

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road  
Manchester M20 2BB  
www.thebmc.co.uk

Tel: 0161 445 6111  
Fax: 0161 445 4500  
Email: office@thebmc.co.uk

## LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA MEETING

Meeting held at the Alpine Club and online  
on Thursday 20 October 2022

### Minutes

#### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

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

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting which was attended by 15 members in person and 8 virtually. CS welcomed Roger Murray, Chair of the BMC Board to the meeting.

#### 2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 30 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting on 30 June 2022 were approved.

#### 3. Update from Southern Sandstone (Harrison's Rocks Management Group)

CS reported the following on behalf of the Harrison's Rocks Management Group:

- New BMC - staff Phil Hargreaves (Land Management) and Jon Fullwood (Access and Conservation Officer (England))
- Continuation of bolt testing taking place
- Campsite is open again - booking required through the Forestry England website
- Harrison's Rock Carpark will be closed from 5pm - 8am when the clocks change at the end of the month
- Next year's Sandstone Open Meeting will take place at Harrison's Rocks, date TBC
- Some climbing restrictions lifted at Eridge, please check the RAD for the latest updates.
- Mid-November work day may take place and will likely be 12th/13th or 19th/20th November
- Next HRMG Meeting – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February

#### 4. Area Reps update

##### 4.1 Clubs

No report

##### 4.2 Hillwalking

FS reported on:

- Ongoing consultation about the continuation of legal wild camping on Dartmoor which is being challenged by some local landowners
- Outdoor for All, a collaborative policy document about access to the outdoors for all, in particular for young people
- Petition to retain land management subsidies should continue to require access
- Mariella Sullivan appointed as BMC staff member as hillwalking coordinator
- Reiterated request for volunteer to assist FS to help organise walks in the area
- Possible micro-site on the BMC website about hill walking
- Possible future hill walking festival in 2023

##### 4.3 Youth

Tanya Sage the Area Youth Climbing Series Coordinator reported:

- Lots of competitions held in the region, including in Southampton. British Lead Climbing Championships (senior & youth) held in Sheffield.
- TS attended the IFSC World Cup climbing competition held in Ratho, Edinburgh. This was organised on very short notice. Toby Roberts came 3<sup>rd</sup> overall and is a former London YCS competitor from 10 years ago.
- The Youth Competition (North and South) had respectively 157 and 133 young people taking part.
- There was a need for more volunteers to assist at area youth climbing competitions, particularly in judging for which training is provided.

No questions.

## 5. Organisational update

RM gave an organisational update.

Membership currently 80k+ gone beyond pre-Covid levels. Plan on track to increase membership to above 100k by 2024.

RM thanked RD for his work on Members' Council and as a member of the Board nominations sub-committee.

RM thanked CS for his work as Chair of the LSE area.

New CFO appointed in the year, Joeline Chisholm.

Sport England support for BMC in partnership with Mountain Training for additional resources in terms of full time Safeguarding Officer, a dedicated Diversity & Inclusion Manager and agreement with Association of British Climbing Walls to establish an accreditation system.

Sport England funding for BMC in partnership with Plas y Brenin the National Outdoor Mountaineering Centre.

Neil Hockley co-opted to board, North Wales area, Academic at Bangor.

Paul Ratcliffe to chair the Competition Performance Climbing Group.

Mohammed Dhalech appointed to chair the Equity Steering Group.

Mileage increase to 45p per mile for volunteers to claim when carrying out activities on behalf of the BMC.

Board deep dive into 2023 membership fees. £2.45 increase for individual membership fees.

Question from SM about lack of notice for increase in subscription for club members, Notice given on 30 September, to come into effect on 1 January. Three months' notice was not sufficient for some clubs including the Alpine Club due to when their AGM's take place. Previously more notice was given.

Club member James Wishart stated that last year notification was given at the end September which came it to effect in April. So the period of notice was longer.

RM agreed to take these concerns back to Paul Davies, CEO and his staff.

Vincent asked about the primary drivers for the increase in fees. RM explained that a substantial part was in relation to inflation and other costs. Board asked for detailed explanations. Increase in salary costs 2% at start of year and 2.5% in insurance. Office costs increased in terms of energy and other utilities. Total cost increase was 8.4%. Board reviewed what could be reduced in terms of expenditure. Board agreed 5-6% increase.

Rosemary asked a question in chat about implications for membership increases and this how would affect club members depending on the date of their AGM, e.g., Fell and Rock Climbing Club AGM still to take place. RM agreed to review how the BMC had reached this situation.

CS reported on volunteers' gala weekend and specialist committee reviews held two weekends ago

CS reported on the updating of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and Members' Council. Changes include consultation with MC about future changes to ToR for specialist committees.

BMC Cymru are supporting a bill in the Senned about compulsory access to outdoors for young people in Wales.

## **6. Area noticeboard**

Chilterns walking festival until end October

Crag and upland restoration fund (worth in total £10k) offering grants of £250-£1000 to local groups to undertake conservation and access projects.

## **7. Any other business**

Mike Penny gave an update a year on about Ty'n y Berth, London's mountain centre in Wales for young people which has been closed since 2018. In the last 12 months a philanthropic organisation has agreed to acquiring the centre and operating it as a new "magic place" for children and young people to enjoy the outdoors. Future plans include collaboration with Plas y Brenin to instruct young people in climbing. [www.tynyberth.org.uk](http://www.tynyberth.org.uk).

RM congratulated Mike Penny and his colleagues. BMC could do more for young people. Would be part of enhanced work of EDI resource coming through Sport England funding.

Tom asked about timescale for reopening of the centre. Legal sale had not yet taken place. Hope that this would take place later in 2023.

James B thanked BMC for enhancements to the Membership Services Online system for administration of membership data from clubs to BMC. James asked about future plans for further enhancements. RM said that there was a plan for future change on digital improvements led by BMC staff member, Gavin Finch.

## **8. Date of next Area Meetings**

Dates to be confirmed, will be two online and two hybrid.

Meeting finished at 20.30.

Minutes written by Robert Dufton