

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 12 September 2018 Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Present: Andy Potter (Chair), John Edwards (Sec), Niall Grimes (BMC Guidebook Co-ordinator), Roger Fanner (Solihull MC), Richard Law (Wrekin MC), Andy Railton (Bowline Club), Phil Simister (Solihull MC), Jo Denins (Solihull MC), John Handley (Coventry MC), Richard Lloyd (Coventry MC), James Reeley (Climbers' Club), Andrew Brown (West Brom MC), Hilary Jones (West Bromwich MC), Mike Smith (West Bromwich MC), Emily Smith (West Bromwich MC), Ann Parrot (West Bromwich MC), Paul Brindley (West Bromwich MC), Oliver Stephenson (West Bromwich MC), Anne Gregory (Lichfield MC), Mike Ratty (Lichfield MC), Rich Amor-Wilkes (Wolverhampton MC), Toni McKay (Wolverhampton MC), Rich McKay (Wolverhampton MC), Sally Ann Northcliffe (Bowline Club), Jason Till (Berwyn Mountaineering), Hazel Jonas (Fell & Rock CC), Chris Moore, David Sampson, Stuart Jamieson, Rebecca Husband, David McGee, Matt Ramsey, Sarah Ramsey, Richard Bower, E. Kinchin & 2 others. **(37)**

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Phil Bailey, David Jones, Claudia Sarner & Brian Smith.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

'The circulated minutes for the 6th June 2018 Midland Area Meeting are accepted as accurate' Proposed: Phil Simister Seconded: Roger Fanner Carried nem con.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere:

None.

4. Reports from Area Representatives

4.1 Access East: Andy Railton reported a new fence has been put in at Craig Buddon, but access was still possible. The owner of Charnwood Quarry has instituted dog patrols which obviously makes access very difficult. He was not sure why but a fence that had been installed had been damaged and the Quarry has become a very popular place with local, non-climbing teenagers. These issues had been put on RAD (Regional Access Database) and UKC (UK Climbing website).

4.1 Access West: Richard Law reported that the summer had been quiet overall but Pandy Rocks, although technically over the border in Wales, had changed ownership. Roger Fanner asked Niall Grimes for an update on the RAD phone app which was brought out 2 years ago and received the reply that it seemed to be working well. However, when asked for a show of hands only around half a dozen people in the room had it on their phones. The fact that several experienced climbers knew nothing about it suggested that more publicity was needed for it in Summit magazine. It was suggested that details about it are not that prominent on the BMC website.

4.3 Climbing Walls: John Churcher was away representing UK Paraclimbing at Innsbruck so Andy Potter pointed out that the Midlands Area has a Facebook page which he and John update and also drew attention to the Midlands Area section in the BMC Local Areas website, aka the Community site. He mentioned there was a new bouldering wall "Social Climbing" in Leicester city centre and it was confirmed that "Flash Climbing" had reopened.

4.4 Youth: Rep. not present and no report.

4.5. Hill Walking: David Jones had passed on an update from Peter Judd. The Hill Walking Implementation (working) Group last met in July and CEO Dave Turnbull and President Lynn Robinson joined the meeting. Both recognised the importance of hill walking within the BMC and the HWIG expressed hope that hill walking would have its proper place within any future strategy, pointing to stats from the most recent survey of members undertaken to support ORG that 87% of members participate in hill walking, for 33% of all members it is their main activity & for 11% it is their **only** activity. Moreover, other data suggests adventurous hill walking represents a huge and largely untapped area of potential new membership growth for the BMC.

The previous Hill Walking Working Group wrote a 'Strategic Plan for Hill Walking' which was approved/endorsed by National Council in Feb. 2017 but, perhaps unsurprisingly, has not received the hoped-for attention so the HWIG has re-submitted the original SPHW back to the BMC Board with a renewed request for feedback on the feasibility, desirability and practicability of the recommendations it contains.

The 'Mend Our Mountains - Make One Million' campaign had already passed the 1/3rd point, four months after the public launch, so is already around 3 x the overall total that was raised by MOM 1.

