

BMC South West Area Gathering

Minutes of meeting held at The Nova Scotia, Bristol, Saturday 25 March 2017 starting at 7:00pm.

Present and Signed in:

James Mann (Chair)	Mark Kemball (Secretary)
Gareth Palmer (National Council)	Simon Lee (BMC Commercial Partnerships Manager)
Carey Davies (BMC Hill Walking Development Officer)	Annabel Tall (Avon MC)
Barry Donovan	Paul Wood
Tom Gibbison	John Booth
Alan Howells	Terry Gifford
Matt Goater	Matt Glover
Frank Cannings	Martin Bazley
Jessica Camps	Anthony Horton
Tim Meehan	Simon Fletcher
Libby Houston	Sally Smith
Trevor Smith	Peter Crowther
Tim Burrow	Rick Swards

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – James Mann welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Colin Knowles, Helen Wilson, David Hillebrandt, Andy Holborn, Mark Courtiour, Martin Crocker, Will Hornby, Dave Fisher and Dan Donovan (in person!).
2. **The previous meeting's minutes** – these were reviewed.
3. **Area briefing notes** – James Mann summarised these.
4. **Feedback from National Council** – Gareth Palmer gave a summary of the National Council Meeting – minutes are available on the BMC website.
5. **BMC Affinity Partnerships** – Simon Lee, BMC Commercial Partnerships Manager, explained that last year the BMC were given a grant of £50k by Sport England for consultation work on developing the commercial side of the BMC. Following the report, he has been given a year's contract as Commercial Partnerships Manager. He is hoping to develop Affinity Partnerships and Commercial Endorsements with a view to replacing the income that is likely to be lost due to a reduction in Sport England's grants. Simon explained how this will work and asked for the meeting's views. Following discussion, the following motion was proposed by Alan Howells and seconded by Gareth Palmer:

“The meeting shows support for the development of Affinity Partnerships and Commercial Endorsements providing the sponsors do not influence the BMC's policies.”

The motion was carried – 19 for, 0 against, 6 abstentions.

6. **BMC AGM** – Agenda item 9, the vote of no confidence, was discussed at length, including the likely motivations of the proposers (James Mann had invited both Bob Pettigrew and Steve Woollard to the meeting to speak for the motion, but they were not able to attend) and the implications should the motion be passed. Following the discussion, James asked the meeting if anyone was for the motion, no one was. Agenda item 8, the proposed increase in BMC subscriptions, was then briefly discussed.
7. **BMC draft strategic plan 2017-21** – this, and the proposed BMC review were discussed, a copy of the draft plan was made available at the meeting.
8. **Avon clean up and scrub bash** – Barry Donovan explained that the proposed work on Suspension Bridge Buttress has not yet gone ahead as he had not been able to get the council's consent in time. However, the new bridge engineer is very supportive. The work will happen at a later date. The meeting noted that we had not been informed prior to the present work by contractors on the main sewage pipe beneath Main Wall and the new fencing being installed in the Unknown Wall area. Libby Houston informed the meeting that she had also not been consulted, and that rare plants had been damaged. On a more positive note, the contractors had cut back a lot of the invasive scrub (buddleia etc.) beneath the buttresses, saving us a job. Barry is planning to hand over liaison with the council to Colin Knowles.
Terry Gifford reported that there had been a small clean up in Lime Kiln Lane.
9. **The Lundy Climbing Festival 2017** – Gareth reported that, at present, all the places at the festival have been filled, however he is waiting to hear from the BMC office that everyone who has booked a place has paid (so places may become available) and that people who have paid are awaiting receipts.
10. **Coastguard Sea Cliff Rescues** – This has become an area of particular concern in West Cornwall following a rescue from Bosigran Ridge in 2015, where the coastguard were unable to access a casualty low on the ridge (no helicopter was available), the evacuation to easier ground was carried out by climbers who fortunately were on hand. There has also been a report that following an accident at Sennen, the coastguards had difficulty getting out from the base of the cliff and had to be assisted by climbers. It was suggested that the coastguards do not have the required expertise for the more awkward to access cliff rescues, and that it might be a good idea to set up some sort of local climbers' rescue team. This will be on the agenda for the next area meeting in Cornwall.
11. **Access and Local Issues**
 - a. **Bosigran (nasty step)** – the issue was briefly summarised. It will be on the agenda for the next meeting in Cornwall.
 - b. **National Trust Parking Charges** – it is noted that the National Trust has installed meters at some of the parking places used by climbers in West Cornwall.
 - c. **Bovey Woods** – following the publication of the new Dartmoor Guide, there has been a big increase in the numbers bouldering in Bovey Woods. Concern has been raised regarding

