

**Cyfarfod - BMC Cymru North/Gogledd - Meeting
Lodge Dinorwig
Ionawr 30 January
2018**

Minutes

Attendance: Total: 39: including 7 females and Tim Jepson (TJ, Chair), Ian Martin (Taking notes), Elfyn Jones (EJ, BMC Officer), Dan Lane (DL, Area Rep), Anthony Eccles (AE, Area Rep), Ray Wood (RW, Access management Group)

1. Welcome and apologies TJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Lodge Dinorwig 'am y bwyd gwyh'. Those attending were satisfied with the on-line access (i.e. on the BMC Community site and on Facebook) to the paperwork for the meeting.

Apologies received from: Ann Vowles, Clive James, Bryn Williams, Ross Worthington, Lun Roberts, Jodie Beatty.

2. Minutes of the previous two meetings.

i. 5 September 2017, Y Vaynol, Nant Peris

Accepted as a correct record. (Proposed: Andy Boorman, Seconded: Kate Worthington)

Matters Arising:

Craig y Forwyn

The proposal that the BMC should purchase Craig y Forwyn had been presented by AE at National Council, but was rejected on the grounds that there weren't the funds/resources to manage it. Martin Doyle (and others) expressed deep disappointment that NC and the Exec. were seemingly negative in their response to a one-off opportunity to acquire this 'nationally important' crag. **Action:** Martin Doyle was asked to liaise with EJ to develop an effective approach to re-presenting the case for purchase, to include garnering the support of other areas, contacting the CEO and President directly, and inclusion as an agenda item (rather than AOB) at the next NC meeting. TJ, offered the chair's support for ensuring that appropriate action is taken.

NT Bridge Cwm Idwal

The new bridge has now been installed. EJ has written to the National Trust insisting on better communication with the BMC prior to such planning proposals being implemented. The NT have responded and agreed.

ii. 22 November 2017, Plas y Brenin (following AGM)

Accepted as a correct record with the inclusion of: i) a list of 'apologies', ii) the amendment of the date of the BMC AGM (from 28 April to 16 June) and iii) the addition of a note referencing the issues raised during the questions which followed the ORG presentation. (Proposed: Martin Doyle, Seconded: Myfyr Tomos)

3. Additional agenda items for AOB (see 14 below)

4. BMC Organisational Review

Update and Survey Results.

TJ presented what he knew of recent ORG developments, referencing the ORG Local Areas Briefing Sheet (issued Jan 2018, and available on-line prior to the meeting) and a telephone call with Rebecca Ting (RT) during which Rebecca addressed six concerns all of which had been raised at the Q and A session following Nov. 22nd's ORG presentation.

- a. (Raised by Kamala Sen) Confusion over which issues were recommended to be just 'Considered' and which were recommended to actually be 'Done'. RT agreed that this had not been well-differentiated in the original report and would be clarified throughout the amended report. RT further added that about one quarter of the 51 ORG recommendations were in the process of being 'tweaked' to take account of feedback received.
- b. (Raised by Pat Littlejohn) .. Confusion over the Structure of the Board and the President's role, especially with respect to scrutiny of the Board. RT said that others had indicated similar confusion. These structures and roles would be revisited and clarified.
- c. (Raised by Pat Littlejohn) Little or no mention in the report, of the risk, danger or personal responsibility inherent in adventurous climbing and mountaineering. RT agreed that this was an omission, and promised it would be addressed by inclusion somewhere in the final report.
- d. (Raised by K.C. Gordon)...Suggestion that Members' Council would be a stronger title than Members' Assembly. RT did not think this would be changed.
- e. (Raised by Jon Ratcliffe) ...There was no mention of Bouldering in the report despite this nowadays being a key progression route from indoor to outdoor climbing. RT acknowledged the point, and said that bouldering would be mentioned in the notes, but probably not in the recommendations, of the final report.

- f. (Raised by John Cousins) Potential for a conflict between Sport England's requirements and the proposed BMC structure in respect of 'Primacy' and 'Reserved Matters'. RT agreed that this issue needed to be addressed and fine-tuned, before the final report was published.

Points made in Discussion

- Reassuring that the ORG (RT in our case) were prepared to address the N Wales area feedback directly.
- The meeting was resigned to the need for a revised, extended timescale, but concerned that momentum gets lost if too drawn out.
- The whole ORG reporting and feedback process evokes a wide range of emotion from despair at the complexity of it all, through scepticism and indifference to excitement at the opportunities for change.

BMC Cymru – The Way Forward for Wales

Dan Lane presented a summary of, a meeting held on Jan 19th 2018 involving a few key past and present volunteer post-holders from N, S and mid-Wales to discuss an all-Wales response to the ORG report, especially recommendation 25.

(Notes of the Jan 19th meeting, written by EJ, were available on-line prior to this local area meeting).

