

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road  
Manchester M20 2BB

Tel: 0161 445 4747  
Fax: 0161 445 4500  
email:office@thebmc.co.uk

## HARRISONS ROCKS MANAGEMENT GROUP (HRMG)

Minutes of the meeting held on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Evolution Climbing Wall,  
Plumyfeather Farm, Lye Green at 19:00.

Present:	Tim Skinner	Chair
	Bob Moulton	BMC
	Geoff Pearson	BMC
	Nigel Head	BMC
	Daimon Beail	BMC
	Emma Harrington	BMC
	Adrian Paisey	BMC
	Rob Dyer	BMC
	Mary Symes	Village Rep (Withyham PC)
	Sarah Cullen	Site Contractor
	Kate Harris	Forestry Commission

### Action

#### 1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Anne Jenkins. TS welcomed KH to the group.

#### 2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (19/05/14)

These were agreed.

#### 3 Matters Arising not covered in other items below

3a Approach Road KH reported that the Forestry Commission had agreed a budget to repair the approach road over the winter.

#### 4 Harrison's Rocks Work and Site Manager's Report

4a Cement Work TS reported that no cement work had been done and wondered if Mick Canning would be fit enough to do any next year. SC said that his back was still bad and he couldn't hang in a harness for very long, so probably not.. BM suggested that one or more of the people who had volunteered to do resin work might be willing to do some cement work as well. The areas that may need some attention are the top of the boulder on Tame Variant; the top of Baldrick's Boulderdash; the top of Piecemeal Wall; the arête of Sossblitz (although resin may be more appropriate here); Greasy Crack and Giant's Ear. **BM**

**4b**      **Resin Work** No work has been done so far this year. Work is needed on North Boulder, Bow Window, The Vice (high priority), Root Route 3, Panther's Wall, The Flakes, Forester's Wall, Southwest Corner, Birchden Wall, Birchden Corner, Forget-Me-Not, Last Chance, ZigZag, Rift (all medium priority), Carrera, Coronation Crack, Moonlight Arete, The Mank, Piecemeal Wall and Isolated Buttress Climb (all low priority). BM reported that Mick Canning and Mike Vetterlein had not managed to meet over the summer and so no briefing had taken place, he also said that Steve Jackson had offered to get in touch with Mike and arrange a briefing so that he could start the work next spring. Mike Vetterlein had however restocked our supplies of resin, solvent, brushes etc and these are now in the lock-up at Harrison's. RD said that someone had reported breaking a hold off a boulder problem called 'The Sheriff' on North Boulder. TS reported that a hold had broken on The Vice and needed treatment. BM said that Oliver Hill had volunteered to dig out research done by Mike Eden on the merits of the various surface hardening treatments used, and to bring it up to date. **BM**

**4c**      **Anchors** New swageing is still required on Eyelet and Ejector and the rear anchor of the latter should be replaced, new anchors are required above Long Layback now that the tree stump has been removed, the anchors on Bow Window should be removed and a new set placed at the top of the crag, new swageing is needed on What Crisis, a placement is still required above Right Circle, the front set of anchors above Unclimbed Wall still hasn't been removed, the rear anchor needs some more resin and some extra resin is needed around one or two others (detailed in the report). TS reported that the bolt above Grant's Groove had failed, he had no other details but it looked as if the rock had cracked due to natural erosion and tree root action combined with the old Hilti placement being too close to the edge of the crag. TS had removed the rear anchor to stop anyone using it and DB had treated the damage with PVA to limit further erosion. This will be added to the list of new bolts required. GP wondered whether this called the bolt inspection methodology in to question but BM said it was still the best method available. TS will arrange dates with DB to do the work, so that DB can learn how to place and repair the anchors. TS also said that the branch above Two Toed Sloth, that is supported by a wire, will be removed during the next SVG day and then later anchors will be placed above the climb. **TS, DB**

