



BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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DE CYMRU / SOUTH WALES ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting held online
On Monday 26 April 2021

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Elfyn Jones, Luke Allum, CJ Griffiths.

A quorum was present in accordance with Article 28.6.1 of the British Mountaineering Council's articles of association (the "Articles").

2. Acceptance of previous meeting minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 22 February 2021, a draft of which had been posted on the BMC website were noted. A minor spelling correction to section 3.8 in relation to auks (rather than orcs) was noted.

3. Agricultural White Paper

Brân Devey from Ramblers Cymru gave an update on the Agricultural White Paper in relation to access. There is a push to subsidies being conditional on access to land.

This will likely be a large campaign following the Welsh Government elections.

4. Updates

Lynn introduced Eben Muse as the BMC Cymru Policy & Campaigns officer for Wales; Brân and Eben will plan to meet shortly.

Craig-y-Nos – Matt Woodfield updated on an escalating issue with an agitated landowner, and incorrect signage. This has been passed to Emma and she is in touch with the Rights of Way Officer at BBNP.

4.1. **Lynn Thompson** (BMC President) –

Virtual AGM on 15 May, look out for the emails and have your voice by voting. Votes are due to take place regarding making the Members Council more representative.

A significant number of films were entered to the Women in Adventure film competition – check out YouTube -

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTodUXkQjZwwAhawFfig7A3KrgZMvV2wx>

4.2. **BBNPA Pen y Fan Closure FOI response** –

BMC Cymru had sent a Freedom of Information request to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) regarding the decision to close the central Beacons around Pen y Fan including to those on foot. The complicated email trail disclosed in response seemed to show that in effect the closure was enacted at the request of the police and supported by local councillors.

It was noted that BMC Cymru intentions were trying to ensure that proper processes are followed rather than knee-jerk reactions.

Following questions it was clarified that this was about the closure of rights of way to local users, not the prohibition of travel or closure of car parks.

Concerns were raised about car parking at honeypot sites due to the rise in “staycations”, and what can be done to distribute walkers away from the honeypot sites, or whether this will displace a problem to new places.

There need to be conversations about sustainable tourism going forward.

Liz added the communications that have been taking place by Pembrokeshire National Park and partners.

Martin Skinner – raised the query of a “Sherpa” park and ride from Merthyr and Brecon. **Action for Emma and Elfyn** to take forward.

4.3. **Gower** (Stuart Burns) –

Apologies for not being present at past meetings. Generally ticking over. Kestrels nesting at Trial Wall. Two chough nests at Southgate reported by a bird watcher. Always check for the latest agreement on RAD.

4.4. **Pembrokeshire** (Steve Quinton) –

No major problems. New restriction due to choughs at Mewsford, include popular route Daydreams – indicated on cliff top and RAD. Filmed next version of Respect the Rock video, due to be published shortly.

Range West is now a lot easier - briefings are now online, on demand

<https://www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales/things-to-do/outdoor-activities/castlemartin-range-recreational-access-brief/> - the slideshow has no sound. You must PRINT

and SIGN the access request form and take it to the Guard Room.
Downloadable guidebook supplement on the CC website <https://www.climbers-club.co.uk/pembroke-supplement-2020/>

4.5. **South East** (Eben Muse) –

Coed Ely – Negotiations with the landowner are ongoing.

Cwm Dimbath – Site visit done to review damage. A definitive survey will be undertaken, including a review of the bat situation.

New job – busy with the election coming up, promoting the manifesto. Based in Cardiff and engaging with the Senedd and politicians.

Organised hustings - <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-senedd-hustings-wales-election-access>

Dorian congratulated Eben on the new role.

Some support will still be possible, but a new volunteer is now required to take on this

John Harwood requested updates on Cefn Coed and Mount Pleasant – no change to Cefn Coed. Peter Sheppard reported 3rd party information that the landowner may have changed and will follow this up.

Llangattock – query re lower-offs. There have been various differing views over the years. **Action – John and Matt** to do a crag walk-through to update the guidebook and view what routes might be suitable for lower-offs. Matt would be able to run a midweek workshop if people were interested but weekends are at a premium until the autumn.

4.6. **Hillwalking** (Emma Davies) –

Gwent Mountaineering Club (GMC) have done a lot of letter-writing about off-road motorbikes. The police have been active and made some arrests.

A lot of poorly-prepared people are using key sites, but other than that the area is generally quiet.

4.7. **Climbing walls** (CJ Griffiths) –

Unable to join due to Zoom issues

4.8. **Clubs** (Peter Salenieks) – Very busy with Zoom calls. Looking to review the BMC guidance on re-opening club huts. Q&A last week on restarting club meets. Putting together a proposal for a campaign on recruitment.

4.9. **National Council** (CJ/Steve) –

Preparations for AGM papers. Task and finish group looking at the role of President. The situation around youth co-ordinator roles is being clarified.

4.10. **Mountain Training** (Matt Woodfield) –

No meetings have taken place since the last Area meeting. Courses now re-starting. Club members training - <https://thebmc.co.uk/training-essentials>

4.11. **Student Clubs** (Luke Allum) – Apologies sent; nothing likely to happen until September. A lot of work has been going on within BMC Clubs Committee, including putting some training online to combat skills fade.

5. **Illegal off-road briefing**

5.1. Elfyn will be doing an article for the website. Talking with the Trial Riding Federation and LARA which represent legal off-roading. This has become very emotive as sadly a sheep dog was hit and fatally injured.

Be aware of legitimate use eg farmers using quad bikes to look after sheep.

Please report – what, where, when, how many. Form on the BBNP website, and 101 to police if outside the NP.

Unlikely to be fixed without legal sites being available.

Ties in with the changes in access rights and possibility of cyclists gaining access to footpaths in future. Need to be aware of the possibility of electric bikes on footpaths and what impact this may cause in the future – e-bikes increase accessibility, but also increase range, including isolation if they break down – important to note there is a legal distinction between electrically assisted bikes (limited to 16mph and controlled by pedals) and anything else which are counted as motorbikes. Action – Eben to maintain a watching brief.

6. **Any other business**

6.1. Liz Collyer - Query re youth training.

<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/training-courses-with-the-bmc>

6.2. Lynn Robinson – thank you to everyone for making her feel very welcome as President. Blown away by the amount of voluntary work that goes on with access, training, and more. Dorian thanked Lynn for her service as president.

6.3. Next meeting – Thursday 8 July, 7:30pm, via Zoom