

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting

6 June 2018

Village Hall, Newton Linford

**Present:** Andy Potter (Chair), John Edwards (Sec), Roger Fanner (Solihull MC), Claudia Sarner (Bowline Club), Andy Railton (Bowline Club), Zoe Pickering (Bowline Club), Andy Richards (Bowline Club), Yvonne Alexander (Bowline Club), Andy Harper (Bowline Club), Graham Richmond (Bowline Club), Phil Simister (Solihull MC), Alastair Thompson (Wolverhampton MC), Richard Amor-Wilkes (Wolverhampton MC), Nicola Bashforth (Oread MC), Robin Hildgard (Loughborough Students MC), Ralph Birkenhead (Red Rope), Rod Eastwood (Red Rope), John Handley (Coventry MC), Richard Ellis (CC) Jane Thompson (BMC Clubs Officer), Matt Ramsey, Sarah Ramsey, Chris Sweetman, Spenser Gray & 1 other. **(25)**

### 1. Apologies:

Apologies had been received from: Chris Elliott (MAM), Rob Tipper (Yeti Club), Mike Beaumont, John Marston, Harry Wilson, Stuart Webb, John Churcher, Richard Law & Brian Smith.

### 2. Minutes of the last Meeting:

The photocopied minutes for the April Midland Area Meeting (wrongly dated as 7 Feb 18) were otherwise accepted as accurate. Proposed by Roger Fanner & seconded by Zoe Pickering. Carried Nem con

### 3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere:

None

### 4. Reports from Area Representatives:

#### 4.1 Access West: Nil

**4.2 Access East:** Andy Railton reported that the original way of access to Charnwood Quarry from Nanpantan Road has had the fence, which always barred access, renewed. Although the fence has been damaged and access is possible by this route the usual access route from Lodge farm (as stated on the RAD database) should be used. And there has been an incident reported at Forrest Rock where a group of climbers suffered some verbal abuse to from a local resident. This has happened before and this has been reported back to the BMC. The situation is being monitored at the moment.

**4.3 Climbing Walls:** Roger Fanner reported that the Flash Bouldering Wall in Solihull had closed but has been re-opened. Bear Rock in Coventry is also looking to close but will be replaced as part of the rebuilding of the university sports facility.

**4.4 Youth:** Claudia Sarner reported that the BMC held a successful Youth Meet in the Peak District recently. In Wales a safety initiative called 'Adventure Smart Wales' has been launched and there are lots of interesting video clips available online.

**4.5 Club Issues:** Andy mentioned that the BMC Clubs & Huts Seminar was taking place at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal prior to the BMC AGM (16<sup>th</sup> June). Jane mentioned that there were still a few places left for the BMC's experience-sharing

seminar *“How to train Novice Members in your Club”* to be held at Plas y Brenin on the second weekend in September, cost £85 for the weekend including Sat night dinner. The BMC “Winter Skills” training would probably be occurring again next March.

**4.6. Hill Walking:** Roger said that the HWIG have met several times but are frustrated by the lack of funds at the moment. However, Carey is still in place, although he is largely tied up with MOM2. The Hill-walking reps are due to meet in November and hopefully David Jones will be able to attend for us.

Andy drew attention to the photocopies circulated at the meeting which gave an update on recent activities of those at head office and asked people to try and publicize the BMC’s student safety seminar in September in their clubs. Places are limited to 2 per university or college club. Jane said that all the staff at Head Office are concentrating on the AGM or MOMII at the moment but the latest application to Sport England is due to be sent in next week.

## **5. National Council:**

### **5.1 Report from last meeting:**

- Roger Fanner said the last meeting was much less acrimonious than the previous couple but was still mostly about ORG.
- It also agreed that the BMC should purchase Craig y Forwyn, a limestone crag off the A55. This would be achieved in 3 sections, as there were 3 owners, using a legacy left to the Access & Conservation Trust.
- It had been agreed that Mark Vallance be awarded honorary BMC membership but he sadly died before this could be could happen so it is alas a posthumous award.

**5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting:** There were no matters from the floor.

## **6. The Organisational Review:**

Roger Fanner re-capped how we got where we are today with the present ballot. He mentioned that, after a long and acrimonious meeting debating the proposals of the Organisational Review Group, another motion had been launched: this was Option B. As a result of another meeting, which was not so well attended, 5 or 6 small changes were incorporated into Option A. As a consequence of this around 33 of the 44 who had proposed Option B withdrew their support for it and said they would now support Option A. However, around a dozen members refuse any compromise so the National Executive accepts that Option B cannot be withdrawn and will still be voted upon by the membership, even though it now commands the support of less than the 25 members necessary to get it on the ballot paper!

Roger said he had real concern that even if Option A was more popular than Option B, it might not get the necessary 75% of votes cast to take effect. The BMC would then be the only one of 56 organisations funded by Sport England not to meet the good governance standards expected and be constituted on a legally sound basis. Someone queried what the 75% related to and it was pointed out that it was 75% of votes cast, not total membership, and that abstentions do not count.

The situation is further muddled by the fact that members who have already voted have been given a chance to revise their votes as it was originally believed that Options A and B were alternatives and so the ballot papers didn’t include “Against” boxes. It was pointed out that some members might want to vote ‘For’ or ‘Against’ both Options so the voting form has had to be redesigned.

There was a question from the floor as to how Option A would change things. Phil Simister attempted to concisely summarise this complex issue. Another queried whether we have to be at level 3 to get funding or could we could apply for funding at level 1. The answer was a clear "No".

Jane reminded the meeting that £250,000 funding was lost from Sport England last year and that the BMC reserves are now down by £100,000. Two of the four staff funded by Sport England had been lost already. The point was made by many speakers that it was not just the financial implications of losing Sport England funding that were important. It would also represent the end of official government recognition of the BMC and allow other, possibly commercial organisations, to claim representative status for our activities.

#### **7. Any other Business:**

- Spenser Gray mentioned that he was helping to organise the South Peak Area Limestone Festival on the 14/16<sup>th</sup> September based at The Royal Oak at Whetton.
- Jane Thompson thanked Andy for organising a different sort of meeting which seemed well suited to the time of year.

#### **8. Date & location of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at Old Edwardians, Solihull, followed by John Edwards' "Toubkal" mountaineering talk, held over from the April meeting.

Written by John Edwards