4d

**Woodland Management & Ground Erosion Work** TS reported that RD, TS Tony Flint would cut compartment C of the woodland plan in the week commencing November 24<sup>th</sup> and that he had already contacted the SVG to ask for volunteers on the following weekend (29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>). The new fence is up and TS said that SC had forwarded an email from a regular climber asking whether the new squeeze points (rather than a gate) would cause problems for the emergency services trying to access the crag from Forge Farm. It was agreed that TS would contact the ambulance service first and then act on their advice. TS reported that a group had set up a zip line from the top of Forester's Wall to a tree near the fence. They had been challenged by a couple of people but were unwilling to take it down. DB said that he was planning to do more crag cleaning and wanted to check that it was OK, the group agreed that it was. TS said that AP had phoned him on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of September to report that the boulder on the mainland used for the step across to the Isolated Buttress was moving a significant amount and was dangerous. TS arranged to inspect it on the 23<sup>rd</sup> with AP and Chris Tullis and at that inspection the decision was taken that it had to be demolished in a controlled manner as it was extremely dangerous and could kill someone if it fell into the passageway. Temporary signs were put up until Chris and Matt Tullis returned on the 26<sup>th</sup> to carry out the work on behalf of HRMG. At the open meeting there had been one or two angry protests at the speed with which this decision was taken but TS said that he had been extremely worried about the risk to visitors and had felt that something had to be done immediately. He said that the question now was: how to access the buttress in the future ? The Open Meeting had thrown up several suggestions: do nothing; a bridge; a wooden half-bridge ('springboard/launchpad'); ropes; ladders; an artificial replacement boulder. BM had suggested ladders on either side of the jammed boulder and this suggestion had been popular at the Open Meeting and was the preferred option of the group as well (as long as they didn't obstruct the 3-star Boulder Bridge Route), but there were also calls at the Open Meeting for an artificial replacement boulder. The group felt this would be out of keeping with the rest of the crag, disproportionately expensive to construct and then to maintain, and so was not really viable. In the short term ropes will be placed to aid access, particularly off the boulder, as AP pointed out that this is especially problematic. Whatever the longterm solution there will be liability and insurance issues, so RD will talk to the legal advisors at the BMC to see where we stand.

- 4e**      **Car Park and Toilet** TS reported on the meeting he had attended, along with Dave Turnbull, with the Forestry Commission in August to discuss the future of the facilities. The meeting had been very positive and the FC said that they wanted to work with partners to keep the facilities open but didn't want to use the payment collection system proposed by the CIC due to the high start-up cost. They proposed starting with a pay-and-display machine and seeing how things went, if other partners could be found to share the installation costs. Dave Turnbull said the BMC was willing to put some money into this scheme NH wanted assurances that the fees charged would be reasonable i.e. not as high as at Bedgbury. KH said they were very different sites so that was very unlikely and that ideally they would have a burglar-proof pay machine and a barrier that was locked at night, however the latter wasn't feasible because of the campsite. DB asked whether losing the facilities and therefore the campsite was still an option – the group felt it wasn't as the campsite is a memorial to Julie Tullis. KH did agree, however, that a car park on its own would probably be free. MS said that the toilets were very important to the local residents to avoid sanitation problems due to the high visitor numbers. Another meeting has been arranged for the 13<sup>th</sup> of October between all the stakeholders and it was hoped that a solution would be found. In the short term the FC plan to close the facilities over the winter months to carry out further repairs and refurbishments, including repairs to the approach road and car park surface. The group felt it was a pity that no full-time BMC officer would be at the meeting (only BM can make it) as only they can speak for the BMC as a whole. RD read out a list of required repairs to the toilets and carpark that Kevin Burton of Sport England had sent him. The group were satisfied that none of the tasks fall into the area of maintenance and that the lease ends in a month anyway. RD will contact Kevin to let him know and also to mention the leaking skylights in both toilets. **RD, BM**
- 4f**      **Signs** SC asked about the new campsite noticeboard. TS said he had understood from Chris Tullis that this was on order but if this wasn't the case SC should go ahead and order it. **SC**
- 5**      **Health and Safety**
- 5a**      **Notes of any Accidents in the Accident Book** There were no accidents to report. As there is no appropriate 'accident book', this phrase will be removed from future agendas and minutes. **TS**
- 6**      **Financial Report**
- 6a**      **HRMG Budget** this was noted by the group. SC asked why the figure for campsite takings was zero on page 1, when she had been submitting them separate to the car parking money. TS said that this figure appeared in the list of creditors on page 2 because the money was paid to the Julie Tullis Memorial Fund. The group also noted that the takings since Nuts4Climbing took over were nearly £7000.

