



Peak Area Meeting

Venue: Zoom

Time & Date: 7pm, Monday 18th October 2021

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introduction – Andy Reeve

1.1. Apologies: Alison Cairns, Vikki Hughes, Jean Thomas, Henry Folkard.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th July.

2.1. <https://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?id=4283>

3. Clubs Update (Paul Justin)

Great news is clubs have been out and active over the summer. The Peak area is relatively quiet with most clubs starting up again in November. The Clubs area have been very active with the find your adventure campaign to try and get non-BMC members to join clubs. This campaign is running parallel to the general campaign to boost BMC members.

Trying to attract new BMC members with lots of advertising. Difficult to tell how effective this is in the short term but getting lots of online clicks and likes so looking like a strong campaign. Find your adventure articles getting four times the reads of other articles. We won't see the effect of the campaign until next year as people can join a club for 3 months before signing up to become a member and then there's also a delay in clubs reporting membership but the preliminary feedback looks good. Monthly seminars for clubs on how to attract people and things like direct debits. A number of the Peak area clubs have signed up and will know more about success as time goes on.

Q - Louise Hawson: Is there any element about enabling non-affiliated clubs to affiliate to BMC? For example, groups like Black Girls Hike, is there encouragement for them to affiliate?

A – Thanks for introduction to next slide. Perfect point.

New project kicking off – Clubs 2.0. Revisiting the criteria for club affiliation, which are pretty much the same ones established in 1945. The current criteria can be an obstacle, objectives are to stay relevant to current clubs but also be attractive for clubs to affiliate. A working group has been established and will most likely hear more in 2022. Peaks & Pubs and also Climbing Clan in Manchester are very big clubs who have both affiliated this year



they are part of the new generation of clubs who have seen relevance of BMC membership, the BMC want to encourage and continue this and make sure new clubs aren't blocked.

Welcome to the Sheffield climbing club who are new.

4. Hill Walking Update (Austin Knott)

The next peak area hill walk, the 3rd this year, is on 30th October. There is a cheese connection as we are starting in Hartington near the cheese shop. E-mail Austin if you want to go. It's a walk of two halves, walking up the through limestone looking at geology, finest limestone pavement in the peaks, then crossing into a gritstone valley and back to Hartington with lots of pubs and cafes and the cheese shop!

Shutlingsloe & Tegg's Nose Walk

Area walk in August. Kind offer from Michelle Martin who attended the Hayfield walk and offered to take us round her regular haunt. 16 people attended and it was a lovely day with good hills and beautiful views. Great chance to socialise and we have attracted new BMC members. Grateful to Michelle and David Heaton for leading that walk. Would love to put on more walks next year so if you have some great walks you want to share then we'll do the difficult bits of paperwork you just need to lead.

National Trust invasive species removal day

Previously Peter has organised sphagnum planting. This year the National Trust have completed sphagnum planting but asked for help removing saplings that self seeded along the A57. The seeds are carried by the wind, they are an invasive species and threaten moorland. Peter organised the event which was well attended by a mix of BMC and mountain training members, they joined rangers from the area and removed as many saplings as they could. Excellent progress was made in part due to the great weather. Peter is investigating more opportunities for the future.

BMC Survey

There are opportunities to shape BMC walkers. There's a survey on the BMC. They're keen to hear from walkers (both BMC and non-BMC) so please complete the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KJHNDH7>

Dartmoor consultation

There is a consultation going on in Dartmoor. As you may be aware, Dartmoor is the only place in England where you can legally wild camp, everywhere else you need the landowners permission. Due to anti-social behaviour over the pandemic there are proposals to change the by-laws. The original proposed changes removed any land within 1km of



roads, this is very restrictive. BMC have been giving informal feedback which along with other organisations pressure has led to a change in the proposed by-laws. The BMC have now made a formal response to the published by-law changes. It is worrying to see more changes in by-laws when actually we need a change in social education and the use of the outdoors.

