

Minutes

BMC North East Area Meeting

Thursday 16th June 2016

Newcastle Climbing Centre

1. Welcome and Introduction

Jon Punshon welcomed everyone to the meeting. In attendance:

Jon Punshon
John Herron
Paul Mitchinson
Jonathon Sims
Bob McAdam
Mike Facchini
Jessica Wortley
Martin Ballantine
Rich Alderton
Martin Shaw
Stephen Heineger
Tom Parkin
Franco Cookson
Anna Healy

2. Apologies for Absence

Received from:

Chris Bullock
Alan Hinkes
Mark Goodings
Steve Jenkins
John Vaughan
Steve Blake
Mark Anstiss
John Dalrymple
Steve Blake
Mike Conlon
Philip Powell
James Higgins

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting, held on Thursday 25th February 2016 at Durham Climbing Centre, were read, agreed and accepted as a true and proper record.

4. Recent Climbing Accidents in Northumberland

Discussed in light of four recent climbing accidents in Northumberland: 16th May at Peel Crag; 24th May at Peel Crag; 24th May at Kyloe; and 9th June at Back Bowden Doors.

It was also reported that the tall standing block on top of Sunset at Peel Crag had fallen to the bottom of the crag.

Reasons for the accidents were explored and there were some suggestions to provide some training for inexperienced climbers and some wall-to-crag experience. The level of experience of those involved in the aforementioned accidents is unknown.

Action: JP to pester BMC for some funding

5. Festival of Climbing 2017 and Other Potential Developments

Suggested dates are 16th & 17th June 2017, venue TBD.

Jonathon Sims, Martin Ballantine, Jessica Wortley and Franco Cookson kindly volunteered to further plan for this event. BMC event information was passed to this team.

6. National Trust (NT) Licencing for Commercial Activities

This was discussed at length and the areas which affect the North East Area are: the whole of the Lake District and Gibside.

A pilot scheme is underway at 21 sites and will conclude in September.

We are asked to make our voice heard to the NT and any BMC members who are also NT members are urged to contact the NT to air their views.

'The North East Area of the BMC disagrees with the raising of this levy, and believes it sets a dangerous precedent' was proposed by Tom Parkin and seconded by Steve Heiniger.

Action: JP will make representation to the BMC National Office

7. Forthcoming Events

25th June: Ushaw College, County Durham – Joe Tasker talk (Savage Arena and exhibition).

8. Co-ordinators Reports

a) Access

North

Unfortunately John Vaughan was unable to attend.

Jon Punshon advised of a new approach to The Stell, a bouldering venue near Rothbury.

Approach notes for The Stell

A new approach to the crag has been negotiated with the farmer; this has the advantages of better parking and a dry walk in. While slightly longer it avoids an area where Pheasant and Grouse are fed and nest.

If you take your dog to the crag please keep it under control. This is important as birds nest on the moor and are vulnerable to both disturbance and being eaten. Both can result in dead chicks.

The new parking is adjacent to Debdon Pit Cottage, which is visible just west of the Rothbury-Alnwick road (B6341), grid reference NU 073041.

Leave the road and follow the track up to the cottage. The parking area is on the right just before the cottage's enclosure. There is parking for several cars. Do not block the entrance to the cottage, and park in a way that others can park as well.

From the parking follow the wall west to a gate in the fence. From here a small diamond-shaped rock will be seen on the apparent horizon, about 400m distant; walk to this. Once at the small cairn, drift slightly right over the gentle ridge and drop down to a track in a shallow valley that leads left and down to the crag, which is just over one km (15 minutes' walk) from the parking.

The above text is taken from UKC website and can be found by following the hyperlink; <http://www.ukclimbing.com/logbook/crag.php?id=21838>

Sandy Crag

Franco Cookson and Anna Healy advised of a jealous gamekeeper on the approach to Sandy Crag and it is best to follow the advice given on the BMC Regional Access Database (RAD).

South

There was no access rep from the South at the meeting.

Tranmire Rocks

Climbers are advised to follow the parking and approach advise on the RAD: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/viewcrag.aspx?id=183>

Scugdale

Work is to start to improve the access path.

b) Youth

The youth report was given by Chris Balloch of Rock Solid.

April: The final of the Youth Climbing Series took place at Ratho; congratulations to Lily Kinnersley who took home the silver medal in the girls' group E category.

May: Rock Solid sent a large contingent to the Scottish Youth Bouldering Championships at TCA Glasgow; several team members made it through to the finals with Lilly Kinnersley taking home the bronze medal in the girls' group E category.

Congratulations go to Rock Solid Youth Team Member Issy Orwin who made it through to the final of the ASBO at Climb Newcastle; quite an achievement amongst an outstanding field of climbers.

June: The British Youth Bouldering Championships took place at the Depot Manchester; several team members made the trip down to take part in the biggest youth bouldering event of the year.

That's the end of the national boulder competitions for this year; the rope competitions start in September and we will be running several training sessions leading up to this.

c) Climbing Walls

Unfortunately Mark Goodings tendered his apologies, so no report was available. It was noted however that the climbing wall at Simonside Outdoor Adventure Centre in South Shields has been re-equipped and revamped and is well worth a visit.

d) Hill Walking

Hillwalking Reps Report

From NNPA

The bridge at Fairhaugh over the Usway Burn is open again, but there is some windblow blocking the bridleway just to the north of this (grid ref NT 87551244). Walkers are able to get round but riders and cyclists would have to go the long way round. We are working with the landowner on this issue.

From North Pennines AONB

We raised £16,405 through Crowdfunder for the path repair at Nine Standards Rigg. Our grant total to date is £30,000, £5k of which was a BMC grant. We hope to do the work this autumn. Colleagues took BMC Trustees to have a look at the route on 10 May, as part of

their AGM. My colleague Alistair is going to do a presentation at the BMC upland footpath conference at Rheged in November.

We are also in the process of producing guidance for those wanting to arrange larger outdoor events in the AONB.

Alan Dougherty has stepped down from the Cumbria LAF (Local Access Forum) and so there is no longer direct climbing representation on our Access and Recreation Working Group as he used to attend on behalf of that body...know anyone who might be interested? It meets four times per year for half a day and includes the Pennine National Trails Northern Working Group. Local Access Forum (the County based access groups)

This would be coming to the North Pennines Access and Recreation Working Group representing climbers etc. (pref as a BMC rep), Cumbria LAF membership will be dealt with separately (we were lucky to get both historically with Alan).

Meetings are always in the North Pennines and rotate between County Durham, Cumbria and Northumberland in order.

e) Clubs

Unfortunately Mark Anstiss tendered his apologies so no club report was available.

f) National Council

Unfortunately Mark Anstiss tendered his apologies so no club report was available.

9. AOB

None.

UIAA pushing for Ice Climbing at the Olympics.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 1st September 2016, starting at 19:30, at the Durham Climbing Centre.