- 7 Stone Farm Rocks**
- 7a Woodland Management & Ground Erosion work** BM reported that at the Open Meeting there had been requests to do some woodland management work below the Cat Wall area as it was getting very shaded and green. TS said that work was also required on the hazels further down the slope. BM will liaise with Malcolm McPherson with regard to doing the work and contacting Natural England to seek their consent. Input will also be sought from the SVG, probably some time after Christmas. **BM**
- 7b Resin Work** see 4b above. Work is still needed on the right arete of Inaccessible Boulder where there are a number of boulder problems, at the bottom of Key Wall, Bare Essentials, Pinnacle Buttress, Pinnacle Buttress Arete, Overlapping Wall, Front Face, Chipperydoodah, Thin and Remote. **BM**
- 7c Signs** nothing to report.
- 7d Anchors** These are required above Inside Or Out, The Face and Stone Farm Crack (once the stumps have been removed). Consent will be required from Natural England. **TS, DB**
- 8 AOB**
- 8a Filming At The Rocks** TS reported that there had been two approaches from film companies over the summer. One had wanted to take casts of parts of the crag and this had been turned down because the last time this happened it damaged the surface of the crag. The second request was to do some normal filming and this was accepted. RD reported that he and TS had been at the rocks that day to film some instructional videos showing best practice when climbing on southern sandstone, which will be available on BMC TV.
- 8b Sandstone Code Of Practice** BM reported that this had been discussed at the Open Meeting following a debate on the UKC forums. BM said that some amendments were needed to the code, mainly to bring it in to line with the more up-to-date postcard version. RD suggested adding a QR code that could be scanned by smartphones. EH suggested that the front page be simplified, with maximum emphasis being given to the important information (much like the postcard version). GP was concerned that any changes would have to go through the LSEAC and Open Meeting, but the group felt that minor changes in layout and emphasis wouldn't need this. DB and RD suggested that the crag-specific information be left out as it changes more frequently and people could use websites to get up-to-date information. EH and DB have a lot of ideas about re-vamping the code so they will take on this work and will circulate their suggestions to the group for comment. **EH, DB**
- 8c Dog Mess** GP said that some sandstone regulars had complained about an increase in the presence of dog mess directly below the crag. AP and KH both said that the 'stick and flick' approach was the best way to deal with this, as (strangely) dog loos and free plastic bags just encouraged owners to leave bags of poo everywhere. TS said that owners who didn't deal with the mess should be challenged.

**8d Resignations** NH announced that after nearly 37 years (!) on the group, he would stand down after the next meeting. GP also said that he was willing to step down at the same time if the group wished, as once the group only has the rocks to look after it won't need to be so large. TS reluctantly accepted that this was a good idea. AP raised the question of Terms of Reference for the group and a clarification of how people can join the group. TS said that the chair can co-opt members and that the Open Meeting historically could vote up to two members on if there were vacancies. RD said that the main problem was finding people who were willing to join and then stick at the job.

**9 Date of Next Meeting** The next meeting will be held at Evolution climbing wall on Monday January 19<sup>th</sup> 2015, at 19.00.