5. Access Update

Local updates (Louise Hawson)

Some of you may have seen questions about Yarncliff raised on UKC. The yellow lines down Padley Gorge which were Derbyshire County Council's response to dangerous parking. The layby there is not technically a layby, but an access point for the quarry, and parking was always tolerated as long as the gates were not blocked. The law of the yellow lines is that they extend to the boundary of the highway, which in this case is about a metre from the yellow lines, so if you are well off the road in the 'layby' you should be ok. However, this then reduces the number of cars that can park there to about 2. Because of this you may need to park further away at either Longshaw or Grindleford Station. If you are a group who want to park a minibus talk to the National Trust and they may be able to give you a key to open the gate to allow parking, this does depend on what else is happening but mountain rescue and some school groups do this already so it is a feasible option.

Q – Steve Clark: I was thinking of putting up a sign around parking for quarry use only but don't want to encourage people to park on yellow lines.

A – Yes, it's hard as it is vague on boundaries and everyone has to park there at their own risk. The bigger worry is how yellow lines are being used across the landscape in general and that we want to be consulted on their use.

Q – Andy Reeve: How long do temporary powers last?

A – It is not clear.

Still don't know the outcome of the public enquiry into the Midhope Moor plastic matting issue, and whether they will be asked to remove the mats or not.

May remember we objected to an application for planning permission for an access track to Black Moss & Swellands Reservoirs. This has been rejected, in part due to the impact on recreation activities and the SSSI but we think they will come back as they do need access.

There's a consultation on the planned A57 link road at Mottram. Does not affect climbing areas but still going to meetings just to make sure access is on agenda – it hasn't been.

Stanage Forum open meeting last weekend. Kim Leyland's ring ouzel report now available.



Kim Leyland:

Ring Ouzels have been low on numbers overall but those that where there had good success – especially on Stanage and Burbage. Not sure why low numbers, perhaps weather. Birds arrived early but then didn't stay. Quite a few restrictions but all nests on climbing routes fledged successfully so shows that signage worked. The ones that weren't successful were predated rather than disturbed.

Louise:

Henry keen to point out that as humans we might be keeping predators away. As long as we keep away from the nests our activities in the area might be keeping predators away from the wider area.

Feels like we're seeing impetus from the National Park on Stanage. Which is good. White path moss being re-wetted. Going to be a significant change in Stanage landscape due to Larch removal at Plantation (Hollins Bank). Also identified phytophthora in Tain Wood near campsite so most of the plantations in that area will be removed. This will be replaced by more native woodland over time, but will cause huge changes to the landscape. Hopefully this one will be a more gradual transition. Don't yet have a date for tree removal from Hollins Bank but will be sometime this winter.

There has been a complaint from a National Trust volunteer to the National Trust about a carabiner left on buttress car park at foot of Tideswell Dale.

Simon Lee: Fairly obvious do you want me to take it out?

Louise: If it's easy then yes. There's a new ranger in that area and its getting busy around there so things are getting spotted, this will be a recurring theme.

Andy Reeve – Thank-you for offer of removing the carabiner Simon.

National Update (Dave Turnbull)

Job title – head of access, conservation & environmental sustainability. Means I'm no longer CEO. Financial situation is getting better, probably due to furlough so this is good. General sketch across the UK is that hot spots and National Parks are busier than they've ever been. Most National Parks are anticipating that it will just keep getting busier. May calm down when foreign holidays open up but there are also people who have 'discovered' these areas which could lead to a long-term increase in numbers. Anecdotally there has been an increase in ethnic minorities visiting, good to see a greater range of society enjoying the National Parks. Mountain Rescue have had challenges just from the sheer volume of people. There are issues worldwide showing the difficulties in getting best practice message out to



the public, in America some areas can't cope with climbers. Not putting the increase in climbers down to the Olympics but due to films like Free Solo which seem to have had a bigger impact on climbing becoming main stream and more people giving it a go. The BMC are trying to manage and deal with people who want to go out and about. There are places like Tintagel in Devon or The Needles in the Isle of Wight which are both health and safety considerations. There are also other organisations who don't understand about climbing so are tempted to ban it, we have written a strong letter to Tintagel to try and encourage talks. There are a fair few site-based issues, mostly due to sheer numbers, in particular of people who haven't read the RAD.

Dartmoor is a big one, generally the proposed changes to wild camping are a reaction to big groups of friends or large family gatherings going out and getting pissed, more festival campers than wild campers but need to make sure this doesn't affect genuine wild campers. There was an idea to restrict sizes of tent but the BMC are saying size of the tent shouldn't be the issue more about restricting wild camping to what you can carry.

