

HARRISON'S ROCKS MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on January 13th 2016 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 |
| Mark Brewster | BMC |

- Action**
- 1 Welcome and Apologies**
SC welcomed Mark Brewster who has been invited to join the group.
- 2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (14/10/2015)** **SC**
Typo – bottom of 4f, page 3 – typo - revert/report
- 3 Matters Arising not covered in other items below**
- Code of Conduct (Minor) Revision** **BM**
Bob reported that he has drafted some minor revisions to the Sandstone Code of Conduct. Steve Jackson has managed to get it all into the same format. DB asked how they were distributed – they have previously mainly been distributed to climbing walls.
- Following safety advice on using dynamic ropes from Dan Middleton, the BMC's technical officer, a short discussion re. static and dynamic ropes was had, and although it was said static ropes cause less damage to the rocks than dynamic ropes, there is an awareness that there could be safety implications if climbing a metre or more above the belay on a static rope. In which case it was agreed that it would be best not to recommend either a static rope or a dynamic one, but to focus the code of conduct on correctly setting belays and not having moving ropes touching the rock.
- Wording was discussed to make clear that there is a difference in grading on southern sandstone and climbing walls. This was seen as important as there are increasing numbers of climbers being introduced to the sport through indoor climbing centres, however when they transfer their skills outside, they are often trying climbs that are too difficult for them due to the difference in grading systems.
- DB pointed out that gradings can vary from guidebook to guidebook and that the new RockFax will be French grades. MB said that the real problem we are trying to avoid is dogging. TS said we should focus more on the rigging rather than worrying too much about working routes – MB agreed. TS suggested

changing the wording to 'working' rather than 'dogging' as this may be more easily understood by the younger climbers. MC suggested using the wording proposed by AP, plus 'check your guidebook to verify the grading system used, predominantly these are UK grades' and adding 'because the different grading systems can vary widely.' This was agreed.

BMC Logo – it was agreed to add the BMC web address

Cleaning shoes – this protects the rock and enables better technique – giving an instruction so that it is made clear that this protects the rock as well as helping to climb better.

It was agreed to take out 'belay ropes can be bought from the Warden' as we no longer have a warden.

AP suggested removing 'and any tick marks' so as not to encourage people to put them on in the first place. AP raised concerns that the new climbing wall in Tunbridge Wells is only selling and promoting use of loose chalk. SC suggested talking to them and raising that we are concerned that this may be transferred to Harrison's in the summer.

BM raised the question of what to do now we are happy with the new wording and we agreed that once the new leaflets are printed, we will ditch the old ones (as several boxes turned up from Evolution) so that we can give out the right message. **SC**

TS suggested asking the Steve Durkin Trust to contribute towards the printing costs. The group agreed to run off 2,000 copies to start with. **TS**

DB suggested including putting dogs on leads but this was felt to be unnecessary.

BM said that the crag specific wording needs to go onto websites which he will work up and email round. **BM**

4 Harrison's Rocks Work Reports

4a Cement Work

Still waiting to hear back about cement project – BM will chase them up. Anything urgent Frank will do - we will pay him **BM**

4b Resin Work

Nothing to report

4c Anchors

DB had a chat with Scott and Jim Titt about anchors – Scott said he would come and have a look and he knows quite a bit about it. AP has talked to Loz at Bowles and is keen to have Scott come along. AP said that we should produce a brief/method statement on what we should be doing in terms of **DB/AP/TS**

anchors. BM said that Ian Nettleton had given outline terms of reference for the cement project in an email, and we want to have an input in fleshing these out. It was agreed that we should work with Bowles and talk to them about the anchors they use. AP suggested collating historical data on anchors so that the MSc student at Portsmouth doesn't go in fresh with his or her research. TS has the most knowledge on this within the group and agreed to work with AP to collate this information. AP will talk to Bowles. SC said that she had spoken to and agreed to share information with Bowles particularly with the cement survey. **BM**

4d Woodland Management and Ground Erosion Work

SC reported that compartment D (section by North Boulder) was cut in November however there wasn't much to do and Tony took out just four trees. It was agreed that next year we should get at least one other quote.

BM reported that he emailed the chair of the BMC's land management group, Bill Renshaw, to suggest to the BMC that they should apply for the grant directly rather than relying on volunteers to do it as it's a considerable undertaking. TS said that previously the grant was £1k, although it could be more now. It would be used for replanting, such as chestnut and hazel, and control of weeds for example, bracken, rhododendron, sycamore, Himalayan balsam. **BM**

BM has not yet had a reply to his email regarding the grant.

SC reported that volunteers pulled up a lot of Himalayan Balsam on the volunteers day.

4e Signs.

BM

TS reported that we have talked about taking off Chris Tullis' details and also putting a sign at the bottom of the rocks on the Birchden Farm entrance. Bob will talk to Steve Jackson.

Sign for Isolated Buttress - Rob Dyer's wording was approved as follows:

"Isolated Buttress Access

Access to this buttress is not simple and involves inherent and obvious risks. If you and all members of your group are not confident in gaining access to this section of crag safely, please climb elsewhere on the crag where easy access to top rope anchors is possible.

Please do not leave fixed rope in place across the gap. Any fixed rope found across this gap will be removed as soon as possible and should not be relied upon.

Please do not abseil or lower off any routes - only climb on the Isolated Buttress if you are confident of your ability to regain the main crag without

using either of these techniques.”

TS suggested ordering 5 or 6 signs so that we have replacements. We will place one at the top by the Buttress and one at the Bottom.

4f Isolated Buttress

Following an email from Rob Dyer saying that he had brought the matter up at the LMG meeting and although they were unable to support the current ‘tyrolean’ method of access to the Buttress, there would be potential to have a more formalised installation of short, fixed, knotted ropes hanging down. The group agreed that they would prefer an ‘all’ (a bridge) or ‘nothing’ approach, as implementing and managing formal rope access raises problems such as liability and potentially other people leaving their own ropes and making it look messy. SC said that she would thank Rob Dyer for his support with this, although we’d prefer to keep the access as it is for the time being. This will be subject to ongoing checks and on the basis that it is a) working and b) not encouraging bad practise and subsequent damage to the rock. SC

5 Health and Safety

Reports of any Accidents

There were no accidents to report.

6 Financial Report

HRMG Budget

SC

TS talked about the Ground rent and that we shouldn’t have to pay this now that there is no lease. He asked why there is money in the JTMF this year ? SC said she would ask Alan. Also he said that things will get simpler now that Soft Rock will no longer be on there.

7 Stone Farm Rocks

7a Woodland Management & Ground Erosion work

Nothing new to report

7b Resin Work

Nothing to report

7c Signs

TS

DB suggested putting a fire and BBQ sign at Stone Farm. TS will ask Robin to put one up at Stone Farm, or MB offered to do it. TS suggested asking Rob for some more signs in reserve.

7d Anchors

Nothing to report

8 AOB

A short discussion regarding Mrs Treptie’s house being up for sale which involves the fields at the bottom of the rocks. It was agreed that the BMC would not have any interest in buying or maintaining these fields. SC

There was also a short discussion on the car park as SC raised that some people would like to pay for 2 hours. At the moment the rates are £1 for an hour or £4 per day. Some people find an hour not long enough and yet they don't want to be there all day. SC said she would talk to the FC about this.

9 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the same time (7pm) in the Crown, Groombridge, on Wednesday 11th May 2016.