

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 8th February 2017, The Maynard, Grindleford

Present:

Rob Greenwood (Chair)	Becky Hammond (Secretary)	Geoff Nichols (Castle MC)
Lynn Robinson (note taker for this meeting)	John Horscroft	Mikey Brown
Dave Turnbull (BMC)	Graeme Hammond	Greg Hoyle
Estee Farrar (BMC)	Simon Lee	Ed Douglas (Alpine Club)
Rob Dyer (BMC)	Dave Parry	Pete Tapping
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)	Clarke Boulter (climbing walls rep)	Richard Wheeldon
Mark Warwick (Access Rep)	Austin Knott	John Gresby
Peter Judd (Peak Area Hillwalking Rep)	Kim Leyland	Phil Robins
Louise Hawson (Access Rep)	Christina Richards	Alison Bell
Clare Reading (FRCC)	Ian Whitehouse	Kym West
David Brown (Peak Climbing Club)	Sarah Whithouse	Colin Nave
Ian Smith	John Coefield	Daniel Hoyle
Steve Clark	Phil Cooper	Bill Gordon
Mick Cheque	Mike Cheque	Flo Richardson
Stephen Coughlan	Martin Wass	Neil Foster
John Cook (Castle MC)		

Plus numerous others, but the signing in sheets were taken by mistake! **65 people present**

1. Apologies:

Gill Radcliffe	Alan James	Sue Smith (PDNP)
Chris Radcliffe	Alex Ekins	Claire Carte
Penny Orr	Michael Smith	Tim Grice
Steve Burns	Michael Kent	

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as correct.

3. Actions from the last meeting (held on 22.11.16)

The 3 actions from previous meeting have been completed.

4. Guidebooks and first ascents information

Martin Kocsis, former member of the BMC Guidebook Committee introduced this item with an overview.

Of the latest 3 BMC guidebooks (Cheshire & Merseyside, Peak Limestone North and Lancashire Rock) that have been published, they include history sections, but no First Ascent (FA) information. It is recognised that the information is on the BMC website, but it isn't easily accessible. It seems as though there was a unilateral decision by the guidebook committee not to include FA information in the guides.

Other publishers (Rockfax, Ground Up, Wired and Fell and Rock) all include FA information in their guides.

Guides with FA information in have more depth and character. However, because this isn't now included:

- Is this a cause for concern?
- Is it just a symptom of guidebook evolution?
- Is it a big issue for other climbers / people at the meeting?

Rob Greenwood reviewed Lancashire Rock and flagged it up that there was no FA information included – a great guide, but lack of FA detail.

From UKC forum Niall Grimes reason for not including:

- “Limited size” – Lancashire Rock is 516 pages long, Peak Limestone North has 528 pages. Over the Moors has 624 pages long, so this reason doesn’t stand up. Also if this is true, why didn’t the Merseyside guide contain FA details?
- “To add x50 more pages would make it a poorer book” – that would be true if there were x50 more pages of derelict crags. To say this about 50 pages of history shows a significant misunderstanding about what it is that makes BMC guidebooks so unique and good
- “What will be the best for the area and its crags?” – is deleting the FA details the best thing for the area and its crags?

Mike Cheque:

- Thinks the FA information should be included in the guides
- By removing the information, it is removing a Unique Selling Point
- It removes something from the guides
- He fully supports the view that the FA information should be included in future guides
- It is a sad state of affairs when you have to refer to a selective guide to get information regarding FAs.

Ian Smith:

- The Climbers Club is completely committed to including FA information in its guides
- Important from a historic perspective, as it gives an important view of what the route is about, for example, if it’s a Don Whillans or Mike Fowler route, you know what to expect!
- It preserves a historic record
- Typesetting tricks can be used so it is easy to include the FA date and x2 names
- FA details should be reinstated in the BMC guidebooks.

Neil Foster:

- Agrees with the above
- Modern guidebooks are turning into coffee table books and they need to be practical but not sure that the FA information is the right information to remove.

Dave Parry:

- Loves the anecdotes that are included in previous guidebooks
- Will read a guidebook at home and go climbing without it
- 1999 Wye Valley Guide – in two parts with a separate history section – is this the solution?