There is a meeting with Cotswold at head office with one company definitely interested in funding a three-year campaign with a different style to Mend Our Mountains. The idea is it's a three-year programme as a slower burning programme will support beneficial parts of the mountain such as footpaths.

Louise touched on Ash dieback, big thing in next few years. Some of our sites such as Horseshoe quarry have high number of ash trees so there will be a big effect and high cost to remove.

The seal population around the coast line has increased greatly so potential for restrictions around parts of the coast in Pembroke next season to allow pupping.

Q – Simon Lee: The issues at Tintagel do they affect the bouldering there as well?

A – Good question, I wasn't aware there was bouldering. Line from England heritage is its been banned due to a health and safety risk assessment.

Q- Simon Lee: what's happening with purchase in Wales?

A – Slowed right down, not sure owners still want to sell. Access is ok but road laying company are owners and they've gone quiet. Elvin in Wales is retiring, big loss as he's a first language welsh speaker and worked for National Trust.

Simon Lee – If I understand correctly, restricting wild camping within 1 km of road in Dartmoor, sounds reasonable, as campers would be in the hills so what was objection to that?



A – Sheer volume of land that would encompass, including areas that are popular with wild campers. Sheer volume of land that takes in as 1 km from each side of road and sheer number of roads.

Louise – There is currently a 100 m limit which the National Park fail to enforce so extending it to 1 km could remove good practice wild campers with no evidence it will work.

Q - Andy Reeve: Question e-mailed. Anyone know of any issues at Coal Hill Quarry?

Louise: Nothing known but generally that whole Matlock area is having more issues with access, combination of owners selling land that we have previously climbed and also access issues with parking. Can ask Jon & Henry to look into it if there's more details.

Dave: Saw Jonny Dawes in Wales and talked about Black Rocks and amount of litter there. Suggesting there was a crag clean up there but don't know if it's actually an issue?

Simon: Think it's always an issue and there is a regular clean up.

Steve Clark: Yes, but lots of people organise irregular clean ups. Kids having fun up there – never going to stop it but just getting people to help clean it up.

Simon Kincaid: Think Andy Tickle knows about Coal Hill/Coal Hills, separate places. Andy Tickle seemed to know something about an ongoing discussion with the landowners. Advice related to Lorry Park, just wondered if general consensus is sleeping dogs are best left lying or let it be known that we have a vested interest in maintaining access to the back wall? I think keep it quiet in case they restrict access but argument for bringing it up. Has been popular in the last few years.

Louise: Limestone is not my area which may be why not heard about Coal Hill. Henry may know more, as far as aware discussions are ongoing around maintaining access at Lorry Park. Will bring details to the next meeting.

Lynn Robinson: Trying to pick up broken glass is hard. Always take a black bag but can't pick up broken glass. Not sure what the solution is. Not climbers doing it.

Greg Jennings: in conjunction with Derby Greenpeace and warden there's a crag clean up. 14th November. As climbers take ropes and get the rubbish from the gulleys and from people throwing rubbish over the edge so trying to stay on top of it.

Andy Reeve: Thanks for letting us know, we will share on facebook.



6. Members Council Update

David Brown:

Only 2 Members' Council Meetings to report on since the last Peak Area Meeting in July:

Saturday 17 July 2021

A normal full day meeting following a Pre-meeting on 5 July.

Chris Stone, London and the South East Area Representative, was confirmed as Deputy President following an on-line poll of Voting Council Members.

Rock Climbing Vision Event: This was led by Steve Clark Constituency Councillor (and Peak Area Member) and was a first attempt "aimed to form a more detailed shared vision of the future of rock climbing, alongside the BMC strategic plan.....". Similar events are planned for Mountaineering, Indoor Climbing and Hill Walking.

Steve Clark: pleased on people feedback but a few key people missing so need to make sure everything matches up then we'll be organising a few key meetings to get the message out.

Areas: most areas have witnessed a massive decrease in activity and Area Meetings have been increasingly poorly attended. There is widespread concern that the BMC E-mail notification of Area Meetings and events does not appear to work well, whatever the reason, and many Areas would like to return to Area lists in the hands of local Area Secretaries. How did people hear about this meeting? From the chat most people heard about it from e-mail. Most people seemed to have heard about it from BMC e-mail but some from UKC or BMC website.

