

Minutes of South Wales Area Meeting

Vardre Rugby Club, Clydach, Swansea

7-30p.m. 26th March 2014

Chair: Gareth Tucker

BMC Officer: Dave Turnbull BMC CEO

Number present: 34

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Gareth welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies for Dan Cook. No further apologies were offered.

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 21st November 2013

The minutes were accepted as a fair record of the last meeting.

3. Actions from previous meeting

Reference Item 7 previous meeting. Gareth gave more thoughts on the suggestion that South Wales should become a separate BMC region. At present Wales is represented on the National Council by three members from the Cymru area, representing all of Wales. South Wales being a separate area would mean more representation on the national council, but Gareth felt that we need to have far more people regularly involved and more things happening in South Wales (such as crag clean ups) before this can happen. Dave Turnbull added that the North Wales group was long established, and regularly has very well attended meetings with lots of volunteers getting involved in issues that affect climbers and hill walkers.

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

There were none.

5. Mini Mountain Festival proposal

Will Kilner gave an update. The idea has moved on and a day in September 2014 (possibly 27th) is being considered for an event in Brecon. Volunteers are needed to make this happen. Dave Turnbull contributed that this year is BMC's 70th anniversary and such an event in South Wales could be part of the celebrations.

6. 2014 Gower Climbing Festival

The festival has taken place for the last 5 years. Matt Woodfield is unable to be involved this year so once again volunteers are needed in order to make this happen. Normally takes place on an early September weekend with favourable tides.

7. National Council report

Will Kilner outlined the structure of this group which meets 4 times a year and has three representatives from Wales and two from each of the English regions. The last meeting was in The Peak District and the three main points to report are:

- i. BMC membership subscriptions are to go up by £1-50
- ii. The drilled equipment position statement, discussed at an earlier South Wales area meeting, was agreed.
- iii. A position statement on dry tooling was agreed.

There was a question about what was happening with the South West area's bolting policy, which is more radical than the position statement which has been adopted. Dave Turnbull responded by saying that it had taken two and a half years to agree the current position statement on fixed equipment and it was important that the document was now in place. No doubt the South West area's proposals will be discussed again in due course.

8. Access report

Matt Woodfield gave an access report.

There had been problems at Tirpentwys and Edwardsville Crag X, but climbing appears to be taking place again with no issues with landowners. Continue using but best avoid with big groups.

There has been a lot of new development along the Ceredigion coast. See ukclimbing.com.

Range West briefings will take place on April 18th, May 24th and July 26th and there may be another date to be arranged. There was a question about the total number of people allowed on the range at any one time being reduced to 30, when it has been 30 climbers plus 30 others (fishers, walkers, birders). Elfyn Jones has been liaising with the Commandant who is intransigent.

WAG consultation about access. There may be progress soon on allotments, but countryside access will take longer, and access to water may stall altogether.

Other points raised by members:

At Dinas Rock, river left, owners have been making efforts to prevent access for climbers, but more recently, responsible access has been going ahead.

Signs have gone up at Sirhowy.

9. Bolting proposals

9.1 Equal Opportunities Cave

There was a proposal to permit bolting in Equal Opportunities Cave on Gower. Two people spoke in favour of allowing bolting, a vote was taken and the proposal was carried.

For 23 Against 2 Abstain 7

9.2 Llangattock

This item was for further discussion not for voting on bolting at this stage. A sheet of proposals from Roy Thomas was circulated which related to specific routes at Llangattock. The discussions revolved around whether we should vote on individual routes, on 26 routes which have (had) bolts, or on allowing bolting on sections of the crag. A view was expressed that the BMC should get on with organising a meeting, and decide on a new fixed gear policy for Llangattock. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority would like to be consulted on any proposals, and there was discussion as to how best to involve them. Gareth agreed to liaise with Elfyn Jones and others in order to decide on a structure for a Llangattock specific meeting.

10. AOB

There was a query about Minchen Hole. The agreement is that routes outside the cave can be climbed but the hangers have been removed from some routes. Matt agreed to check with the National Trust.

The winter storms appear to have made Hardy's Bay at Ogmore very unstable in places. Take care if you go there.

Jump to Conclusions at Watch House East has also been affected by a rockfall.

Dave Turnbull drew attention to matters of interest:

- i. BMC AGM weekend 25th – 27th April 2014 on the Isle of Portland.
- ii. Quarries Regeneration Project – seminar to take place at the end of this year.
- iii. BMC Bristol Climbing Festival at Avon Gorge Project 26th July 2014
- iv. Funding available for access projects – footpaths, crag clean-ups, access leaflets.

11. Date and venue of next meeting

Possibly 26th July 2014 but will be confirmed when National Council schedule had been consulted. Check BMC website.

Meeting finished at 2055 and was followed by an inspiring illustrated talk by Dave Turnbull about climbing the west face of Cerro Torre.

To get involved with the BMC South Wales Area please contact
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