

BMC South West Area Meeting

Venue: The Project Climbing Centre, The Dolphin Centre, Poole Dorset BH15 1UD

Date: Saturday 1 September 2018 (7.00pm)

MINUTES

Present and signed in: James Mann (chair), Mark Kemball (Secretary), Nick Colton (BMC Deputy CEO), Peter Salenieks (Clubs Committee), Martin Hallett (Dorset Access), Colin Knowles (Red Rope, CC, AC), Yazan Abbas, Emmie Chadwick, Sam Parsons, Alan Thomson, Chris Smart.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

James Mann welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were received from Pete Callaghan, Mark Courtiour, Julian Wills, Philip Wilson, Helen Wilson, Simon Fletcher, Rick Swards.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 31.5.18

James Mann summarised these.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere

None.

4. (Not on agenda) James summarised Lynn Robinson's (BMC President) August update. This is available on the [BMC website](#).

5. National Council Rep

Gareth Palmer's term as NC rep has now finished, the meeting wished to record our thanks for his work as rep and in helping to organise BMC Cornish and Lundy climbing festivals over the last 5 years. We do not yet have anyone to replace him, and the meeting agreed to look for suitable volunteers for the next meeting. Gareth has also stood down as West Cornwall access rep and we are looking for someone to take this on.

6. Climbing Wall Rep

We do not have a climbing wall rep – we are not clear as to what this role involves; Nick Colton offered to find out what this involves.

7. Amendment to South Devon fixed gear policy

Belay bolts set back from the crag top should be allowable where other belay solutions are failing. Bolts in bare rock will provide a long term solution and will be easy to find. This will apply to natural sea cliffs in a change to existing policy. The following safeguards apply:

- a. Bolts must be set back from the cliff top so as not to encourage top roping or a 'lower-off mentality'.
- b. Bolts should not be used where adequate natural protection is available. This protection includes threads, good quality pegs, nuts, cams and good quality stakes.
- c. Only high quality glue-in P bolts are used with no staples or expansion bolts being used.

- d. The fixed gear policy remains unchanged with regard to bolts for protection or belays on rock climbs.

So far it has been observed that Durl Head may need one or two bolt belays, Telegraph Hole may require a similar number and as cut trees decay there may be a need at Daddyhole and Meadfoot.

The amendment was agreed unanimously.

8. Cliff Rescue and Coastguard

James Mann reported that the sea cliff safety films are now finished and should be available on BMC TV shortly. We have been unsuccessful in our attempts to speak with the coastguards to raise our concerns about cliff rescue. Nick Colton offered to look into this and to speak to Mountain Rescue organisations to see if we can improve the situation.

9. Incident reporting system

Pete Callaghan sent in the following report:

We had our second working group meeting on Wednesday 18th July, to review the feedback on the process of submitting reports and also to review a first draft of the cost model.

To recap, the aim of the working group is to create a costed proposal for consideration by the BMC National Council. In order to do that, we need to define the service in sufficient detail that we can identify the costs associated with providing the service.

After the previous working group meeting we created a first draft cost model, which is basically a spreadsheet that calculates costs based on a different assumptions, such as how many incident reports each year, how long it takes to moderate incident reports, how many reviews we produce given different numbers of incident reports and so on.

The value of a model like this is it helps us plan the resources needed to provide the service, such as moderators, reviewers, technical infrastructure or marketing costs.

The current model provides a start, and a useful basis for discussion, but will no doubt change substantially as planning progresses.

Some of the working group also tested the process of submitting reports, to provide feedback on the report submission process, and we collectively reviewed the moderation process.

The next steps for the group are to engage with a small group of climbers, mountaineers and hill walkers in order to trial both the report submission process and the report moderation process more widely.

We have had some more positive feedback on the report submission form, and the next meeting for the working group is Tuesday 18 September.

At this point, the meeting adjourned for a rather excellent curry provided by The Project cafe.

10. Reports from Area Representatives

10.1 Access

a) North Coast of Devon and Cornwall: Will Hornby sent in a report – There are currently no access issues – he is planning to start re-staking crags with the first stakes going in at Screda and Vicarage. He also said the Brian Martin of The Barn Climbing Centre has given him an 80m abseil rope for access work.

b) West Cornwall: Concern was raised about the parking area at Bosigran – there is considerable wild / van camping in the area and the surrounding paths now have a lot of human faeces on them – this may well lead to the National Trust closing / gating the car park and or charging for parking.

c) Cheddar and the Mendips: Mark Courtiour sent in the following report:
I've had a couple of messages from climbers worried about developments at a place called Sandford Quarry, which could possibly come up. I'd liked to have got a feel for the BMC view on it. A company called Mendip Outdoor Pursuits owns it and leases part of it to the Charterhouse Centre that runs activities for children including climbing and abseiling. The concern is that they have created an outdoor climbing wall with bolts and belay / top rope anchors, including routes with added plastic holds to make them doable for novices. And in doing so have superimposed this on to existing trad routes. They have also removed tons and tons of unstable rock to make it safe for clients.

