

BMC South West Area Gathering

MINUTES

Meeting held at The Quay Climbing Centre, Exeter, Saturday 14 January 2017 starting at 6:00pm.

Present and Signed in:

James Mann (Chair)

Gareth Palmer (National Council)

Philip Wilson

Andy Holborn

Nicholas Pade

Ian Jones

Mike Virtue

Bob Watson

Mark Courtiour

Mark Kemball (Secretary)

Helen Wilson (National Council)

Rob Seymour

David Hillebrandt

Pete Merrick

Will Hornby

Matt Glover

Bethany Christine

Tim Reynolds

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

James Mann welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Colin Knowles, Iain Peters, Mark Garland, Ian Butterworth, Richard Nadin, Matt Goater, Frank Cannings and David Fisher.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The previous meeting's minutes were reviewed. There was one correction – Simon Fletcher has not resigned as the Avon rep. Matters arising – Helen Wilson reported that she still holds some of the BMC equipment – gas burners and a shelter and possibly some more – she will check and let us know exactly what she is holding.

3. Area briefing notes

James Mann summarised these.

4. Feedback from National Council

Helen Wilson gave a short summary of the National Council meeting – minutes are available on the BMC website. The BMC is considering an increase in the subscription to offset the reduction in funding from the Sports Council, this will have to be agreed at the next AGM.

5. Avon clean up and scrub bash

Barry Donovan is organising the cleaning of Suspension Bridge Buttress for 22nd January, he has sufficient volunteers to help with this.

6. Lundy Climbing Festival 2017

This will be held 26 August – 2 September, Gareth reported that there are now only 2 camping places left. Those who have booked a place will shortly be contacted by the BMC to arrange payment.

7. BMC International Meet

This will be held at the Count House 13 – 20 May. The deadline for applying to be a host is 30 January, apply via the BMC website.

8. Access and local Issues

8.1. Dartmoor – The Climbers’ Club has just published a new guidebook, copies were available for purchase at the meeting.

8.2. Roadford Quarry, Plymouth – climbing is banned here.

8.3. Hazard Quarry – climbing is banned, James Mann will try to meet with the owner to discuss possible access.

8.4. Vixen Tor – climbing is still banned, the situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

8.5. Bristol – Colin Knowles represented the BMC at a conference on “Bristol’s Sporting Future” organised by Bristol City Council, 6 January 2017. A copy of his report from that meeting is attached to the end of the minutes.

8.6. Cheddar and Mendips – Mark Courtiour has taken over from Ian Butterworth as the local access rep and from Martin Crocker as the Cheddar Warden.

8.7. Bosigran – “The Nasty Step”. Following the discussion of this at the last meeting, we received an email from Des Hannigan (Bosigran guidebook editor) expressing concern at the improvements that have been made to the footholds on this step (wire brushing / chipping?) and the appearance of a fixed abseil anchor on the sea gully descent. Concern was once again expressed that the “nasty step” is an accident waiting to happen. Various people reported observing close calls where inexperienced climbers had almost slipped. If anyone were to slip over the edge, they would be unlikely to survive. Des had pointed out that it is easy to protect the step (hex 7), but it was pointed out that inexperienced climbers were unlikely to do this. Various possible solutions were discussed, however, it was realised that without the agreement of all the local climbers, any fixed gear would be unlikely to remain in place. A vote was unanimously in favour of doing something about the problem. James Mann volunteered to talk to Des and representatives of the Cornwall Climbing Club to try and find an acceptable solution. The meeting did not support the fixed gear on the sea gully descent.

9. Club Issues

Helen Wilson reported that the minimum number of members for a club to affiliate to the BMC has been reduced from 20 to 10.

10. Hill Walking Issues

There were none.

11. South West Events

Philip Wilson reported that he had heard of an event set up by Graham Hassel (via the AMI members forum) Yatfest will be held at Symonds Yat, 1 – 2 April 2017.

12. Any Other Business

12.1. David Hillebrandt asked what we could do to increase the participation of younger people (teenagers) in the BMC, asking Will Hornby, as a younger person, what we could do. Will said that the Youth Climbing Series was something that the younger climbers really

enjoyed and that “learn to climb outdoors” type events were a good idea. The meeting was in favour of organising such an event in the South West. Will agreed to organise this. Mark Kemball agreed to discuss this with Tina Hesleden, the South West Youth Rep, who organises the YCS in the south west.

12.2. David Hillebrandt drew attention to the Crag and Mountain Medicine Weekend to be held in Hathersage, 3 – 4 June 2017.

12.3. Concern was expressed at the lack of notice people had received for this meeting. The BMC emailing does not seem to be working well, some people had only heard of the meeting through social media. Mark Kemball offered to email everyone who had attended this meeting prior to the next one.

13. Date of next meeting

To be arranged (Bristol, late March / early April).

James Mann thanked everyone for attending the meeting, meeting closed at 8:00pm.

Addenda:

Report by Colin Knowles on the meeting ‘Bristol’s Sporting Future’ organised by Bristol City Council on 6th January 2017 as part of the “Bristol - European City of Sport 2017” events.

I attended this conference on behalf of the BMC. It was attended by about 180 people, representing a range of sports/sports organisations/related organisations across Bristol.

The aims of the “Bristol - European City of Sport 2017” are:

- To maximise participation in sport in Bristol
- To bring world-class sports events to the city
- To nurture those in Bristol who will excel at the highest in sport in the future

As part of the context speakers pointed out that in the UK:

- 83% of 15 year old children do not do enough physical activity to ensure that they develop fully as they should do;
- Only 35% of the population are regularly engaged in sporting activity;

During the workshops I pointed out that:

- Bristol has a world-renowned female climber (Hazel Findlay)
- Bristol has a nationally-important outdoor climbing site (Avon Gorge)
- Bristol has four busy climbing walls

I was able to engage with Guy Fishbourne, the Sport/Recreational Development Manager.

I hope to have a follow-up meeting with him where I shall be pressing the case for:

- Much improved safe pedestrian access in the Avon Gorge;
- Co-operation from BCC Property Department to arrange a suitable change in use for very large limestone quarry in Ashton Court to enable it to become a sports climbing venue.

Colin Knowles
06/01/2017