton
Tony Whitehouse
Michael Carr
Felicity Stout
Matt Fennelow
Sue Lewis
D. Woloy
Becky Ellis (Peak Climbing Club)
Steve Clark

93 people present

1. Apologies:

Graham Hoey
Alan James (UKC, Rockfax)

Rick Gibbon

John Coefield

Neil welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced guest speakers; Mary Bagley, PDNPA, Sophie Milner, National Trust and Danny Udall, Eastern Moors Partnership. Also staff from the BMC office including; Dave Turnbull, Chief Operating Officer and Ed Douglas, Vice-President.

2. Actions from the last meeting (held on 20th November 2013)

None.

3. Update Regarding the Future of the North Lees Estate

Neil gave an overview background . The Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) undertook a Property Asset Review and decided to make alternative arrangements for the management of some of its Estate:

- (a) Eastern Moors (including Froggatt, Curbar etc). 18 months ago a Partnership to manage this Estate was formed between The National Trust and RSPB. Danny Udall is the Partnership Manager.
- (b) The Roaches Estate – now managed by the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- (c) North Lees, including Stanage Edge – the PDNPA has now decided to keep the management of it 'in-house'. However, in its 'Stand up for Stanage' campaign the BMC set out criteria which it believed would be critical to the future management of the Estate, irrespective of who managed it.

Mary Bagley, Assistant Director from the PDNPA, gave an overview of the issues around the North Lees Estate, some of the key areas covered as follows. There are different types of land use; including buildings, wild flora and wildlife, including the home of some rare ring ouzels. The PDNPA wants to work with partner organisations, including the BMC, for the future of Stanage. As well as its importance to climbers, it is also important for its heritage, as well as to other recreation users. Mary would like ideas as to what the PDNPA should do with the toilet block and ranger's station. There is a lot of Estate management which needs to be undertaken, and this will include the use of volunteers; some main issues that are current are off-roaders getting stuck and litter. The Stanage Forum's Vision and Management Plan needs refreshing. The PDNPA wants to build on this vision with consultation from users.

Mary then took questions from the floor:

Q: Financial pressures led to property asset disposal. The PDNPA must have thought it could raise revenue from Stanage or it would have disposed of it. Can you confirm this?

A: Mary doesn't think the decision was financial. She thinks that members of the Authority thought that there were enough skilled and experienced people 'in-house' that could do a good job. The running of North Lees could be cost-neutral . This would include income from three streams: agricultural tenancy land, High Level Stewardship (HLS) money and fees from the camp site and car parking.

Mary outlined a few ideas for generating income and would like people's views on them:

- form a Charitable Trust for Stanage and North Lees, to enable people to donate where they know and trust their legacy will be spent. This would need a Board of Trustees and be managed.
- the area next to the toilet block, which faces out over woodland, could be used to make a café.
- parking charges including the possibility of charging in the currently free areas.

Q: What is the Business Case behind the idea of the PDNPA keeping the management of the Estate in-house?

A: The Business Case includes no additional charges for climbing and there will always be free access for climbing. The PDNPA will receive grants. At Hook's car parking area (Popular End) there is currently a parking donation box which only generates £70 per year (many may not realise it is there). Would people consider paying for parking here?

Q: Are there any plans to improve the parking at the High Neb end to the same standard as the Popular End?

A: That is a good idea, but there are no plans at the moment. She will take this idea to the Stanage Forum. If visitors paid for parking, then the income generated could be used to improve parking areas. There is currently not a ring-fenced budget for Stanage, but Mary is working with finance colleagues to organise this. Mary would encourage people to put in voluntary contributions for parking.

Q: What is the current cost and income for running the Estate?

A: For maintenance of the Estate £60,000 is required, but more money is required for improvements. Mary didn't have the figures for the current income.

Q: If a Trust was established, how separate would it be?

A: Totally separate – it would be set up as a charity. It would have a Board of Trustees and the majority of these couldn't be from the PDNPA. Mary anticipated a BMC representative would certainly be one of the Trustees.

Q: Do you think this idea of a Trust would have an impact on other Trusts, for example, Friends of the Peak District?

A: Mary is meeting with Friends of the Peak District and will discuss with them, however, from past experience, people like to leave money for specific things.

Q/Opinion: Climbers shouldn't have to pay to use or park at Stanage. A lot of climbers volunteer, and we should be encouraging people to utilise the countryside. There are 10 million visitors a year to The Peak National Park. They are subsidised 50p/visit by government. Visitors to the National Opera House are subsidised by £100 per visit.

A: Income is required for maintaining paths etc. and Mary thinks it is reasonable that visitors to contribute. We cannot change the funding by government although we would like to see more funding for national parks.

Q: What about users who use Stanage as part of their income?

A: There is a Strategic Impact Group which thinks that if people make a business out of Stanage, then they should contribute financially. In a previous job Mary used to give businesses a licence to use recreation land. Mary will be looking at that again.

Q: If climbers are made to pay for climbing, then the payment should be proportionate. We could pay as much as we could for parking.

A: Most of the income comes from the tenancy of the farm, camp site and the Vivat Trust. The car park generates a small proportion of income. The car parking donation box currently generates £70 year.

Q: Are you looking for volunteer effort to maintain the Estate?

