

BMC Cymru North Wales Area Meeting

4 September 2018

Vaynol Arms, Nant Peris

MINUTES

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Apologies received from: Tim Jepson (Chair); Keith Ball; Jim Derry; Andy Boorman; Greg Cain.

2. Note issues for AOB

National Eisteddfod next year – would the BMC like to be involved? At Llanrwst

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Accepted

4. Matters arising

None

5. Actions from previous meeting

None

6. Agenda items

6.1. Update from President

New BMC President Lynn Robinson attended the meeting, to update us. Wasn't originally on the Agenda – on holiday in North Wales! Thanks to everyone for voting. The big event at AGM was Option A/B – Option A won with 92% (pretty decisive). The very next day, ... chair and president has been split; president is now a director of the BMC company. Chair will administer; President is member's rep on the company board. Many recommendations, now moving into implementing them – things are moving. New Articles of Association (how BMC is run as a business). Governance is important, but also important to have fun and meet people! This is first area meeting of choice (outside of mandated attendances at others). Gave history of her involvement: been staying at Gwern Gof Uchaf for almost 30 years. Enjoyed switching from route to route (in spite of 3 dead sheep at bottom!). Has jumped Adam & Eve once – once is enough. Wanted to climb Cuillin Ridge, so went to practice on Stanage! Since, has been involved in guidebooks, including Froggatt to Black Rocks guide. Then Peak area secretary for a time, involving

more women in mountaineering. Then role of vice president came up; George Band Award awarded (first woman winner). Then stood as president, which is where she is.

Tarquin: are you going to be the first president to tell Montane to select a better garment? Long issue: Montane only provide men's pants, not ladies pants! So: yes, sorted.

Elfyn; Implementation Group Report: Noted that the group has vacancies on it, and deadline is Monday, 10th September, but it would be really useful if someone from Wales was on it. Lynn: there's no-one in the frame, so everything is up for grabs. John Roberts (VP) is chair, Dave Turnbull Chief Exec, and Andy Syme (who has done lots of work on the first phase, and also this one). Will be looking at that at the next National Council meeting. Long term plan to implement the recommendations. Looking for Project Manager, as well as more Implementation Group Members to help out. People needed for: financial, policy, volunteer/membership engagement.

Rehan Sidiqqi Award (Kamala Sen), and Young Volunteer award (Dan Lane) both in this area (round of applause).

30th March for next AGM, although not sure. Was originally in PyB in April, but has to change to March (because AGM said in Q1 2019). Only for this year.

Ray Wood: Question: in implementation group, it's relevance to Wales? Lynn: Will Kilner is looking at leading on this. He's not on the Implementation Group (he's on the Board of Directors). This is why we need a PM (to decide what to do first). National Council will look at this. Elfyn: complex structure, which is why PM is required. There's about 8 main areas identified. One is ambition and strategy of BMC, and part of that is what happens to/in Wales, which is where we will be involved. So Implementation Group isn't there to decide what to do, but to make sure that anything decided is implemented. The flip is that the board of directors has the primacy, but now Will and Lynn are on the board, and National Council (whatever it becomes) are the consultative body – this is the flip that happened in June.

Anthony: back to the people on the Implementation Group: have to be independent, so Will K, Dan, Anthony are not eligible.

Elfyn: there will be subgroups to look at everything. Chair for Wales (South Wales, and Outreach Group) need to get together, brainstorm and feed into Implementation Group. North Mid & South need to get together. We've discussed for many years; case has been made now, so need to take it to central BMC. Not just finance, but cultural, etc as well. Not just from Elfyn and the BMC Officers.

Anthony: reading out announcement that Tim has prepared. (pre-written). Bits to be read out for each part of the agenda.

Implementation Recommendations – there's about 5 pages. Anthony read Tim's statement. Mentioned reading Stephen Venable's article in The Times – worth reading (or not). Since, Alex Messenger has been in contact with the Journalist that has written the article, and has struck up a rapport with this Journalist, who has since written article about disabled woman climbing Old Man of Hoy. Pushing on an open door.

(Tim's statement continues...) Wales specifically listed as development area for strategy and vision for Wales. Tim has put out feelers to Mid- and South- Wales to get together to articulate the priorities for the entire Wales region.

Elfyn: are we happy for Tim and Will Kilner to take the lead? People need to get in touch with Tim to voice opinions. Clock is ticking now, so needs imminent effort (probably by Christmas) so that it can go to National Council before the AGM in March 2019.

