

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held via zoom
on Tuesday 27th October 2020 19.00

1. Welcome and Apologies

Chaired by Chris Stone (CS). Minutes taken by Robert Dufton (RD)

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting. CS reported that since the last ordinary area meeting he had stepped down as a director of the BMC.

Apologies were received from Tim Crocker

2. Quorum

Initial Poll

Are you a voting member? *(more people joined the meeting after this vote)*

Yes 11

No 5

In total 25 people present (4 non-voting members plus Lynn Robinson).

3 Agreement to Vote by zoom polls

Due to the meeting not being able to be held in person as a result of COVID-19 and lockdown restrictions, are you happy for the voting to take place by way of Zoom polls?

Yes 14

No 0

Abstain 0

NVM 5

4 Consent to short notice

The AGM date was publicised at the area meeting on 10th September however official members notification went out on 5th November which falls short of the 28 day notice period.

Are you happy to proceed with the AGM?

Yes 15

No 0

Abstain 1

NVM 4

5 Approval of minutes of previous AGM held on 21 November 2019

Do you approve the minutes of the last AGM held on 21st November 2019?

Yes 9

No 0

Abstain 6

NVM 5

6 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 2019 AGM.

7 Area chair's report

CS gave his annual report as area chair (attached) and thanked the volunteers in the area.

LR thanked CS for this report and also for his work as a director of the BMC.

8 Election of officers

Chair

Do you approve of the continued appointment of Chris Stone as chair of the London & South East Area?

Yes 15

No 0

Abstain 0

NVM 5

Secretary

Do you approve of the continued appointment of Robert Dufton as secretary of the London & South East Area?

Yes 15

No 0

Abstain 0

NVM 4

Clubs reps

Do you approve of the appointment of Tim Crocker as clubs rep for the London & South East Area?

Yes 15

No 0

Abstain 0

NVM 5

Hill walking reps

Do you approve of the appointment of Fabrizio Scalgione as hill walking rep for the London & South East Area?

Yes 14

No 0

Abstain 0

NVM 4

Do you approve of the appointment of Tom Bennett as hill walking rep for the London & South East Area?

Yes 16

No 0

Abstain 1

NVM 4

Area youth coordinator

Do you approve of the continued appointment of Tanya Sage as Area Youth Co-ordinator the London & South East Area?

Yes 16

No 0

Abstain 0

NVM 5

9 Date of next year's AGM

tbc

10 Close of meeting

19.45

Robert Dufton, Secretary

London & SE Area

Chair's Annual Report 2020

This time last year, Robert and I met to plan the area meetings for the year ahead. Who would have thought back then the year was going to go the way it has. We had some great plans to engage members, we were even going to hold a very special meeting at the House of Lords. We were able though to hold one face to face meeting this year back in March at YHA St Pancras but since then everything has gone online. It was at that time the BMC held the second hill walking symposium which turned out to be the last in person event for the organisation for some considerable time.

The pandemic has deeply affected everyone, and never did I ever think I would see the BMC putting out a video telling people not to go climbing and walking. Indoor walls closed, crags closed, even National Parks closed, this really has been an unprecedented year. But it was the right thing to do, we needed to protect the NHS but more importantly, we needed to protect each other.

Three rounds of this year's Youth Climbing Series took place but unfortunately the fourth round as well as the final had to be cancelled. I would like to thank Tanya and the Area Youth Co-ordinators for all of their hard work to make these competitions possible and for managing a difficult situation when events were cancelled. I would like to also thank all the wall staff and parents who without their support, time and commitment these events would not be able to take place and I am sure all the young people are also incredibly grateful. I hope all those who were not able to complete the series this year come back next year.

Before the lockdown took effect two successful workdays were held at Southern Sandstone both with a fantastic turn out of volunteers. Thank you to everyone who came along to support the clearance and revetment work at Harrison's and Stone Farm and thank you to Adrian, Michael, Graeme and Tim for their organisation of the event.

As lockdown eased, there was a huge influx of people coming to Southern Sandstone which not only put increased pressure on the rock put also on local parking and on our relationship with our neighbours. Whilst many climbers were doing what they should, there were many who were not. I cannot thank the members of the Harrison's Rocks Management Group (Sarah Cullen, Damion Beail, Mark Brewster, Emma Harrington, Bob Moulton, Adrian Paisey, Michael Phelan and Tim Skinner) enough for everything they did during this time. Regularly patrolling the crags to monitor the situation, raising any issues identified with the BMC office and speaking to climbers who were not following the code of practice. Adrian presented a fantastic Q&A on Facebook Live.

Despite all the challenges the year has brought, thanks to the incredible work of Graham Adcock and Tim Daniells access was re-negotiated to High Rocks which meant in August the crag reopened to climbers. At the end of September, Ben Read made a rare ascent of The Second Generation at High Rocks Graded at French 8a UK 6c. It is fantastic to have this amazing crag open to climbers again.

Last Saturday Fabrizio led a fantastic walk in the Chilterns as part of the Chilterns Walking Festival which was so popular it sold out before we could even publicise it. Thank you Fabrizio for the work you have done representing hill walkers in the area and I know you have lots of plans going forward so we look forward to more led walk opportunities in the new year.

In the London & South East Area we have more affiliated clubs than any other area and I would like to thank Tim Croker for his work with the local clubs and the building of a local network. It is also important to recognise the work of all the club's officers and that without them clubs would not be able to function or exist.

Members registered in the London & South Area are slightly down from last year and currently stand at 20,668 although this doesn't include all student members as they are still renewing. This does however account for 27% of the BMC's membership and we are by far the largest area.

At the start of the year we did a big push to increase our following on social media which has seen a 25% increase on the number of page likes on Facebook from this time last year. We currently have 1,098 likes putting us in 7th place out of the other BMC area pages.

As you will gather, running an area takes a team and I am incredibly grateful to Robert Dufton for everything he has done both as area secretary and as one of your National Council reps. Robert has also been providing his invaluable expertise to support the Nominations Committee and support the Board in recruiting a new Chair and Independent Directors.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the hard work and dedication of the BMC staff and to thank them for everything they have done. Whilst not wishing to single out any department I would like to commend the work of the access team who throughout the lockdown have worked tirelessly to keep up to date with the latest guidance and disseminate it to members in a way that we could all understand. They also ran weekly virtual meetings of access reps which had 30/40 people on the call so the national picture could be monitored.

Although I have singled out some volunteers there are hundreds that support the organisation and they all should be recognised for their dedication and support to make the BMC what it is ensuring representing the members is at the heart of it.

Finally, I can't end without saying thank you to you, for being members and supporting the BMC. We know the situation is likely to remain challenging for some time yet especially as we move into Winter but the BMC will continue doing what it does and representing all the climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

Let's make 2021 the best year ever!

Chris Stone

Chair of London & South East

October 2020