

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 21 November 2018 Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Present: Andy Potter (Chair & Bowline Club), John Edwards (Sec & West Brom MC), Niall Grimes (BMC Guidebook Co-ordinator), Roger Fanner (Solihull MC), Richard Law (Wrekin MC), Andy Railton (Bowline Club), John Churcher (Solihull MC), Claudia Sarner (Bowline Club), (David Jones (West Bromwich MC), Phil Simister (Solihull MC), Margaret Harries (Solihull MC), Brian Langford (Solihull MC), Jo Dennis (Solihull MC), Ashley Price (Solihull MC), Bill Thomson (Solihull MC), Stuart Webb (M.A.M.), Rich Amor-Wilkes (Wolverhampton MC), Zoe Pickering (Bowline Club), Andrew Brown (West Bromwich MC), Hazel Jonas (Fell & Rock CC), Mike Beaumont, Brian Smith, Lauren Bean, Rob Shaw, Michael Blake, Sarah Atkins-Ramsey, Matt Ramsey, Alex Roddie. **(28)**

1. Apologies: Apologies were received from Steve Wright.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting:

'The circulated minutes for the 12th September 2018 Midland Area Meeting are accepted as accurate' Proposed: Phil Simister; Seconded: Richard Law; Carried nem con.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere: None. Andy Potter said he would conduct the normal area meeting first and then we would hold the AGM.

4. Reports from Area Representatives:

4.1 Access East: Andy Railton said he had contacted BIFA, the owner of Charnwood Quarry and, although it was early days, discussions were relatively positive.

4.2 Access West: Richard Law said there was nothing further to report re. Pandy Rocks.

4.3 Climbing Walls: John Churcher had nothing to report

4.4 Youth: Iain was not present and Claudia had nothing to report.

4.5. Hill Walking: David Jones said that Mend Our Mountains II campaign had raised £565,000 so far and that it was still possible to contribute via a link on the BMC website. With the resumption of Sport England funding there was the possibility of a new BMC Officer to liaise with organisations whose activities could lead to outdoor events, such as Duke of Edinburgh, National Trust, Youth Hostels Association & Forestry Commission. At Castleton this weekend the BMC was holding a symposium with workshops on the theme of taking hill walking forward. Roger Fanner pointed out there were still a few places left and that Claudia would be giving a presentation.

The government is conducting a review of National Parks and David said that Cath Flitcroft was co-ordinating the BMC response. Members should feel free to send her their views.

4.5. Club Issues: Andy Potter said that the Club's Committee was busy engaging with the Organisational Development Group (ODG) and is trying to make sure that all clubs are receiving information relevant to them. Jane Thompson was involved in projects that would hopefully lead to recruitment of new members. David Jones reported that West Bromwich MC had concerns about whether new members were insured by BMC under the affiliated club scheme and their committee held a very useful meeting with Jane Thompson & Andy Goulborne, the insurance representative. Roger Fanner asked if minutes were kept of this meeting and whether these could be shared with other groups. David Jones said he was happy to do this.

4.6 GDPR Data Base records (item not on agenda)

Before going on to item 5, John Edwards reported on an email received a week ago from Jon Chittenden (BMC Online Marketing Co-ordinator) which indicated that area secretaries should no longer be holding lists of emails or personal data and should not be sending

emails out to members: under GDPR these should all be coming from Head Office. He had replied to the effect that this information seemed to be much too little and too late as he'd already spent a lot of time and effort collecting email approval from Midland area members before the 25th May start date for GDPR. He asked members whether they would still like to receive details of area meetings etc from him and their views on sharing his database of emails with the BMC. The suggestion was made that maybe the BMC could email EVERY member in the Midland region, including all those in affiliated clubs (around 11,000 in total?) about 3-4 weeks before the area meeting with details of the meeting flier and agenda to try and encourage maximum attendance, rather than the area secretary just emailing to the 'select' hundred or so who'd given permission for their emails to be kept. However, nobody in the room appeared to have received an email from the BMC that had been promised which doesn't give confidence that detailed advanced publicity for area meetings would be guaranteed. John said he would take up the offer to talk to Jon over the phone before sending out any more Area Meeting reminders.

5. National Council:

5.1 Report from last meeting: Claudia Sarnar said she had taken the club affiliation issue raised at the last meeting to National Council and they have said they will do all they can to help clubs who ask for help in securing or maintaining affiliation.

Sport England had confirmed it will be giving funding again but nothing had yet arrived in BMC coffers. She pointed out that some of it will be ring fenced.

