

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Peak Area Annual General Meeting Wednesday 18th November 2015 The Maynard, Grindleford

Present:

Peter Judd (BMC Hillwalking Area rep)	Clare Reading (FRCC)	Lynn Robinson
Glynis Judd	Martin Wass	Rebecca (Becky) Hammond
Cath Lee (BMC Hillwalking Area rep)	Jenny Wass	Neil Foster
Mike Pinder	Frag Last	Meg Slatcher
Rob Greenwood (National Council Rep)	Andrew Barker	Dan Slatcher
Penny Orr	Andy Reeve	Alan Sanderson (Peak CC)
John Cook (Castle MC)	Louise Hawson (Access rep)	Mick Walsh (Peak CC)
Graeme Hammond (Peak CC)	Graham Hoey	Dave Kitchen
Graham Sutton (Ceunant/CC)	Dominic Lee	Tim Waterhouse
David Pendlebury (Castle MC)	Mitch	Jue Searing
Linda McLeish (Castle MC)	Andrew Elliott	Mark Warwicker
Alan James (UKC & Rockfax)	Adge Last	Martin Kocsis
Richard Wheeldon (Cordee)	Pete Tapping	Steve Clark
Stephen Coughlan (Ceunant)	Hamish Forbes	Ian Carr (BMC guidebooks)
Chris Hindley	Henry Folkard (Access rep)	Marcus Buckley
Nick Longland	Rebekah Newman (PDNPA)	Nick Bond
Gill Radcliffe (DMC)	Mike Cheque	Christina Richards
Chris Radcliffe (Oread MC)	Katy Coutts	Tim Grice
Simon Lee (UK Bouldering)	Chris Taylor	Jon Fullwood
Andy Tickle (Friends of the Peak)	Chris Moor	Toby Wilson
John Horscroft (Ride Sheffield)	Adam Long	Sam Townsend
Dave Turnbull (BMC Chief Exec)	Rick Scott	Total signed in = 65
		Total present = 70

1. **Apologies**

Bill Irving	Ed Douglas	Kym Nave
Colin Nave	Austin Knott	John Gresty
David Brown	Kevin Noon	Sue Smith
Rick Gibbon	Gary Gibson	Niall Grimes

2. **Minutes of previous AGM held on 19th November 2014** – accepted as a true record

3. **Chair's report**

Neil welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a brief review of the previous year.

We had 5 meetings (3 at Grindleford; 1 at Ramshaw and 1 in Glossop). We had several guests from landowner and managers – Ted Talbot from National Trust & Sheffield Moors Partnership; Rebekah Newman and Sue Smith from the Peak Park Authority and Jon Rowe and Emily Tabemor from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The fact these people are all keen to attend our meetings is a result of the credibility of the BMC Peak Area as a proactive, campaigning organisation – something evidenced by the high turnouts at our meetings and the quality of the debates and Q&A sessions we host. The average attendance this year was 56, exactly double the average across all other BMC local areas.

Neil went on to speak about the last 5 years. He reminded the audience that his stated aims at his first meeting were to reinvigorate the Peak Area, get the attendance numbers up, and get the area buzzing with volunteers. He hoped those aims had at least partly been achieved.

Neil then thanked some of the many people who had been involved and helped during the last 5 years:

- Access Reps (who do so much hard work behind the scenes) - Adam Long, Louise Hawson, Simon Jacques, Jon Fullwood, Ian Millward, Dave Bishop, Andi Turner, Rick Gibbon, Mark Warwicker, plus Kym and Colin Nave and Alan Austin who are looking after Horseshoe now, with help from Duncan Frish, Tony and Sarah Whitehouse; and Buxton MC who are doing the same for Aldery, and Dave Williams who has done a huge amount to help improve both sites.

- Martin Wass for producing the Peak Area Newsletter which is a tremendous resource, and the envy of many other areas.

- BMC Headquarters for their support, especially Tony Ryan and Kate Anwyl

Finally two outstanding friends who had made a huge contribution during the last 5 years:

- Henry Folkard for his exceptional work for access and conservation in the Peak District, something he works tirelessly on, to the point it is virtually a full time job.

-Lynn Robinson for being a fantastic Secretary to the Peak Area, doing much of the work behind the scenes which made the meetings run so well.

4. **Election of officers**

Neil Foster stood down from his position as Chair and Steve Clark ran the election process. This was for the positions of Chair, Secretary and one National Council Representative (as Simon Lee wishes to step down from this role).

Post	Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by	Result
Chair	Rob Greenwood	Henry Folkard	Simon Lee	Voted in unopposed
Secretary	Rebecca Hammond	Steve Clark	Stephen Coughlan	Voted in unopposed
National Council Representative	David Brown	Rebecca Hammond	Alan Sanderson	Voted in unopposed

5. **Vote of thanks**

Dave Turnbull thanked Lynn and Neil on behalf of the BMC for the fantastic job they have done over the last five years, and presented them with a gift from the BMC.

