

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 8th June 2011 The Winking Man Pub, Staffordshire

Present:

Neil Foster (Chair)	Stu Ivory (SUMC)	Duncan Bourne
Lynn Robinson (Secretary)	Simon Lee (UKB)	Mitch
Henry Folkard (Access Rep)	Dan Lane	Simon Kincaid
Rob Middleton BMC Office)	Steve Carty (Peak Climbing Club)	Miles Herbert
Rick Gibbon (Access Rep)	Steve Clark	Laura Norcop
Dave Bishop (Access Rep)	Clare Reading	Mike Battye
Simon Jacques (Access Rep)	Rebecca Ellis (Peak CC)	Ross Burnage
Andi Turner (Access Rep)	Graeme Hammond (Peak CC)	Chris Moor
Martin Wass (Newsletter editor)	Richard Langthorpe	Chris Johnson
Martin Kocsis (BMC Office)	Stu Johnson (Mynydd CC)	Jenny Wass
Ed Douglas (BMC, Vice-President)	John Gresty	Adam Long
Paul Shepherd	Alan Smith	Alan James
Matt Snell (Staffs University MC)	Coel Hellier	Michelle Bourne
Alexander Maggs (SUMC)	Rob Tresidder (Oread MC)	Matthew Reynolds
		42 people signed in

1. Apologies:

Trudi Materna	Reuben Brown	Dave Turnbull
Julian Materna	Dave Parry	Dave Garnett
Clare Brown	Matt Heason	Dave Brown
Alan Sanderson	Dominic Lee	Andy Elliot
Phil Robins		

2. Actions from the last meeting (held on the 13th April, 2011)

Agenda Item	Actions	Who Responsible	Progress
3	BMC signs to be placed at Shooters Nab.	Rob Dyer and Rick Gibbon	Rob fed back to Rick. The signs are on order. Rob is on holiday for a month.
5	Ideas for Crag Management Plan to Simon Jacques.	All	On agenda.
7	Please contact Martin if interested in contributing to the next newsletter.	All	On agenda.
10	To arrange a Peak Area Guidebook meeting.	Neil Foster and Lynn Robinson	Martin approached the Limestone Guidebook team. Ian Carr reported that they are making good progress. They may need help in the future, but currently things are OK.

3. Access Areas Updates:

As there were so many new faces at the meeting, Neil gave a brief overview of access the work of the BMC:

- There are two BMC Access Officers; Rob Dyer covers England, Elfyn Jones covers Wales. Also Cath Flitcroft deals with national representation.
- The Peak area is supported by lots of access volunteers, who give update reports to this meeting.

The volunteer representatives are:

Area	Representative/s
Staffordshire	Andi Turner and Dave Bishop
Northern Peak	Rick Gibbon (also Peak area National Council rep)
Central and East	Adam Long, Henry Folkard, Simon Jacques
Southern Peak	Reuben Brown (currently working away – but will be back!)
Access Volunteer Coordinator	Henry Folkard

Rick Gibbon (Northern Peak):

Pack Horse Quarry – this has a new owner who is withdrawing climbing permission. Rick will speak to him to see if he will negotiate. The crag will remain on the database.

Henry Folkard (Central and East and Access Rep Coordinator):

Staden/Cowdale – On the 20th June the High Peak Borough Council is meeting to discuss the application. They have received 170 letters objecting to the application and 1 letter supporting it. There are signs stating that climbing is banned in the quarry at the moment. The owner has said that if climbers stay away for the moment, he will give permission for climbing at a later date. The BMC has not made a formal response to the planning application.

Willersley – there is a sign saying 'climbing banned'. For more detail please refer to the Peak Area newsletter. The Arkwright Society has a new chair and the BMC has briefed her on owner's liability.

Cheedale – climbers are advised to follow access advice. For Wormhill parking, please refer to the BMC website for details. There is an existing agreement with the Wildlife Trust:

- They don't like quick-draws and lower offs to be visible.
- If bolts are already there, replace only a like-for-like basis; no new bolts.
- No removal of vegetation.

Adam Long (Central and East and Access Rep)

Rivelin - an oak tree had been felled at Rivelin. Following previous damage here to trees, the BMC had developed a good relationship with the landowner, a tree surgeon, who is developing the woodland area. He is very upset by this action, however he is otherwise happy with climbers using the crag.

Other examples of trees illegally being felled are; at Burbage North the holly tree at Great Crack, and at Stanage, the holly tree on Bishop's Route.

The BMC was going to produce a 'gardening guidelines' paper. As a general rule, people are asked to avoid cutting back any holly and oak, but there is a more relaxed attitude towards the pruning of sycamore and birch trees.

Adam met with his MP, Nick Clegg. Initially Mr Clegg questioned whether a change of ownership was problematic for the Roaches or North Lees if access was maintained, but agreed it also mattered how the Estates were managed, and that experimenting with untried land managers who might or might not do a good job was not appropriate for such iconic publicly owned sites. 'Play it safe, play it long' was the right approach.

