



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### North West Area Meeting

Meeting held in hybrid format - at BMC Head Office (address as above) and online via Zoom.

Wednesday 25th January 2023, 19:00.

### Minutes

#### Attendance:

Not all attendees were present for the whole meeting: Agustin Guardiola (**NW Area Chair**), Carl Spencer (Members' Council Rep and Council Nominated Director), Andy Holland, Les Ainsworth (Lancashire Access Rep), Dominic Oughton, Sven (no last name), Georgia Forsyth Sijpestijn, Coel Hellier, Simon, Alex Owens, Steve Charles, Gavin Finch, Steve Riley, Steve's Ipad (no last name), Dom Oughton, Phil Kelly, Andy Say, Tim Greenhalgh, John Tebay, Pete Trewin, Bill Beveridge (members' council Rep), Stuart Holmes, Fiend the Unholy, Alex Holland, Stuart Holmes (Area Youth & Walls Rep).

#### 1. Welcome, Quorum and Apologies

Agustin Guardiola welcomed members to the meeting. The meeting was quorate in accordance with Article 28.6.1 of the BMC's articles of association. Apologies were received from Martin Elliot, Paul Evans and Nicole Booth (Area Secretary) and

#### 2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without comments.

#### 3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

None reported.

#### 4. Reports from area representatives

##### 4.1 Access – Lancashire (Les Ainsworth)

- Martin Elliot has now taken over on the access for conforth area (familiar with the local area and good relationship with those in the AoNB). Martin's details on the BMC website.
- Martin and Colin Kingshott has a meeting informally with AoNB and noted some rockfalls at Trowbarrow, which have been marked and being managed.

- Warton Main

- o Routes to the left of the crucifix are difficult to access and are now overgrown. May need to abseil in and would involve some more bolts, labels.
- o Attendee Comment: Stakes were suggested but are not available at the moment but bolts and lower offs would be more suitable.
- o All in attendance agreed to lower offs, bolts and Labelling was agreed as a good decision due to the trees and the lack of obvious area for abseiling.
- o **Action to vote on the above:** in next session, cooling off period and this can be voted at next meeting.
- **Climbing at the Silverdale Sea Cliffs,**
  - o Ecology needs to be protected and concerns have been expressed by locals regarding this. AoNB and national trust have explained climbing agreement. **Climbers** should not add any new bolts or routes. Lower offs should be done to avoid damage to cliff top fauna
- **Edgerton**
  - o The pool at Edgerton dried out during the summer so the tyres were removed (approx. 24). Struggling to get the council to remove the tyres despite these being lifted out of the pool, but these will need to be moved further out to dry up away from the vegetation and habitat for crested newts. **Potential Solution** – climbers to remove one tyre each at a time to local tips. However any other suggestions are welcome.
  - o To left of Wood buttress there is a substantial rock fall on Spindrift.
  - o On the right of wood buttress the routes have been cleaned and climbing restored.
  - o Minor additions and cleaning on lonely wall.
  - o 3 new routes near ceremony and cleaning has begun on routes between the bridge and concrete building.

#### 4.2 Access – Cheshire & Merseyside (Position still open)

Alex Owens would like to be considered for the new access rep position – **10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain**

Alex Owens has been co-opted until the next AGM.

#### 4.3 Clubs

Aiming to get more people involved. Wanted to bring NW clubs communities together similar to those that took part following covid. After the summer it has been harder to engage. Hopes for easter zoom meeting to take place and will be shared.

#### 4.4 Hill Walking - (Steve Charles)

- o High Court Decision – wild camping on Dartmoor, nationally publicised. The BMC is working on this to send a consistent message and contest this.
- o Calendar for 2023 walks has yet to be decided though 2022 walks were successful.
- o Upland conservation – Winter hill (moss planting, invasive species clearance). Looking for others who may want to get involved and a conservation group in Bolton to hand over to it.
- o Snowdonia footpath project – Lots of work done on the Watkins path in June with National trust team. Also cairn scattering on the glyders.
- o The Roaches footpath project – 2 days of funded work was done on the Roaches path conservation (behind willing's hut on the right, more work continuing).
- o Invasive species clearance arranged in kinder / hayfield (January) and winter hill (February)
- o Footpath repair days with Fix the fells where accommodation is included and can be booked through Eventbrite. This is part of [Mend The Mountains](#).

- o Additional volunteers sign up for clean-ups, upland restoration projects, ideas for walks, organising a work and more volunteer reps to email [SteveCharles25@gmail.com](mailto:SteveCharles25@gmail.com)

#### 4.5 Youth and Walls – (Stuart Holmes)

Key Updates for youth and walls from Stuart

- Update on Rockover in Bolton which is now open
- There is a new wall being built in Wythenshawe
- English bouldering championships was at the weekend in Manchester and very successful.
- Now planning upcoming competition season.

#### 5. Fixed Gear Removal Vote at Winewall Quarry – Andy Say

**See previous area meeting for notes regarding Winewall Quarry**

Slight inaccuracies on the previous meeting minutes. Today is a vote on the proposal for bolts on the Winewall. The slides from previous meeting and posts on social media sharing the proposal for the cool off period were also shared publicly.

**Vote on proposal:** for all bolts added subsequent to the 2020 supplement should be removed as unnecessary, and in contravention of the prevailing ethic in the NW area, following the procedures outlines in the recently agreed guidance.

**Decision – To be removed**

Access report comment: A route has been moved (Vino Veretas is different between the 2019 supplement to the 2020 supplement) leading to confusion.

10 bolts have been placed after the supplement. All should be removed.

One Lower bolt on Sommelier prevents falling onto a ledge.

All ascents during autumn following this have agreed these should be removed and in line with new policy.