Christina Richards:

- Portland / Swanage guide – x2 guides, so you can take the one you want to the crag.
- Maybe produce the guides in smaller clusters?

Rick Gibbon:

- Horseshoe to Harper Hill guide – bland, needed FA details
- Without FA details there is no personal touch, no feeling of history and how the crags have developed over the years
- Need to be included to show we have a connection to the past.

There was a show of hands at the meeting and the majority were in favour of FA information being reinstated in future BMC guidebooks.

There were four members of the BMC guidebook committee at the meeting; Lynn Robinson, Dave Turnbull, Richard Wheeldon and Graeme Hammond.

Action: Lynn Robinson to ask that the FA information be put on the agenda of the next meeting and to raise the points above from this meeting.

5. Ring Ouzel Monitoring

Kim Leyland – Eastern Moors Partnership.

Wants more volunteers to get involved in the ring ouzel monitoring. The work includes:

- Reporting and monitoring nests

- Making a note of when the birds arrive
- Do chicks succeed / fail?
- To put up / down notices etc.
- Work to start next month for one month and includes a couple of visits a week.

The Eastern Moors Partnership has a Moor Wild apt that can be used to report sightings of ring ouzels.

Carl Benson – he has received funding to do a PhD studying mountain hares in the Peak District.

They were introduced in the 1880's and he is examining why they have succeeded on the moorland. Amongst other things he will be looking at:

- how many there are
- their habitat
- human caused mortality.

6. Stanage

Update from John Horscroft, Chair of the Stanage Forum:

- The Stanage Sticker was a BMC initiative, the idea of which came from climbers and walkers. It has raised £5,000 in a year. Since it has been in place, takings in the car parks have gone up – the Park District National Park Authority (PDNPA) is going to stop it. They are going to impose car parking charges throughout the park, which is felt will increase poor and dangerous parking as people won't want to use the car parks.
- John reported that the PDNPA management talk about partnership working, but haven't practised it. The current management doesn't understand the Stanage Forum.
- After 16-years of positive involvement and working, Henry is standing down in protest from the Forum.

Henry Folkard:

- Reported on the people who are leaving the PDNPA. He thinks the management see the Park as a commercial commodity and he thinks the BMC should write to the NP.

Louise Hawson:

- The NP is cash strapped and has got to get income into the area, however, they need stakeholders on board.
- The Stanage Sticker is owned by the Forum and not the NP.
- An outside company will probably manage the car parking. It will be disruptive and people will park anywhere except the car parks.
- Not sure if the management know how special Stanage is to its recreational users.

Rob Dyer (BMC):

- The BMC has to maintain a relationship with the NP, but we can make an appropriate response. Individuals can also make personal responses. A response will be sent from the CE of the BMC.

Dave Turnbull:

- It is the job of the BMC to reflect the feelings of its members. There was very strong feeling from the meeting that the Stanage Sticker should remain.

7. Mountain biking and path erosion

John Horscroft - Ride Sheffield.

Ride Sheffield recognises that Mountain Bikers have an image problem and they are trying to do something about it. In summary:

- There is a Peak Bike Code – this is been circulated to bike shops and through social media
- A sign; "Be nice, say hi" has been produced
- Through Ride Sheffield, members are encouraged to 'do the right thing'
- The jury is out as to who is causing the most erosion and all recreational users create damage. There are x20 plus academic studies on the cause of erosion
- Mountain Bikers do repair trails.

Rick Gibbon commented that in the Northern Peak a lot of footpaths have been destroyed and that some paths have become un-walkable. This is especially worrying in environmental sensitive areas.

Peter Judd said that resentment builds up on both sides and the hillwalkers need to do more in return. As more footpaths are being turned into concessionary bridleways, this will lead to more mountain bikers. There is a problem and this needs further debate and discussion.

8. Other access updates

Mark Warwicker – Mark outlined a proposal for a disused paper mill, near Dovestones Reservoir, of which the boundary reaches the Peak Park boundary for the building of x120 luxury homes and holiday lodges.

These will be visible from the moors and within 1,000 yards of Wimberry, with very little infrastructure to support the homes. The buildings will have a massive impact on the environment, including the cutting down of trees.

Objections have been submitted and there is a campaign group from the Chew Valley opposing it.