4. The Roaches

Dave Bishop gave the following update to complement his report which is available at:

<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?view=report&id=531>

The deadline for tenders to lease or buy the estate was 20th May. As far as we are aware, there are three bidders remaining: The National Trust (which the BMC has supported), Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (the BMC gives qualified support) and The Land Trust. A letter has gone from Neil Foster to the Chair of the Peak District National Park Authority outlining our position.

The BMC has submitted a written proposal to buy the Don Whillans' Memorial Hut (DWMH). A decision may be made in October regarding the estate or it may be delayed until next spring, if any proposal also includes the North Lees Estate (part of Stanage). There is growing realisation that we have to safeguard public land so that it doesn't fall into unsympathetic private hands.

A fungal disease, phytophthora pseudosyringae, has affected bilberry at Roach End. It may spread through several mechanisms including spores (deer may be vectors - they carry and disperse spores). Andi Turner reported that there are notices at access points regarding the disease and emphasising that people should keep to the established footpaths and keep dogs on leads.

5. Eastern Moors Group

Simon Jacques fed back on the Eastern Moors Partnership Stakeholder Forum, an advisory body for the estate. A draft Crag Management Plan has been produced and submitted. The RSPB was generally pleased with it and just requested a few amendments, for example, they wanted more background information on the BMC.

Simon and Adam Long will soon be doing a 'walk round' of the estate, with RSPB Officers, to establish what work needs to be done and when. We need to be mindful of other recreation user-groups.

6. Peak Area Newsletter

June 1st saw the publication, once again, of the Peak Area newsletter – available for download or viewing on the BMC website. It includes lots of detail of important access issues affecting The Peak Area. Martin Wass, editor of the newsletter, explained that it was designed to be read on a computer screen. However, people at the meeting liked the black text on a white background, as this is better to download, rather than having a coloured background.

Chris Moor asked whether copies could be printed off by the BMC Office and posted to climbing walls in and around The Peak.

ACTION: Martin Kocsis to ensure this is actioned.

The deadline for contributions is two weeks before the area meeting, with the aim to produce it one week before the meeting. This will allow people to read up on any issues that will be discussed at the meeting.

The deadlines for contributions for the next two editions of the newsletter are:

31st August - to be produce on the 7th September

9th November - to be produced on the 15th September.

All contribution welcome and to be sent to Martin Wass at: peakarea@gmail.com

ACTION: All to note deadline for newsletter contributions.

A Facebook account is now up and running; open for anyone to join who wants to be kept up-to-date with Peak Area issues. Go to: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8296873935>.

7. Guidebook Update

Martin Kocsis gave an update:

Guide

Limestone Guide -

Moorland Guide -

Cheshire Sandstone -

Update

In hand – see action log for further details

Chew Valley and Northern Edges finished. Cover photo chosen.

Coming out soon

8. National Council Report

Not many areas had met since the last National Council meeting, however items discussed were the issue of fixed gear, the potential development of Leicestershire quarries and wind farms. This final item led to a lively discussion with very strong views expressed in favour and against. The view from the meeting (for Rick and Neil to take to the NC) was that individuals should put their views forward on a case-by-case basis and that the BMC should not have a fixed national view.

ACTION: Rick and Neil to express the above and feed back at the next meeting.

9. Any other business

Windgather – awaiting the results of the valuation before the BMC makes an offer.

CROW Act 2000 – Right to Roam. People may have heard about the ‘closure of the moors’. Where open access land is closed for up to 28-days for management purposes under CROW, public rights of way are not affected.

New Mill Torrs - there was a discussion on the proposal to create bolted routes on the bridge piers at New Mills Torrs (to be done by the local council). There was both objection and support for the proposal.

Don Whillans’ Memorial Hut (DWMH) – This had been open prior to the meeting and several people took the opportunity to have a guided tour and learn about the history of The Hut. This is currently leased by the BMC. Michael Hunt is ‘guardian’ of the Hut. He asked for people to volunteer to become involved in looking after it. The work involves checking the state of it after the weekend, and restocking any supplies. There are already several volunteers so it would involve checking it about once every eight weeks. For this you get a key to The Hut. For most of the major repairs, the BMC pays for someone to do it, but if any volunteers are prepared to do minor repairs, or if you want to volunteer, please contact Michael at mike@mountain-house.co.uk or telephone 014336 39368.

ACTION: All to note.

10. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 14th September, 7.30pm at The Crown, Glossop. A good turn-out from locals would be appreciated to encourage the retention of an annual Glossop meeting in future, and just to tempt you further Mike Hutton will be giving a slideshow.

“3-years in the Life of a Climbing Photographer”.

Mike Hutton gives an insight as to what’s involved to get that ultimate shot.

Many thanks to everyone for attending and for your contributions.

AS ALWAYS:

- If interested in access issues/access volunteer work please contact Henry Folkard – henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- With regard to the meetings, agenda items or any other issues please contact Lynn Robinson, Peak Area Secretary – lynn.robinson@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Chair of the Peak Area is Neil Foster – neil.foster@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Peak Area Newsletter Editor: Martin Wass - peakarea@gmail.com
- Check out the Facebook Page <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8296873935>.

Note from Lynn: I will be on holiday for the September meeting. Simon Jacques has kindly volunteered to act as secretary for this meeting. Please forward any agenda items and apologies to him at: simon.jacques@btinternet.com