

BMC LAKES AREA MEETING

21 November 2018, Eagel & Child Inn, Staveley

MINUTES

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** as for AGM.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** were proposed as correct by Justin Shiels, Eden Valley MC, seconded by John Holden, Carlisle MC.
3. **Matters arising from those minutes not included in the agenda**
 - Fiona Sanders recommends all present to use Lakes area BMC Facebook (BMC Lakes Area) and asked they post regular updates and invite friends.
 - CarPark crag: due to be surveyed.
 - Thirlmere road/path closures: Paul Phillips (of United Utilities) is keeping us informed as to access progress. Rob Dyer, BMC Access officer, is to try and push faster progress. **Action: MP to follow up with RD after NC meeting.**
4. **BMC National Council report:** by area reps Fiona Sanders and Mike Parsons
 - **Mike:** gave a short overview of the key happenings in 2018 including the BMC AGM in June and our Sept decision to revitalise Lakes area BMC meetings to ensure we are more representative and inclusive of all activities and people.
 - **Fiona:** 2019 BMC AGM will be at 12 noon on 31st March in Buxton. All resolutions and nominations should be in by end Feb. 2019. Sport England will provide some funding now the new Articles of Association have been sorted out. Our membership numbers are now 85,345.
5. **The Organisational Development Group (ODG):** was set up post BMC June AGM (2018) to advise the BMC board and National Council on how the broad recommendations should come together. Fiona Sanders is a member of 'ODG' and our BMC Lakes area group, so explains progress.
 - ODG: split into 8 work streams, some operational ones under Dave Turnbull. National Council reorganisation. A new name is being sought; is 'Members' Assembly' a good title? Main changes to Articles of Association: thresholds for resolutions, and details of AGM. At present, 45 days' notice required for proposed changes/resolutions. It was suggested that this be reduced to 14 days. John H, James B and others think 14 days too short.
 - At present, it requires a minimum of 25 members to propose a resolution. This number probably fine but now presented via National Council rather than needing an EGM. It is proposed to increase the number of people who can call an EGM, to 1% of the membership.
 - Point 1 – Membership engagement is one of the work streams (WS8) and is considering how we can use electronic means to engage with our members in a local area - this will be particularly useful for the Lakes as per our discussion about where to locate meetings.

- Point 2 – accountability of area officers - at present there is no mechanism to remove officers by their area - this is now going to be included - 25 is minimum number of members to raise a resolution.
- National Council reconstitution. Fiona: At present, each local area fields two reps. It is recommended to improve representation of differing activities that there is a shift to just one vote per local area (but two reps may attend). Chairs of specialist committees will be given a vote once the review as per the ODG requires. There may be a new name for NC now that the President sits on the board and the NC will be there to represent the members: 'Members' Assembly'. MCP thanked FS for all her input and work on these complex issues.

6. Ideas to take the BMC Lakes Area Meetings forward

Newsletters, agendas, communication principles, recruiting more people.

- 2500 BMC members live in Lakes. 1600 are on mailing list for new newsletter and there is an opening rate of 30% (which is rated for high bulk email.) All files and documents will be obtainable via the BMC community site - this is because it is for members only - different to our Facebook group which is open.
- MCP: agreed a short friendly agenda to be continued and the detailed one supplied at the meeting. Can be on website link again. Also, on FB page. Also minutes of previous meetings. Password protected area can contain more sensitive items. **Action FS to try and find out how other folk outside our area can sign up for the newsletter (they would not need to be BMC members).**

7. Access updates and news: overview by James Bumby

- **Thirlmere:** remedial work may last until late April. We have tried hard to apply further pressure for reopening sooner. **Action: Rob Dyer was asked to request that the BMC CEO send an official letter pushing for an improvement on this opening date.**
- **Walna Scar:** the new car park is happening. Places will be marked out and limited. Gate will not be locked, so 24hr access is okay. Moves continue to try to persuade them to keep charges down.
- **Castle Rock:** crack still widening. (Update: now split off at last. Stay clear until that new face area declared stable.)
- **Raven Crag, Langdale:** Abseil point in place alongside Centipede (to R of original descent as you look up.) 50m rope just okay but 60m better.
- **Chapel Head Scar:** Rob (BMC): people should check on the RAD (regional access database) to find out where rare birds are nesting.
- **E-bikes:** James: attended meeting on use of fells by various user groups, re erosion etc. The subject of powered mountain bikes came up. There could usefully be a meeting between path mending groups and users such as electric bike riders. Obviously more erosion is likely when bikes are powered, plus folk can more easily access high and/or remote areas where they may get out of their comfort zone without the necessary skills and equipment. See James' report below.

8. Environmental and Landscape issues

- James Bumby reported on two important conferences he has attended. Mountain Liaison Group (MLG) is a group that meets to discuss the bigger impact of mountain activities on the Lake District National Park. Current representatives

have attended by invitation from the National Trust, the National Park Authority, English Nature, Ministry of Defence, BMC, Fell Runners Association, Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres, Institute for Outdoor Learning, Fix the Fells and the John Muir Trust. Successful projects that have been directed by this group have included the White Guide to Winter Climbing. The group is currently re-establishing its purpose and direction.

