

BMC Midlands Area Minutes – 19th November 2014

Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Attendance: 32 – Phil Simister (Chair), Jo Goodson (Access East), Richard Law (Access West), John Churcher (SMC/Walls Rep), Iain Blanch (Youth), Claudia Sarner (Secretary & National Council Rep), Charles Gameson (National Council Rep), John Edwards (WBMC), Jane Thomson (BMC Staff), Al Thomson (WMC), Roger Fanner (SMC), Ian Wyatt (SMC), Robert Trezise (SMC), Sue Manns (Mam/Bremex), Nick Protrowsky (WBMC), Brian Smith (BMC Director), Michelle Aukland (BCC), Andy Railton (BCC), Andy Potter (BCC), Tamsin Mayberry, Philip Wilkinson (MAM), Jeanette Breckles (WBMC), David Jones (WBMC), Chris Elliott (MAM), Graham Richmond (BCC), Helen Every (SMC), Stephen Wright, Mike Beaumont.

Apologies: 2 – Andrew Graham, Andy Brown.

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Area meeting.

2 Minutes of last meeting agreed as accurate (proposed: Roger Fanner, seconded: Iain Blanch).

3 Matters arising

Leicestershire guidebook – Ian Wyatt reported that Niall Grimes had met up with Robin Richmond, crag shots have been taken, and progress is being made.

4 Access West

Individuals have previously been keen to carry out organised crag clean-ups in the Malverns, specifically at Reservoir Wall and Westminster Arms Quarry. However, there are so many vested interests in the area (e.g. by Natural England, Malvern Hill Conservators, local geologists, Worcs Wildlife Trust) that there is very little chance of gaining agreement from all of them. Currently we think that, unless individuals are keen, the benefits do not warrant pursuing this further.

5 Access East

Jo has been compiling a database of crags, however she is unable to continue this role and hopes that the new Access East Rep can further this project, including updating BMC RAD and UKC listings.

Craig Buddon update – Following two incidents, climbers are kindly reminded to be considerate and not attract unwanted attention.

6 Climbing Walls

Nothing to report.

7 Youth

This is a fairly quiet time of year, although there are some youth climbing competitions at local climbing walls.

West Bromwich Mountaineering Club had hoped to put on an event in Birmingham City centre in conjunction with a local activity centre but it was rained off. They may try again next year.

8 National Council

- Hillwalking strategy – See below
- April national council meeting reinstated (shorter, brief meeting, focusing on key reports and AGM related issues).
- Subscriptions – A paper on subscriptions policy and options is being produced by the Financial Committee, to be discussed by the Executive Committee at the next National Council meeting.

9 Hillwalking strategy

To develop the BMC's work for hillwalkers, a specialist Hillwalking Development Officer has been employed (since April 2013) and a Hillwalking Strategy is being

developed. A Working Group is now being established to support the development and implementation of this hillwalking strategy. (The proposal to set up a working group had been put forward by the Midlands area and was accepted at the last National Council meeting.) The Chair nominated Charles Gameson to be part of this group; there were no objections. Brian Smith (Independent Director of The BMC) has been asked to chair the first meeting and is happy to continue as chair if requested by the working group.

All interested BMC members are invited to attend an engagement event in Hayfield, Peak District, on 29th November, to give input and thoughts on the BMC's latest ideas to improve our work for Hillwalkers (<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/hill-walkers-come-and-hear-about-the-bmcs-future>). Publicity for this event was handed out at the beginning of the meeting.

- 10 Location for area meetings in 2015** – General consensus that meetings will continue to be held in Solihull unless a particular issue arises which is best discussed elsewhere.

- 11 Meetings for rest of the year:**
Wed 28 Jan 15 - speaker Mick Fowler
Wed 3 Jun 15 - speaker Gary Gibson
Wed 9 Sep 15 - speaker TBD
Wed 25 Nov 15 - speaker TBD

- 12 AOB**

Quarries – The Quarries Working Group was formed two years ago as a sub-group within the Access and Conservation Trust. Graham Richmond stated that an expected output from this group was a policy document to aid discussions with Quarry owners regarding the use of end-of-life quarries for climbing. It was suggested that we should push for the production of this important policy document via the National Council representatives.

Confirmation of new Clubs Rep - The meeting was reopened after the talk at the end in order to finalise the election of a new Clubs Rep (Michelle Aukland), since notification of the resignation of the current Clubs Rep had been received during the talk.

Reduction to Two Area Meetings Per Year – Whilst the meeting was reopened (see above) a late arrival (Misha Nepogodiev - SMC) then suggested that the BMC reduced the number of Area Meetings to two per year; however there was no support for the idea.

- 13 Next Meeting**
Wednesday 28th January 2015
8pm – Meeting will be followed by guest speaker, Mick Fowler.
Venue: Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Following the meeting the attendees enjoyed an interesting and entertaining talk by Matt Stygall "From The Nose (El Cap) to Patagonia"