Q. Why is there not an officer at the BMC to coordinate this? Lynn: this is why we're recruiting, but this is unlikely to happen by Christmas: Elfyn: chicken & egg. If this process is done, then someone will be identified for Wales; but it won't happen without being member driven. Due to animosity from AGM leveled at some of the staff and volunteers, this cannot be BMC driven.

Mike Raine: do we need to make those suggestions of what we think? Kate: it wouldn't be appropriate for members to dictate the strategy by which outcomes are achieved; but we need to articulate our needs and requirements without stating how to get there, but it's then BMC's responsibility to decide how to get there. Don't believe that ordinary members role to say how it's implemented, but to say what we want (e.g., regional officer to implement). Ross: it's an extension of the paragraph that's already been written. Callum: Tim and Will are on the ball about this, whole membership, but it is a separate country.

Mike Raine: important we're not talking about representing Welsh BMC members, but BMC members in Wales. Kamala: defining what we want is the key part. Anthony: conversation with Tim, who met with Ramblers at the Eisteddfod. Basically, Ramblers have paid Officers in Wales (Ross: only just and recently expanded). Anthony: similar membership in Wales to BMC, but have 5 staff in Cardiff, and fully dedicated budgets for all their work in Wales. Tim: we should work closely with Ramblers to put our case in negotiating with Welsh Government.

Ray: What if our vision of BMC in Wales doesn't align with our overall vision? Dan: Is this not our time to tell them what the vision should be? Anthony: agree. Might take some members to state it in a paragraph or two. Elfyn: very important, because there's been a lot of navel-gazing. Out for the next National Council. Lynn: has spent a day looking at Mission/Vision with Dave Turnbull. Nothing is new that's in there, but it has to go to the board before national council. Ray: Has it gone to the members? It will go to National Council in 2 weeks.

Dan: on that Mission statement – is it blank until we say what goes on it? Lynn: yes. E.g., lots of discussion about Sport England, but not so much about Wales as well. Lynn lives in Nottingham and feels disenfranchised from London, so ... But this is about BMC members coming to Wales (most PyB attendees are from London!).

Mike's paragraph already fluffed out. Lynn very aware that funding in Wales is very special.

6.2. Secretary

Permanent Secretary badly needed. Kate W: Secretary is a vital role, number of things that they help with – promotion of meeting, dissemination of information, ensuring info is well-received, writing newsletters, etc. It will take some time and input, but it's really debilitating not to have a Secretary by the side of the Chair; then Chair ends up doing secretary admin, rather than being more proactive and helping the area to develop. Anthony: Anyone interested, contact Tim. Elfyn: getting a newsletter out is really useful. Lakes Area has started a really good one, and there's financial support in the office. But needs to be more varied than just access routes. Also needs to be across all Wales. Better turnout at meetings when there's a good newsletter.

6.3. Rhoscolyn bolt

UKC found out about it. Then it all kicked off. Peak Area rep Rob found it. Bolt has been present for 15 years. Statements read from both Rob and Tim. Tim attached BMC position on drilled equipment and dry tooling. Discussion: you can hardly find it! It's been there for years. If someone really wants to they can crop it. It's not in the way. No one present has an issue with it!

6.4. Gower Climbing Festival

The annual BMC Gower Climbing Festival will be held on the weekend of 7-9 September.

6.5. Real3Peaks clean-up

Real 3 peaks cleanup: Saturday October 13th there's over 50 mountains involved now, not just the original 3. Elfyn: is this on the BMC website? Kate W: yes, BMC will help promote it. Info will also go out to Mountain Training to share this as well. Elfyn: suggested talking to Cath at central BMC. Marty: what are we doing differently to educate people. Ross: it's not just about cleaning up; it's also about the conversations that you have with the public too. Similar to SAS's pick up 3 bits of plastic. Elfyn: one thing from chats to warden at Castle Inn, thank you to climbers for picking up rubbish. Dan: it's harder and harder to find rubbish every year. Anthony: agree with Ross: us being there changes people's behaviour.

6.6. Clubs

No discussion.

6.7. Access

ELFYN'S PIECE (ACCESS)

Some of it is in newsletter, but in brief:

Craig y Forwyn: still complicated. Owners of middle section have said they're interested in leasing/selling. Owner at top is still on-board in spite of gate being left open again; Hogan's have put in controversial planning app to extend the camp site, but don't want to antagonise locals further by giving

climbers access, so still softly-softly. Due to go to Conwy Council Planning Authority in the next few weeks, then Elfyn will approach after to get access to the middle section.

