

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## Hill Walking Working Group

Minutes of the BMC Hill Walking Working Group, held on Monday April 13 at 7pm at the BMC office.

Present: Brian Smith (BMC Director) (BS) Chair  
Carey Davies (BMC HWO) (CD) Secretary  
Jennifer Raffle  
Charles Gameson  
Andy Howell  
Ian Howells  
David Jones  
Peter Judd  
Martin Lewis  
Rob Nolan  
Jennifer Raffle  
Heather Thomas-Smith

		Actions
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	
1.1.	<b>Introductions</b>	
1.2	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
	Tanya Oliver	
	Cath Lee	
	Paul Redding	
	Paul Mitchinson	
	David Robinson	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes approved</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters arising</b>	
3.1.	Progress of hillwalking 'mini-site' idea discussed. The urgency of this has slackened as it was originally conceived as a counterbalance to the climbing-focused 'Be' project. However the latter has now stalled, potentially to be replaced with mini-websites to help promote specific BMC events and initiatives, which would have much more general application. Remains to be seen what will come of this. <b>CD</b> to keep an eye on progress and update the group where necessary.	<b>CD</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Update on actions taken, progress made and plans in place</b>	

4.1.	<p><b>Summit magazine:</b> widespread approval of the latest (Spring) issue of Summit. The group felt it incorporated a good amount of hill walking content, had a strong front cover, and handled the ‘all-mountain approach’ deftly. <b>CD</b> reported that Dave Turnbull had spoken to Alex Messenger about him working to a guideline in future issues of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25% walking</li> <li>- 25% climbing</li> <li>- 25% mountaineering</li> <li>- 25% general</li> </ul> <p>Group agreed this apportioning should not be compulsory, allowing for flexibility and overlap between activities, but is feasible and reasonable.</p>	
4.2.	<p>The meeting welcomed the decision to have 25% of Summit dedicated to hill walking and asked for confirmation that this included the front cover. It was noted that other regular publications, such as the Members Handbook and Young People’s Guide, were dominated by climbing images and text and it was recommended that this be addressed. <b>CD</b> to follow up and report back to the group.</p>	<b>CD</b>
4.3.	<p>It was noted that advertisers in Summit and other publications were predominantly climbing-related. It was recommended that the list of advertisers used by the BMC, or its advertising management agent, be reviewed to add potential advertisers who promote hill walking products and services. It was felt that a good source for identifying these companies was believed to be walking magazines and other outdoor industry publications. Securing some of these would increase advertising revenues and increase hill walking imagery in BMC publications. See item 5.1. <b>CD</b> to follow up and report back to the group.</p>	<b>CD</b>
4.4.	<p><b>Areas:</b> <b>CD</b> reported the group had helped catalyse a number of developments at Area level, most notably a big rise in the number of hill Walking representatives – e.g. now there are more than a dozen, in the past there was just one. Reps are taking forward the hill walking agenda in their meetings with central BMC support e.g. the upcoming meeting with Terry Abraham as speaker in the Peak. Dave Turnbull and <b>CD</b> to also speak at a number of upcoming meetings about hill walking ambitions.</p>	<b>CD</b>
4.5.	<p>Questions raised about the effectiveness of Area Meeting promotion, as several group members had not received any invitation to their local area meeting via email. <b>CD</b> to look into how Area Meetings are promoted and whether there are regional email lists of BMC members.</p>	<b>CD</b>
4.6.	<p>The Group agreed that each BMC Area would benefit from an annual “Big” hill walking event, strongly publicised to members, friend, clubs and the hill walking community. It could be a day in the hills with a well-known speaker or national personality. Also see item 5.2. <b>CD</b> to follow up and report back to the group.</p>	<b>CD</b>
4.7.	<p><b>Campaigns:</b> <b>CD</b> reported the BMC’s <a href="#">campaign to get the outdoors on the agenda for the May election</a>, which CD worked on with Cath Flitcroft, has been viewed 8,000 times, widely disseminated on social media and been noticed by politicians. It is a good example of the BMC’s access agenda at its broadest and most inclusive: seeking to influence national policy for the benefit of all outdoor goers and the country at large. Demonstrates how the hill walking agenda can help to widen the scope of the BMC in general.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Report back from interest groups with recommendations, followed by discussions and decisions</b>	

