

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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HARRISONS ROCKS MANAGEMENT GROUP (HRMG)

Minutes of the meeting held on January 13th 2014 at Evolution Climbing Wall,
Plumyfeather Farm, Lye Green at 19:00.

Present:	Tim Skinner	Chair
	Sarah Cullen	BMC
	Geoff Pearson	BMC
	Daimon Beail	BMC
	Emma Harrington	BMC
	Adrian Paisey	BMC
	Mary Symes	Village Rep (Withyham PC)
	Chris Tullis	Site Contractor

- Action**
- 1 Welcome and Apologies**
Apologies were received from Nigel Head and Anne Jenkins. TS welcomed new member Adrian Paisey to the group.
- 2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (07/10/13)**
These were agreed.
- 3 Matters Arising not covered in other items below**
- 3a Wealden DC Representative** TS asked MS if she had spoken to William Rutherford about attending the meetings. MS replied that she hadn't spoken to him yet but would do so at the parish council meeting that she was going to after HRMG. **MS**
- 3b Approach Road** TS reported that he had taken the matter of the approach road up with the Forestry Commission after Kevin Burton of Sport England had said that its maintenance was their responsibility. TS had not had any reply from the Forestry Commission and would try again as the surface is getting steadily worse. SC said that she thought Sport England had agreed to repair it at the meeting about the toilet block on the 4th of November. MS said that she would raise the issue at the parish council meeting or directly with the parish clerk. GP checked the lease again but the wording was inconclusive, it says that Sport England have the 'right', not the 'duty' to make and maintain the road. **TS, MS**
- 4 Harrison's Rocks Work and Site Manager's Report**
- 4a Cement Work** TS reported that no cement work had been done. At the open meeting Gawain Theobald had offered to do some so TS will contact him about this in the spring. 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. **TS**

- 4b Resin Work** TS reported that nothing had changed since the last meeting, no work had been done in 2013. Work is still needed on North Boulder, Bow Window (both high priority), Root Route 3, Panther's Wall, The Flakes, Forester's Wall, The step across from the Isolated Buttress, 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). Mick Canning may be able to do some of this work as it is mostly on the starting holds. BM will talk to Mike Vetterlein about doing a workshop later in the year for a group of climbers who expressed an interest at the open meeting. **BM**
- 4c Anchors** TS reported that nothing had changed since the last meeting. New swageing is required on Eyelet and Ejector and the rear anchor of the latter should be replaced, 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 and some extra resin is needed around one or two others (detailed in the report). CT will arrange dates with DB and TS to do the work in the spring, so that DB can learn how to place and repair the anchors. **TS, CT, DB**
- 4d Woodland Management & Ground Erosion Work** TS said that this year's phase of cutting, including the 10m corridor work, had been completed successfully in the week commencing 25th November, with a great turnout from the SVG on the weekend of November 30th and December 1st. A lot of erosion work and path repair was done as well, including a new path up to the Root Routes area. TS also said that he had tried to get hold of a forestry consultant to do a survey of the trees above the crag but had had no reply, so he would contact some more of the firms recommended by the Wealden DC tree preservation officer to try and get this done. CT said that a small number of trees had come down in the storm just before Christmas and that Malcolm McPherson and Phil Loasby had cleared the ones that were blocking paths on our land. TS said that there were some trees that had fallen into Mrs Treptie's fields and that he had asked Tony Flint and Phil Loasby to clear these as well – about a day's paid work. DB and EH reported that they had been doing some clearance work at Harrison's and plan to do more. So far they have done Kukri Wall, the bouldering area just north of Ejector area, Fang/Incisor area and Fallen Block wall. CT said that the work was very well done and the crag looked a lot better for it. CT said that the top of the crag needs to be cleared of birch and holly saplings, TS suggested this be a task for volunteers after this year's compartment has been cut. CT had received a letter from Mrs Smith, a resident of the Forge Farm hamlet, complaining about people camping in Mrs Treptie's fields (and on the Smiths' land) and also about the removal of part of the fence on our western boundary. The group was sympathetic but in reality it is impossible for us to stop this sort of thing from happening, although when the campsite re-opens this may alleviate the situation to some extent. The group also agreed that replacing the fence should be a high priority and TS asked CT to get three quotes from local contractors for a post-and-three-strand fence and also for similar fencing to the type we already have at the northern end of our land. It was agreed that we would ask Mrs Treptie if she wanted us to put up some 'Private Land' signs in her fields when the fencing was being done. **CT, BM**

