

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 May 16th 2011 at Evolution Climbing Wall,
Plumyfeather Farm, Lye Green at 19:00.**

Present:	Tim Skinner	Chair
	Bob Moulton	BMC
	Geoff Pearson	BMC
	Chris Tullis	Site Contractor
	Ben Mason	BMC
	Nigel Head	BMC
	Sarah Cullen	BMC
	Rob Dyer	BMC
	Ruth Brannan	Village Rep

Action

1 **Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tim Daniells and Charlie Pickin. TS welcomed new members Ruth Brannan and Ben Mason to the group and also Rob Dyer (BMC Access & Conservation Officer) who was here on his first site inspection.

2 **Minutes of the Last Meeting (17/01/11)**

These were agreed.

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

- 3a **Forms from the BMC** TS said that CT was still waiting for the timesheet form to be sent from head office. Rob Dyer will talk to Elfyn Jones to remind him. **Rob Dyer**

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

- 4a **Cement Work** Work is still needed on Wailing Wall, Blackeye Wall, The Flakes, Archers Wall, Two-Toed Sloth, Trip of the Psychedelic Tortoise and Right Circle. GP said that he had spoken to some foreign climbers who had their ropes running through the grooves on Wailing Wall. Ben M felt that they were bringing in ethics from elsewhere and that more education was needed, including leaflets. CT offered to arrange groove repair training for Ben M and other regular Evolution/Sandstone climbers next week (possibly with Ian Bull as he did the recent repair on the Isolated Buttress – see 4c below). **CT**

- 4b Resin Work** Work is still needed on North Boulder, Bow Window (both high priority), The Flakes, Foresters Wall, Birchden Wall, Southwest Corner, ZigZag, Rift (all medium priority), Carrera, Coronation Crack, Moonlight Arete, The Mank, Piecemeal Wall, Isolated Buttress Climb and Birchden Corner (all low priority). GP said that he had contacted Mike Vetterlein who is willing to provide resin training for Matthew Tullis, Barnaby Ventham, Ben M and Chris Searle but that Mike couldn't do anything without the equipment, which he had handed over to Steve Reed. TS will contact Steve to have him return the equipment and it will be stored at Evolution from then on. Once this is done, Ben M will contact Mike Vetterlein to arrange the training. **TS, Ben M**
- 4c Bolts** On the 17th of April a complete failure of the main bolt above Woolly Bear/West Wall was reported to various group members. The rock around the front bolt had disintegrated and the bolt was left hanging by the connecting wire, as the backup bolt held. So far no-one has claimed responsibility, although there are rumours that it was caused by people slack-lining. TS said that it wasn't important to know who did it, but we must find out how, as this could have a bearing on the other bolts at the outcrop. GP said he had seen tape over the backup bolt soon after the accident, and CT said he had removed that and put a normal bolt, two washers and a nut though the eye to stop people using it, but they had been removed. GP asked about our liability if people used the single bolt to set a top-rope, Rob Dyer said that people should use their own judgement when using the bolt and that we should block it up again but couldn't do any more. Ben M commented that if it had happened as part of normal climbing activity we would have heard something by now, TS will contact a friend at Brighton University, as that club was top-roping Woolly Bear on the day of the failure. NH said that the fact that the backup bolt had held (and CT had been unable to remove it) was proof that the twin, cable-linked bolt system did the job. TS said that during their site visits on Sunday Rob had suggested contacting Bolt Products to get them to make up some more extra long (20cm) bolts for sandstone. BM asked CT to try and gather as much evidence as possible, and that both points be raised when Dan Middleton visits next month to talk to TS and CT (and possibly Simon Fowler, who expressed an interest at the open meeting) about sandstone bolts. NH asked if soaking the area surrounding a drilled hole before pouring in the resin would produce a better bond with the rock. TS pointed out that the nature of sandstone meant that there wasn't really a surface for the resin to bond to, the bolts really work by mechanical strength. BM said we should add the question to the list for Dan Middleton. TS also said that there was outstanding work to be done placing new bolts and replacing the ones on Woolly Bear and The Vice, and that the old bolt above Unclimbed Wall still needed to be removed – CT to carry out the work. **CT, TS, Rob Dyer**