Mark wants BMC support to oppose the plans.

Action: To agenda for the next Peak Area meeting. The BMC will want a steer from the room and possibly get a small action group going.

Phil, an experienced architect, commented that objections should be measured and come from a professional stance as this will be more influential. He offered his help and support.

9. National Council Report

Rob Greenwood and Lynn Robinson represented the Peak Area at the last National Council meeting.

Two areas to note:

- Subscriptions – the proposed increase. Discussed in more detail in Dave Turnbull's report below
- How BMC Patrons are nominated and voted for. At National Council it was proposed that Rab Carrington be made a Patron of the BMC. This proposal is not in dispute, but what is the process. Lynn had asked several people in the BMC office for the criteria and process by which someone is made a Patron to ensure there is a clear and transparent process. There currently isn't one.

There was a show of hands and the majority of people in the room were in full support of Rab becoming a Patron.

10. Update from Peak Area Hill Walking Representatives

Peter Judd – Peter commented that on the latest Peak Area walk on the 26th November, despite being successful, only men participated. The Hill Walking Group has a challenge on its hands of how to encourage people from more diverse backgrounds to participate.

Peter reported that the Hill Walking group, initially set up for two-years, has produced a Strategy Document. It includes seven steps for the BMC to consider:

- An all mountain approach
- To understand the popularity of hill-walking
- To address the image problem of hill-walkers
- To continue and do more in relation to campaigns, for example, Mend the Mountains
- Want to do more in the upland areas
- Be a creative and active community
- BMC to embed hill-walking into the organisation.

The Strategy will be presented to National Council to consider, but there are funding implications. Peter asked that the meeting join him in encouraging our Area National Council reps to support adoption of the strategy, at their next meeting

11. Update from BMC Officers

Dave Turnbull – The BMC congratulated people who had been involved in developing the Hill Walking Strategic Plan. On the 17.1.17, there was a meeting with Sport England. The strategy document was given to them. Early indications are positive and show that the BMC will be given £130k to implement the strategy in year 1 and continue to fund it for years 2 and 3.

The national Active Life survey has just been published. There were some interesting findings. Participation in swimming was estimated as being 4.8 million people, and climbing and hill-walking 2.13 million (just behind football). Of that 92% hill-walkers; 5% outdoor climbers; and 8% indoor climbers (some people said they participated in one or more disciplines hence the % doesn't add up to 100%).

In relation to subscription fees and a possible increase, a paper is going to National Council this weekend. There is a big financial deficit this year. It looks as if Sport England will cut the grant to the BMC by 38%.

There is a lot of uncertainty regarding future funding. Since 2006 subscription fees have gone up twice. For the past 8-years the BMC has used Sport England grants to keep subs low. £100k is required to balance the books.

Members at the meeting were asked if they were happy for individual subscriptions to go up by £2:50 / year. The majority of the room voted in favour of this.

In relation to club members, it was reported that Pete Sterling from the Climbers Club had reported that club members don't get value for money. However, Ian Smith disputed this and said this was not the view of the Climbers Club.

Simon Lee – newly appointed Commercial Manager for the BMC. Simon explained that 80% of funds comes from subscriptions and 20% from the Sport England grant. His role is to make up financially the cut in the Sport England grant. He will be identifying income generation projects.

12. Peak Area Newsletter

People were asked to note the latest edition of the newsletter. Many thanks to Dave and John for this latest edition. As always contribution and photographs welcome. Please send to: peakarea@gmail.com.

13. Any other business

George Band Award for Exceptional Voluntary Contribution to Mountaineering – Dave Turnbull gave a brief background to this annual award and then announced the 2017 recipients of the award, both who were at the meeting; Ian Smith, for his contribution to guidebooks and Climbers Club and Lynn Robinson for her contributions to BMC guidebooks, Peak Area and Women's Development Group.

14. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 5th April 2017, 7.30pm at The Maynard Arms, Grindleford, S32 2HE

After the break Sarah Proctor from Moors for the Future gave a fascinating presentation on all the excellent work that is being done to the moorland to ensure it flourishes in light of global warming. She also talked about the community science projects encouraging people to record when and where they see certain wildlife. For more information please go to: www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk

Many thanks Sarah, your presentation was incredibly informative and interesting.