**See chat for the notes following the ascents. HVS climbers and VS climbers have agreed.**

**Discussion** around the vegetation of the horizontal break visible in photo but this isn't the case now but the vegetation has been removed. It does have flaked rock, but this is a deep crack and cams can be placed. A counter point of clipping the bolts was made online for trad climbers.

**Vote:** 12 For, 2 Against, 2 Abstain (including the public consultation via social media and email votes).

Carl Spencer abstained, "As a director I have a legal obligation and should not be involved in a vote that involves safety."

Motion passed and the bolts will be removed.

#### 6. Fixed Gear vote at Noggarth

**See previous area meeting for notes regarding Noggarth**

- Novocaine, extraction, fang, canine, nag, garth, anonymous eliminate, barrowford mantel, cutting edge, Springfield need to be assessed. A vote would need to take place in next meeting. Additionally, the time of year and conditions have made this difficult to assess yet and for people to climb before giving their opinion or vote.
- Suggestion of a delay to 6.1 and 6.2 are suggested based on this weekend.

- Girls Slab – Trad climbing with limited but sufficient natural protection and odd pegs. Bolts only for lower offs.
- Central slabs – left hand routes are bolted, with some exceptions. Fillings was originally bolted but is now cleaned out and will be able to take small nuts/friends.
- On the Promontory: Nogg has a peg to the right which has led to climbers being on the wrong route and confused by the high bolt. An additional 2 bolts were added.
- Barrowford mantel has 3 bolts and a peg.

### **Right side**

#### **Hawthorn slab has bolts on the Springfield only.**

- Chess Board is ok.
- Nougat slab has 4 bolted lines.
- Restitution has a crack that becomes heavily vegetated therefor suggest keeping this.
- Les made point that bolts removed it may not be climbed due to the vegetation and suggests remain retro-bolted.
  - Others suggest cleaning the crack instead.
- Additional 3 routes to the right (from Angel) are susceptible to very small flakes (approx. 2-3 inches) and have no natural protections.
  - Les is concerned about the flakes. But these were not all retro-bolted. Some members online liked these being bolted.
- Timeless slab has 4 bolts.
- No bolts on Cyclone.
  - **Suggestion member:** Due to the water that runs down this slab, instead of removing pegs due to this being a slab rather than replacing with bolts. This also stops novice sport climbers from clipping into pegs (instead of the bolts) and then the routes can be regraded to slightly harder. May be at risk, if they see fixed gear that isn't a bolt (may not know the difference).
  - **See chat about placements in the bore holes (tri cams)**

Key Point: Andy suggests that many of the visitors accept that many routes at Noggarth need bolts because they are sport routes. But there are some trad routes that have been retro-bolted and should be removed in these cases.

### **Delayed Vote due to wording error on vote (distinction between bolt and retro-bolt)**

#### **Next Meeting will be:**

**Submit a revised proposal, differentiating between routes with bolts, and routes with retro-bolts.**

**These will be voted on separately after a consultation period.**

### **7. A New Vintage at Winewall (Matthew Thompson)**

Postponed for next meeting due to time constraints.

### **8. Report from Most Recent Members Council**

Members council last meeting in November.

Discussions around participation statement and risk of fatality. A need for modification in that statement (unclear to what extent now. This will be kept but the terminology may be the thing that may need to be adjusted. Hill walking strategy has been approved and indoor climbing strategy is yet to be approved.

### **Board Meeting**

Accounts for 2022 and budget for 2023 were discussed and decided. Less impact from covid and forecasting a smaller deficit. Breakeven by next year. Sport England funding hasn't yet gone to NICAS and ABC. NICAS has signed contract earlier in January but awaiting ABC contract being signed.

BMC is still supporting Ukrainian family's in the world of mountaineering. If you would like to help out, check the website.

New appointments to report for the boards.

- Independent director John Wilmott
- Safeguarding Manager Helen Murphy

#### Groups comment(s):

How much of BMC's finance is currently spent on competition? And concern over the number of staff employed in the competition roles over those who contribute to other areas of the BMC such as access, guides etc.

Response: Expectation of 18% of funds that are allocated to competition to meet expectation for funding. Other funding from UKSport are the ones that focus on the higher-level competition and athletes. Further clarity on how BMC money is spent can be found on the website ([link in chat](#)).

Member noted that the activity does carry risk of death and feels that this should be reflected in the statement.

#### **9. Members Council Representative Position Open**

Carl member councils representative comes to an end in February – please contact Agustin (Chair) if you are interested.

An additional access rep would be helpful for Silverdale and Lancaster.

#### **10. North West Events Calendar – Recap of upcoming events**

Invasive species clearance events: Kinder / Hayfield on the 18<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. Winter Hill on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb and 19<sup>th</sup> March January.

Footpath repairs days with Fix the fells where accommodation is included and can be booked through Eventbrite. This is part of [Mend The Mountains](#).

BMC walk at Blencathra 4<sup>th</sup> March via Mend our mountains.

#### **11. Any other Business**

Wilton Fest date proposed for Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.

The area gave Wilton Fest approval to go ahead on 02/09/2023. 9 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstain

Helsby grass off some of the gorse in the left buttresses (End of February / beginning of March suggestion).

Call for volunteers to remove Tyres at Edgerton.

Discuss Nick Bamber in regard to local quarries that may need some clean up and the point of disrepair ([Henshaw Quarry](#)).

Leister Mill (evil wall) for vegetation. However there has been a clean-up there and no one has up to use this.

Walks to be organised with the Friends of Pexhill group for bird walk.

#### **12. Spring Area Meeting date and Location TBA**

Hybrid in April Date TBC.

**13.      Date of next meeting**

Hybrid in April Date TBC.