

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road  
Manchester M20 2BB  
[www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

Tel: 0161 445 6111  
Fax: 0161 445 4500  
Email: [office@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:office@thebmc.co.uk)

## Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 27 January 2016 Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

**Present:** Phil Simister (Chair), John Edwards (Sec), John Churcher (Solihull MC), Rosie Hudson (Solihull MC), David Jones (WestBrom MC), Richard Cooksey (WestBrom MC), Andy Railton (Bowline Club), Roger Fanner (Solihull MC), Tony Hayward (Solihull MC), Charlotte Potter (Coventry Uni MC), Alistair Robson (Coventry Uni MC), Michelle Aukland (Bowline Club), Cheryl Buxton-Sait (Red Rope CC), Adrian Jones (Red Rope CC), Kevin Dean (Bham Saltley Hillwalking Club), Roy Donnelly (Bham Saltley Hillwalking Club), Phil Blatch (Lichfield MC), M. Beaumont (National), Gordon Green (Hill & Mountain Club), John Handley (Coventry MC), John Duckett (Coventry MC), Carey Davies (BMC Hillwalking Officer), John Quarmby, Adam Beaumont, L.Clark, Stuart Jamieson, Rebecca Husband, Charles Gameson, Steven Johnson, Michael Blake, Tim Weller, Helen Goring, Simon Cousins. **(33)**

### 1. Welcome and Apologies:

- a. **Welcome:** Phil Simister welcomed everyone to the area meeting.
- b. **Apologies:** Apologies had been received from: Claudia Sarner (Bowline Club), Iain Blanch (ctte Youth Rep), Richard Law (WestBrom MC), Steve Wright (MTA), Terry Abraham.

### 2. Minutes of the last Meeting:

The circulated minutes were agreed as accurate (proposed: Roger Fanner, seconded: Charlotte Potter).

### 3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere:

Item 7.1 Although email addresses of officers are on side 4 of the paper minutes of the last meeting they were not & will not be included on the minutes put on the BMC website, as contact can be made via the website itself.

### 4. Reports:

**4.1 Access East:** Andy Railton reported no significant changes to access since last report in November. There's not much climbing at the moment, so problems not apparent. He will be contacting the BMC Access Rep re. Markfield to try and see if it might be possible to regularise access to the quarry. Access is effectively controlled by the local Parish Council so it seems possible and it could potentially get access back to the pool area. The Access spreadsheet is almost ready for review, after which he hopes to get more crags on BMC access database.

**4.2. Access West:** No report.

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

**4.4. Youth:** Ian Blanch was trapped in a meeting so there was no report.

**4.5. Hill Walking:** David Jones had introduced himself to all W.Midlands clubs by email. At the meeting on 1December the 13 hill walking reps decided their focus in 2016 should initially be the "Mend our Mountains" campaign but social events including a litter-picking day were planned. In spite of atrocious conditions, 21 people turned up for the inaugural walk in November. The 13 reps have their own Facebook group for ease of communication.

**4.6. Club Issues:** Charlotte Potter said there was nothing to report.

## **5. National Council:**

**5.1 Report from last meeting:** Roger Fanner briefly went through the report of the Nat'l Council (circulated on back of Agenda) highlighting that the National Councillors who attended watched the Para Climbing competition and were 'knocked out' by the standard they witnessed. He wondered if the meeting still felt their attempts to press on Quarry access guidance were still worthwhile in the light of negligible progress so far. Practical advice had been promised on the website as to how the BMC would advise a climber to proceed if they have a decent quarry to climb on within easy reach, but nothing seemed to have been produced. The meeting appreciated that the BMC would not want to take responsibility or liability for such a quarry, nor would it want to buy crags or land unless of major importance but felt that it was still important to carry on with these access & permission issues.

**5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting:** Advice on quarry access.

## **6. Any Other Business, including news from HQ:**

- Carey Davies reported that the BMC now had a full time Equity Officer, Joanna Rowbottom, funded mainly through Sport England. They have had an Equity Steering Group for the last 8 years which focuses on under-represented groups in the mountains, especially ethnic minorities, socially disadvantaged & handicapped and Carey was secretary for this group for the last 2 years. It was recently discovered that there were no female Honorary Members of the BMC and Gwen Moffatt & Angela Soper are the first to be invited.
- He mentioned the "Mend Our Mountains" initiative which will run for 3 months from the end of February. This aims to get the public involved using crowd funding and other projects & hopes to raise £100,000 to improve upland paths by giving those who donate something back. National Parks have had 40% cuts in their budgets during the government cut-backs and now they are frozen for the next 4 years. The likes of Chris Bonington, Calum Muskett, Doug Scott & Terry Abraham are backing the schemes and donors of large amounts may be rewarded with a day out with one of them!
- Charles Gameson pointed out that it was not just footage that damaged paths, but also water erosion and that volunteers could help by clearing gullies near paths.
- John Handley wondered where all the £10 parking fees people paid ended up and that this issue needed more transparency.
- Somebody commented that the Miners Path on Snowdon had been 'improved' in such a way that many people now preferred not to use it but to walk alongside: something which defeated its purpose.
- Charles pointed out that the "Upland Paths Trust" charity have published a standard for path construction in the mountains but that this is not always adhered to by volunteer groups.
- Richard Cooksey reported he had seen 3 motorbikes churning up trails in the Black Mountains last weekend and wondered what the BMC were doing about this. Carey stated this was illegal activity and it was up to witnesses of such activities to take photos / number plates etc and report them to the police.
- A request was made that the BMC website be brought up to date with

the prices for climbing walls.

**7. Date & location of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be held at Old Edwardians Sports Club, Streetsbrook Road, Solihull, B90 3PE on Wed 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016, starting at 8.00pm.

After the meeting there will be a talk by BMC Vice-President & Director Mina Leslie-Wujastyk, whose main interests are bouldering, sport climbing & competing.

Following the meeting, refreshments were taken and the attendees enjoyed an excellent dual presentation. First Carey Davies showed photos of some of his trips around the globe when he was deputy editor of TGO magazine before he became the BMC's first Hill-walking Officer. He then put on a wonderful 30 minute video, especially produced for the meeting by Terry Abraham talking into a video cam for us, which featured extracts from his early YouTube short films, his breakthrough "Life of a Mountain: A Year on Scafell Pike" plus shameless advertising for the BMC shop and his new film on Blencathra which will be premiered at Rheged on 14 May.

Written by John Edwards