

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 4th June 2014, The Winking Man Pub, Staffordshire

Present:

Neil Foster (Chair)
Lynn Robinson (Secretary)
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)
Simon Lee (BMC National Council Rep)
Cath Flitcroft (BMC)
Steve Clark
Tim Waterhouse
Clare Reading (FRCC)
Robert Hunter
Bunny McCullough
Margi Bryant
John Gresty
Dee Sayce
Peter Jonwood (Peak Climbing Club)
Adam Long (Access Rep)
30 people signed in

Chris Radcliffe (Oread MC)
Gordon Burgess-Parker
Jeff Sim (Staffs Wildlife Trust)
John Rowe (Staffs Wildlife Trust)
Dave Perry
Graig Harwood
Ross Burnage
Graeme Hammond
Becky Ellis (Peak Climbing Club)
Milessa Cooper (Peak Climbing Club)
Robert Townsend (The Mountain Club)
John Cook (Castle MC)
Joel Pixley
Andi Turner
John Gilbert
32 people present

1. Apologies:

Louise Hawson
Andy Tickle
Dave Bishop
David Brown

Rob Greenwood
Jane Livingstone
Sophie Milner

Dave Turnbull
Michael Hunt
Dan Lane

Neil welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Cath Flitcroft from the BMC office and Jeff Sim and John Rowe from the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

2. Actions from the last meeting (held on 9th April 2014)

None.

3. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Update

Neil opened the floor to the two members of staff from the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT).

Jeff Sim, who was on secondment, has now been recruited to the post of Land Management Team Coordinator permanently.

John Rowe has been appointed as permanent warden for The Roaches. Also appointed is assistant warden, Andy Mayland, who will be replaced after one-year.

John explained that he has been in post since the beginning of April, having moved from North Wales, so is getting to know The Roaches, how it works and partner organisations.

Priorities include:

- Wanting to replace hay meadows at the front of The Roaches
- Re-seeding the green hay.

This will be done with volunteers who work every Friday and one Saturday per month. John is also training volunteers how to re-build dry-stone walls.

Other updates:

- the peregrines are nesting on Hen Cloud this year. One chick is growing nicely. SWT is engaging with people, raising awareness with people in a hope that they will 'police' the nest. A telescope is pointing towards the nest so that people can follow the progress of the chick.
- SWT is working with the grazier to keep the grazing animals where they should be. There are also collars around the neck of cattle, and wires under the ground in the Back Forest area to keep the cattle out of the woods.
- SWT is working with Derbyshire University, who are blocking some of the drains in the area behind The Roaches.

Management of The Roaches

Jeff stated that the SWT will be conducting a major consultation over how they will manage the Estate. They have asked the BMC to be part of the Steering Group. At the end of June the dates of consultation events will be published on their website. People can sign up for Roaches Updates via the SWT website.

'Responsible Roaches'

Jeff introduced an idea which SWT has labelled 'Responsible Roaches' (RR). This is looking at how local businesses that benefit from visitors to the area, such as Bed and Breakfast, coffee shops, climbing instructors, organised races etc. can support The Roaches. It will probably be an annual voluntary scheme. It is just a concept at the moment and any contributions would go towards the maintenance of The Roaches.

There was a discussion regarding the RR idea. It was asked how RR would interface with the Friends of the Peak.

Dave Bishop couldn't make the meeting, but he had e-mailed his ideas/thoughts. In summary:

- The BMC didn't see the SWT proposal regarding RR and would have objected at the time.
- The Peak Park has never taken this approach.
- Trusts have raised money for specific projects in the past, but to our knowledge, never for general upkeep.
- The payment for use of CRoW land by guides etc is a grey area. As far as Dave is aware, no charging for this has ever been attempted before in the UK.
- If the idea of RR goes ahead it will set a dangerous precedent.
- Dave is opposed to the idea.

Other points made:

- The Roaches is public land, bought with public money.
- How would RR be policed?
- BMC Members had similar sorts of requests from across the Peak from different land managers and simply could not respond to them all, especially as the BMC itself had suffered severe cut backs in its funding. It would be far better to work in partnership across the National Park than to try to respond to a variety of piecemeal solutions.
- The first option should be to lobby government for additional funds.

Various suggestions from people at the meeting:

- The SWT to talk to Danny Udall from the Eastern Moors Partnership as to their approach.
- If SWT asks for donations, they need to be specific what the money will go on.
- A solution for the way forward needs to be made together.
- Local non-outdoors related businesses could be targeted, such as banks.

Footpaths

There is an appeal out SWT members as footpaths are expensive to repair (use of helicopters etc). The SWT has placed an advert in the next edition of Summit magazine. ACT has made a commitment to support SWT in this work. Footpaths that are being targeted include; road to the DWMH, bottom of the steps, top of the steps, trig point area and the muddy areas of Back Forest.

