



British Mountaineering Council SOUTH WEST AREA

Quarterly Regional Meeting

Date of Meeting: Monday 27th June 2022, Video Call

Time of Meeting: 1900

Chair: Mark Kemball

Secretary: Alan Dovey

Minutes

1. Welcome and Apologies

David Hillebrandt

2. Minutes of 25/04/2022 Meeting

Link to minutes on BMC Local Areas site:

<https://community.thebmc.co.uk/GetFile.ashx?did=3804>

Agreed: Approved

3. Wintour's Leap gear replacement

Noted: There has been significant progress:

£2000.00 of funds has been raised. Dicks Climbing (Bristol) have been very supportive, as has Rockfax, who donated £500.00. Colin Knowles' club will donate £100.00.

We would like to offer grateful thanks to these commercial organisations who have been so generous.

In total 130 pegs across 55 popular routes have been replaced and 2 peg belays have been replaced with bolts.

Two Ash trees have been replaced, this work has been carried out in partnership with the Wildlife Trust.

4. Brean Down Trad: Access

Noted 1: The National Trust Area Ranger for Brean Down, Joel Bunting, has recently consulted archaeological and botanical experts regarding the condition of the slopes above the Beach Cliffs climbing area. These delicate slopes contain important botanical and archaeological remains. To minimise footfall on these fragile slopes, the National Trust requests that bolt lower-offs be installed / renewed on the four most popular trad routes – Pandora's Box, Cyclops Slab, Great Corner, and Yer Yella!

Noted 2: It is understood that a new guide by Mark Davies is imminent

5. Area Access: Tintagel

Noted 1: There is no additional information since the last meeting. It is possible to climb here. Climbers must book in advance and numbers are limited. The method of access is available on the RAD. Dave Turnbull (Head of Access & Conservation) is engaged in the negotiations and it is hoped an interim agreement is possible.

Noted 2: As yet there has been no feedback on climber experiences at this venue.

6. Carn Gowla: bird bans latest

Noted 1: It is understood that the local Ranger for the National Trust has a strong preference for the mandatory licensing and formal restrictions on climbing. This includes periods of total bans between a set of dates that would effectively ban climbing completely during the Spring/Summer season. The next meeting between representatives of the BMC and the landowners is set for 4th July. The current ban will finish 30th June but it is expected that there would be an extension. Any changes will be available on the RAD.

7. Cheddar Climbing Warden

Noted 1: Mark Courtiour has stood down as Warden. We would like to thank Mark for his work over many years. The Cheddar 'climbing scene' is in a better place with respect to access, safety and partnership with stakeholders for this area. Mark has worked diligently and patiently to secure the future of climbing here at a time when this was by no means assured. All of us wish both to thank Mark again and wish him well for the future. Owen Wynne-Griffith has volunteered to take on this key role in South West climbing.

Noted 2: There has been a solid awareness of the restrictions in place. It is planned to install signage that indicates local Facebook groups and UKClimbing. One climbing instructor has claimed that he has permission to operate at the site. It is possible that the National Trust (NT) has approved this without consultation with BMC representatives. It is understood that the Longden Estate is not happy with this situation. The NT has been approached but to date there has been no response.

8. Hill Walking Representative: vacancy

Noted 1: Thomas Reeves has volunteered.

9. Local Issues

Dorset

Noted 1: The bird issues in Portland are much improved and the RAD has been updated.

Isle of Wight

Noted 1: Access to the Needles is no longer possible. The National Trust and Historic England have stated that they must not be climbed.

Fairy Cave

Noted 1: The ash 'die back' has been extensive. There is a plan in place and the detail is in previous minutes.

Lands' End parking

Noted 1: The concession to BMC members nationally is no longer available, however a 'locals pass system is in place. See extract from the Lands' End website below:

'We are currently reviewing our Locals Pass scheme, and are excited to announce that we will be launching our new and improved offering later in 2022.

Guests who currently have a locals pass can continue to use this even if it has passed its expiry date.

For Cornish residents who do not currently have a locals pass we will be accepting a valid photo-card driving license which has both a picture and proof of a Cornish address.

Our locals pass currently entitles the holder to free parking at Land's End as well as 50% off any full price family experience tickets (Aardman Presents: A Grand Experience, Jolly Roger 4D, Arthur's Quest and Greeb Farm).'

10. Members' Council: forthcoming vacancies

Noted 1: Helen Wilson will stand down after 6 years. We wish to thank Helen for her commitment. This is an important role and we very much appreciate the time spent working on our behalf. If anyone is interested, Philip Wilson is happy to discuss what is involved and we would look to have a volunteer in place for approval at the October Annual General Meeting.

11. IFSC Climbing World Cup, Edinburgh, 9-11 Sep 2022

Noted 1: The BMC is actively engaged in bringing this event to the UK and is working with the stakeholders to bring this to fruition.

12. Crag and Upland Restoration Fund

Noted 1: That a number of small grants between £250 to £1,000 are available. It was suggested that the footpath access to Baggy Point could be a good use of such money. Any proposals should be made in writing.

13. Date of next meeting

Noted 1: It is intended that the next meeting should be a 'hybrid', i.e. physical presence and a 'Zoom' remote access as well. It is planned to be in Exeter at 'The Quay'. The preferred date is 22nd October. The Annual General Meeting for the South West will also take place at this time.

14. Roger Murray Chair of the British Mountaineering Council

Noted 1: We were delighted that Roger Murray was able to attend the meeting this evening. He was appointed to the role 1st December 2021. For further details of Roger's experience and a guide to the vital role of providing leadership to the Board and guidance, support and mentorship to the CEO. Please see a link to the BMC press release below.

[BMC welcomes Roger Murray as new chair of the Board](#)

Noted 2: The role of the Chair is to provide support and guidance to the Board. The organisation has spent much of its time in the recent past focussing on settling internal issues with respect to governance and structure. As this process has (broadly) come to a conclusion it is time to look to the future priorities.

In any organisation financial resources are key to what can be achieved. The priorities are broadly to be directed to the issues of Conservation and Access. In process is the key appointment to replace Rob Dyer. The BMC has always valued its volunteers but will look to provide greater resources in terms of training and support. For example, there will be a 'Volunteer Weekend' in October which will fund training and networking events as well as a volunteer annual awards programme.

The issue of access is a key concern for many here in the South West with a number of landowner / lobby organisations increasingly viewing climbers and climbing in a negative light. Compared with the BMC, they are national in scale with resources both in terms of manpower and political reach that make our 'local' engagement model relatively ineffective. As climbers we have always been aware and (we hope) sensitive to the issues of conservation and environment management. This approach should be reviewed to, if possible, engage organisations like the RSPB, the National Trust and English Heritage at a national level. We believe that the climbing community is a great asset to conservation with eyes and ears that can positively assist such groups locally.