

Summary of the 39th meeting of National Council

Date: Saturday 14 June 2014

Venue: Plas y Brenin

In attendance:

Voting members: Scott Titt (President), John Simpson (Treasurer), Deirdre Collier & James Rowe (Yorkshire), Rupert Fleming & Ralph Ranford (L&SE), Roger Fanner & Claudia Sarner (Midlands), Nick Bond (North West), Neil Foster & Simon Lee (Peak), Ted Rogers (Lakes), Andy Boorman (Cymru North), Will Kilner (Cymru South), Colin Knowles & Gareth Palmer (South West) and Dave Turnbull (CEO).

Specialist Committee chairs: John Farrow (Clubs)

Observers & staff: Martin Doyle (Plas y Brenin), Kamala Sen (ESG), Brian Smith (Independent Director), Andy Say (MTE), Nick Colton & Kate Anwyl (staff).

Summary:

1. Area news & reports:

- Climbing / walking festivals are taking place at Stanage, Wilton, Tremadog, the Gower, Avon Gorge and Northumberland as part of the BMC 70th anniversary celebrations. An anniversary dinner is taking place for the Founder Clubs in October.
- There were detailed discussions in the Midlands and Yorkshire areas about the BMC's work for hill walkers with the conclusion that there is a big opportunity for the BMC to do more to connect with walkers.
- Concerns were expressed in the Peak District about revenue raising plans for the North Lees Estate (Stanage) and the scope for a further planning application for a bottling plant development in Staden Quarry.
- North West Area agreed to the placing of some bolt belays on selected routes in Wilton 1.
- Access to Cheddar Gorge is in a delicate state due to climbers disregarding or failing to adhere to the access arrangements in the gorge.

2. Finance & membership: The BMC is currently forecasting a £70k deficit for 2014. Membership has increased slightly over the past 12 months but travel insurance sales have reduced. The £1.50 per person subscriptions increase agreed at the AGM should improve the BMC's financial position from January

2015. Total membership on 1 May 2014 was 75,753 (480 up on May 2013). The breakdown is 52,549 individual members and 23,204 club members; 85.70% of individual members are now on direct debit.

3. Nominations & elections: National Council agreed to put forward Rehan Siddiqui's name to the April 2015 AGM as the candidate for BMC President; Rehan is a former vice president and chair of the BMC Equity Steering Group. Deirdre Collier was voted in to become a National Council representative (director position) on the Executive Committee.

4. Review of the BMC's 2013-17 Strategic Plan: The focus of discussion was the BMC's work for hill walkers and whether or not the importance of hill walking is suitably reflected in the Strategic Plan. The overall conclusion was that the BMC should increase our work for hill walkers. Further discussions will take place at the September Area meeting with a focus on the BMC's work for young people.

5. Discussion item: 'The BMC Area structure, is it fit for purpose?' Some Areas, in particular London & the South East, and the South West are extremely large and / or spread out making it difficult for people from outlying areas to engage with the organisation. It was agreed that Areas should assess their needs on a case-by-case basis and that outreach meetings could be held in outlying locations where there was sufficient interest / demand.