

BMC Cymru North Wales Area Meeting

22nd January 2019

Beacon Climbing Centre, Caernarfon, Gwynedd

MINUTES

Chair: Tim Jepson

1. Introduction

Introducing the new tripartite Secretariat: Neil Hockley, Tarquin Shipley, Steve Hobdell.

Neil – has already produced a newsletter,

Steve – happy to take minutes,

Tarquin – will be asked to book venues.

VOTE: New Secretariat arrangement approved? Yes, vote carried.

2. Apologies

Anthony Eccles, Andy Boorman, Calum Muskett, Mike Raine, Tarquin Shipley, Pat Littlejohn, Shirley Newton, Lun Roberts, Kate Worthington, Ross Worthington, Adam Wainwright & Sophie.

3. Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held at Gwesty Padarn, Llanberis on 21 November 2019 were accepted without any corrections or amendments.

4. Matters arising

Prosiect Carneddau

Many have expressed enthusiasm to meet with John Roberts (Project Development Manager) to discuss this project. Tim heard him lecture at a Plas-y-Brenin environmental symposium before Christmas. Unfortunately, John is very busy presently. Generally, the BMC should be involved/concerned with these types of projects, e.g. proposal for a waymarked path around the Carneddau. Will it attract large charity events? Additional mountain safety concerns? (Chris Lloyd, OVMRT).

Elfyn: A Carneddau guidebook could receive funding through the project. Recording & interpreting the climbing history of the Carneddau and local communities would meet one of the project's objectives. Elfyn will ask Mike Bailey for guidebook costings to include with the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) bid. However, the project group is currently struggling to pull the complex proposal together.

ODG Wales Priority

Mike Raine's question as to why 'Welsh' ODG issues might be dealt with less quickly than other ODG issues was taken to National Council by Dan Lane. Response was that the All-Wales group's Terms of Reference need to be confirmed, only then things can move on. An email from Gareth Pierce also expressed a view that it was not necessarily the case that 'progress on a Wales model' needed to be slow. Any resolutions related to Wales at the 2019 AGM would need to be presented to NC on Feb 9th.

To this end, Elfyn, Tim & Calum met to discuss a possible resolution about a Welsh Language Policy for BMC Cymru, but in the event, this was pre-empted by the BMC Board of Directors deciding to introduce a language policy/scheme as an operational matter anyway.

Future Meeting Venues

No venues for future meetings yet. **TJ to ask Tarquin to organise these.**
Suggestions? North coast for June meeting.

5. Local News – Dygwyddion Lleol

Welsh Climbing Championships – Sat 9th February

TJ asked whether members knew about this event taking place in our area. Very few!!
TJ to contact Zoe Spriggins (BMC Competitions Programme Manager) to ask how the area can support the event, as he hasn't been contacted by Zoe.
North Wales area currently has no Youth Co-ordinator to help.
Elfyn to use Facebook to ask for volunteer belayers and judges.
Two concerns: cost of entry to competition; competence of belayers.

BMC International Meet, 12-19 May (Ynys Ettws).

TJ has not been contacted about this BMC event taking place in North Wales.
Probably won't need more volunteers. If you're local, you don't have to be residential.
TJ and Elfyn to ask Becky McGovern how we can support the event.

It was suggested that internal communications between various areas of BMC work isn't good at present, but we should be proactive by building relationships year on year.
Fraser said that he would keep Tim informed of Academy developments.

Tremfest

Mike Raine unable to attend; no date yet confirmed - maybe early June.
Elfyn: BMC funding is tight, and events like this may be affected.

Eisteddfod in Llanrwst – 3-10 Awst

It has just been agreed that BMC will work in partnership with Clwb Mynyddda Cymru, Mountain Training, and Outdoor Partnership to operate a double or treble unit on the 'Maes'. Cost to BMC £1000. Should be good publicity for BMC Cymru.
SC4 will interview Eric Jones, Huw Brassington will lecture and there will be an organised walk from Caernarfon to Llanrwst.
Fluent Welsh speakers and learners would be welcome to help on the stand.

Email and Communications

Emma Travers is the BMC's Marketing and Events Co-ordinator and can help us with social media, i.e. our Facebook page
Newsletters ARE sent regularly, as emails, to ALL members. If you think you aren't receiving BMC Newsletters, check your spam and/or contact the Manchester office.

6. Access & Conservation

Generally

All details are in the newsletter on the AREA section of the BMC local area community site:
<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=4032>

Elidir Fawr bridge, Cwm Dudodyn

Still hoping to get this bridge replaced with volunteer, National Park and cash support. Snowdonia Society is to match-fund and fundraise. However, winter weather means it is not a current priority.