	<p>A number of recommendations to further progress the implementation of the BMC Hill Walking Strategy were proposed by the 3 Interest Groups. From these a total of 15 were agreed to be advised to the Chief Executive and progressed for attention with the appropriate person or body.</p>	
5.1.	<p><b>Communications and marketing</b> (delivered by <b>DJ</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask if more resources can be allocated to finance hill walking content on BMC TV. Despite some good inspirational and skills content, walking videos are still significantly outnumbered by climbing ones. Set a percentage and date target. Use BMC conservation initiatives, achievements, issues and plans within this.</li> <li>- Review the BMC membership benefits package to identify specific hill walking member additions, such as walking holidays, information on walking festivals etc.</li> <li>- Review the BMC insurance product and test its suitability and attractiveness to hill walkers – both to individuals and clubs. Consider having a specific “BMC Hill Walking Insurance” product branding and message. This could achieve higher insurance income and encourage higher BMC membership from hill walkers.</li> <li>- Establish key hill walking related advertisers and actively pursue adverts from them in BMC publications. See item 4.3.</li> <li>- Look to appoint a PR placement agency to establish and maintain up to date details of journalists and publications likely to consider using BMC press stories or to approach BMC for story support, and liaise with them as appropriate, including invitations to BMC events.</li> </ul>	
5.2.	<p><b>Organisation, structure and culture</b> (delivered by <b>PJ</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigate whether participants in Mountain Training’s Hill and Mountain Skills could receive BMC membership as part of their £20 registration fee, or at least a discounted rate.</li> <li>- Investigate whether BMC membership could include discounted rates on Hill and Mountain Skills courses.</li> <li>- Prepare ‘job description’ for Area Hill Walking Representatives, and consider a way for these representatives to share ideas and experience and work together.</li> <li>- Encourage and support the delivery of more Area-led hill walking events – target of one over the next 12 months</li> <li>- Investigate the possibility of hosting an ‘official’ BMC hill walking festival or weekend in conjunction with a promotional partner e.g. Trail magazine and / or investigate whether an existing walking festival could benefit from greater BMC involvement.</li> <li>- Proactively promote the advantages of BMC membership to MTA members including BMC-led CPD workshops, in order to overcome the perception that MTA members don’t get sufficient ‘value’ from the BMC and foster positive support.</li> </ul>	

5.3.	<p><b>Access and conservation</b> (delivered by <b>JR</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make a business case for the increase of the Access and Conservation Team to four to allow increased support to hill walking issues and developments, in liaison with the Access Management Team and the Access Officers, and to take the opportunity to review the current use of their time, their priorities and their management support and direction.</li> <li>- Review the purpose and strength of the BMC's relationship with the APPG and engage with the Joint Chairpersons of the Group to help establish the objectives of the MPs, and their understanding of the requirements of the BMC strategy and campaigning messages. This is best achieved soon after the General Election by meeting John Mann MP and David Rutley MP, both likely to be re-elected.</li> <li>- Review partnerships with other organisations with overlapping agendas and seek to establish those who have the most influence and compatibility of purpose.</li> <li>- Improve the profile of access and conservation work and initiatives in BMC communications. See also 5.1.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Views on progress so far – how do we feel?</b></p>	
	<p>The meeting expressed its recognition of the progress made already and the impetus moving forward. It was felt that the Group had helped galvanise attention and actions across the BMC, and the support being given was welcomed and appreciated. Members of the Group could see that their voluntary involvement was making a big difference.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Next steps</b></p>	
	<p>The action points and 15 recommendations above will be progressed. Interest groups will continue to consider opportunities and needs, assist in implementation where possible (i.e. areas), and prepare further recommendations for the next meeting.</p>	
9.	<p><b>AOB</b></p>	
	<p><b>CD</b> has a number of writing tasks in coming weeks and will need to be out of touch with the group until around April 24.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p>	
	<p>September 14.</p>	

**The above accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, Chair