

BMC Sandstone Open Meeting - 15th May 2016

Present: Tim Senior, Sarah Cullen, Malcolm McPherson, Emma Harrington, Daimon Beail, Steve Jackson, Frank Shannon, , Mick Canning, Jay Oram, Adrian Paisey, Oliver Hill, Mike Vetterlein, Mike Baines, Graham Adcock and Bob Moulton (Chair).

1. Welcome and Apologies

BM welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from: Rob Naylor, Tim Skinner.

2. Minutes of the 18.10.15 Meeting

Approved for accuracy as far as anyone could remember.

3. Harrison's Rocks

SC reported:

a. Access to the top of Isolated Buttress

There had been no reports of abseiling or lowering off.

- i) Ropes that had been left in place had been taken down, and it was stressed that people putting up ropes to protect access onto and off the boulder should take them down on the same day. The situation would continue to be monitored.

b. Cement Work

All but essential cement work was on hold while an MSc student from Portsmouth University was doing a project to look into the bonding of the cement to the rock and the way in which the bolts were sealed to the rock (see also c, below). A number of HRMG members had met with the student, Greg Balding, and his supervisor on site and were favourably impressed. GB had done some preliminary work but he was currently doing exams after which he would be concentrating on the project.

c. Anchors (Bolts)

As previously reported a small number of the old bolts had failed, which were been looked at as part of the cement project. A few of the more recent bolts (e.g. above Bow Window) were twisting a bit; these had been looked at by HRMG and were considered to be safe. AP was looking into what bolts were available, including those used at Bowles and bolts that could be made up for the BMC by Jim Titt.

d. Resin Work

Good progress had been made last year at both Harrison's by SJ and at Stone Farm by SJ and Martin Walker. As soon as the rock had dried out, work would start again this year.

e. Woodland Management

The next area to be cut in the autumn (the fifth year of the plan) was the area between *Long Layback* and *Pig Tail Slabs*, i.e. below *Slim Finger Crack*. Himalayan Balsam was still a problem and needs to be pulled up whenever it is seen, and be strimmed.

f. Graffiti

There had been some recent incidents of new graffiti. Sadly some of this had been done by and subsequently in memory of a boy who had died. SC had rubbed off some of this, which in turn had upset the family and friends of the boy. SC had had the full support of HMG and the BMC in the way she had handled this matter.

g. Signs

Work was in hand to replace the two signs at the entrances to the Rocks and to put up a third sign at the Forge Farm entrance.

h. Boulders above Monkey's Bow

Vandals had dislodged large boulder and pushed over the top of the Rocks above *Monkey's Bow*, and was now in the vegetation below *Moonlight Arête*. They had left another boulder and to stop this also being pushed over the edge HRMG members had dragged it back from the top of the cliff and it was now located so that it could not be moved.

i. Erosion of the Rock

There was discussion about the problems caused by climbers and by boulderers in popular bouldering areas: ground erosion, excess chalk and over-zealous cleaning. The importance of all climbers cleaning their feet before climbing was stressed with the need to get all group leaders to ensure good practice; all climbers should be encouraged to own and use pieces of carpet. Rob Dyer was going to write to all organisations who were instructing climbing on Sandstone on this matter, and SC had asked to see a draft of the letter. Banning bouldering was not an option. Other solutions to the problems will have to be found. Action **HRMG**

4. High Rocks

The owner had recently banned bouldering at the Rocks and had further restricted when climbing was allowed - the details were on the High Rocks website. OH had spoken to the owner when he had been at the Rocks and had had an informal discussion with him. Those who had met with the owner in 2015 and previously could see no point in asking for a further meeting with him: they thought that the best approach was to see how things worked out in practice.

5. Bowles

Nothing to report.

6. Bulls Hollow

GA undertook to check on what work might need doing this winter'. Action **GA**

7. Eridge Green Rocks

DB reported on the graffiti and dog mess that he had seen at the Rocks and his conversation with Alice Parfitt at the Sussex Wildlife Trust. It was hoped that the local volunteer would monitor the situation.

8. Stone Farm

SC reported on the two stumps currently used as belays above *Stone Farm Crack* and *Pine Crack* will be removed at some time, after which it was hoped that enough rock will be uncovered to put bolts in. In the meantime the stumps were *thought* to be safe for belaying but it would be up to climbers to make their own assessment as to how safe they were. After the stumps are removed and before bolts are put in, it may be necessary for climbers to put belay ropes across the bridgeway, when due allowance will need to be made as to not causing inconvenience to users of the bridgeway.

9. The SVG Website www.sandstonevolunteers.org.uk

BM reported that now that the revised Code of Practice was about to be printed, he would be consulting others on the wording of the crag-specific material that had previously been in the Code and that would now need to be put on websites.

10. The Steve Durkin Sandstone Trust www.sdst.org.uk

GA reported on the Charter Mark that would be offered to commercial users of the Sandstone crags as a sign of good practice.

11. Any Other Business

JG reported on behalf of Arc'teryx, who were planning to run some form of an event to support Southern Sandstone climbing in keeping with what they've done elsewhere. He would be contacting SC re using local instructors for the event. It was suggested that this could include good practice on Sandstone particularly as regards cleaning feet, perhaps giving away pieces of carpet with the Arc'teryx logo on.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

Sunday 23rd October 2016 in the same venue. Start time to be advised.

Bob Moulton 2/6/16