Points made in Discussion

- The need for a distinct presence and identity for the BMC in Wales is paramount.
- This need was current, and already being discussed, before the ORG review started.
- The BMC is poorly-represented in Wales, considering most of its members (i.e. from England) regularly visit the hills and crags of Wales.
- The BMC is currently side-lined, and rarely consulted, by official, Welsh organisations, including the Welsh Government.
- The Welsh language is more or less ignored by the BMC, despite the need for representation to the Welsh Government needing to be bilingual.
- BMC Cymru needs to be constituted in such a way that it can access funding, but more importantly, influence policy – environmental, cultural, linguistic, social, educational, health-wise etc. These policy issues have been devolved to Cardiff for nearly two decades, and cannot be influenced through Westminster.
- Nowadays funding is always for projects, not posts, although projects can usually then employ staff.
- Concern expressed that forming a BMC 'subsidiary' in Wales would cause unnecessary expense, bureaucracy and fragmentation.
- There is a need to define what we want to achieve and how to get there. We must investigate organisations, similar to the BMC, which have developed a distinct Welsh arm.
- A proper cost-benefit analysis must be undertaken prior to any discussion about becoming a subsidiary.
- Edward Birch (Rucksac Club) voiced grave concern that the BMC in Manchester does not listen to views expressed by members. He cited the 'Commercial Partnership' deal, and now Craig y Forwyn, as prime examples of this attitude. The Rucksac Club had recently debated the ORG report and found it very hard to decipher. The club felt that the proposed structure reduces members' power within the BMC and referenced a detailed and critical response to the ORG report submitted by the 'BMC30' group. Eddie urged the meeting to engage with the ORG review and ensure that the views of the N. Wales area are not ignored.

Chair's Note 1: In support of his concerns, Eddie **incorrectly** quoted voting figures recorded at the N Wales area meeting on 10/4/17. In respect of the proposal that the BMC should seek an 'Affinity (i.e. Commercial) Partnership', the actual, minuted figures were: In favour 4, Neutral 14, Against 5.

Chair's Note 2: TJ now has a copy of the BMC30 response to the ORG report, available to anyone who would like to read it.

Outcomes to be forwarded for agreement to the other Welsh areas

1. With regard to recommendation 25 of the BMC ORG review, BMC Cymru recognises that representation of all BMC member activity in Wales needs review.

BMC Cymru calls upon the BMC to create a presence, and identity, within Wales to better represent the interests of its members to Welsh Government, and the wider outdoor sector in Wales.

NB. A vote was taken to approve this statement: 39 For; 0 Against; 0 Abstentions

2. The N. Wales area of BMC Cymru believes that before any meaningful decision can be made about Wales becoming a 'subsidiary' of the BMC, a wide-ranging cost-benefit analysis must be completed. Furthermore, that cost-benefit analysis must cover not only the costs and benefits in terms of money, time and effort, but equally importantly, the costs and benefits of influence that a subsidiary could exert over policies, made in Wales, which impact on climbers and mountaineers both living in, and visiting, Wales.

NB. Dr Neal Hockley (Bangor University) offered his help with designing an appropriate cost-benefit analysis

5. Sion Roberts - Partneriaeth Yr Wyddfa - Snowdon Partnership

Sion Roberts was introduced by EJ and gave an interesting presentation indicating the importance and complexity of producing and implementing a plan to care for 'Yr Wyddfa'. Look out for the 'Launch' event in March 2018. Full information available on the Snowdon Partnership website.

The plan has brought together many interested parties, however the BMC was not invited to become a member of the Partnership and has not as yet been consulted! EJ wants to get BMC Cymru involved in specific action points within the plan.

Questions and comments after the presentation covered issues of Parking, Yellow Lines, Sherpa Buses and National Park cutbacks.

6. Access and Conservation

The Newsletter covers most issues.

EJ highlighted a 'free' Snowdonia Active' workshop intended to give guidance on minimal impact for providers of groups coasteering at 'The Range', Ynys Mon. Date 27 February 2018. Contact Snowdonia Active if interested. Andy Boorman has now re-negotiated access to Craig Ty Newydd, a limestone crag near Dyserth.

7. Tremfest 2018

The campsite and cafe at Bwlch y Moch is under new ownership, but will continue to support climbers on the Tremadog cliffs, including a Tremfest on 21st April 2018. Tremfest will run along similar lines to previous years, but for those taking part, EJ will ensure that there is a clear focus on undertaking meaningful, conservation/management projects which benefit climbers.

Reports:

8. **National Council** Dan Lane attended the last, 2-day NC meeting, primarily considering the ORG's work. Full minutes of all NC meetings are available on the BMC website.

9. **Clubs** Myfyr Tomos o Glwb Mynydd Cymru and Eddie Birch of the Rucksac Club were present. Both had received Peter Salenieks' Clubs' Committee Update. Nothing else to report.

10. **Youth** - Chris Forrest is to stand down. A new rep. with interests in Youth Development, indoors and outdoors, required.

11. **Hill Walking** AE introduced himself. It has been difficult to arrange meetings of all the Hillwalking area reps. The group is trying to get more copy relevant to Hillwalking into Summit magazine.

12. **Climbing Walls** No report

13. **Mountain Training UK** No report

14. **Mountain Training Cymru** No report but Steve Jones introduced himself as the new rep.

14. AOB

Afon Dudodyn – Kate Worthington sought members' support to lobby for a replacement bridge for the one swept away in Nov. 2017. A show of hands indicated full support, with no dissenters, due to the need for safe and environmentally sustainable access to Elidir Fawr from Nant Peris.

Newsletter – compiled on this occasion by EJ, but should really be a members' newsletter. Volunteer editor for the next edition required!

15. **Date of next meeting:** **Tuesday 17th April 2018. Caffi Bwlch y Moch Cafe, Tremadog**
7.00pm for food Meeting starts: 7.30pm

16. Suggestions for future speakers/films.

The North Wales Wildlife Trust have approached us asking to do a short presentation about their work on their 30+ sites across N Wales.