Andy Boorman, Great Orme: access path to LPT is pretty treacherous now. There is an alternative, a bit further down, but had informal heads-up from the council to do some work and put some steps in (lower part only). Might have a small setback, because there was a fatality last week when a 17yo walked off the top near Testament Area. Chris (OGVMRO) recovered property the other day, but doesn't know much more.

Craig Pant Ifan – paid contractor to improve descent path there. Has been repaired, but shouldn't need work for 5-10 years.

Craig y Castell – needs similar work. On land owned by health authority, but impassable in winter, needs drainage. Gent has stripped some when he was down on Bwlch y Moch the other week. Hospital and authority both say the other owns it, so get it done!

Minera Quarry, in NE Wales – has been taken over by NW Wildlife Trust, and Elfyn has received letter saying cease all climbing there, and will require a licence. But not aware the restrictions are being enforced, so unless that happens, continue as now.

NT Ogwen Hydro scheme – no planning app submitted yet. There's been lots of objections during planning open day at Capel Curig, so they've maybe backed down. Has to be done by April. Chris has asked to do something about OVMRO helipad over the hydro scheme.

Tomorrow: live weather system from the summit of Snowdon will be installed soon. Café Manager was objecting to the way it looked. Installed by Joe Roberts and Bob Shepherd from tomorrow – will be linked from the BMC website. Café a bit miffed because no one from the national park asked them!

Good response to Welsh Government report, specifically better access for the coastline. Has had approx. 17,000 responses, double what they had for NHS. 16,000 were for access, the majority were in support of enhanced access. Then the minister's statement: Basically, there's strong support for reform, so we won't reform. BMC are part of the outdoor groups alliance, so most are upset with this. But Brexit is limiting possibility for action, and there's concern about what's going to happen to land management in Wales. English: "Harmony in Nature" Wales: "Protecting Farming in Wales" – both the same about supporting rural economy in Wales. BMC wants to ensure that, when farming is paid for providing goods, access is part of that agreement. Also need to create working group of AMs with interest in the outdoors. There are several who are very keen. We need something like the Mountaineering All Party Parliamentary Group in Westminster. Here, things are done slightly differently, need to continue working in partnerships (cannot do things on ourselves). Anthony: reflects what Tim said.

Didodyn Bridge (in Nant Peris), washed away (on path to Elidir Fawr). Installed by national park in 80s. technically outside the national park. NP have come up with a spec to replace it. Will cost around £5,000 to lift it, around £1,000 to install. Landowner is happy. Now need funds, Elfyn will put bid in to BMC

Access & Conservation Trust to make it happen. Will probably happen in Spring 2019. Ray: Mend Our Bridge suggested!

Castle Inn. Continuation from last meeting (up to 150 people at weekends), parking issues. Solution is Outdoor Centres will park in the main car park for Marian Bach nature reserve instead. BMC has organised an evening Monday September 17th, with Warden, Elfyn, and local climber activist to educate. Also some work that centres can help with.

Other things: Rungs have been put in to snakes & ladders.

6.8. National Council

Didn't give anything from areas to NC at last meeting because all focused on implementation recommendations.

6.9. Hill walking

MEND OUR MOUNTAINS

Tarquin: how will our part be spent? Or will it just be given to us? Elfyn: Snowdonia NPA picked a few areas, the Mynydd Moel path in Cadair Idris and in Beacons (smaller volunteer group). Mend Our Mountains 1 went to upper Watkin Path.

6.10. BMC in Wales – where next?

No discussion.

7. AOB

EISTEDDFOD

Will be held in Llanrwst in 2019. Attendance 150-200k. Clwb Mynedda Cymru will have a stand – would BMC like to be involved? Shop window to promote, there will be high profile people there, and a good opportunity to showcase our work. Elfyn: we need volunteers to staff the stand. A unit costs £1,200, CMC thinking of getting two. Need Welsh-speaking volunteers though, and Elfyn is the only one! It would be very good to support CMC. Comment: At the Bangor one, Mountain Training and Mountain Training Trust were also involved.

8. Date of next meeting

NC meeting is December 1st, maybe the week before (end of November) somewhere different, not too far away from here. Also there will be the Area AGM as well. Need a speaker: e.g., Tom Livingstone just back from Pakistan.

CLOSE; 21:18