The 1st Hill Walking Symposium organised by the BMC for Area Reps (& anyone else interested) will take place at Losehill Hall in the Peak District on 24th & 25th November 2018. There will be lots of short workshops to choose from on the Saturday, hopefully a good guest speaker after the Saturday evening dinner & a selection of walks and other activities to choose from on Sunday. There'll be a modest charge, to cover the dinner & the overnight accommodation. The more the merrier: see the BMC website on how to book.

4.5. Club Issues: Andy Potter reported that the Club's Committee had been very busy with ORG matters but now has a new chair. It is currently looking into how the BMC handles new clubs seeking affiliation. It is also striving to improve communication with the already-affiliated clubs and club committees.

5. National Council

5.1 Report from last meeting: Roger Fanner said the last meeting was very short as it was the evening before the AGM and the crucial vote the next day. However, they went ahead and implemented about 15 of the ORG recommendations that would be necessary whichever way the vote went.

5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting: See A.O.B.

6. Report on the BMC Annual General Meeting and the ballot results

Roger admitted that he and several other reps had not been confident that Option A would get the necessary 75% of votes cast and were pleasantly surprised when 92% voted in favour of the modernisation changes. Lynn Robinson is now BMC President and applications closed for the position of 'Chair of the Board' at the end of August. Niall Grimes confirmed that several had been received for this unpaid position.

The other 35 ORG recommendations are now going through to Phase 2 which will need to be completed before the 2019 AGM which will need to be held in late March. Copies of the BMC IG Update (30/8/2018) for the September meetings were circulated to the members.

There were 4 other matters Roger felt members should know.

a) Montane's "BMC Terra Pants Limited Edition" promotion which featured the BMC logo by the leg zips. For perceived economic reasons the company had only produced them in men's sizes! The company was quickly taken to task by our lady President for their gender

bias and the company have said they will rectify this oversight.

b) BMC is looking for ways to separate out the competition side of climbing, so that competitions do not suck up core resources.

c) BMC is also looking at the possibility of a different type of membership for people who just go to climbing walls. What could the BMC offer them: what might they like from the BMC? A suggestion from the floor that this might best be done through their membership of climbing walls.

d) Finally the BMC is considering whether to launch a project and campaign for the 'right to wild camp', such as exists in Scotland and on Dartmoor. Why not elsewhere in E & W?

7. Any Other Business

Andy Potter mentioned that at their AGM some of the Bowline Club members expressed unhappiness with their BMC membership. He proposed a review which would give the club's members a chance of a vote at the next AGM by which time he hopes Bowline will have fully informed their membership of the benefits of BMC affiliation. However, he would like to get the BMC to engage with the Bowline Club to carry out this review, especially in the area of membership tiers and the problem of inactive members.

Paul Brindley said that other clubs had similar problems with the older, non-active members. It was suggested that Club's should maybe have a social membership category that didn't count in their membership total for affiliation. Andy Potter said this was not allowed by the BMC at the moment; it was only members who did not live in the UK that could be omitted.

Richard Lloyd said that Coventry MC had won these dissenters round by allowing them to pay just the BMC affiliation fee of £15 and not the full £25 Club fee. There was general agreement that it was unfair on the club to lose its much-needed income in this way.

Discussion continued and Andy Potter proposed a motion asking the Midlands Area to support the Bowline Club in its efforts to get the BMC to support with its Club review. After some discussion as to whether this was appropriate, it was seconded by Andy Brown and **carried at the vote (22 For : 0 Against : 4 Abstentions)**

John Handley reported the problems he had been having getting BMC insurance for an impending trip. The doctor had cleared him but he could not get the lady on the phone to accept this and so was unable to get cover.

Andy Railton asked if the meeting could start 30 minutes earlier so that folk could get home at a reasonable hour. It was agreed we should try this at the next meeting.

8. Date & location of next meeting

The next meeting & Midlands Area AGM will be held on Wednesday 21st November 2018 at Old Edwardians Sports Club, Streetsbrook Road, Solihull, B90 3PE starting at the earlier than usual time of 7.30pm,

The meeting closed at 9.14pm after which refreshments became available, followed by an illustrated talk by John Edwards, held over from the April meeting, on a successful long weekend trip to Mt Toubkal which resulted in 8 female & 19 male West Bromwich MC members successfully summiting together in winter 2012.

Written by John Edwards