Rob Greenwood also expressed his thanks, on behalf of all the attendees, and presented them with gifts.

6. **Dates of the 2016 meetings**

Wednesday 20th January – The Maynard, Grindleford

Wednesday 6th April (TBC)– venue TBC

Wednesday 8th June – venue TBC

Wednesday 31st August – **provisional date**

Wednesday 16th November – **provisional date** - AGM

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the BMC Peak Area Wednesday 18th November 2015 The Maynard, Grindleford

1. **Apologies** – as for the AGM

2. **Actions from the last meeting** – Note

3. **Update from the Peak District National Park Authority (Stanage-North Lees)**

Rebekah Newman, who manages Stanage for the PDNPA, attended the meeting to give an update about Stanage-North Lees. The Stanage sticker was launched in April and has raised approximately £6,000 which goes solely to the North Lees estate. To date the money has been spent on work on the gates and paths

through Stanage Plantation and further work is planned at the bottom of Long Causeway and Hooks Car layby (aka Popular End). They have received a grant from Natural England for Ring Ouzel conservation: some of that money has been used to produce T-shirts and mugs (for sale at the meeting and will also be available from staff/volunteers in the car parks e.g. at weekends). The primary purpose of this initiative is to increase 'pride in place', recognising the contribution climbers make to ring ouzel conservation.

Henry Folkard added that our ideas feed into the Stanage Forum which tells the PDNPA how to spend the money. Questions he posed included "how should parking be improved at Popular End and High Neb?", "what should be done with North Lees Hall?" and "are there too many sheep?". Answers to these and any other ideas are welcome.

Someone suggested concrete grass blocks at High Neb (similar to Popular End) to reduce the churning up of the verges. There can be up to 60 cars parked on the verges (the parking area is designed for 8 vehicles). John Horscroft (a member of the Stanage Forum) asked how many people in the room had bought a Stanage sticker: most people had. Around 500-600 stickers have been sold in total – the vast majority to climbers. More work is needed to promote them. He pointed out that national subsidy for National Parks is only 36 pence per person, significantly less than the Royal Opera House for example. He felt the BMC and other interested groups need to form a political alliance to champion the protection of the national parks. Stickers for 2016-17 were available to buy at the meeting. The changeover date is April.

Q - Is the general PDNPA parking permit in conflict with the Stanage sticker?

A – The general permit money goes into the general pot, but information about it is available in all PDNPA car parks including Stanage. The Stanage sticker money is ring-fenced for Stanage.

Q – Many Stanage users are groups including commercial organisations – has this been discussed?

A – Attempts have been made to promote the sticker to organisations, outdoor centres etc, with little success. Adge Last (head of Thornbridge Outdoors) said he would try to promote the sticker to outdoor centres to give something back. Rebekah has his contact details.

Over 10,000 copies of guidebooks to Stanage have been sold – we need to be ambitious! John Horscroft pointed out that it takes time. Someone said it needs bodies on the ground: volunteers and staff are already out and about at weekends etc.

4. **Access update**

Standing Stones and Alderman Rocks – allegations of landowner slashing climbers' tyres and dumping rubble. Beaters have been beating across the A635 resulting in shooting across the road. 5 signs have appeared saying "Private Land" - this is on land which is Open Access under CroW. Henry and Mark Warwicker are working with the National Park, Oldham Ramblers etc to resolve this. There is concern about the landowner changing the use of the land so that when CROW is next mapped it will no longer be Open Access.

Dovedale Church Buttress – John Fullwood approached the National Trust and managed to organise a day of vegetation clearance and footpath maintenance on this important crag, which was suffering somewhat from neglect. The small team of volunteers, along with the National Trust warden, achieved a great deal, both for climbers and passing walkers who can now better appreciate the magnificent rock architecture. It's an excellent crag, unfortunately on the "wrong" side of the river and not so straightforward to access.

Footpaths - repairs have been suggested to the footpath between Foulstone Delph to Back Tor [Post-meeting note: Sadly no progress was made on this at a site meeting which took place just after the Area Meeting]. There is the possibility of creating a link from Carledge Flat through Hollingdale Plantation to join with existing rights of way east of Strines Road.

Cattle on Big Moor – the Highland Cross cattle are to be replaced with Shorthorns (as on Leash Fen).

For all other access info, see the latest Peak Area Newsletter.

5. **Hill Walking Update**

Peter Judd and Cath Lee are our Hill Walking Representatives. The BMC's Hill Walking Strategy was developed in response to a member survey, to improve the offering for walkers (the majority of members said that they go hill walking, either as their main activity or as part of other activities). The National Hill Walking Group has made huge progress in the last year. There has been increased content in Summit magazine and on BMC TV. They hope to encourage increased participation from the access and conservation angle. Peter and Cath are organising a walk on 28th November around Combs Moss. This will be an opportunity to find out what's going on and network between clubs and individual members, for example.