A: There will be a Ranger training day in June.

Q: If agreed, the ideas you have suggested this evening will take a long time to come into fruition. What are your plans for the next 12-months?

A: There are several areas of work:

- We are working with the Stanage Forum to develop the Management Plan.
- A lot of money is being spent to restore the farm house.
- The cruck barn is having a lot of money spent on it.
- Because of the recent heavy rain, we are reviewing what work needs to be done regarding drainage, and this work is being led by Bill (the ranger).
- PDNPA won't do anything until it has discussed with partner organisations, including the BMC. It wants to build a trustworthy relationship.

Q: What part of the income from Stanage will be spent on salaries of people employed by the PDNPA?

A: The PDNPA wants to employ someone to look after the Estate. They will be recruited later in the summer. The income will go on staff costs of people who look after the Estate only, including Bill.

Q: I probably wouldn't pay for parking, but I would buy an annual car parking sticker for say, £20. Is this a possibility?

A: That is a good idea.

Q: Who is responsible for off-roading?

A: Derbyshire County Council and the PDNPA working together.

Q: Are there any plans to expand mountain biking?

A: Nothing has been discussed to date. It will form part of the consultation in relation to the Management Plan that is being developed with the Stanage Forum.

There was a mixed response to the development of a café and car parking charges amongst people who attended the meeting.

In summary, the discussion and questions asked focused on the PDNA building trust with stakeholders including climbers. It is evident that climbers care passionately about Stanage. This includes no PDNPA meetings in secret regarding the future of the North Lees Estate and an open dialogue of how the income will be used. The BMC would like to see Business Plans and develop an open and transparent relationship. In the Eastern Moors, there is a model that has already worked. Something similar needs to happen for the North Lees Estate.

Henry thanked Mary for attending, and emphasised that we are now working to a common purpose, however continued transparency is key and the next stages are continued dialogue and delivery.

Mary can be contacted at: mary.bagley@peakdistrict.gov.uk

4. Update from The National Trust - Sophie Milner

Sophie had five items to update the meeting on:

- (a) Funding from Sport England – The National Trust has received funding for a one-year, 3-days a week post to look at running, cycling and climbing. The aim of the post is to encourage participation from these user groups, of the Longshaw Estate, linking in with existing users. Look at The National Trust website and ‘jobs’ for more details.
- (b) More concessionary bridleway paths are being developed at Longshaw. This will improve the mountain biking experience.
- (c) Climbing Festival – Froggatt and Curbar. This is currently being planned and there will be talks and presentations. The aim is to improve the perspective of The National Trust. The National Trust welcomes ideas for the festival. Please contact Sophie at sophie.milner@nationaltrust.org.uk
- (d) Woodland Regeneration – Burbage, Houndkirk. New fencing has been erected at Surprise View. The aim is to create new woodland/allow regeneration of habitation and to keep life stock off the land whilst this is happening. Nest boxes etc have been installed. With all fencing, access points are maintained. Regenerated woodland is away from the climbing and climbing areas could be looked at for thinning tree cover.
- (e) In relation to whether The National Trust will develop a ‘countryside only’ membership scheme – this is still in the melting pot. A trial has taken place elsewhere in the country, and the results are still being examined to see whether it would be a viable proposition for The National Trust to introduce it nationally.

In a general discussion people present at the meeting welcomed the close working relationship with The National Trust, but asked that any fencing in open landscapes should only be introduced as a last resort and after all other options had been considered.

5. Neil Roden – Mountain Rescue

Neil gave an overview of the service. It runs 24 hours/day, seven days a week, and is free to all. In the Peak District there are 7 teams, with a total of 300 team members across the teams. They receive approximately 250 call-outs a year. They receive £2,000 from government per year.

In the Edale team, there are 50 team members, including 15 professional medics. There is more information on Mountain Rescue in the Peak District in the February edition of the BMC Peak Area newsletter.

6. Eastern Moors Partnership

Danny Udall gave a brief update on access and other improvements on the Eastern Moors Estate.

7. Access Updates

Henry Folkard - For more detailed information please refer to Henry’s access notes in the BMC Peak Area Newsletter, February 2014.

Louise Hawson – Ross, the project manager for the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Areas (NIA) will be in the Fiddlers Elbow car park (Burbage North) over several weekends from May onwards to answer questions regarding the work being done to remove the plantation and replant/allow regeneration with native woodland species. He’ll have information including; the aims of the work, before and after pictures, planned timetables for work etc.

8. Any other business

Stanage Forum – the next open meeting of the Stanage Forum is taking place on the 29.3.14, at 2.00pm in the Memorial Hall, Oddfellows Road, Hathersage (next to the swimming pool, opposite the car park).

9. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 9th April, 7.30pm. The Maynard, Grindleford .

Provisional dates and venues for BMC Peak Area meetings for 2014:

June 4 th	The Winking Man Pub, Staffordshire
September 10 th	Glossop
November 19 th	AGM, The Maynard, Grindleford

Many thanks to Pete Whittaker who gave an amazingly insightful talk and slideshow into what it takes to be at the cutting edge of new routing on what were some of the last great problems in the Peak District.

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
All articles considered.

The deadline for the next newsletter is 26th March

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.