

BMC Cymru Mid Wales Area meeting notes.

Meeting held at White Lion Hotel Machynlleth on Tuesday 3 June 2014.

1. Apologies - Tom Hutton, Don Sergeant, Dan Harries, Piers Nesbitt, Pete Trickie.
2. Minutes of previous meeting – Dan was not at the meeting and these were not available.
3. No matters arising!
4. Updates on Mid-Wales climbing access issues:
 - Lochtyn** – DK mentioned that a few new routes had been done and since the mini-guidebook had been made available on-line there appeared to be a few visiting climbers enjoying the new routes. In terms of access info the NT were happy for climbing to occur and for the installation of belay stakes at identified locations. However some detailed discussions were still needed with National Resources Wales (NRW) regarding the exact locations for the belay stakes. It was possible that there may need to be some seasonal restrictions to protect nesting birds but most if not all the current climbing seems to be outside of the areas frequented by nesting birds.
 - Elan Valley** – the crags all seem to lie on open access land except possibly for part of Craig Cnwch. There could be some environmental issues (nesting peregrines and some protected plants) being found on some of the crags. Elfyn to arrange and follow up with Elan Valley Trust and to have site visit to discuss the details (DK also keen to be involved).
 - Pennal** – following the initial development of this slate quarry the then land owners withdrew access permission due to liability fears. However the farm has now been sold. TT would find the contact details of the new owners and EJ would then arrange to visit.
 - Barmouth Quarry** – local climbers questioned the extent of the restrictions and if they were really needed. Several birds nest at the crag including Chough, which had special protection. There is also a large colony of Herring Gulls which are now regarded as being nationally endangered! It's unlikely that the conservation bodies would agree to a reduction to the extent of the restricted area.
 - Pantperthog** – CAT site. This was a previously climbed on quarry where a neighbour had objected to climbing but this person had now moved away, giving the potential for negotiations with CAT for access to this site.
5. Guidebook progress – From Don Sergeant by e-mail ...Mid Wales guidebook not seen as greatest priority by CC due to financial situation. CC can only produce two definitive guidebooks per year. On-going discussions about possible loans from BMC, grant aid, and other possible options but no clear funding stream at the moment.
6. Wales Access Review – EJ updated on this. Basically Welsh Government are yet to produce a “green paper” outlining their plans for a review of access laws in Wales and the Minister for Sports issued a statement saying that there would not be any new legislation in this term of government but that they were still committed to improving access to the coast and

countryside of Wales. BMC are leading a coalition of recreational bodies to continue to lobby Welsh Government on this issue and to press for reform of the current access laws, especially in relation to the coast of Wales.

7. Pembroke updates – quite a few changes to the seasonal restrictions due to birds nesting in unusual locations this year. Great response to Range West Access with over 200 briefed climbers to date, and over 77 people allowed on to the range on one day at Easter. MoD had imposed a limit of 30 recreational users (inc. climbers, fishermen and surfers) per day but was willing to look at increased numbers based on daily demand and their own resources to manage more people.
8. Barmouth slabs – these are on land mapped as open access and there should not be a need to register or pay for access for climbing. Some outdoor centres have traditionally paid the land owner to climb here and it's possible that are continuing to do so. However there do not appear to be any current issues (occasional over-crowding) and members felt that there were no issues to pursue at this venue at this time.
9. Feedback on Drilled equipment policy – this was noted.
10. TremFest – a great success with over 60 people and lots of work completed. An article and video will soon be on the BMC website.
11. Slate quarries – bolts warning. Belay bolts on a number of popular routes (many had literally hundreds of ascents per month) had been identified as being loose and on inspection were found to be pulling out at very low loads (less than 2kn). The advice is that 10mm expansion bolts should not be used on slate on routes where considerable loading and un-loading of bolts may happen, as it seems that erosion of the drilled hole is caused by constant loading and un-loading of expansion bolts. The advice is to use resin bolts where possible on such routes.
12. Mid Wales Wind farms – it was noted that the public inquiry to look at the decision to build the high power transmission power cables across Mid Wales had closed and that the planning inspector would make a decision at some point in the next few weeks. This decision would have a considerable impact on any possible future applications for wind turbine developments in the Cambrian mountains.
13. Future chair BMC Wales – Tom Hutton had indicated that he may be stepping down as chair of BMC Cymru at the end of 2015 and anyone with an interest in taking over the role should contact Tom or Elfyn.
14. AOB - £40 was collected for the North Wales Bolt Fund which will be transferred to Chris Parkin by Elfyn.