Craig y Forwyn

The owners, Hogans, are resubmitting an amended application to extend the caravan park under the cliff and have stated:
"We cannot allow climbing access at this time; also we are not in a position to consider the sale of the cliff."

Nesting Bird Restrictions, Gogarth

NBRs start on the 1st of February at Gogarth.

Revision of the restrictions is necessary for some areas, e.g. Blacksmith Zawn.

Lundy Island

There's a new warden for the Landmark Trust managing Lundy Island.

BMC (Elfyn) is contesting the Trust's plans to extend restrictions which would more or less stop climbing for all but one month of the year. Restrictions need to be evidence-based.

Craig Cywarch (South Snowdonia - De Parc Eryri)

Myfyr: The national park authority would like to replace a section of rotting wooden planks with recycled composite material. Planks provide a necessary path-erosion-stopping function.

The meeting felt this was an appropriate solution to the problem.

7. All-Wales Review Group update

All-Wales Review Group Membership

- Oli Burrows – Chair of De Gymru
- Huw Gilbert – chair of Mid Wales outreach group
- Will Kilner – National Council Rep for South Wales, and elected director of BMC.
- Elfyn Jones – Secretariat
- Calum Muskett – co-opted to discuss Language
- Peter Salenieks – attends South Wales area meetings, chair of BMC clubs committee
- Neil Hockley – co-opted for cost/benefit analysis expertise
- Lyn Robinson – BMC President
- Dave Turnbull – BMC CEO

Terms of Reference for the All-Wales Group

Still not yet completed. They have to be approved by National Council.

Tim believes that discussion of real issues affecting Wales is being frustrated by slow progress on the Terms of Reference.

Matrix for Wales

Elfyn has produced a draft matrix of interests, influences and shortcomings of the BMC in Wales.

The matrix is divided into 19 key areas.

When asked if anything was missing from those 19 areas, the members suggested that neither hill walking, nor mountain training had sufficient prominence.

It was noted that the officers do not want to break the categories down too finely as this causes duplication and confusion.

Q. where does **participation** come in?

Elfyn: The BMC has always represented *existing* hill walkers and climbers - it has not been in the articles that BMC would *promote* to non-climbers. However, this is contrary to funding from Sport England (funding to promote participation). This area is a fundamental concern of the BMC board.

Q. Where can people access the matrix to provide detailed comment?

Elfyn: The matrix is still a working/consultation document of the All-Wales group. It hasn't therefore yet gone public.

Tim will ask Will Kilner how best to make it available to those wishing to comment on it.

In the meantime, Tim is prepared to email the existing draft to anyone who requests it.

Q. What should be the **next steps**?

Youth - Andy Newton felt that the matrix did not accurately represent what was happening in Wales with respect to Youth. There was actually a lot going on.

Q. Should the BMC be encouraging the clubs to develop youth?

- Elfyn: Jane is very good at this. Some clubs don't want to, other clubs do. Some have age-based, or experience-based, entry criteria, which prevent youngsters from joining. Nowadays, social media allows individuals to form their own groupings, without the need of a club structure - the BMC needs to modernise too!
- Fraser: Climbing walls are effectively clubs in their own right. What James McHaffie is doing with the Youth Trad Meets is excellent. The challenge is to give youth members an opportunity to "take that next step" outside of climbing walls. .
- Steve Long: Doesn't think there's a 'vacuum' as expressed in the matrix. NICAS & OP are doing good job, as are others. However, BMC now chairs the UIAA Youth Commission (Mark Dennison) but none of this comes through to BMC Wales. Ken: NICAS is supported by the BMC.

Summary

Note: Members' input to the matrix is very much appreciated; but it is very difficult to bring it all together in a manageable form. Elfyn: it is a massive amount of work; and the All-Wales group is only a group within a group, within the BMC.

8. The Way Forward in Wales – Questionnaire results

The Way Forward in Wales - Questionnaire Results

Tim talked through the reasons for, and the results of, the 'Wales' questionnaire presented at the previous meeting. Those results are available on the BMC local area community website: <http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=4032>

Outcome?

Dan, Elfyn and Tim all felt that the questionnaire results were already being helpful as qualitative evidence, influencing the work of the Organisational Development Group (ODG) and National Council.

9. Welsh Language Scheme (Calum Muskett unable to attend)

Elfyn explained: BMC Cymru has no language policy at present, and translations are ad-hoc. Consequently, we're far behind similar organisations.

But, as reported above, the BMC Board will now develop a language policy 'as an operational matter'.