The Welsh Government is looking into countryside access with a view to trying to make the situation in Wales more like that in Scotland but there was no progress to report on this yet. Finally, the BMC would shortly be trialling a new 'incident reporting system'. The idea is that any individual could do this for accidents or near misses on a form designed for this purpose. The information would be moderated, possibly by a panel, in a sensitive way and the informant could then decide if it can be publicised to help inform or warn the wider BMC community. She said that the scheme will go live at some time in the future and that members should 'watch this space' as the system could be used to report incidents from years gone.

5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting: Nothing raised

6. 1 The BMC Strategic Planning process 2018-2020

Roger said he was pleased that all the planning issues had not submerged MOM2 which had raised almost £600,000. He then went through the Plan (Rev 4) slide that Andy projected to the meeting, pointing out that Phase 1 stretched over 2 years and was all about implementing the remaining ORG recommendations. Phases 2, 3 & 4 were each scheduled to last around 6 months and were to do with developing a plan for the future. Although these might seem tedious and rather boring it was essential to first agree on a vision and mission statement, then construct a 5 year plan to deliver this and finally flesh this out, especially regarding business details. With around 85,000 members currently, the BMC couldn't afford to operate as it had in the past when membership was much lower. To complete this planning the BMC would need input & feedback from individuals, areas and clubs. Andy Potter was keen to see how members would be involved and hopefully engaged and Brian Smith asked how the BMC was going to get the views of 85,000 members. Roger said that the area meetings would certainly play a role but with 11,000 members in the Midlands area and only 2 or 3 dozen at meetings clearly there is a need to go out beyond these by surveys or questionnaires, possibly online. Brian agreed that questionnaires were vital so that everyone at least has the opportunity to contribute even though only a proportion will use this. The 1st ORG survey produced around 3,000 replies but interest in the process appears to wane as there were only around 600 replies to the 2nd ORG consultation.

6. Organisational Development Group questions (item missing from Agenda)

Roger Fanner spoke to slides 1 & 5 from the set of 13 posted on the BMC website and mentioned that Gareth Pierce, a Welsh walker, is the new Chair of the Board of Directors.

He mentioned that the BMC want to keep control of competition climbing and this might necessitate setting up a 9th Workstream Group.

He said that the ODG hoped that the online update would enable members to discuss the group's work at the upcoming round of BMC Area Meetings so that each Area's National Council representatives could report to the next National Council meeting in December. Andy Brown asked how many people had actually looked at the BMC website in the last month? As show of hands suggested 50 – 60% but hardly any had seen the ODG update so it was impossible to give considered feedback. Brian Smith said that effective communication is more than just putting information on a website. It's all very well posting information but members have to be persuaded to go onto the website, then navigate to the relevant par, which is not easy on the BMC's complex homepage. John Edwards felt that some specific questions would have been more useful than a general request for comments. Matt Ramsey noted that in the recent eNewsletter sent to all members, the item relating to ODG requiring comments was hidden as 5th of 14 items and titled "Next steps after the 2018 AGM". The meeting was in agreement that if ODG seriously wanted members' feedback this should have been highlighted as the most prominent article. Niall Grimes suggested that mountaineering activities are the important thing to most members so that ODG issues have been de-prioritized due to ORG/ODG fatigue but he would feed back our concerns to the ODG. Communication by email seemed to be preferred by most members, although a link on the Facebook page would be useful to some. It was eventually agreed that people should look at the slides at home and email any comment to the area Secretary in the next few days so that they could be forwarded to our Council Representatives by 2nd December at the latest.

7. Any Other Business: Nil.

The meeting then went on to become the Annual General Meeting (see separate minutes).

8. Date & location of next meeting:

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd January 2019 at Old Edwardians Sports Club, Streetsbrook Road, Solihull, B90 3PE starting at 7.30pm,

The meeting closed at 9.20pm and refreshments were then taken.

Alex Roddie, who had travelled from Skegness to be at the meeting, then gave an extremely interesting account of how his interests had changed in the last decade from being a rock climbing mountaineer to an ultra-lightweight long distance trail walker in remote regions. Members were fascinated by some of the compromises and adjustments he had made to his kit after a successful but painful 17 day completion of the Cape Wrath Trail and marvelled that he could get his base weight for kit down to 8kg and less. This was very apparent from the varied range of questions he was asked at the end.

See www.alexroddie.com for more details.

Written by John Edwards