

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 3 June 2015 The Manor Hotel, Meriden

Present: Phil Simister (Chair), John Edwards (Sec), John Churcher (Solihull MC), Roger Fanner (Solihull MC), Sue Hodson (Solihull MC), Mark Hodson (Solihull MC), Siang Chu (Solihull MC), David Jones (WestBrom MC), Michelle Aukland (Bowline Club & Clubs Rep), Harry Wilson (Yeti Club), Judy Wilson (Yeti Club), Rob Tipper (Yeti Club), David Williams (Wolverhampton MC), Julie Black (Wolverhampton MC), Dan Jackson (Wolverhampton MC), Jane Thompson (BMC), Brian Smith (BMC), Rosi Yule (Climbers' Club), Charlotte Potter (Coventry University Climbing Club), Alan Seager (Warwick CC), Steve Foster (Coventry MC), Marisa Gunn (Coventry MC), Joe Harris (Ceunant MC), Juliette Edwards (Ceunant MC), Phil Leyton (B.R.M.C.), Derek Allen, Kerry Elford, Neil Partridge, Paul O'Shea, Charles Masters, James Masters, Pete Surtees, Mark White & Gary Gibson. **(34)**

1. Welcome and Apologies:

- a. **Welcome:** Phil Simister welcomed everyone to the area meeting.
- b. **Apologies:** Apologies had been received from: Iain Blanch (cttee Youth Rep), Richard Law (cttee Access West Rep), Andy Railton (cttee Access East Rep) & Claudia Sarner.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting:

The circulated minutes were agreed as accurate (proposed: Michelle Aukland, seconded: Rosi Yule).

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere: None

4. Reports:

- a. **Access East:** Andy Railton had emailed that there had been some new climbing restriction signs erected at Markfield & Craig Buddon but that people have been able to continue to climb at these venues without any problem. Due to a change in personnel it looks as if there is potential for access to improve at Outwoods Crag. The information sheet on Eastern Area Crag is still being updated.
- b. **Access West:** Nothing to report.
- c. **Climbing Walls:** Nothing to report.
- d. **Youth:** Phil read out Iain's report to the effect that:
 - The BMC Youth Climbing Series finals held in Edinburgh attracted over 300 competitors from all over UK & Ireland and that the Midlands achieved 6th place overall out of 11 regions.
 - Notable positions – Joint 6th in Boys youth E (Out of 28), 5th in Boys youth D (out of 32), 6th Girls youth C (out of 33)
 - The dates for next year's rounds and Final had been released as follows:- Round 1: 23rd January; Round 2: 27th February; Round 3: 19th March; National Final: 23rd April - Venue - Edinburgh International Climbing Arena, Ratho (TBC)
 - Iain's climbing series will continue again in September as a feeder series into the BMC YCS but dates and venues are to be confirmed.

e. Hill Walking: David Jones reported that at the working party's last meeting on 13th April it was agreed that the BMC should try to get issues of Summit magazine to reflect approx 25% coverage to climbing, mountaineering, walking & general articles.

There were now 3 sub groups to the working party concerned with

- Communication & Marketing;
- Organisation, Structure & Culture; and
- Access & Conservation.

BMC was reviewing the Member Benefits package to make joining more attractive to walkers, with information on walking festivals and holidays and a specific BMC insurance product & message. Next meeting to be held on 14th September.

5. Reports from National Council & BMC AGM:

Copies of Roger Fanner's reports on the meetings of 24th & 25th April were circulated at the meeting. Roger highlighted

- The fact that they had had to challenge the minutes of the Torquay meeting and the 5 year plan circulated at Plas y Brenin to ensure that the BMC will put on a National Paraclimbing Competition as well as the existing commitment to support IFSC competitions which include the International Paraclimbing competition - something our Midlands representatives thought had been already agreed.
- That the BMC financial position was now stronger as a result of the last 'Active People Survey' conducted by phone suggesting greater public participation in outdoor recreation. This boosted Sport England funding, who have passed some of this on to the BMC.

6. News from BMC Headquarters: Jane Thompson

- Reported that BMC Manchester office, which previously had a 'flat' hierarchy with almost everyone reporting to the CEO, started a restructuring scheme in April which is still bedding down 6 weeks on.
- She pointed out that the BMC Executive Committee is now even more diverse following the election of Rehan Siddiqui from Blackburn as President for the next 3 years.
- The Nepal earthquake struck on the day of the BMC AGM and a collection at the meeting raised £1,000.
- Rehan's suggestion of an eBay Auction later this month, in conjunction with the Alpine Club, to raise more aid for Nepal now has over 50 diverse items which members are encouraged to bid for.
- BMC has been at the forefront supporting Sport England's "This Girl Can" initiative to get more female participation in sport, producing a climbing video with a female focus and has received further funding as a result to continue this objective.
- A new guide aimed at easing the transition from indoor to outdoor rock climbing was produced 3 weeks ago and copies can be ordered or downloaded from the BMC website (New Rock Climbers - Your First Steps to Climbing Outside: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/new-rock-climbers>). The "Hill Walking" guide will be updated to a matching format.

- The Clubs Committee are planning ahead for the next round of funding so clubs should let the BMC know what their priorities are. Material suitable for a “New Member Welcome Pack” has recently been made available for download on the website.

7. Suggestions re Hill Walking Agenda:

In response to concerns expressed that the BMC’s Hill Walking initiative might go hand in hand with a reduction in support for rock climbing, Brian Smith emphasised that this would not be the case. There would be no sudden large initiatives but rather a gradual introduction of relevant hill walking issues within existing BMC structures, partly because hill walking and hill access was something even climbers did to get to their cliffs and partly because recruitment to the BMC was important for influence in government circles and for financial income. He suggested that groups in the Midlands region could best help by supporting this culture change and perhaps have a speaker talk on topical hill walking issues at a future regional meeting. Roger Fanner proposed, and John Edwards seconded, “that a Hill Walking Representative be elected to the Midland Regional Committee at the AGM on 25th November”. This was passed:- For 20 Against 0 Abstentions 7.

8. Any Other Business: Phil gave an update on planned future speakers for the Midland region meetings:

- 25th November 2015: BMC Ambassador, Calum Muskett
- January 2016: BMC Chief Executive Officer, Dave Turnbull
- June 2016: BMC Vice President, Mina Leslie-Wujastyk, who recently made the 2nd female ascent of Austrian Oak 8b at Malham Cove.

9. Date & location of next meeting:

Wed 9th September 2015, probably at The Manor Hotel, Meriden, after which George Cave is to talk on expedition planning with the help of Google Earth.

Following the meeting, sandwiches were available and attendees enjoyed an excellent, amusing self-deprecating talk by Gary Gibson on his life-long obsession with finding new routes, his devotion to “The Strangers” – apparently reciprocated – and his sport climbing legacy.

Written by John Edwards