

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 28th January 2015, The Maynard, Grindleford

Present:

Neil Foster (Chair)
Lynn Robinson (Secretary)
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)
Cath Flitcroft (BMC)
Ted Talbot (The National Trust)
Steve McClure (BMC Ambassador)
Peter Judd (Peak Area Hillwalking Rep)
Clare Reading (FRCC)
John Bayliss (Peak Climbing Club)
David Brown (Peak Climbing Club)
John Gresty
Steve Clark
Chris Jones (Clogwyn MC)
Stephen Coughlan
John Cook (Castle Mountaineers)
Gillian Radcliffe (Oread MC)
Chris Radcliffe (Oread MC)

33 people signed in

Stephen Jones (Clogwyn MC/MTA)
Bunny McCullough
Tim Grice
Andy Hayes (ABMSAC)
Simon Lee (National Council rep & UKBouldering)
Dave Parry
Joe Shearring
Christina Richards
Matt McKenzie
John Whittle
Kevin Bradbury
Graham Sutton
Phil Robins
Richard Wheeldon
Hamish Forbes
Pete Tapping

38 people present

1. Apologies:

Louise Hawson
Mark Warwicker
Sue Smith

Rob Greenwood (NC rep)
Mark Vallance
Rebekah Newman

Danny Udall
Cath Lee
Adam Long

Neil welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Cath Flitcroft from the BMC office.

2. Actions from the last meeting (held on 19.11.14)

None.

3. Hill Walking Working Group

Peter Judd gave the following update:

The BMC is trying to enhance its work for hill walkers. It has formed a Hill Walking Working Group (Peter Judd and Cath Lee are our representatives), which is chaired by Brian Smith (BMC independent director) and has a two-year limited time period. A strategy document, developed by Carey Davies, forms the focus. The first Hill Walking Working Group meeting took place recently and set the following objectives.

To:

- Meet the needs of BMC hill walking members and create an active community involvement
- Attract new hill walking members to the BMC and be a supportive, involving community
- Position the BMC as a leading authority on hill walking, promoting the benefits of this activity and stretching out to a wide range of groups and communities through education.

The Hill Walking Working Group meeting set some priorities for immediate attention. To:

- Build on the already improving hill walking content in Summit magazine
- Ensure BMC area meetings all have hill walking as a standing agenda item (we're already ahead of the game here).
- Coordinate some sort of campaign tying together all the efforts made so far to improve the BMC's hill walking work, with a bold message and strong social media strategy making the BMC the 'Natural Home for Hill Walkers'.

These are exciting times and we look forward to playing a part.

4. Update from The National Trust

Ted Talbot, Countryside Manager from The National Trust, gave an update of the work that has been going on in the area. As background, The National Trust owns 13% of the Peak District National Park.

Ted is based out of Longshaw and works with the Sheffield Moors Partnership (SMP). As part of this work (ie the SMP work) a Nature Improvement Area Grant has been paid for the removal of the conifer plantation in the Burbage Valley, known as the Great Britain Plantation.

Ted took a question and answer session:

Q – In relation to the Burbage Plantation removal, some trees are still there – why?

A – The reasons for this are partly for wildlife, partly for aesthetics and partly for water management. There are little pockets of conifers left. It is hoped these will be naturally replaced as other trees grow through. The eventual plan is to re-generate natural woodland similar to that in the Padley Gorge area.

Q – Are there ordnance remains still there?

A – Yes. It is alleged that after the war some Canadian ordnance was buried in what would have been the south-west peninsular, had it been planted. In any case, as it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the NT are supposed to be advised if any digging goes on.

Q – What is the plan for The Green Drive?

A – For a few years it will remain as a footpath: it will be seeded either side and remain accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles for emergency use only. Most people think it should become a bridleway. It will likely become a concessionary bridleway and The National Trust supports this.

Q – Froggat/Curbar is now a concessionary bridleway – how is that working as there are lots of mountain bikers?

A – It is too early to say. As the largest National Park in the country, we have to be aware of other users and respect all users of the countryside.

Q – There are lots of mountain bikers on Win Hill on the footpath. What's happening about this?

A – The role of the Rangers are to be the reasonable voice before the police are contacted. The approach they take is a gentle one, pointing them in the direction of bridleways.

Q – What's happening about all the deer, as there are too many and there is a concern about Lyme's Disease?