6. **Update from the BMC Office**

Dave Turnbull represented the BMC office.

They have completed the first ever staff restructuring exercise, and are taking on 4 new staff – funding for 2 of these is funded by Sport England.

They are applying for the next 4 years-worth of funding from Sport England: we are in a good position compared to other sports in regards to “getting the country active”.

There are 3 streams of consultancy work going on funded by Sport England: Governance, Commercial Development, and Branding/Messaging/Campaigning.

We are not very good at connecting with younger people (under 30s) even though there are lots of them at climbing walls – this needs addressing.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park is looking to sell Crookrise, and the BMC is looking at it. The BMC may need to re-look at the policy on crag ownership and may need to be more pro-active.

Q - What is the BMC's policy on quarries?

A - The Crag Acquisition and Leasing Policy is being reviewed. Quarries will be included this this and would be considered on a case by case basis. This would include the quality of climbing and size of crag, as it needs to be something that can be maintained.

Andy Tickle spoke as a member of the Access and Management Group Quarries Project. Planners have been “trained” to only ask for biodiversity considerations when a quarry is decommissioned. They have trying to raise the profile of access and recreation. They are now trying to wrap up that project. Threshfield Quarry in North Yorkshire is being handed over to a trust and could be used as an example for the future.

Q – There is no statutory protection for land/crags if owned by the BMC, but there is if it is owned by the National Trust. Is there any attempt to persuade the NT to buy crags?

A – The advantage of BMC ownership is that we are experts in crags and we don't need to ask someone else to do things. There haven't been discussions with the NT regarding Crookrise. They are known to be very selective about what they take on. The BMC do only step in as a last resort.

7. **National Council report**

Neither Simon Lee nor Rob Greenwood could attend the last National Council, so David Brown went in their place:

The most important decision that was taken, was that in future BMC National Council Meeting Minutes will be published on the BMC Web-site (subject to the removal of any confidential/commercially sensitive information).

The remit, i.e. the respective roles and responsibilities, of the National Council and the Executive were agreed. This was to satisfy Sport England with regard to governance.

The BMC are preparing a response to the Government's 'New Strategy for Sport', and two MPs from the All Parties Mountaineering Group have agreed to write a covering letter.

Following the restructuring of the Burton Road Office staff, there have been early discussions with staff on the need and possibility of refurbishment or even relocation of the office itself as it is close to capacity..The idea has also been mooted of merging with the Mountain Heritage Trust, although if this happens it is not imminent. The BMC's Nepal Earthquake Appeal has raised £24,000.

Membership has exceeded 80,000 for the first time, of which 54,000 are individual members and 26,000 are Club Affiliated.

One new Club was admitted to the BMC.

Reports from all the other Areas (all except the Peak!) show varying degrees of support but in most cases the difficulties and issues are being addressed. Many Areas are having climbing and/or walking festivals, partly in an attempt to stimulate interest in their Areas.

8. **Peak Area Newsletter**

Items for the next newsletter should be sent to Martin Wass by 6th January – email peakarea@gmail.com

9. **Any other business**

Dave Turnbull emphasised the importance of having a stand in available if someone can't attend National Council. Anyone interested in being a stand-in please contact Rob Greenwood or Becky Hammond.

The BMC AGM will be at the YHA in Castleton on the weekend of 16th - 17th April. The AGM part of the proceedings will be minimal, and will be combined with fun stuff. There will also be a Clubs Seminar.

10. **Date, time and venue of the next meeting**

Wednesday 20th January 2016, 7.30pm at The Maynard, Grindleford.

After sarnies and chips, everyone enjoyed the Annual Christmas Quiz.

Many thanks to Chris Taylor, Mark Rankine and Rob Greenwood for a fantastic quiz which challenged the knowledge of climbers, walkers and mountaineers alike!

John Fullwood and Simon Wilson were on the winning team and have promised to do next year's quiz.

Many thanks to the following individuals and businesses who donated quiz prizes:

Alpkit, Rockfax, Vertebrate Publishing, Outside, The Depot, The Climbing Works,
The Foundry, Crag X, Awesome Walls, Cordee Books, Heason Events, BMC,
Pete O'Donovan, Hitch n Hike, Five Ten, EB

AS ALWAYS (but note some new names!):

- Chair of the Peak Area is Rob Greenwood – robgreenwood@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Access issues/access volunteer work please contact Henry Folkard – henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- With regard to the meetings, agenda items or any other issues please contact Becky Hammond, Peak Area Secretary – becky@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Check out the Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/bmcpeakarea> and 'like' us if you can
- Newsletter editor is Martin Wass. Articles etc always welcome. Please send directly to Martin at: peakarea@gmail.com