- 4d Woodland Management & Ground Erosion Work** TS reported that the work had been done to make safe the bifurcated beech tree that is close to the railway line, and that now the tree was in leaf the impact was not nearly as bad as we had feared. He also reported that the woodland plan had been rejected by the Forestry Commission (FC) and that he had contacted Jonathan Webb, the forest agent who is advising us, to ask him to make the changes he thinks are necessary to get the plan approved. Jonathan feels that the main problem was in the wording, and also the size of the compartments we planned to work in each year, and that not many changes will be needed. TS will liaise with him. BM suggested that we try to incorporate the largest sycamores into the first of the new compartments. CT also reported that he had had to speak to a group run by Fairbridge because they were all climbing in big boots. **TS**
- 4e Car Park and Toilet** CT reported things had been very quiet so far this year, apart from a group of people who have been driving their cars up the grass and parking under the canopy ! Ben M offered to supply chestnut stakes that could be hammered into the ground and then sawn off low down, thus preventing vehicular access – CT will organise this with Ben. He also said that the outside sinks had been stolen earlier this year and that a local contractor, Nick Stevens, had done a very good job replacing them, paid for by Sport England. He said that there was still no hot water and that he had asked Nick for a quote to fix it but had not heard anything yet. TS asked about another quote from Nick to replace the old unreliable hand-washer units with normal sinks and hand-dryers. This quote is required by Sport England before they will consider paying for the work. CT said that he had asked Nick for that quote too, and was waiting for a reply – he will chase both quotes up. CT also reported that a couple of the lower stone steps are starting to become loose - TS will contact Sport England about this. NH asked GP if there was any way we could extend the carpark and campsite leases after 2014, GP explained that the leases are with Sport England and the FC so there is nothing we can do. TS and BM both said that Sport England want to give up any involvement in the rocks and therefore it would not be possible to persuade them to extend them. NH said he was worried about high carparking charges causing climbers to start parking elsewhere and annoying local residents. **CT, TS**

- 4f** **Signs** BM showed the group the latest draft of the new sign for the approaches to the rocks, designed by Steve Jackson. He said that following yesterday's open meeting there may need to be some amendments to the wording to include something about cleaning your shoes properly and also about working routes by hanging on the rope. BM will produce a draft form of words with TS and SC and then share it with the rest of the group. BM also suggested that we reprint the postcard form of the code once the new wording has been agreed. There was also discussion of the idea of producing the code in other languages to help inform foreign climbers, and Rob Dyer suggested we could achieve this with PDFs on the BMC website that anyone could download and hand out. It was felt that the code should be translated into Polish, German, French and Spanish, but that other languages might also be required. Rob Dyer also suggested having the translated versions as posters that could be put up in the carpark and at local walls. CT asked for a poster version (A2 size) of the approach sign, minus the map and anything specific to Harrisons, so that he can put it up at Evolution. BM and GP both thought it was a good idea – BM will produce a draft. BM reported on progress on the joint HRMG/FC sign for the carpark. He met with James Sharpe of AONB and Steve McCarthy and subsequently submitted our text and photos to Steve, who said he should contact Richard Everett. BM contacted him but is still waiting for a reply, and feels that we may have to go ahead with our own sign as we are not getting anywhere on the joint venture. **BM, TS, SC, Rob Dyer**
- 5** **Health and Safety**
- 5a** **Notes of any Accidents in the Accident Book** There were no accidents to report. Rob Dyer had visited Stone Farm and Harrison's with TS to make his first inspection and to draft a risk assessment for each site. He will share the drafts with the group once they are written up. He also said that the BMC had the services of a tree expert and that he would ask them to visit Harrison's and Stone Farm and assess the state of any dangerous trees. **Rob Dyer**
- 6** **Financial Report**
- 6a** **HRMG Budget** Alan Brown explained in a note on the latest financial report that the Electricity expenses (not the Cesspit Expenses) showed £290 of money in because we had a credit following a number of estimated readings. TS reported that Alan had also said that he had tracked down £500 of the bequest of £1000 from Mr Buist but had still not found any documentation relating to the second £500. TS will contact Alan Brown to ask him what information he requires, if any. TS also reported that Alan was ready to pay £1000 to the new Steve Durkin Sandstone Trust – TS will send him the details of where to send the cheque. Rob Dyer said that he had queried the very high bin-emptying charge by Wealden DC and that they had assured him the charge would be lower this year. TS asked about the £240 charge for artwork, and BM said that it was paid to Don Sargeant for his work on the maps for the new signs. **TS**
- 7** **Stone Farm Rocks**
- 7a** **Woodland Management & Ground Erosion work** TS reported that the work done last November had bedded in well and was looking good.
- 7b** **Resin Work** See **4b** above.
- 7c** **Signs** See **4f** above.

7d Bolts Nothing to report.

8 AOB

8a Water & Electricity Meters Rob Dyer asked CT where they were located at Harrisons carpark. CT said the electricity meter was in the locked cupboard and that he didn't know where the water meter was, although he thought it was probably somewhere up next to the drive – he will find out and let Rob know, and also include electricity meter readings on his monthly returns. **CT**

8b Best Practice Web Article Rob Dyer offered to put together an article for the BMC website explaining why the sandstone code of practice existed, and the consequences of not following it. SC suggested that Rebekah Bibby would be a good contact for information about the local habitat. **Rob Dyer**

8c Bolt Testing GP noted that the recent bolt failure had occurred only ten months after the last bolt inspection, and wondered if we were using the right methods. This will be addressed (we hope) by Dan Middleton's visit. He also wondered whether the two recent harsh winters (which have caused frost damage to some parts of Stone Farm) might have played a part in the failure.

9 Date of Next Meeting The next meeting will be held at Evolution climbing wall on Monday October 10th 2011, at 19.00.