One Area (London & South East) is trialling a combined meeting this week; Zoom and face-to-face.

Tuesday 3 August 2021

A follow-up/follow-on meeting from the previous full meeting.

Youth Engagement: proposal to introduce two new youth-related roles (at Area level) focused on organising hill walking and climbing days for young people, and a possible Youth Council – both suggestions are at a very early stage of discussion: any comments?

Lack of a Director responsible for finance: One of Council's representatives on the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) expressed concern that the relationship between the Board and FAC has deteriorated since the current Board structure was implemented in 2019. Following the resignation of Hew Jones in September 2020, a temporary director with a financial



background was co-opted but this arrangement came to an end in May (at the AGM); at present there is a stand-in Director with a very uncertain plan for a permanent Director responsible for finance, and with an expectation of a long-term relationship with FAC and the finance staff, and the Membership. We now have a Chief Finance Officer (CFO) but only a designated Director can provide the necessary financial policy, control and leadership that the Members deserve. Council agreed to hold the Board to account on this issue and has written to the Board.

Two of our patrons died this year. Lord Greaves and Doug Scott. We are looking at patrons so if anyone has any ideas or suggestions then let David know.

Full Minutes for both meetings have been approved and are available on the BMC Website: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-members-council-minutes>

Steve Clark: Just to say I support David's concerns about how finance is being governed. Not an actual finance issue more concern over the way everything is governed. Especially with Covid pressures we do need to ensure reporting on finances is done correctly.

David: Agree with Steve, this is not about the state of the finances it's about how the organisation is being run. Also, in the members council report nothing to do with subscriptions. This is because the board have not involved the finance committee or council. Letter about subscriptions going up has not involved the council at all. This is what I think is fundamentally wrong in a membership organisation.

Simon: ORG recommendations were to have a finance director in office who should be on the board and recognised by the board. Assuming they are on the finance committee. This would solve issue of hiring a director who has a specialism. My recommendation to revert to ORG recommendations and make the qualified accountant a board member.

David: How do you do that? Got 12 board members?

Simon: I get that but my point still stands.

Steve Clark: The guy who has been appointed does attend board meeting but as an observer.

Simon: I hope he does, but if he's there anyway why not make him a board member.

Andy Reeve: Suggest we wrap up this conversation.



7. Any Other Business

Michael Smith: Question for Paul relating to clubs. About the change to BMC membership for new people joining a club. Newbies must now have individual or club membership after three months. Works for clubs with regular meetings but not for clubs who vary their activities. This means someone who was only interested in winter mountaineering would need to attend for a long time before they reach this. Suggest three-month requirement is changed to three meetings which might be more appropriate.

Paul Justin: This is insurance driven. Don't think it's a new policy only better publicised. BMC insurers will offer full liability insurance as long as you have details of the person (e-mail address etc) for three months before that person becomes a full club member but after that they must be a club member. Some clubs do have partial membership to try and cover this but it is an insurance driven thing.

Michael: So, if someone is a prospective club member they do not have to take out membership for first 18 months if this period covers three meetings?

Paul Justin: No, it's a three-month limit.

Michael: Point stands, can we think about changing it to attendances not months?

Paul: Happy to feed that back.

David: This is an insurance thing, first time at a first meeting three months starts.

Michael: Yes, understood but my point still stands, could we consider changing this to number of meetings.

Becky: three meets also wouldn't necessarily work for all clubs just as three months doesn't work. The Pinnacle club have a solution where as a prospective member you just pay the BMC membership fee not a club membership whilst your trying to decide. This covers the insurance whilst not asking for full payment.

Andy Reeve: Thanks for the suggestion, Paul will take this forward.

Peak Area Newsletter

Andy Reeve: Dave & John who have done the newsletter for the last 5 years are stepping down. The current newsletter is their last. Anyone who would like to take over the reigns for that please get in touch. Any budding designers or gossip columnists get in touch. Thank you to them for doing that.



8. Date and venue of next meetings: AGM & next meeting to be held on 27th January at the Norfolk Arms.

Next meeting will be face to face! At the Norfolk Arms. Chips. Beer. Quiz.

Members council and secretary positions up for grabs.

Talk: Marie Richards

About transitions through different phases of climbing loves.