



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### BMC South West Area Gathering

Meeting held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016 Starting 7pm @ The Nova Scotia Inn,  
1 Nova Scotia Place, Bristol, BS1 6XL.

### MINUTES

**Present:** Matt Goater (Chair), Philip Wilson (Sec), Wendy Matthews, Martin Hallet (Portland & Swanage Area Rep), Alastair Begley, Nigel Barry, Barry Donovan, Mark Kemball, Allan Howells, Owain Jones, Ian Butterworth, Jon Garside (BMC), Peter Salenieks, James Mann, Rick Sowards (Wye Valley Rep), Simon Fletcher (Avon Rep), Rob Seymour, Steve Gibbs, Frank Cannings, Dave Fisher (Clubs Rep), Dan Donovan, Steve Marriott, Gareth Palmer (NC Rep), Mark Davies & Iain Butterworth (Cheddar & Mendips Area Rep).

Note: Advanced apologies to anyone whose name I have been unable to decipher correctly from the signing in sheet.

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence:** Matthew Goater welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received from Tom Palmer, Colin Knowles, Iain Peters, Helen Wilson, Richard Nadin, Trevor Smith (Hill Walking Rep) & Martin Crocker.
2. **The Previous Meetings Minutes & Any Matters Arising:** Copies of the minutes were circulated at the meeting. These were read out with the following amendments:
  - a) Point 1 & Those Present: Colin Knowles was reported as both present and absent. He has been removed from the 'Those Present' list as he did not attend the meeting.
  - b) Point 9 BMC Re-Branding: Peter Salenieks wanted it to be known that he had asked for a 'those against' to be recorded in this vote. The meeting decided only to record those voting for by a show of hands.

The secretary agreed to add these amendments to the previous meeting minutes & re-publish them on the BMC Community site. Note: I have amended the minutes under review and uploaded them to the BMC Community site to reflect these concerns. These minutes were then signed off as a complete and accurate record of that meeting with these changes made.

3. **AGM Election of New Volunteer Officers:** Elections to the following South West area volunteer BMC posts were made. This follows those listed below serving their maximum 5 year terms under the BMC constitution as follows:

Area Chair: Matthew Goater stepped down. James Mann was elected to this post (proposed & seconded by Allan Howells & Iain Butterworth).

Area Secretary: Philip Wilson stepped down. Mark Kemball was elected to this post (proposed & seconded by Rob Seymour & Iain Butterworth).

National Council: Colin Knowles steps down. Helen Wilson was elected (proposed & seconded by Allan Howells & Simon Fletcher).

Post Meeting Note: We thought at the meeting that this post becomes vacant from January 2017. Gareth Palmer has confirmed post meeting with Colin Knowles that this is however from immediate effect.

All were warmly thanked for their time and effort in these post on behalf of the BMC.

4. **BMC South West Annual Review:** Matthew Goater gave a brief review of the highlights of 2016. This included the Avon Scrub Bash (our most successful ever numbers wise), well supported meetings held throughout 2016 in Avon, Devon & Cornwall, the Cornish Climbing Festival (5<sup>th</sup> year), the Mend Our Mountains Campaign (work carried out in the South West & the BMC proposed name change to Climb Britain (which was voted 80% against). Looking forward to 2017 the Lundy Climbing Festival organised spear headed by Gareth Palmer.
5. **BMC Area Briefing Notes:** These are to be published alongside these minutes via the BMC Community web site as a separate pdf document called Area Meeting Briefing Note 16 Nov 2016.
6. **Feedback from National Council:** Gareth Palmer (SW Area National Council Rep) reported feedback and discussions concerning the proposed aborted Climb Britain BMC re-branding. Frank Cannings asked if the failure of this re-branding would alter relationship that the BMC currently has with Sports England and especially their funding to us in the future. There were also some concerns raised that the BMC could be put under pressure by the Sports Council to conform to what they want in return for continued levels of funding (due in part to BMC executive decisions not being made by the BMC Executive body but by its National Council). John Garside (BMC) answered this by saying that this does not present a problem, because the BMC is not dependant on Sports England funding as this is not a large part of BMC income (unlike some other sporting bodies receiving support of up to 80%). He added that government strategy is more interested in funding bodies that can provide public related activities e.g. a fitter general UK population, funded through encouraging outdoor activities. He added that the BMC is well placed to champion hill walking, mountaineering & climbing (both indoor, outdoor & winter) to these people.

Further discussions centred on what the BMC would now do with the re-branding. Some concerns were raised that the future use of the Climb Britain branding was being discussed after its adoption by the BMC had been voted against by its members. Gareth Palmer pointed out we had voted for the National Council to find another for the Climb Britain branding and that the National Council were obliged to follow this steer.

Concern was raised regarding why the National Council meeting minutes were not available in paper form for this meeting. Gareth Palmer replied that they were a very long and detailed procedural and factual account of each meeting. He added that he did not think that it was appropriate to provide full copies at each South West meeting, instead preferring to feedback highlights of interest to South West area members for discussion. He however provided a copy for the interested party to read at the meeting. He also pointed out that they were available in full via the BMC web site for anyone interested in reading them in detail.
7. **Proposed Clean Up Work Avon Gorge:** The need for a clean-up of Suspension Bridge Buttress was proposed, discussed and accepted as the focus for our efforts this winter. It was agreed that this would take place on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017 with a second back-up date in case of bad weather being the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Barry Donovan who raised this issue was appointed as

co-ordinator. Work would be foliage removal from front face routes to clear footholds and handholds on routes. Volunteers were sought and Dave Fisher, Philip Wilson, Simon Fletcher, Marti Hallett, Steve Marriott, Martin Crocker confirmed that they could help. Barry was reminded to consult the Bridge Master, Bristol City Council, Natural England, Avon Wildlife Trust & Libby Houston. The meeting also authorised him to form a sub-committee to finalise the details and report back to a future South West Area meeting.