The scheme must be pragmatic, appropriate and reasonable, introduced progressively. Clwb Mynyddda Cymru should have a pivotal role.

10. Parking in Ogwen Valley at Nant Ffrancon

The parking at and around Ogwen Cottage at weekends is now dangerous. Often cars parked on the pavement for free, despite places in the paying car parks.

Our aim should be to maintain current levels of access for mountaineering. BMC is representing the needs of climbers/walkers/mountaineers. Idwal dog walkers are not the voice of BMC.

Elfyn: **There is an urgency for this:** Assembly Members and Councillors have become involved, Transport for Wales, etc. Something will be proposed in the short term.

Suggestions discussed:

- Park and Ride – like Llanberis/Nant Peris, which seems to be working well. Where would the park and ride be located in Bethesda? It needs to be a reliable/well-defined service. Buses in Nant Ffrancon are not good – there are about two a day!
- Make the path/road distinction better – why is the path so wide? Allow a metre of pathway on one side. Discussion about the legality of path-parking:

- If it's a pavement, you're allowed to park on it. You could be charged for obstruction, but nothing more.
- If it was illegal, they would have enforced it by now, like Pen Y Pass.
- If there is a double-white line down the middle, then it is a police issue.
- If parked on double-yellow, local council issue.
- Also, one of the bridges is the boundary between Gwynedd and Conwy, so parking penalties are not consistently enforced.
- Many years ago, there was a 'Green Key' scheme: the proposal was that all laybys would be closed, then people would have to use the buses. However, since then, bus services have suffered (for various reasons, political, economical and criminal). We're therefore in a potential situation where the laybys are closed, but a bus service doesn't last more than a few years.

11. Reports

Dan: National Council

- last meeting was about ODG (see below)
- Volunteer awards nominations are open to end of month
- BMC AGM will be in the Peak District: 31st March, Buxton.

Andy: Mountain Training

- New providers for the autumn, including rock skills 123.
- Rock climbing development instructor (single pitch leader) award is in development.
- Mountain training is reviewing its articles of association. Meeting at Siabod Cottage tomorrow.

12. Any Other Business

Tim expressed frustration at having received the following three issues by email from the Manchester Office within a couple of days of the meeting, allowing no time for proper preparation or discussion.

1. Governance – a 6-page document. The ODG is looking for feedback.

- Update available at <https://odg.thebmc.co.uk/hc/en-gb> email: odg@thebmc.co.uk
- All levels of feedback are valuable: critical and supportive!
- Dan said that he felt the ODG is doing a good job, and that the local area generally supports the ODG's efforts and work.

2. Proposed new post of deputy president: There's a perceived gap in interim governance. Therefore, it is proposed to create an elected deputy president role, initially for one year only. There are 3 options:

- do nothing (no post);
- agree post from National Council;
- agree post from membership at 2019 AGM.

Q: Why is this post needed? Dan: because there's so much work to do. Voluntary post for now, who can't be member of Board, and can't sit on National Council.

Q: Where are other officers voted in? Vice president – never had an AGM where voted on the board; The Board of directors are interviewed, but not voted in.

Decision: The meeting supports : 'Agree post from National Council'.

3. Subscriptions increase for 2020

- Reasons for a proposed increase were summarised to include: Realignment with inflation: Loss of insurance no claims rebate due to large accident claim: Partial ODG implementation in 2019/2020
- BMC member Insurance was explained in detail:
 - i. This insurance is public liability/third party insurance, including a small amount for death

- or disablement as standard.
- ii. It is applicable for club members too.
- iii. There are some areas like Cheddar, where you need to be insured.
- Full membership rates (family/club rates similarly increasing)
 - Current: £33.95
 - proposed level 1 without ODG: £38.95
 - proposed level 2 with partial ODG: £39.95

Q. What would subs be with with full ODG? Tim: estimate at an additional £1. The “partial” amount will fund what gets done in year 1; the remainder would be funded in subsequent years.

Opinion was divided: from “remarkable value, less than a pint of beer”, to “Disagree: 15%-20% increase is not proportional year-on-year.”

Comment from Andy: subs have risen little over recent years by comparison to inflation and to other bodies. Since 2009 – over 10 years - if increased according to inflation, subs would be 38% higher, but they’ve only gone up by 20% over that period, well below inflation, also below all other bodies in Europe and other sports.

Q. What is the BMC reserve? Unknown, but it has dropped due to lack of funding, and ODG.

VOTE: The meeting voted on the subscriptions increase proposal:

- Do Nothing - 0
- Proposed level 1 - 0
- **Proposed level 2 - 23 - majority**
- Abstentions - 4

Meeting Closed at 22:02