

Successful Area Meetings – the future

Meeting: 1.00 - 4.00pm, 16 July 2015

Attendees

Deirdre Collier (Yorkshire), Roger Fanner (Midlands), Tim Greenhalgh (North West), Phil Simister (Midlands), Mike Parsons & Polly Sullivan (Lakes). Dave Turnbull, Nick Colton, Alex Messenger, Tony Ryan & Lynda Buckley (BMC staff).

Background

Ref: Item 9.4, National Council minutes, 13 June 2015

Enhanced support for area meetings: Phil Simister felt a strategy is needed to help build and maintain attendance at area meetings, and proposed that Dave Turnbull and the Head of Marketing & Communications consider what more can be done. DT suggested a one-off meeting at the BMC office to be attended by any National Council members with an interest. Action: DT to arrange.

Agenda

1. Introduction & purpose of meeting

2. Existing office support

a. staff, b. publicity & promotion (community site, emails, websites), c. documentation, d. budget

3. Local arrangements for Area Meetings

a. venue choice, b. agreement of dates, c. agenda & topics, d. clubs & individuals, e. activities & speakers, f. integration of hill walking, g. publicity

4. Improvement & change.

a. Agreement of follow-ups & action points

5. AOB

Summary & action points

The meeting was wide-ranging and positive, the following list summarises the key action points and issues requiring further investigation:

- **Social media - Facebook & Twitter:** extremely important means for promoting Area Meetings; all Areas are encouraged to promote their individual Facebook pages; use of Twitter for promoting Area Meetings to be increased (note: Twitter is better co-ordinated via the office). Area chairs & secretaries to consider setting up a closed group on Facebook to discuss area issues.
- **Use of SMS:** the office agreed to investigate the use of SMS messaging as another way of promoting Area Meeting attendance; Action: Lynda Buckley to investigate.
- **Area newsletters:** Peak and Cymru Wales cited as good practice examples of newsletters; volunteer time and commitment is required to sustain newsletter production but experience from Wales and the Peak suggests they encourage involvement and

attendance. Office to circulate copies to other Areas for reference; Action: Tony Ryan to circulate.

- **Encouraging member affinity to locals areas:** agreed that the BMC should do more to promote area involvement to new and existing members; for starters office to investigate adding area name to membership card (e.g. Joe Bloggs, BMC Individual Member (Midlands Area)) and to amend the new members 'welcome letter' to encourage local involvement; Action: Lynda Buckley to investigate membership card amendment; area information to be added to welcome letter.
- **Area Meeting budgets:** currently each BMC Area has an annual budget of £500.00 to cover room expenses, food and speaker travel expenses; some Areas go over budget and some underspend; Action: DT to review the current budget allowance.
- **Area chairs & secretaries:** it was agreed that Area chairs & secretaries should be 'strongly encouraged' to have a familiarisation visit / briefing to the BMC office on taking up the role. Experience suggests this can greatly help the administration and promotion of Area activities; Action: Tony Ryan to co-ordinate visits of future chairs & secretaries.
- **BMC Officer attendance:** it was felt that the BMC Officer attending the Area Meeting should be briefed to give a 'key issues' report at each meeting. Note: office to ensure staff attendance / Areas to try to avoid clash of dates (i.e. multiple meetings on the same evening).
- **Club representation:** agreed that clubs should be encouraged to send reps to Area Meetings; Action: DT to write to all affiliated clubs and perhaps suggest they create a 'BMC Area rep' position. It was also felt that the office should hold a contact list of club presidents and secretaries to help Area officials improve their contacts with local clubs.
- **Guest speakers:** the use of guest speakers boosts meeting attendance but it can be difficult for Area officials to get 'big name' speakers to commit (there being no budget to pay people other than travel expenses); Action: office to investigate whether a list of 'willing speakers' can be compiled and also to require BMC international grant recipients to be prepared to speak at at least one Area Meeting. Outdoor photographers are a possible option for guest speakers as they have an interest in promoting their goods.
- **Area film evenings:** there was a discussion about the prospect of BMCTV running an exclusive film evening for Areas. This needs further work but may well have mileage; Action: Alex Messenger and interested Area chairs / secretaries to investigate further.
- **National Council:** consider inviting all Area chairs to the April (AGM weekend) National Council meeting in order to encourage involvement and information sharing (note: National Council to consider this in September); office to produce and publicise National Council summary reports on the BMC website.

Dave Turnbull
17 July 2015