

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC CYMRU – NORTH WALES LOCAL AREA MEETING

8:00pm, Wednesday 6 April 2016 at Plas y Brenin
The National Mountain Sports Centre, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ET

MINUTES

Minutes taken by Tabitha Angle-Smith
Meeting chaired by Kate Worthington

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Thanks were given to PyB for hosting the meeting and providing the food and to Jackie Bryson, the new CEO of PyB.

Present at meeting: Kate Worthington (KW), Elfyn Jones (EJ), James McHaffie (JM), Jim Kelly (JK), Carwyn ap Myrddin – SNPA (CM), Anthony Eccles (AE), Will Kilner (WK) plus members

Apologies: Mike Raine, Libby Peter, Peter Trickey, Bryn Williams, Clive James, Callum Muskett

2. Note issues for AOB – none

3. Accept minutes of the previous meeting – Lodge Dinorwig 28/1/2016 – Minutes accepted

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere (from previous minutes) – none

5. Actions from previous meeting – covered within agenda

6. Agenda items

6.1 BMC Representation and Glyn Rhonwy Pumped Storage scheme – update (EJ)

The main issues are that there are historic climbs at Glyn Rhonwy – it was the first area on slate to be climbed – and these will be lost forever; the land being offered to replace the lost open access common land is not suitable; the closure of footpaths – some temporary some permanent. The submission is in and now it is a waiting game to see whether it will need to be expanded on in May and whether or not the BMC will be called to give evidence or attend a site meeting.

There is also the issue regarding how the power will be transported from Glyn Rhonwy to the National Grid. The final decision will fall with the NG and will be subject to a separate planning application. It could take up to 2 years for a final decision on the whole application.

6.2 Welsh language policy for BMC Cymru – update (KW/EJ)

Hannah Hughes will be providing a translation service for ensuring the newsletter and social media broadcasts are bilingual. Support from Dave Turnbull and generally positive feedback at national level for some Welsh language publications (impossible to do them all!). EJ wanted members to know that questions were welcome in both languages at meetings and that it was about making BMC Cymru welcoming and accessible to both locals and those coming into Wales.

6.3 Tremfest 2016 – update (JK)

Dates: evening of Friday 5th May to Sunday 7th May. Free campsite/barn accommodation and beer for those attending to work (paid for by BMC). Plenty of work to do, especially around base of One Step in the Clouds. Last year turnout was 55-65 people – would be good to match those numbers again this year. Important to spread word to Bangor/Aberystwyth University Climbing Clubs. There will be a speaker on Saturday evening – TBC. Info on website in 2 weeks.

6.4 Tradfest 2016 – update (KW)

Dates: evening of Friday 10th June to Sunday 12th June. Ty Isaf campsite in Nant Peris. Speaker on the Friday night, food and music on Saturday night. Possibly some BMC workshops. Climbing groups will be self-organised. Limited tickets available. Llanberistrafest.co.uk should be live asap and V12 will be selling tickets as well.

6.5 James McHaffie – intro and youth climbing (JM)

James introduced himself – started in role as Youth Climbing Officer for the BMC two months ago. Scheme is being pushed by Sport England and is starting in urban areas. Pilot scheme running in Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester at climbing walls. Focusing on charities, colleges and schools – looking at developing youth climbing in all areas including career pathways into the outdoors. Hoping to extend into Wales. £10,000 will get 1,000 kids into the scheme. Also responsible for developing resources for primary and secondary schools.

6.6 Access updates (EJ)

Saturday 7th May – South Wales – Hillwalking Day
Saturday 4th June – North Wales – Hillwalking Day

Green Paper by Welsh Government has not been produced – but the consultation to see if Green Paper necessary has now been published. Most viewed consultation on their website. Important to note that when responding to government consultations, make responses personal. Results showed 50% in favour of Scottish-style access.

In the next term of government there will hopefully be a full inquiry by the Environment and Sustainability Committee of the National Assembly into access in the countryside.. Positive result so far. Plaid Cymru have included access in their manifesto for the WA election. Awaiting manifestos from other parties – will update on the website.

Need Access Volunteers in NE Wales. (update now have one!).

Incidents: climbers apparently videoed chasing sheep over cliff on Orme – need to find out facts – bound to be in the press; climbers been in no-go area in Pembrokeshire – signs also defaced.

Nesting bird restrictions now in place on Orme/Gogarth/Castell y Gwynt.

NRW likely to take more regulatory approach to access issues.

KW implemented a comfort break at this point and apologies were given to those who arrived at the meeting for an 8.30pm start, due to conflicting information via a recent email newsletter.

6.7 National Trust (England) commercial licence fees (EJ)

NT England running pilot licencing scheme at 21 of their properties, including Purbeck, Longshaw, most of the Lake District – sites of significant interest to the BMC. Licence is for commercial use of their land. Their stance is to cover insurance, mitigation, protection of landscape, risk assessing, etc. Article on website from Rob Dyer.

Currently no plan to run this scheme in Wales although NT head office have stated that after the pilot, the scheme will be rolled out across 'all NT properties'.

Scheme to be discussed at meeting of Heads of Centres, North Wales and at IOL meeting.

Issues discussed with the floor around the legality of such a scheme on open access land, different interpretations across properties, how such a scheme would be policed. Basically agreed it is opening a huge can of worms.

BMC to keep members updated on website.

6.8 Mend Our Mountains campaign (EJ)

The campaign was launched on 14th March to raise money across nine projects in England and Wales. Just under £37,000 raised already. Ironically, 2/3 of projects are on land owned by the National Trust...!

Carey Davies is leading on this – looking for volunteers to take possession of posters and leaflets – contact him directly. He's also looking for rewards to be donated to the campaign.

6.9 BMC Women in Adventure competition – not discussed due to time (KW decision)

6.10 SNPA Updates (CM)

Following on from the Snowdon Partnership consultation there are lots of ongoing projects:

- The parking situation around Snowdon is being looked at – there needs to be a long term plan.
- The 'Visitor Giving' scheme is starting at the end of May and will be funding projects for 2017.
- Some upland path work going on together with education programme for youngsters – updates to be emailed out soon.
- Three Peaks Partnership going ahead – website needs development and it is relying on companies registering.
- The volunteer warden scheme which started 2 years ago is going well with further people signed up this year – main focus is presence on Snowdon over the weekends and bank holidays together with litter picking. Primarily PyG Track, Miners Track, Llanberis Path.
- NP to continue with their winter ground conditions reporting – feedback has been positive
- Projects that have received funding from W.A. – Cwm Dyli, Gwynant, Rhyd Ddu.

6.11 Events and signage – ways forward (KW)

No attendance, despite invitations for last 2 meetings, from local organisations concerned. BMC document being produced for guidance on challenge events.

Issues discussed with the floor including lobbying by the BMC, working groups, talking with the Snowdon Partnership.

Hwb Eryri Project – community project in Electric Mountain – looking to work with event providers.

6.12 News from clubs – no contact from Mike Byrne so no club news

6.13 National Council update from/feedback to (JK)

AGM is 15-17th April 2016 – activities and talks as well as organisational matters. Auction happening Saturday night – JK running. Lots of great prizes including a couple of postcards from Eric Jones, one which is a one-off from his 1978 Everest trip. JK hoping to raise lots of cash!

7. AOB – none

8. Date of next meeting – provisionally Thursday 9th June (Llandudno/Orme) – venue being confirmed