

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

Lakes Area Meeting

Wednesday - 30 January 2019 – 7.30pm
PENRITH LEISURE CENTRE – PENRITH

MINUTES

Present:

Mike Parsons – AC – Patterdale (Chair)
Dave Turnbull - BMC
Marian Parsons – AC – Patterdale
Steve Scott – SMC/CC/FRCC – Kendal
Nigel Jenkins – EVMC – Penrith
Laurie Priebe – TVCC – Penrith
David Montieth – CC – Penrith
Dave Bodecott – EVMC/FRCC - Motherby
Stuart Smith – PMRT – Greystoke
Tony Mawer – EVMC – Penrith
Mike Tinnion – CMC – Penrith
Cathy Hooper – EVMC – Penrith
John Holden – CMC – Penrith
Belinda Lloyd – EVMC – Penrith
Eric Parker – EVMC – Penrith
Cressida Allwood – Individual Member – Kendal
Ron Kenyon – EVMC/FRCC – Penrith (Sec)
John Porter – AC – Caldbeck

Apologies:

Alison, Woodall, Rick Graham, Dan Robinson, Fiona Sanders, Justin Shiels, Anne Salisbury, James Bumby, Rob Lewis.

1. **Welcome and introductions –**
 - By **Mike Parsons** as chair
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting –**
 - Minutes agreed - Proposed by **Steve Scott**, Seconded by **John Holden**
3. **Matters arising from those minutes not included in the Agenda.**
 - No matters arising – all in agenda
4. **Feedback session –**
 - New style of Newsletter produced.
 - There are 2500 members in Lakes area with 1600 being emailed. There had been a high 30% opening rate of Newsletter with varying rates of opening – 7% > high 30% openings for each subjections
 - Information re meeting – some from BMC notification – others by local contact/email
 - Still work in progress

5. **BMC National Council Report, by NC member**

- **Mike Parsons** reported about long day of NC meetings with several hours of reading beforehand.
- Report back of specialists committees (12 committees) with short discussion after each.
 - Peter Judd of Hillwalking Committee produced most discussion.
 - MT(UK) – with written then verbal report. Indication that during its existence 1.3 million people had been “touched” by MT(UK) – either as guide, leader or person being led.
 - Looking for more help on these committees
- Looking to bring out Annual Report, Proposals for the Future and then get Approval from Board to go to AGM.

6. **Organisation Development Group (ODG).**

- The ODG was set up post BMC AGM 2018 to advise how the BMC board and National Council should take forward the 51 recommendations of the ORG in Nov 2017.
- **Mike Parsons** (deputing for Fiona Sanders ODG member) reported -
 - Specific mention of item 50 – being “Volunteer Induction Programme”
 - 8 Workstreams over range of areas.
 - Membership Engagement is one particular area -
 - Lot is happening – eNews is part of change
 - Using systems at a local level
- **Steve Scott** mentioned link to ODG@BMC – with information on all aspects
- **Dave Turnbull** indicated about lots of ongoing changes
 - Main area regarding “Governance”
 - New Terms of Reference
 - Updated Constitution coming together
 - Paul Evans – Report on Digital Engagement
 - Rab Carrington – looking at Competition element
 - Will Kilner – looking at Structure in Wales
 - Dave Turnbull – with group looking at Operations and Finance
 - Gareth Pearce – looking at Staffing Structure
 - Strategy of BMC – now looking to 2020 – 12 committees and Terms of Reference
 - Board of Director – chair – Gareth Pearce
 - President (Lynn) chairs the NC and AGM
 - BMC has 32 staff and 150 volunteers working with BMC and feedback to workstream 8, membership engagement.
 - DT feels needs to be realistic and not raise expectations too high – he feels less in control and has concerns – hopefully will get 90% of what is being sought.
 - BMC is different from many other national bodies – as National Body covering a wide spread of activities (Climbing (Crag (Trad and Sport),Bouldering, Walls etc), Mountaineering and Hillwalking); Environmental Body and also Business element with insurance.

7. **Proposal by Lynn Robinson for the Role of an Interim BMC Deputy President.**

- Lynn as President feels there is need for a Deputy President to help with duties.

- Candidates for the Deputy President role shall not be a Director of the BMC and once appointed will not be a member of the Board. Lynn President has suggested 3 possible actions
 1. Do nothing (no post)
 2. Agree that an interim Deputy President role is required and be voted on from within National Council
 3. Agree that an interim Deputy President role is required and be voted on, by the members, at the 2019 AGM.
- Point discussed as follows
 - Positions of Vice President had been got rid of. Lynn has taken a sabbatical year off work and feels need someone to Deputise as necessary
 - There is no time for creation of position and election of Deputy President at the AGM and looking for NC to vote someone as part from within NC or from Members – then for creation of post and election from members at the 2020 AGM.
- Proposal put forward by **John Porter** that the meeting agrees that
 - The President needs help with her tenure in that position (especially at the moment)
 - The position of interim Deputy President should be investigated by NC and action taken accordingly probably (2) of the proposed possible actions.
 - The position of Deputy President should be created and candidates put forward for election, at the 2020 AGM, assuming that the position is agreed.
This was agreed by the meeting.

