

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 25 Nov 2015 Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Present: Phil Simister (Chair), John Edwards (Sec), John Churcher (SolihullMC), Ian Wyatt (SolihullMC), David Jones (WestBromMC), Andy Brown (WestBromMC), Andy Railton (Bowline Club), Roger Fanner (SolihullMC), Alex Taylor (SolihullMC), Michael Reynolds (SolihullMC & M.A.M.), Richard Law (WrekinMC), Charlotte Potter (CoventryUniMC), Iain Blanch (ctte Youth Rep), Geoff Taylor (MercianMC), Lynn Taylor (MercianMC), Kevin Dean (Bham Saltley Hillwalking Club), Roy Donnelly (Bham Saltley Hillwalking Club), Phil Blatch (LichfieldMC), Louise Waters (WarwickCC), Rob Tipper (Yeti Club), Harry Wilson (Yeti Club), Stephen Wright (MTA), Luke Green (WorcesterMC), Dave Rickerby (CC), John Martin (WMC), Sandra Garrington (WMC), Michael Blairs (NantmorMC), Calum Muskett (Alpine Club), Mahroof Malik (BMC ESG), Brian Smith (Director), John Garside (BMC Training Officer), Charles Gameson, Stuart Jamieson, Rebecca Husband, Matt Cooper, Paul O'Shea, **(36)**

1. Welcome and Apologies:

- a. **Welcome:** Phil Simister welcomed everyone to the area meeting.
- b. **Apologies:** Apologies had been received from: Michelle Aukland (Bowline Club), Nick Piotrowski (WestBromMC), Susan Mann (SolihullMC)

2. **Minutes of the last Meeting:** The circulated minutes were agreed as accurate (proposed: Andy Brown, seconded: Roger Fanner).

3. **Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere:** AGM minutes for 2014 on reverse of the Meeting Agenda were agreed as accurate (proposed: John Edwards, seconded: Roger Fanner).

4. Reports:

4.1 **Access East:** Andy Railton reported that there had been a few minor access issues with Craig Buddon and Markfield. The owners of the Craig Buddon, Severn Trent, mainly turn a blind eye but the land behind (owned by Tarmac Lafarge) used for belay anchors & descent has led to some issues. Climbers just need to be careful. Markfield, now a nature site (Hill Hole Quarry) is owned by council who have put up more 'no climbing' signs & one climber was challenged by a local. Usually not a problem. He is continuing with access spreadsheet plus plan to protect key quarries.

4.2 **Access West:** Richard Law said he had nothing to report.

4.3 **Climbing Walls:** John Churcher also had nothing to report.

4.4 **Youth:** Ian Blanch said that round 3 of the Midland Youth Climbing Series had taken place last weekend and that there were 2 more MYCS rounds before the National BMC competition starts on 23rd January next year.

4.5 **Hill Walking:** Brian Smith reported that the next meeting on 1st Dec was specifically to review the first year's activity of this group.

4.6 **Club Issues:** Michelle Aukland was called to work at short notice and there was no report.

5. National Council:

5.1 Report from last meeting:

- Roger Fanner said that Yorkshire area had supported the Midlands suggestion that Council decisions be made available to all members by posting the minutes of meetings on the BMC website. This had been agreed and thus his notes on the 20/9/15 meeting were much briefer than normal. He urged members to go online and read the full minutes.
- During the discussion Charles Gameson commented that he had heard it reported that the (BMC) Executive had tried to downgrade the role of National Council within the BMC whereas it was his understanding that National Council was the BMC's policy making body. Roger said that whilst there had initially been concern within Council that this would reduce its role and that a document tabled at the last meeting had dealt with those concerns by clearly delineating where responsibility lay for individual areas of strategic management. Clarification had been important, particularly in relation to the Sport England; however the two bodies worked well together. As a member of both the Executive and National Council Brian Smith explained that the roles could never be as simple as "the Executive does what it is ordered to by the Council": the relationship must be more nuanced than that, but it remained Council's role to make policy.
- It was pointed out that the website was advertising that area volunteers had organised a BMC Winter Walk in the Peak District next Saturday.

