

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 20 November 2019 Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Present: Andy Potter (Chair & Bowline Club), John Edwards (Sec & West Brom MC), David Jones (West Brom MC), Phil Simister (Solihull MC), Jane Thompson (BMC Clubs & Volunteers Officer), Richard Law (Wrekin MC), Jo Dennis (Solihull MC), Stuart Webb (MAM & Fell & Rock CC), Hazel Jonas (Fell & Rock CC), Chris Hemming (individual member) **(10)**

1. Welcome & Apologies: At 7.40pm Andy opened the meeting with 9 present (5 is stated as quorum). Apologies had been received from Andy Railton, Claudia Sarner & Roger Fanner.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting: Amendments:

The meeting venue was The Free@Last, Nechells Park Road, B7 5PR, not Old Edwardians.

4.3 The climbing wall was Warwick University's in Coventry. Once it was pointed out that the previous meeting's argument about shortlisting had been mentioned in the minutes (item 6 2nd para) as well as in the Area Report, the minutes were accepted as a good record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere: None.

4. Reports from Area Representatives

4.1 Access East: Andy Railton had emailed to say there were still access issues at Charnwood Quarry and there is now also an access issue at Cademan Woods where there are bouldering opportunities. This has mainly occurred through MTBs creating trails in the woods on what is private land, but a couple of climbers were rude to the land owner. He is trying to manage this locally through a climber who knows the owner.

4.2 Access West: Richard Law said he had not been out actively searching for problems since the last meeting and nobody had reported any to him.

4.3 Climbing Walls: Flash Bouldering are offering a free first climb to BMC members. Warwick University are consulting on-line about charging for parking at their Climbing Wall. It is currently free to park there and will hopefully remain so if enough people make their views known.

4.4 Youth: As indicated in the minutes of the last meeting, Claudia is organising the Midland rounds of the Youth Climbing Series next year and will need the support of members on the Saturdays for belaying, judging etc. Andy said he will put the dates and venues on the Area Facebook page. Plans for a day event outdoors are also continuing.

4.5. Hill Walking: David Jones reported that there will be another Hill Walking weekend symposium next year, this time at Ambleside on 14-15 March. As with the first such event, this will include organised walks, conservation work and evening speakers. The group are also looking to get some events in more southerly parts of the country. At the HWIG meeting in September a Peak District rep proposed that National Council start to implement parts of the strategic plan and this was passed: 18 For, 0 Against. It was reported that there were as yet no plans to replace Carey Davies and that Roger Fanner had agreed that it didn't make sense to refill certain posts until the Strategic Plan is clearer.

4.5. Club Issues: Andy Potter said that BMC insurance guidelines for clubs & individuals have been clarified and will be published soon via website and email. He felt that clubs will be better represented in the new BMC structure than before. There is a day workshop for club committee members in Birmingham on 8 December and a couple of weekends to help competent members who take novices out on hills and crags, both at Plas y Brenin and heavily subsidised by the BMC. These are Winter Skills on 1-2 February and Hill Walking, Scrambling & Single pitch climbing on 16-17 May.

5. National Council

5.1 Report from last meeting: Neither of the councillors were present but it was confirmed that the issue of short-listing candidates prior to elections, which had been so contentious at our last meeting, had been discussed at length at National Council. They have taken on board the need for transparency.

5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting: None were raised.

6. The election of the Midlands Area Committee then took place (see separate minutes) and the meeting then adjourned for refreshments for 15 minutes or so.

7. BMC Volunteer Awards: Jane said that up to three awards could be presented at the AGM weekend during the President's Dinner; the George Band Award for exceptional service to the BMC had been running for many years but that this was the third year when the Young Volunteer of the Year (for those under 25 years old) and the Rehan Siddiqui Award (for improving an aspect of equality) would be presented. She said that information & proposal forms were available on the BMC website <https://thebmc.co.uk/bmc-volunteer-awards> and urged members to think of any suitable nominees, who would need a proposer and a seconder. The deadline for all nominations is 31 March 2020. Some had been received incompletely filled. It is essential all sections of the forms are completed as HQ may well not have heard of the individuals or what they had done and it was important that their actions were considered anonymously.

8. BMC Strategic Plan 2020-2024: Nothing to report, although David Jones reported that the large amount of paperwork on this that was presented at the last meeting had been circulated to its members by West Bromwich MC.

9. Organisational Development Group: It is hoped to start signing various work streams off and this may involve consulting with the membership first, although with some it makes more sense to go to the Board first and then the membership. Much of this will happen over the next couple of quarters. Richard Law felt that engagement of members might be improved if such consultation and request for membership input was done through a separate loose insert sheet in Summit that would hopefully catch members attention.

10. Any Other Business: The poor attendance at this meeting was noted – especially disappointing when BMC has stated that it is looking at ways to try and make the Area meetings more effective. Several attendees said they had not received individual notifications of the time and place of this meeting. It was agreed that it might be better to go back to the old system of Area Secretary informing those members in the area who had given him their GDPR consent and try to ensure there is a speaker at the next meeting to improve attendance. Another suggestion was that every affiliated club should have BMC Matters on its committee meeting agendas as the membership secretaries should be getting updates and information that could usefully be shared.

11. Date & location of next meeting:

The next meeting will be held on a Wednesday in mid March 2020, most likely at Old Edwardians Sports Club B90 3PE starting at 7.30pm; speaker: to be decided.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Minutes written by John Edwards.