Action - To be taken forward to the NC Meeting

8. Cumbria Bolt Fund (CBF)

- **Ron Kenyon** explained
 - The creation of the CBF and recent discussions to amend and agree new constitution.
 - CBF was formed by the BMC Lakes area and is answerable to the Lakes area for any changes etc
- **Steve Scott** also explained
 - Need to firm up the constitution which amongst other things states the position re (a) replacement of old bolts; (b) bolting of new routes and (c) (important for the new Sports and Slate guide, due in 2019) the retro bolting of established routes.
 - Regarding retro bolting it is evident that there are a lot of routes which are “sportingly bolted” from an era of 20 – 25 years ago, which is out of tune with modern bolting practices. Some routes should not be retro bolted (e.g. Life in the Fast Lane and Stage Fright at Hodge) whilst other could be candidates for retro bolting (e.g. Anvil Arête at Tilberthwaite) – however any retro bolting should be agreed on a route by route basis by the Lakes area committee
- **Revised CBF Constitution**
 - This had been displayed on the CBF website and though not everyone had seen it, it was agreed to put to the vote whether or not to agree the constitution ... and separately consideration will be given to retro bolting of particular routes at future meetings.
 - Position re vote to adopt new constitution as follows –
 - 8 - in favour
 - 0 - against
 - 5 - abstentions

- **Funding by BMC for CBF**
 - It was mentioned that the BMC had not paid anything to CBF since 2012. It is understood that the BMC had supplied bolts
 - **Dave Turnbull** indicated that between 2007 – 2012 the BMC had paid £50,000 towards rebolting etc

9. **Lakeland Paths project** (Fix the Fells (FtF), Mend our Mountains)

- Mike Parsons updated the meeting
 - At June 2018 meeting issue raised, by **Doug Scott**, re unsuitability of paths for knobbly knees.
 - **Nick Colton** indicated as linked with Mend the Mountains then BMC should have a say re structure etc.
 - A meeting was arranged with FtF, Rob Dyer and Carey Davies to check position refunding -
 1. FtF – partners - NT, LDNPA, Natural England, Friends of the Lakes and Lake District Foundation
 2. Fund 1 – applied for £6m under Rural Payments Agency - £3m awarded with £650k to FtF which was ring fenced to Storm Desmond related damage on fells and remaining £2.3m to LDNPA for Lower Paths.
 3. BMC looking to raise £1m from Mend our Mountains spread over the UK National Parks
 4. Some quite heated feelings from various quarters about paths – walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders have differing needs and opinions,
 5. Some people believe BMC were building the paths – and not just funding.
 - Later meeting in Patterdale area attended by **Richard Fox** and **Joanne Birkenshaw** of FtF.
 1. Focused on water – footfall is an issue but water is key.
 2. Went for walk up Boredalehead path
 3. Historical situation re path construction systems which has evolved over time.
 4. Users prefer gravel paths rather than stone paths
 - Making comparisons with path construction in the **Alps** with more zigzags.
 - Also there are differences with construction in **Scotland**.
 - **Mike Parsons** commented about use of volunteers, as with JMT on Glenridding Common – **Ron Kenyon** however indicated that FtF volunteers used in path construction as with the path around the east side of Gowbarrow – so sound similar to JMT.
 - **Issues of Charity Walks such as on 3 Peaks**
 1. Could look for a moratorium on charity walks
 2. At BMC symposium looked to getting contribution from charity fund raisers – but this does not seem to be happening.
 3. Steve Scott indicated that many (most) of the people doing charity challenges such as the 3 Peaks are unaware of the collective damage and also carbon footprint effect of the challenges.
 4. Also for many organisers – this is a business !
 5. Graham Uney said many in North Wales did not want to contribute towards damage.

- 6. Should look to include something the Challenge Packs about the collective damage
- Need for education for mountain users of the damage being done.
 - 1. Get the BMC to put its weight behind such education
- Erosion awareness courses for Course providers.
- Issues of path maintenance as follows –
 - 1. Savings
 - 2. Preventative
 - 3. More cross drains
 - 4. Grazing of fells by sheep – now World Heritage Site for Cultural Heritage based round Herdwick Sheep – so politically a no go area !
- The BMC Access Reps Conference in November 2019 is about Footpaths – so logical to include FtF etc and Lakes position at the Conference.
- Suggestion to gets FtF to come along to meetings.
 - 1. Also mentioned useful invite representative of other agencies and organisation to future meetings.
 - 2. Look to create good rapport with FtF

