

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 3rd June 2015, The Winking Man Pub, Staffordshire

Present:

Neil Foster (Chair)	Chris Radcliffe (Oread MC)
Lynn Robinson (Secretary)	Robert Townsend (The Mountain Club, Stafford)
Simon Lee (BMC National Council Rep)	Simon Cundy
Rob Greenwood (BMC National Council Rep)	Coel Hellier
Cath Lee (Hill Walking Rep)	Graeme Hammond (Peak Climbing Club)
Peter Judd (Hill Walking Rep)	Becky Hammond (Peak Climbing Club)
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)	Austin Knott
Rob Adie (BMC Officer)	Susannah Morrison
Dan Middleton (BMC Officer)	Tom Morrison
Rob Dyer (BMC Officer)	Jamie Morrison
Jon Rowe (Staffs Wildlife Trust)	Ross Burnage (Buxton MC)
Emily Tabernor (Staffs Wildlife Trust)	Mike Trevor
Clare Reading (FRCC)	Mike Battye (DWMH)
Steve Clark	Phil Cooper
Dave Garnett	John Gresty
Alan James (UK Climbing)	Andy Beardsley
Rick Gibbon (Rucksack Club)	Viv Beardsley
Mark Warwicker	Nick Conway
Christina Richards	
37 people signed in	41 people present

1. Apologies:

Dave Bishop	Ian Carr	Phil Robbins
David Brown	Tim Grice	Tony Whitehouse
Gary Gibson	Martin Wass	Jon Fullwood
Bill Irving	Carey Davies	

Neil welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Rob D, Dan and Rob A from the BMC office and Jon Rowe and Emily Tabernor from the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

2. Actions from the last meeting (held on 15th April 2015)

None.

3. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Update

Neil opened the floor to Jon Rowe warden for The Roaches from the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) who has been in post for one-year now.

Jon gave the following comprehensive update on the work that has been going on by the SWT:

Peregrines- this year the female has nested lower-down and there are three chicks due to fledge soon. The SWT will inform people once they have fledged. Jon thanked the climbing and walking community for helping to protect the nest, especially Andi Turner who installed smart water to protect the site.

Footpaths – the climbers’ path has been repaired. Gritstone gravel has been used to fill in holes and the drains are functioning well.

A grant of £23,000 from Outdoor Conservation EU money was awarded for footpath repairs. In all £29,000 has been invested into footpaths.

There are still a few drains to go in. As local materials have been used, this has meant that helicopters haven’t had to be used, and therefore has saved money.

Fence – the fence around the Don Whillans Memorial Hut (DWMH) will be repaired to stop the cows and sheep from going into the garden. The SWT wants to keep these animals on the moor where they belong.

Scrub and Bracken Clearance – continuing.

Public Consultation – thanks to everyone that has contributed to the development of The Management Plan. It is in draft format at the moment.

Litter picking – this is on-going, the main problem area is roadside.

Future Work:

Bracken control – will take place this summer. This will involve spraying from helicopters at The Roaches and Backside.

Path repair – is on hold at the moment because of ground-nesting birds and not wanting to disturb them.

Dry stone walling – repairs on-going.

Bird survey – the SWT is comparing bird habitat now with historical records.

Grit Blocking – is taking place to hold back water and create a blanket bog.

Jon asked people at the meeting what they thought about the SWT removing the laurel and rhododendron from the back of the DWMH to stop it from spreading. All present were in agreement.

SWT plans to cut down some trees, but will always consult with climbers to ensure no important trees (or runners!) are removed.

Q: How many staff are employed by the SWT to look after The Roaches Estate?

A: Warden (Jon), an Assistant Warden and an apprentice (currently Emily).

Q: What is grit blocking?

A: This is when you take an erosion scar and block it with stone to re-collect soil and hold back water.

Q: Has the SWT had any issues with wildlife photographers, especially wanting to photograph the peregrines nest?

A: No, because there are a group of volunteers who are constantly ‘guarding’ the nest.

Jon was thanked for his input into the meeting.

4. Peak Limestone North – update from Niall Grimes

The Peak Limestone North book has been published and was available for purchase at the meeting. The Lancashire guide will be published next and then Peak Limestone South.

5. National Council Report – update from Rob Greenwood

The BMC financial forecast for 2015 is very good. The organisation is currently running on a surplus. This is partly due to a change in insurance underwriters.

Engagement with hill walkers – more work is required.

Membership – there has been a growth within individual and group membership of the BMC, however, there is still room for the BMC to grow.

President – at the BMC AGM in April Rehan Siddiqui was elected as the new President. Many congratulations to him from the Peak Area.

Rob and Simon welcome any feedback / issues from people that they would like raising at the National Council.

6. Update from the Peak Area Hill Walking Representatives

The Hill Walking Group is implementing the BMC Hill Walking Strategy. If anyone would like a copy, then please contact Cath or Peter and they will email it out to you.

The Strategy covers three areas:

- a) Communications and Marketing. Cath sits on this sub-group. The group is looking at membership benefits and how the package can be made to look more attractive to hill walkers. Any feedback / suggestions welcome. Please contact Cath.
- b) Organisations and Structure. Peter is a member of this sub-group. It is looking at organising events to engage with the general public and existing BMC members. It is planning to run walking events and festivals and there may possibly one held at Stanage next summer. Please contact Peter for any more information.
- c) Access and Conservation.

The last BMC membership survey took place in 2010. Currently there are 78,950 members. The Active People Survey, run by Sport England, is the only national survey which asks about participation in hill walking and other sports.

It was suggested that local walking clubs in the Peak District could be targeted directly. It was emphasised that the BMC wants to engage with hill walkers and not encroach on the excellent work that the Ramblers Association does, so target audiences need to be thought of carefully.

7. Update from BMC Officers

Dan Middleton – the BMC has produced a booklet “New Rock Climbers: Your First Steps to Climbing Outside”. This is available to order (free) via the BMC website shop.

Copies of the Terry Abrahams DVD “A Year of a Mountain” were available for sale, along with the Stanage car stickers and Peak Limestone North guidebooks.

Rob Dyer – there are lots of bird restrictions at the moment. Keep updated via the Regional Access Database (RAD) on the BMC website.

Rob Adie – gave an update on all the latest climbing competitions. It has been suggested that the AGM is combined with the youth climbing competition series in Ratho next year. The BMC is currently considering this suggestion.

8. Access Updates

For a full access update, please read the latest Peak Area newsletter.

Henry updated the meeting:

- There are currently three consultations going on in the Peak District, which the BMC is inputting into.
- There is a loose boulder at Stanage on the Manchester Buttress Descent. This was last inspected in 2005. This will be assessed again soon to see if it requires to be trundled (post meeting note: this was found to be unsafe and has now been made more secure).
- There are problems with fly tipping at Stanage. If anyone sees anything, then please report it to the police.
- There is no update on Staden. Climbing is still possible there but climbers should leave politely if challenged by the landowner.

9. 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 **28th August**.

10. Any Other Business

Don Whillans Memorial Hut – Mike Battye reported that the BMC had spent a lot of money on refurbishing it and would encourage people to book to stay there, especially during the week. There are 12 beds at £10 each. A planning application has been submitted to make the patio area level.

11. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 9th September, 7.30pm at The Globe Inn, 144, High Street West, Glossop. SK13 8HJ

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.