inconsiderate parking (blocking gateways etc.), excessive chalk, litter and floodlit night climbing. Climbers are asked to park considerately, remove all litter and not to climb at night (see RAD).

- d. **Ban-y-Gor** – Rick Sowards, the access rep spoke about the current ban on routes left of *Heady Days* (see RAD) Paul Wood asked what we could do to get the ban lifted, Rick suggested that the best chance would be to carefully observe the ban this year, sticking to the code of conduct in the RAD, and to talk to the warden, emphasising the importance of the routes in the banned section, hoping for improved access next year.
- e. **Bristol City Council Sports Development** – Colin Knowles, who was unable to attend the meeting, sent in the following note :

I can report that I met with the Bristol City Council Sports Development Manager (Guy Fishbourne) to discuss the opportunities for climbing in the light of Bristol being 'European Capital of Sport 2017'. As you can see (below) he was receptive to our requirements, but I think we must be sanguine about the chances of either set of aspirations being met. I think it would be sensible if this was reported at the Area Meeting.

It was very good to meet you today, and have the chance to explain the development needs for climbing locally.

Guy, I recall that you will be getting in contact with BCC Transport re the improved access to Avon Gorge to identify a first point of contact, with Becky Coffin to get an update on the Avon Gorge Development Plan and look into possible funding sources for this project.

Re Durnford Quarry you will hopefully identify a suitably senior person who can meaningfully discuss with us and Tarmac the future possibility for sport/recreational use for part of the quarry.

All of which is good positive stuff, understanding of course that coming to fruition on both of these objectives may be a slow process.

On a similar note, Martin Crocker (also unable to attend the meeting) has been in communication with the Downs Committee, giving them a copy of the new Avon guide, pressing for setting up an Avon Gorge stakeholders' group, offering climbers' help if needed and asking to be kept up to date with any developments which may affect climbing.

- f. **Ebbor Gorge** – Three new sports routes have been developed here, apparently with the landowner's permission. As climbing has been banned here for some time, we should investigate the possibility of regaining access to the older routes. There are nesting restrictions at Carn Les Boel and Porth Nanven (see RAD for more details).

- 12. **Club Issues** – a series of "Club Road Shows" have been held around the regions: Manchester, Sheffield, Gloucester and London in an attempt to get more participants. The theme was: "Is the BMC doing the right thing for clubs and what do they need to do?" Unfortunately, attendance was poor.
- 13. **Hill Walking Issues** – Carey Davies, BMC Hill Walking Development Officer, reported on last year's "Mend our Mountains" campaign which raised £ 104k and plans for this year's campaign which has a target of £1million. He asked for any suggestions for projects to be included.

14. SW Events

- a. **Yatfest** – this is next weekend (1st – 2nd April) details on Facebook.
- b. **Learn to Climb Outdoors** – Young Climbers’ Event – Will Hornby, who has volunteered to organise this has been ill and made no progress. James McHaffie (BMC Youth and Partnerships Officer) may be able to help once we know what funding will be available.

15. **Any Other Business** – If anyone receives an “Active Lives” questionnaire, please complete the survey – the data is used to measure participation in different sports which in turn is used by Sport England when awarding grants.

16. **Date of Next Meeting** – to be held in early June in West Cornwall – date and venue to be decided.

James Mann thanked everyone for attending, the meeting closed at 9:30pm.