10. Access updates and news - James Bumby - Nothing to report

11. Environmental and Landscape issues.

- Road closure update on west side of Thirlmere etc
 - **Ron Kenyon** reported that the road, on the west side, is now open from the south end of the lake to Armboth Car Park.
 - 1. Trees cleared above Dob Wood Car Park and along the road.
 - 2. Lots of trees still uncleared around Launchy Gill and so no access for probably some time.
 - 3. Lakeside path open from Armboth Car Park south.
 - Extensive work still to be done from Armboth Car Park to Shoulthwaite valley, affecting access to Raven Crag area. Affected by Larch Disease – 150,000 trees have to be removed.
 - Issue of road over Dam – with road closure whilst above and issue of width etc
 - Feeling – would appreciate more information to outside world from UU re situation with timelines etc
- Traffic and Car Parks in Lakes
 - Email received from Tom Burditt of NT (Borrowdale) – no specific update on parking at Seathwaite except thank to BMC etc with getting message out re Remembrance Sunday. Next steps are to continue to look at (with Highways and LDNPA) whether any more small measures can help to stop parking on the corners and very narrow verges that contribute to the road becoming blocked; rather than any more drastic change. The Park are still wanting to look in more depth at traffic issues at the head of the Borrowdale valley and how they could be solved – they are doing a traffic management plan but don't know about timescales or process for that – the next meeting of their little group is 7th Feb.
 - The issue of parking in the Lakes is much bigger than Borrowdale and growing worse with time and the WHS status – need short to medium term solutions – not 10 year ideas.
 - Issue of resurrecting the Penrith/Keswick Railway mentioned from rail point of view and reinstating the bike route.

- Better infrastructure in the Alps – British rail systems are gear towards commuter transport – not visitors.
- Idea of bed tax for the Lakes was mentioned –
 - Estimated 20 million bed nights in the Lakes (hotels, B&B, huts etc) and at 50p per night – that gives £10m – can vary amount (could be 20p or 40p etc) depending on overall need.
 - Funding available for National Park
 - Free buses for everyone
 - Path Maintenance
 - TIC's
 - Funding car parks
 - Funding local housing
 - But not promotion
 - Maintained by responsible partnership – similar to FtF.

12. **Clubs report. Pete Glasper and Ged Campion** – no report

13. **Hill Walking Representative and Hill Walking Issues**

- **Stuart Smith** reported –
 - He attended the BMC Hill Walking Symposium Day 1
 - Lot of talk about rewrite of legislation and Brexit
 - Hillwalking items
 - Minutes will be available.
 - Met with Peter Judd – similar problems and with bikes.
 - Day 2 was more practical with walks.
 - Mend the Mountains – raise £600k towards £1m so far – finishes in March 2019.
 - Controversy with Scafell Pike path – feel should be more contributed from other users (charity challenges)
 - All beneficial
 - Looking for ideas beyond.
 - Hillwalking implementation group – one of 12 in BMC – promote stats with big proportion of membership are hillwalkers.
 - Hillwalking day at BMC AGM weekend on Saturday.

14. **BMC Subscriptions - 2020 – notification of need to increase subscriptions at 2019 AGM**

- **Dave Turnbull** reported
 - Increase due to large pending insurance claim in connection with climbing wall accident.
 - Situation changing almost daily – with recent indications of insurance premiums there have been changes to two subs options, proposed for 2020, to the following, in order to deal with this situation:
 1. + £3.50 (clubs) and + £7.00 (individuals) to break even in 2020, or
 2. + £4.00 (clubs) and + £8.00 (individuals) to include provision for implementing some of the ODG recommendations.
 - Currently £2.50 (clubs) and 5.00 (individuals) is paid for the insurance element of BMC subs
 - Needs continuous review in the future linked with claims and premiums
 - Need to emphasise proper care at climbing wall and onerous on instructors at climbing walls.

- Look at areas covered by policy – e.g. climbing walls – against which many BMC members just climb on climbing walls.
- There had been a move, in the past, by insurance companies that all climbers should wear climbing helmets – but fought against this and leave to personal choice.
- The policy covers all members – not just climbers.
- Updated paper prepared for NC for discussion etc at NC meeting
- Area Meeting appraised of situation

15. Any Other Business.

- Copies of the BMC Winter Guide were available at the meeting to collect.
- **Ron Kenyon** – reminded attendees of the BMC Youth Meet on weekend of 5 – 7 July 2019 at Rawhead Hut in Langdale – open to youngsters aged 12 – 17 and looking for adults to help please contact Ron accordingly – email - ron@jaggedlakes.plus.com
- **Belinda Lloyd** commented that she was disappointed that there was no mention in the Access Report of the access issues on many crags in the Eden Valley – **Ron Kenyon** indicated these were long-going and intractable issues revolving mainly round the fact that many crags in the Eden Valley are not on CROW land and is up to the landowners for access

Next Meetings Wednesday 5th June 2019 – Kendal Climbing Wall

- Also - 30th March 2019 - BMC AGM - Buxton.

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The BMC was founded in 1944 with membership open to all, "regardless of race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or socioeconomic status".

<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/a-brief-history-of-the-bmc>