4e

Car Park and Toilet MS reported on a meeting held on November the 4th 2013 between all the stakeholders in the toilet block and car park, namely Withyham Parish Council, BMC, Forestry Commission, Sport England and a group of climbers and local residents trying to ensure the future of the facilities. The main outcome of this meeting was that Sport England had agreed to repair the toilet block and get it back into use by early 2014. The Forestry Commission had launched a consultation website to gauge opinions in the community and this had had a good response. They had also had two 'drop-in' sessions in early January and these too had been very successful, with a good attendance by Groombridge residents. MS said that although Birchden Wood is a very small wood by Forestry Commission standards, they did seem to be responding to local opinion. The consultation site is now closed and the Forestry Commission will respond to the feedback on the 24th of January. SC said that she was a bit disappointed at the lack of involvement by the BMC. MS said that the parish council was going to do a public consultation at the end of January to canvas local opinion. MS also asked what would happen in terms of maintenance once the block re-opens. TS replied that the BMC's contract with Softrock was still in place until November, so things would carry on as before the closure. TS reported that the Sport England contractors had started work on the toilet block on the 9th of January. They had initially had problems gaining access to the block but SC and Ian Bull had been there and were able to help with keys. CT said that he had spoken to the contractors and that they had nearly finished rewiring but needed a couple of dry days before they could start work on the roof. Apparently they plan to remove the roof-top tank and install a pressurized water system, replace some timbers and then cover the roof with a fibreglass skin (guaranteed for about 10 years). CT had asked them about insulating the pipes to stop them bursting in cold periods and they had said they planned to do this and possibly fit electric 'trace heating' to the pipes, although this might prove too expensive. MS wondered if the mains pipe was big enough for a pressurized system, CT assured her it was. CT gave TS the latest electricity meter reading (62778) which he will pass on to Alan Brown. TS will also contact Kevin Burton at Sport England to find out the planned extent of the repairs and if they include any work on the car park surface and approach road. CT reported that Andy Meyers had cut down the leaning oak by the campfire area and that there were problems here with a tree surgeon dumping large quantities of wood etc and making the whole area very untidy – he thinks he knows who the culprit is and will speak to them. AP said there was also a lot of rubber matting near the fire and CT said this was less of a problem and gave people something to sit on. CT reported that we still haven't had a replacement bin delivered, even though Kier had said they would provide one. TS asked CT to contact Kier to remind them of this and also to find out exactly what the emptying schedule was for our bin. CT reported that the bottom of the carpark had silted up a lot following all the floods and people couldn't park to the left of the campfire area any more. TS will contact Steve McCarthy to see if he can have one of his machines scrape off the excess mud. CT also reported that the money box had been damaged over the Christmas period. DB raised the issue of dog poo in the carpark area, often left in bags hanging from the trees and wondered if there was anything the Parish Council could do, such as a dog loo. MS said that as the carpark etc

TS, CT

was private land there was nothing they could do, it was up to HRMG and the Forestry Commission. AP said that the Forestry Commission have a 'stick and flick' policy, encouraging dog owners to use a stick to flick the poo off the paths. CT said he would put a sign about this on the notice board.

4f Signs TS reported that as the toilet block is currently being repaired, there is no longer a need for more, larger 'Campsite Closed' signs. CT had repaired the sign at the lower entrance which was bowed and not flush with the backing board.

5 Health and Safety

5a Notes of any Accidents in the Accident Book There were no accidents to report.

6 Financial Report

6a HRMG Financial Statement this was noted by the group. SC asked **TS** why there was no mention of consumables for the toilets etc in the financial statement. CT explained that these were included in the Softrock charge. Alan Brown from BMC head office had emailed to ask what we wanted to do about a £250 debt owed by Turner Broadcasting for the last two years – did the group want to try and pursue it or write it off. The group decided to write it off as no-one has contact details for the debtor. The group wondered if the Harrison's Repair Fund was still ring-fenced within the new BMC Land and Property Trust bank account and if not, could HRMG have its own account – TS will contact Alan Brown to find out. DB asked about money being made available to replace climbing gear (specifically ascenders and descenders etc) used while working at the rocks. The group felt this was a difficult question, as many people use their own equipment when volunteering but we don't generally pay to replace worn or broken tools, although we do offer to pay for fuel for power tools. It was suggested that perhaps HRMG should buy some pooled gear that could be used by volunteers but again if it is climbing gear this is difficult because of the safety aspect. AP asked whether we should consider allocating some of the money from the donations box to the repair and future maintenance of the toilet block. The group felt that until the lease runs out the money should go into the repair fund, except for the campsite money, which is sent to the Julie Tullis Memorial Fund administered by the BMC. SC said that any body that took over the carpark and toilets would probably need all the money it could get but that if there was a surplus the JTMF would certainly be considered for donations.

7 Stone Farm Rocks

7a Woodland Management & Ground Erosion work TS reported that a small amount of revetment work was needed below Undercut Wall and Milestone Boulder and that a date of the 9th of March had been agreed with Andy Meyers (who has a chainsaw) and a small group of people (BM, TS, Graham Adcock, Robin Mazinke and Sarah Goodman) to do this work. DB, EH and AP said they would probably attend as well. **BM, TS, DB, EH, AP**

7b Resin Work 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.

- 7c** **Signs** TS reminded CT that the sign on the bridleway was coming away from the backing board and still needs repair. CT will deal with this. **CT**
- 7d** **Anchors** These are still required above Inside Or Out, and new swageing is still required on one set of anchors. **CT, TS, DB**
- 8** **AOB**
- 9** **Date of Next Meeting** The next meeting will be held at Evolution climbing wall on Monday May 19th 2014, at 19.00, with a site visit at Harrison's beforehand at 17:00.