

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 14th 2015 at The Crown Inn, Groombridge

Present:	Sarah Cullen	Chair
	Tim Skinner	BMC
	Adrian Paisey	BMC
	Bob Moulton	BMC
	Mick Canning	BMC
	Daimon Beail	BMC
	Emma Harrington	BMC
	Rob Dyer (by telephone for part of the meeting)	BMC

Action

1 Welcome and Apologies

No apologies were received. SC Welcomed Mick Canning to the group.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (17/05/2015)

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3 Matters Arising not covered in other items below

Car park update. SC reported that the FC are doing a great job and are ticketing people who do not buy a valid parking ticket. BM asked if the layby on Forge Lane was being used more and SC said that it had – BM noted that on the 8 Outcrop walk more cars were parked there. AP suggested leafleting these cars to ask them to use and support the car park. BM suggested that we monitor it for a while to see if it's a problem. SC uses the road a lot so will monitor it. If it's still a problem next meeting we will put some wording together for some fliers, TS suggested possibly using the BMC logo if we go ahead with this.

SC

4 Harrison's Rocks Work Reports

4a Cement Work

SC reported that Frank Shannon has carried out an urgent repair on The Vice and that any further work will be carried out subsequent to the cement university project that is being set up by Ian Nettleton. BM & TS presented their cement survey that they carried out recently. TS reported that some areas were in a very fragile condition. Other pieces where there are big sheets of cement (above Ejector) had eroded underneath. The worst area was the Root Route area and NW corner was quite bad as well. There was also loose cement above Spider Wall. Quite a lot of the cement is above the bolts where damage was done in the past. These can now be left to weather naturally. Really loose bits have been pulled off. Rob Dyer and Dan Middleton are writing a

BM/TS

method statement for future surveying.

4b Resin Work

SC reported that Steve Jackson and Martin Walker have completed most of the resin work at Stone Farm and at Harrison's. BM gave a vote of thanks.

4c Anchors

TS

Following newly placed bolts that have become loose, TS reported that he and DB thought that the holes that they had drilled may have been damp. AP disagreed. SC suggested it could be the resin as it's a different colour to other resin and also looks to be more crumbly. DB suggested making a Y shape to prevent the bolt turning. TS suggested drilling bigger holes. DB suggested doing some tests and BM agreed this was a good idea in a discreet area. This is in conjunction with the university project. AP suggested that the Bowles bolts are solid and perhaps we could follow suit. TS to speak to Loz who has done a lot of research on this. TS suggested that we should talk to Bolt Products when the current bolts run out.

4d Woodland Management and Ground Erosion Work

**SC/MC/
AP/TS**

SC reported that Phil had strimmed back the Himalayan Balsalm. TS, MC and SC pull it out every time they go. Although strimming is a good method SC suggested that we could have a volunteer work party to pull them out. This may need to be done annually. BM said we should be also pulling up sycamore seedlings. SC suggested making a poster to ask people to pull them out and the group felt this was a good idea.

SC reported that the next compartment cutting (compartment D) will take place in the first week of November and the SVG volunteers weekend will be immediately after this. TS said that there are quite a few oaks and trees that we don't want to chop in that area. TS will talk to Tony Flint about which ones to keep.

SC reported that Malcolm had said that there is a tree in the 10 metre corridor by Elementary that is causing a lot of shade in this area and has asked if this can be taken out when Tony does the other cutting. MC will check to determine what sort of tree this is – Malcolm thought it was an Ash, but we are not sure.

AP mentioned that the footpath near the Root Routes has deteriorated and the ground erosion is evident. TS suggested planting some grasses to hold the ground here. SC noted that the steps in the gully opposite Crack and Cave are deteriorating. Perhaps we could do some repair work in these areas when we do the next cutting although BM pointed out it's a long way to carry the wood and there may be some nearer. We could take some of the wood to the Root Route area to rebuild the steps here.

MC mentioned the rotten tree stump between Blue Peter and Snout Crack. AP said he would have a look at it and we could ask Tony to chain saw it off.

4e

Signs

BM

There was a discussion on signs since the signs have gone up. The group felt that the signs have been effective over the summer. Re. signs at the bottom of the rocks it was agreed to leave this for the time being due to concerns of having too many signs and whether or not they are really necessary. Current signs may need a face-lift soon and wording was discussed. In particular it was felt that people coming to the rocks from indoor climbing walls are not always recognising the difference in English technical grades and possibly setting their ropes on climbs that are too difficult for them, which in turn will lead to damage to the rocks. It was felt that this was a more important point than whether or not climbers 'work' routes, in that if they are climbing appropriate grades, less 'dogging' will occur. BM said that we need to do a re-run of the Sandstone Code of Conduct with minimal changes and that he would pursue this with Steve Jackson.

4f

Isolated Buttress

RD

SC reported that whilst we have been monitoring The Block through the summer, climbers have used their own ropes and equipment to access the Isolated Buttress, and this has been done by novices under instruction. Current access is safely available to all climbers in a way that will not entice the general public and there have been no reports of ill practise that we are aware of since the signs have gone up. SC noted that there is strong local opposition to installing a bridge and proposed for the time being to continue to assess the situation and leave the access 'problem' alone whilst keeping a very close eye on the jammed boulder for any movement. If the situation changes, whereby damage is caused to the rock by lowering off or abseiling, or if there is any deterioration to the wedged boulder then we should not hesitate to install a bridge. BM said that he would prefer that if an in situ rope was to be used for access then it ought to be officially installed and regularly inspected. AP said that he would prefer a situation whereby climbers removed their access ropes at the end of each climbing session so that nothing was left in situ. Liability was discussed and after a telephone conversation with Rob Dyer during the meeting, the group put it to the BMC that we have an in situ rope officially placed and regularly inspected. Rob said that he was unsure on how this would work from a liability point of view and would discuss it with Dave Turnbull as well as come and have a look at the current access, and then revert at the Open Meeting on Sunday.

5

Health and Safety

5a

Reports of any Accidents

There were no accidents to report.

6

Financial Report

HRMG Budget

Financial Report – no questions – TS noted that sections will soon disappear now the car park has been taken over by the Forestry Commission.

- 7 Stone Farm Rocks**
- 7a Woodland Management & Ground Erosion work**
Nothing to Report
- 7b Resin Work**
See 4b.
- 7c Signs** **BM**
Signs were discussed and it was agreed that a 'revamp' of all signs is required. (see 4e above).
- 7d Anchors** **TS**
Stone Farm is due to be tested this year.
- 8 AOB** **BM**
None
- 9 Date of Next Meeting** **SC**
The next meeting will be held at The Crown in Groombridge – (SC will book a room) on Wednesday January 13th, 2015, at 7pm.