A – The deer level is only slightly above that what we want. There are currently about 260. With the potential spread of Lyme's Disease and an increase in road traffic accidents, they plan to keep the numbers closer to below 200. They have approval for management of deer numbers. Farmers are already controlling the number of deer when on their land.

Q – Fences are becoming an issue in many parts of the National Park. Can The National Trust spread their good practice regarding them?

A – We are very sensitive to fences. We see them as a management tool and are involved in putting them up in a few places, but removing them when no longer required (especially when tree planted areas are high enough not to be damaged by grazing). We have removed many fences in recent years. We think having regular stiles in any fences facilitates recreational land use and stops damage to the fences. We would be happy to advise other landowners on our approach and publicise our developments.

Q – What is the update on replacing the heather on Kinder?

A – Over the past 20 years Kinder is becoming greener, partly reversing previous declines in vegetation. There are water traps to keep the peat-land wet to encourage sphagnum growth. There is a 20km fence

keeping the sheep out. Our aspiration is that the fence won't be there in 20 years and that light grazing will return. This approach seems to be working.

5. Access Update

Henry Folkard:

As previously reported, there seems to be an increase in fences everywhere. Derbyshire County Council has a 'no cattle-grid' policy, which is being challenged in respect of the road between the Plantation and High Neb car parks at Stanage. This is preferable to the alternative, which would be to fence off Sheepwash Bank.

Stanage – A positive dialogue, regarding the future of Stanage, was being had, and then suddenly it was decided by the Resource Management Team that the campsite should be sold. This proposal went to the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee. Both Henry and other stakeholders including other members of the Stanage Forum spoke, and the decision was reversed and it was decided to retain the campsite and to invest up to £60,000; which is fantastic news but shows the importance of retaining access representation in key meetings.

There is currently a special offer for using the campsite. John Horsecroft is actively trying to encourage mountain bikers to use it. The money generated from North Lees will go back into North Lees.

Mary Bagley thinks that people should financially contribute to Stanage via the formation of a Trust Fund. However, the current situation with Park ownership and links through the Stanage Forum was working effectively and the meeting questioned whether a better way forward might be through enhanced partnership working across the wider landscape. Climbers were as concerned for Curbar and Froggatt as they were for Stanage. Setting up a sort of competition for fiscal and volunteer input between the different landholdings might not make the best use of resources which was limited for everyone - including the BMC. Interested parties should input into the refreshed Management Plan. If anyone has any issues or questions, then please contact Henry or Adam Long.

Stanage Car Parking – There will be a sticker that people can buy for annual parking, which will also cover the Surprise View car park. The cost hasn't yet been decided, but the aim is to generate income.

Rowter – there have been complaints again from a neighbour about boulderers encroaching on the small cultivated area right of Short Sean's. Please avoid this sensitive area for the moment, keep a low profile if nearby and report any further problems to the BMC.

Staden – a new application for a bottling plant, including a single storey building is being considered. It is recommended that we go and climb there in force.

Spirit of Kinder Day (plus 50th anniversary of the Pennine Way) – 25th April, 2.00pm at Edale Village Hall. Entry free and is being hosted by Chris Townsend, BMC Hill Walking Ambassador.

6. National Council Update

Simon Lee reported briefly on the meeting, with a key issue being that the sub-committee of climbing walls has been disbanded.

7. Update from BMC Officer

Cath had to leave the meeting, but reported, prior to the meeting, that the BMC has produced a leaflet 'Lake District White Guide – advice on winter climbs'. Copies were available at the meeting.

The BMC produced a Landscape Charter last year. It is hoped that members who attend their local area meetings will raise significant landscape issues that may pose a threat to our most treasured landscapes. Go to: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/love-our-landscapes-get-involved-with-the-bmc-grassroots> for more information. Any relevant planning applications will be put on the agenda of future Peak Area meetings for discussion.

8. Peak Area Newsletter

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 **1st April**.

9. Any Other Business

Stephen Jones – Mountain Training Peak Representative - A small but significant number of BMC members are also members of the Mountain Training Association (MTA). A Peak Regional MTA Group is being formed co-ordinated by MTA member Stephen Jones. This is open to anyone. If interested contact Stephen via mtapeakdistrict@gmail.com

10. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 15th April, 7.30pm at The Maynard, Grindleford.

Many thanks to Steve McClure, for giving the inspirational talk and slideshow 'Beyond Limits'.

Also thanks to everyone who braved the snowy weather and attended. Hope to see you all again soon.

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.