

BMC South West Area Gathering

Meeting held at The North Inn, Pendeen, Saturday 10th June, starting at 7:15pm.

Present and Signed in:

James Mann (Chair)	Mark Kemball (secretary)
Gareth Palmer (National Committee)	Helen Wilson (National Committee)
Pete Greening	Rob Seymour
Andy March	Philip Wilson
Thomas Yorke	Justin Ford
Bill Sharpe	Tom Williams
Chris Griffiths	Sara Scaife
Graham 'Egg' Everett	Pete O'Sullivan
Wojciech Szygmanowicz	Oli Warren
Des Hanigan	David Hillebrandt
Barney Carver	

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence** – James Mann welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were received from Andy Holburn, Colin Knowles, Iain Peters, Dave Viggers, Mark Couttier, Freddie Naish, Kevin Lowry and Frank Cannings.
2. The previous meeting's minutes were reviewed.
3. **BMC area briefing notes:** these were summarised by James Mann.
4. **Feedback from National Council:** Gareth Palmer briefly summarised the last national council meeting.
5. **Feedback from the BMC AGM:** Gareth Palmer had attended this and made a brief report back to the meeting.
6. **BMC Organisational Review:** this was briefly discussed – a copy of the terms of reference and the update was available.
7. **Report from the BMC International Meet:** Mark Kemball (one of the hosts at the meet) reported on this. Some excellent West Penwith trad climbing was enjoyed by our guests (some of whom had not climbed trad before) the weather was mixed but this did not detract too much. There was also some top class partying.
8. **The Lundy Climbing Festival 2017:** Gareth Palmer reported that all the places on the meet are now full.
9. **Coastguard Sea Cliff rescues:** concern has been expressed on a number of occasions regarding the coastguards' role in cliff rescues in the area. These volunteers are not experienced climbers and accessing some of the areas (e.g. Bosigran Ridge) is difficult. Des Hanigan agreed to liaise with the local coastguard co-ordinator, Dave Jackson, to see what help local climbers can offer. Dr. Hillebrandt offered to provide first aid training.
10. **Area Youth Co-ordinator:** Tina Hesleden is standing down from this role after 10 years, more recently she has been assisted by Claudia Hesleden and Paul Russell. The meeting wished to thank Tina, Claudia and Paul for their work. Freddie Naish (of

The Project Climbing Centre, Poole is taking on this role, he is looking for volunteers to help him run the Youth Climbing Series: A scorer – an admin role, inputting data on the day, a head judge to explain the rules, supervise the other judges and settle any disputes and a head belayer (preferably CWLA or MIA qualified) to ensure best practice among the volunteer belayers at the competition.

11. Access and local issues:

- a. **Bosigran (nasty step):** concern for the safety of this (the step below Autumn Flakes) had been expressed at previous meetings where it had been agreed that the matter be deferred until it could be discussed at a meeting in West Cornwall. Prior to this meeting various climbers had been in contact expressing their concerns. Communications from Frank Cannings, Andy Holborn and Peter Sterling were read out. The arguments presented were that this is a special case, Bosigran is a cliff used by many inexperienced climbers, the step is part of a path used to access the easier climbs at the seaward end of the cliff, that a number of “near misses” had been witnessed, that a slip here could easily result in a fatality and that something should be done to make it safer. The contrary arguments were that the step is not part of a path (not being marked as such on any maps), that there are good gear placements available to safeguard the step, that climbers should be self-reliant and recognise the inherent dangers in the sport, that the placement of any fixed gear was contrary to the agreed Coastal West Penwith “No fixed gear” agreement and against the spirit of adventurous trad climbing in the area.

During the discussion, Rob Seymour explained that following witnessing a very close call where a young girl and her father came close to slipping over the edge, he had taken it upon himself to try to improve the friction on the step. He apologised for not consulting prior to taking this action.

The meeting agreed that we should prioritise educating inexperienced climbers (particularly those moving outside from climbing walls) as to the potential dangers of the cliff environment. As there was not universal agreement as to as to the way forward, the chair asked if anyone would propose a motion:

“The step below Autumn Flakes should remain unaltered”- Proposed by Chris Griffiths, seconded by Pete O’Sullivan this was carried -16 votes for, 2 against and 3 abstentions.

- b. **Any other local issues:** Commando Ridge (sic) we have been contacted via Rob Seymour by Betty TV Limited informing us that filming will be taking place in the area Tuesday 4th – Wednesday 5th July, requesting that climbers avoid the area.

- 12. **Club issues:** Tom Williams (Exeter University Climbing Club) requested that the Clubs Road Show (or similar such events) should take place either very close to the end of the academic year or near its beginning so that the current club officers rather than retiring officers can participate.

- 13. **Hill Walking Issues:** none were raised.

14. SW events:

- a. Learn to Climb Outdoors / Younger Climbers event – James Mann will liaise with Will Hornby.

- 15. **Any other business:** none.

- 16. **Date of next meeting:** Saturday 9th September, Dartmoor. Venue to be arranged.