The key for me is that the company owns the land. There is an agreement in place allowing access for climbers, but an element of this is that climbers should not interfere with or obstruct the business activities of the centre. In the first place I'm not sure climbers are in a position to obstruct the changes to existing routes because it is private land, secondly, if I were to challenge Mendip Outdoor Pursuits, it may annoy them and cause them to withdraw access. And also, schools, outdoor centres etc do need somewhere to run their courses. Generally we prefer them not to run courses on crags frequented by climbers, so should we also object when they run courses on their own property, even when this involves "alterations" to existing routes?

Cheddar access agreement: 98 % of people I spoke to climbing on the South side had insurance. There were a handful of people climbing on the South side after the end of June, in spite of the absence of first bolt hangers. All showed contrition! Of most concern were parties on multi-pitch routes, notably Stone Cold Fever and Castles Made of Sand after March 15, and Space Tourist over bank holidays. Those I managed to speak with apologised and had either misunderstood the guide, or actually in most cases, not bothered to read it. However I don't think the agreement is in jeopardy - yet!

Colin Knowles commented that the climbing at Sandford Quarry is not particularly worthwhile and is probably not worth bothering about.

d) Fairy Cave Quarry: Ian Butterworth reported that there were no issues.

e) Avon area: Colin Knowles reported that the Clifton Suspension Bridge master has applied for permission for vegetation clearance on Suspension Bridge Buttress – we need to keep a watching brief.

A response has been written to the draft Downs and Avon Gorge Management Plan, Colin spoke about this briefly – the response is attached separately.
For a number of years, several climbers in the South West have been involved in Peregrine chick ringing, Colin spoke of plans to put the arrangements on a more formal

footing and that the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) was being approached by the BMC to take this forward.

f) Wye Valley: Colin Knowles reported on behalf of Rick Sowards; at Ban y Gor, two of the three closed areas have been re-opened, some of the routes have been cleaned, but no cleaning should be undertaken without first contacting Rick.

There are concerns about access to Woodcroft Quarry and through it to Fly Wall. This will go on the agenda for the next meeting.

g) Damaged bolts at Avon, Cheddar and Brean Down: Martin Hallett reported that Sam Ferguson had advised him of a number of loose bolts. This information will be forwarded to the relevant local access reps.

Avon Gorge

'Academic' – staple bolt after crux is pulling in and out; no glue in bottom hole.

Cheddar Gorge

Spy in the Sky – poor last bolt and loose belay bolt.

Right-Hand Man – crux staple bolt moves back and forth; lost resin from bottom hole.

Seven Months Later – poor belay, too far back and needs adjusting.

Liquid Crystal – crux bolt moves back and forth and unable to be tightened with a spanner.

Brean Down

Brean Topping – wobbly second bolt. Loads other wobbly bolts at Brean!

h) Dorset – Martin Hallett reported the following:

Portland peregrines – there are no wardens monitoring the peregrines but they have been nesting away from the climbing areas this year.

White Hole – there have been some access issues here – it is best to keep a low profile.

Lulworth – this has been very busy with DWS, there are also many kayakers and swimmers here who are not aware of the climbers. Good spotting / warning by climbers have avoided problems so far.

Swanage – the farmer here does not like groups climbing at West Winspit. Following a rockfall, it is proposed that The Fantastic Mr Faz should be de-bolted.

Dorset Bolt policy – Martin is planning to re-write this to clarify things.

10.2 Clubs

Peter Salenieks reported on the last meeting of the Clubs Committee.

10.3 Climbing Walls

Colin Knowles reported that he and Richard Emerson are working on a proposal to Bristol City Council to host the 2020 European Youth Bouldering Championships.

10.4 Hill Walking

The House of Commons All Party Hill Walking and Mountaineering Group will be holding a walk on Dartmoor some time in September.

10.5 Youth

A BMC Youth Meet was held on Dartmoor last week. A number of local climbers acted

as host. A great time was had by all with climbing on Haytor, Dewerstone and Hound Tor. The competition schedule for the next year's Youth Climbing Series should be released by the end of September. Hannah Slaney became World Champion at the IFSC Youth World Championships in Moscow in August.

11. National Council

Philip Wilson, who stood in for Helen Wilson at the last NC meeting sent the following report:

The meeting was largely taken up with preparing the ground work for the phase 2 Organisational Review should the Org Review gain approval (which it did the next day). Each phase 2 proposal was debated and permission given for work to start preparing the bulk of these so they could be debated at future BMC Area Meetings prior to their intended adoption at next year's AGM. There is considerable work needed to achieve this, perhaps more so than was required for phase 1.

12. AOB

- a) Peter Salenieks asked us to promote next weekend's 10th Anniversary Gower Climbing Festival.
- b) Peter also reported the following:
The Welsh Government has published a summary of the 17,391 responses to the consultation on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. The BMC was one of only seventeen representative organisations and groups credited with initiating an organised campaign. Thank you to every club and individual member who responded. I would encourage you to read the written statement by Hannah Blythyn, Minister for Environment and maintain a watching brief, until we hear more about any plans for follow-up actions by the Welsh Government.

13. Date of next meeting

To be held in Bristol either 17th or 24th November.