- **E-bikes:** concerns were raised by this MLG meeting about electric mountain bikes and their increased range: i.e. moderately fit cyclists can now cycle up Helvellyn on a bigger, heavier bike. This will undoubtedly lead to yet more environmental damage. The MLG is looking to appoint a special interest group including those with environmental knowledge and responsibility, bridleway repairers and the mountain biking fraternity (clubs, retail owners, course providers, British Cycling etc) to explore ways forward.
- **Contamination of lakes/tarns:** harmful stuff is easily spread between bodies of water. There is concern about this and folk are asked to take the necessary precautions.
- **Bird nesting / climbing restrictions:** we reviewed the success of this year's breeding. No disturbances reported: thanks to everyone for respecting these agreements. Kendal MC turned up to a meet at Stonestar to find fledged Peregrine chicks at the foot of the crag. The chicks were late due to the cold spring. The meet was diverted to a different crag: brilliant. But we did get a great photo of the fledglings.
- **Bird populations:** declining numbers of peregrines, ravens, ring ouzels etc. Peregrine and raven numbers are increasing nationwide, but decreasing in the Lakes. Probably due to a lack of food. e.g. fewer sheep on the fells means less carrion for the ravens. We are finding it harder to get accurate information about these birds and their nesting. We do get feedback from climbers, but obviously the birds are nesting on non-climbing crags as well. We are hoping to put an article into Summit magazine and on the website asking for climbers and walkers to help with reporting.
- **Lakeland paths:** were raised as an issue at our June meeting. 'Yes' it was agreed we should have a say in how and where they are built because of the 'Mend our Mountains' BMC raising £1m for Fix the Fells, campaign. This has led to two meetings so far. Rob Dyer, BMC access officer reported on first stage findings so far. This will be used to create a first reports as a news item. The BMC campaign has created some misunderstandings about the role BMC plays (which is fund raising only and not path building) where the total money (and BMC funds are a small part) comes from and where and why allocated. £6m damage was caused by Storm Desmond in 2015. £3m has been provided by DEFRA, only £650,000 however for upland paths. 330 paths/ 640km length are involved. Full report to follow.

The second meeting was an onsite visit to look at practical aspects of path construction with Fix the Fells at Boredale Hause path in Patterdale. It must be recorded that there are some strong, sometimes polarised views about the exact methods used by the path builders and widely varying reactions from different user groups, mountain bikers, walkers, runners etc. However, we are creating a friendly two-way dialogue with Fix the Fells and will report further. Thanks to Rob Dyer and Andrew Bisset (our Lakes area footpath specialist) for their efforts and input so far. John Holden expressed interest in being involved.

- **Traffic and car parks in the Lakes:** Seathwaite (Borrowdale) road head. NT thanked us for encouraging those wishing to attend the Remembrance Day service on Great Gable to park at Honister and elsewhere and to not cause obstruction at Seathwaite.

9. Clubs report

We do not at present have a Clubs representative but new recruits to be announced shortly.

10. Hill Walking Representative and hill walking issues

Stu Smith is going to Hill Walking Symposium organised by the BMC, weekend 23/24th Nov in Derbyshire at Lose Hill Hall.

Action: Stu S will send report for use as news items and report next meeting.

11. Cumbria Bolt Fund

Dan Robinson (chair) and Ron Kenyon (treasurer) were absent so Fiona Sanders gave us an update - Dan intends updating the CBF constitution and advise all via FB page and CBF website <http://www.cumbriaboltfund.co.uk>. Project proposals are welcome (adhering to current practise/guidelines). Best to contact Dan in winter season when he is more available.

- 12. Rendez Vous Hautes Montagnes:** meet in July 2019 - Stella Adams: asked FS to mention about RHM - support for women who climb. They will hold a gathering in Langdale in July 2019, and they need to hire a large marquee as a meeting place. Can they apply for help/money from the BMC? Various ideas were suggested about who, locally, might lend or hire them something suitable but in the end Ann Salisbury proposed supporting their request for money, and Justin Sheils seconded this. It was carried.

- 13. AOB:** Should we do anything about the Honister zip wire which has now received planning permission despite the mountainside being in an SSSI (where rare and endangered arctic alpine plants might be damaged)? Also the noise/extra traffic/spoiling the peace/creating a funfair atmosphere etc. Friends of the Lake District have lodged an appeal against it. John Holden (Ulverston – FRCC): proposed that we send a letter of objection against and condemning the planning permission. A vote was taken: 12 for, 2 against, so the motion was carried.

Action Rob Dyer will follow up with the BMC Manchester to act on on this

14. Next meeting

- **Wednesday 30 January 2019:** location to be advised, but North Lakes for sure.
- **Other 2019 meetings:** BMC AGM, 30 March, Buxton

Meeting agenda was completed by 9:30 and the meeting was closed.

Minutes by Marian Parsons (standing in for Ron Kenyon who is away on holiday)