5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting: Nil

6. Election of Area Committee (AGM Element of meeting):

- Chair: Charles Gameson took over the meeting and Phil Simister was returned unopposed as Chair with the general assent of the meeting.
- Secretary: Phil Simister resumed Chairmanship and John Edwards was returned unopposed as Secretary with the general assent of the meeting.
- National Council Representatives (x2): Phil Simister said he was prepared to stand aside but, no volunteers coming forward, both he and Roger Fanner were returned as the Midland Representatives with the general assent of the meeting.
- Access Rep (East): Andy Railton was returned unopposed with the general assent of the meeting.
- Access Rep (West): Richard Law was returned unopposed with the general assent of the meeting.
- Clubs Rep: Michelle Aukland was standing down as Clubs Rep because of examination commitments. Charlotte Potter was proposed by David Jones, seconded by Roger Fanner & elected with the general assent of the meeting. In view of the fact that Charlotte might also have exam commitments at critical times, Phil had asked Michelle if she might be prepared to act a deputy in this role and she had agreed. Charles Gameson proposed, and Andy Brown seconded, that we accept Michelle back as a deputy and this was carried nem con.
- Climbing Wall Rep: John Churcher was returned unopposed with the general assent of the meeting.
- Hill Walking Rep: David Jones, who was already serving on the Hill

Walking committee in an individual capacity, was proposed by Andy Brown and seconded by John Edwards. Carried nem con.

- Youth Rep: Iain Blanch was returned unopposed with the general assent of the meeting.

7. Any Other Business:

- Andy Brown asked whether committee contact details could be circulated. Phil said these were on the BMC website but Charles said he used to include them at the bottom of the minutes when he was Secretary. John Edwards agreed to put emails on the minutes.
- Someone queried whether we should have a Facebook page. John Churcher stated he had already set one up as a community organisation called "BMC Midlands area". He had also recently started a Twitter feed
- Mahroof Malik reported that he was currently serving on the BMC Equity Steering Group and that they had a planning meeting the coming weekend. This appeared to be one area in which the Midlands region was not represented.
- John Garside was invited to bring the meeting up to date with HQ matters. John said that the funding from Sports England was being announced very shortly. BMC has been very encouraged that there now seems to be an appreciation of the fact that around 2.24 million people in the UK are climbing, mountaineering or active in strenuous hill-walking and is hopeful that this will be reflected in its grant (currently 20% of its funding comes from Sports England).
- The BMC website now has a section on their climbing awards and John invited members to make their thoughts about these known in the on-line consultation.
- HQ were very pleased that 'Operation Moffat', the film about Britain's first female mountain guide, had won a major award at the Kendal Festival. Andy Brown commented that he thought Summit #80, which featured a young Gwen on the cover, was the best issue yet and that all involved deserved a pat on the back.

8. Date & location of next meeting:

- The meeting seemed happy to agree to again hold the 2016 meetings in Solihull or its environs where attendances had been good since January 2013, so the next meeting will be held at Old Edwardians Sports Club, Solihull, B90 3PE on Wed 27th Jan 2016
- Speaker will be Terry Abraham – the award winning film-maker who will talk on "The Life of a Mountain Man"
- Future meetings also Wednesdays 10 days before the National Council meetings.

Following the meeting seconds of refreshments were taken and the attendees enjoyed an excellent presentation by Callum Muscat on some of the classic routes he has attempted on El Capitan, Eiger & Cloggy as well as trips to the Dolomites, Norway & Patagonia, succeeding even when such 'essentials' as matches had been forgotten. The audience were also entertained by his graphic description of responsible waste removal / toileting procedures on multi-day wall climbs in America!

Written by John Edwards

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