Deer Culling

Jeff stated that SWT doesn't support the culling of deer at the moment.

Neil thanked Jeff and John for attending the meeting.

4. Access Update

Henry gave the following update:

Cowdale – it has yet to be decided whether the planning application will be dealt with by High Peak Borough Council as a water bottling plant application or Derbyshire County Council as a minerals proposal. The BMC is objecting to the proposal. Comments are still being accepted and it takes less than two minutes to object to the application on-line. Follow the link:

<http://planning.highpeak.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=158844>

Longstone Edge – The Planning Inquiry that has been postponed.

Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area – Moors for the Future is taking on the project management role.

Birds:

- Standing Stones: a female raven has been found dead.
- The Ravensdale raven has fledged
- As Burbage South four ring-ouzes have fledged
- For continued on-going restrictions, please refer to the BMC website.

Aldery Cliff – bramble spraying on the 5.4.14

5. Millstone: keyhole cave new bolt

Adam gave background information. On Millstone there is a keyhole shaped cave in the middle of the wall formed from very soft sandstone. There are two first pitches of extremes that can be climbed as HVS up to the cave. There used to be two iron quarrying stakes that could be used as a belay and lower-off, but over the years both of them have rotted/been removed. A proposal was made a few years ago to the Peak Area meeting to replace one of these, but was rejected. In the spring of this year someone drilled and glued in a 15mm steel hoop bolt where one of the stakes once was.

A discussion was held and the following points were made: there are potential safety issues, as the rock around the bolt is very soft, so we cannot tell how viable over time the new bolt will be; there are plenty of HVSs in very close proximity if people want to climb that grade and the two routes in question can still be climbed by lowering off from gear placed in the crack in the floor of the cave and abseiling to retrieve left gear. This was debated four-years ago and rejected; there was some support to keep the bolt from some climbers on UKC.

A vote was held on the following proposal:

“As a meeting we disagree with the placing of the piece of drilled and glued gear in the Millstone Keystone Cave.”

For the above statement – 20 people

Against the statement – none

Abstentions – 10 people

Post meeting note: the steel hoop was chopped a few days later.

6. National Council Update

There hasn't been a NC meeting since the last Peak Area meeting, therefore there is no update.

7. Update from BMC Officers

Cath Flitcroft gave a summary of her main areas of work at the moment:

- A multi-agency Parliamentary reception to explore the role of the outdoors. There are six action points, including; planning, better access and investment in infrastructure. Thirty MPs and ministers are attending.
- A Charity and Challenge event at Rheged.
- Commenting on the Nature and Wellbeing Bill.

An update from the BMC office is attached to the notes.

Stanage Festival - It is being held on the 28th and 29th June. A lot has been organised. Please visit the BMC website for further details – it's set to be a great weekend.

Anyone who has any further ideas/can volunteer a few hours etc – then please contact Will directly – will@thebmc.co.uk

8. Any Other Business

Equity Symposium – Margi Bryant gave an update on the work she is involved in with the BMC. There has recently been a BMC Equality Symposium which took place over a weekend to encourage people from under-represented groups to climb / work in the outdoor industry. This included people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Over 60 people participated planned by the BMC in partnership with Mosaic.

The BMC office runs an Equity Steering Group that wants to forge links with Areas. This could include, for example, developing contacts, arranging taster sessions etc. Individual volunteers, or through clubs are needed to push this important area of work forward.

It is recognised that the BMC has very strong and active access representatives that address physical access issues. The BMC wants to develop its community outreach work by developing and supporting outreach representatives. The BMC wants to pilot some ideas in The Peak over the summer and then feedback in September. This could include, for example, women only activities. The BMC could link in with existing groups and networks to develop the work, for example, Mosaic already has a network of community champions.

If anyone is interesting in getting involved in the pilot projects, then please contact Margi:

Margi.bryant@btinternet.com

9. Peak Area Newsletter

One wasn't produced for this meeting due to a lack of contributions. All contributions are welcome.

Please send them directly to Martin Wass, editor at: peakarea@gmail.com

The deadline is always two-weeks prior to the next meeting – the next deadline being the **27th August**.

10. Any Other Business

BMC Peak Limestone Guide – an update was requested. It is continued to be worked on. It is planned the Northern volume will be published first.

Limestone Crag – it was commented that many climbs are 'disappearing' under vegetation and need continuous cleaning. The problems of crag cleaning on limestone were discussed. It is thought that the publication of the new BMC guide will help with traffic on the routes.

ACTION: Neil to raise at the next National Council meeting.

Nature Improvement Area – thank you to everyone who has helped with the visitor survey.

11. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 10th September, 7.30pm at The Globe Inn, Glossop.

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.

Area Meeting Briefing Note for Area Chairs & Secretaries – May 2014

A summary of some of the key BMC activities for the period March – May 2014

Access & Conservation

- Agreed and publicised formal position statements on drilled equipment and dry tooling.
- Arranged and publicised 2014 Range West Briefing dates.
- Updated and re-printed the BMC guide to climbing and occupier's liability; it is also available as a free download on the BMC website.
- Published seasonal nesting restrictions advice on the BMC website.
- Organised and led a walk in Wharfedale with Greg Mulholland MP, the BMC's Parliamentary Sports Fellow, to promote hill walking and help to raise money for the local Mountain Rescue Team.
- Publicised the re-opening of the Harrison's Rocks Campsite following repairs to the toilet block.
- Publicised a Stanage Forum open meeting, to encourage interested members to attend and give their views on the management of the North Lees Estate.
- Attended the annual Spirit of Kinder Day, this year held in Sheffield, to mark the 1932 Kinder Scout Mass Trespass.
- Publicised the work being undertaken in the Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area and encouraged interested BMC members to volunteer for a range of projects within the initiative.
- Published a reminder on the BMC website about access arrangements for climbing in Cheddar Gorge, including the need for third party liability insurance cover, following a number of incidents in which climbers have recently been caught climbing in areas outside of the access agreement, or climbing without insurance.
- Ran the annual TremFest clean-up event, with volunteers helping to give Craig Bwlch y Moch at Tremadog a spring clean.

Clubs & Huts

- Published Essential Club Know-how article on BMC website as a holding page for all important club-related articles and information.
- Supported the University of Manchester Hiking Club in the running of a new outdoor club safety seminar.
- 2014 Clubs Survey launched and publicised to all members in BMC monthly newsletter.
- Ran the annual Training Novice Club Members workshop at Plas y Brenin.

Competition Climbing (& Ski Mountaineering)

- Held Grand Final of the BMC Leading Ladder at the Beacon Climbing Centre, Caernarfon.
- Held the third round of the BMC Youth Climbing Series at climbing walls around the country.
- Held the second round of the BMC Paraclimbing Series at Newcastle Climbing Centre.
- Held the second round of the BMC/MCofS Junior British Bouldering Championships at The Climbing Academy in Glasgow.
- Publicised Shauna Coxsey's win at the IFSC Bouldering World Cup event in Grindelwald, which took her to the top of the 2014 series rankings.

International

- Publicised the American Alpine Club's invitation for climbers to attend its annual International Climbers' Meet in Yosemite Valley in October.
- Publicised expeditions awarded a Mount Everest Foundation grant in 2014.
- Publicised Chamonix Mountain Festival discounted ticket offer for BMC members.

Safety & Skills

- Publicised the 2014 BMC Coaching Symposium, to be held in September in North Wales.
- Publicised the 2014 BMC FUNDamentals of Climbing workshop programme; three different one-day workshops hosted by numerous climbing walls around the country.
- Publicised the 2014 BMC Regional Academy programme; 32 one-day events covering five themes to support emerging young climbing talent. Ran the annual BMC Climbing Movement Masterclasses at seven venues around the country.
- Ran the annual BMC Alpine Lecture Series at six venues around the country.
- Commenced delivery of Rock Out subsidised local outdoor climbing courses for the 2014 outdoor climbing season.
- Publicised Mountain Training's free hill walking skills taster sessions being offered at the Keswick Mountain Festival.
- Published information and opened online booking for the annual BMC Student Safety & Good Practice Seminar at Plas y Brenin in October.

Technical

- Published a warning on the BMC website about potential bolt failures in the slate quarries of North Wales.

Youth & Equity

- Publicised the Climb Out challenge organised by BMC member Jake McManus in support of Mental Health Awareness Week.

BMC Organisation

- 2014 BMC AGM held on Portland; Rupert Davies and Mina Leslie-Wujastyk elected as BMC Vice-Presidents; Eric Jones made an Honorary Member; John Innerdale OBE awarded the George Band Award for exceptional voluntary service ; Neil Foster elected as a Director on the Executive Committee, and Brian Smith as an Independent Director; quorum of the Executive Committee increased from four to five persons; Individual and Club Member subscriptions to be increased by £1.50 from 1 January 2015.

Membership

- Supported the Keswick Mountain Festival with publicity of the event to members; organised a themed guided walk to celebrate the BMC's 70th anniversary and exhibited in the festival marquee, promoting BMC membership and selling merchandise including the new BMC Lake District T-shirts.

Medical

- Updated and publicised advice on the BMC website about ticks and tick-borne diseases.