8. **The Lundy Climbing Festival 2017:** Gareth Palmer who is organising this event said that it was set for August 26<sup>th</sup> for 7 Nights. Gareth said that there are 54 spaces with the BMC booking the barn and camping field. Prices are £137 (camping) and £182 (barn). Tickets would be available shortly via the BMC. This price excludes food which can be bought at the island shop or by taking meals at the Marisco Tavern or brought from the main land. People were reminded that they could make advance food orders to the shop, which could be picked up on the day. Frank Cannings, Pat Littlejohn & Dave Turnbull (BMC) would also be attending.
9. **The Cornish Climbing & Walking Festival 2017:** It was agreed to defer this until 2018 so as not to clash with the Lundy Climbing Festival & International Meet 2017 also to be held in Cornwall at the Count House, our preferred Cornish Climbing festival venue.
10. **Access & Any Local Issues:** Reports as follows:
  - a) Wye Valley Rick Swards (Rep) reported:
    - I. Ban y Gor Rocks: The meeting was briefed on concerns by the Wildlife Trust warden regarding wild camping and path improvements (the former by climbers & the latter by persons unknown). Notices have gone up briefing climbers of these concerns at this venue by the wild life trust. Restrictions upon main cliff access is now a real possibility (including access to bolted routes). The warden wants a wild area. It was pointed out to Rick that the top cliff (containing arguably the best climbing on it) has an agreed voluntary climbing ban imposed on it due to their proximity to the housing located just above. Rick is liaising with Rob Dyer & the warden. If you climb here please keep a low profile with no wild camping or path improvements to the Wye Valley cliffs.
    - II. Tintern Quarry: Climbing is presently banned here by the land owner, if asked to leave then please do so. Climbers have been asked to do so in the past and refused to depart. This does not help future access.
  - b) Cheddar & Mendips: Iain Butterworth (Rep) reported:
    - I. Churchill Rocks: An incident occurred here 6 weeks ago, with the land owner threatening to cut climbers ropes and the climbers affected threatening to call the police in retaliation. Nobody knows who has blocked the footpath and erected non-climbing signs. Rob Dyer (BMC) informed. If asked to leave by the land owner, then please do so.
    - II. Ubley Warren: Located above Cheddar Gorge: The Charterhouse Outdoor Centre has erected lower off chains and bolted 4 lines. This was discussed on UKC. The centre manager agreed to alert BMC South West if planning any more. The land is owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust who have been informed of events by Iain Butterworth.
    - III. Recent Meeting With The Somerset Wild Life Trust Warden: Rob Dyer (BMC) & Iain Butterworth productive meeting discussed how end of working life quarries could be made climbing friendly by blasting along breaks when extraction stops.
  - c) Swanage & Portland: Marti Hallet (Rep) reported:

- I. Winspit Quarry: The cave is being used as a toilet. Climbers are asked not to do so as it will jeopardise access and is not pleasant.
- II. The Cuttings Portland: Climbers are using the area around the Buddleia bushes as a toilet. The solution is to again remove these as was done in the past. This clear up is organised by Marti Hallet on the 10th December 2016. Marti was asked to liaise with Rob Dyer (BMC) regarding kit used for the Tremadoc clear ups. Gareth Palmer offered to deliver any kit on the 3rd December 2016 and hand this over to Marti.

d) General:

- I. The Nasty Step Bosigran: Rob Seymour reported that he had filled in the puddle here to avoid wet feet. Concern was again expressed as to this slippery step causing an accident in the future. A friend placement does however exist which could be used to safeguard this.
- II. Hill Walking Issues: None reported.
- III. Resignation Of 2 Local Area Reps: Iain Butterworth (Cheddar & Mendips Rep) resigned. As the post is vacant, applications are welcomed from interested parties. He was warmly thanked for their time and effort in post on behalf of the BMC.
- IV. Clubs: Dave Fisher (Clubs Rep) reported back on the Clubs meet held at the Roaches. Of interest is BMC Road Shows, the one local to the south west being held in Gloucester on the 11th March 2017. The BMC will be communicating the benefits of club membership to the public.

The Beta testing of the membership database for use by club secretaries is also continuing via BMC HQ via interested parties. This gives secretaries the option of completing their submittals on-line. It does not replace current systems.

**11. Any Other Business:**

- I. South West Climbing Equipment Held By BMC Members: Matthew Goater gave an inventory of BMC abseil gear that he removed from the crypt at Undercover Rock St Werburghs, where it was held in unsuitable storage conditions. This consists is: 1 x 100m rope, rope bucket, 5 slings & 5 karabiners in his possession. Simon Fletcher reported that he was holding 1 x 100m rope, 1 x 75m rope, 9 slings & 10 karabiners.

**12. Date of Our Next Meeting:** To be held at the Quay Climbing Centre in Exeter on Saturday 14 January 2017, starting at 6.00 pm.