

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Notes from the Meeting of the BMC Peak Area Wednesday 8th June 2016 The Winking Man, Upper Hulme, Staffordshire

Present:

John Cook	Becky Hammond (secretary)	Chris Radcliff
John Gresty	Alan Malone	Phil Robins (Climbers Club)
Steve Clark	Rob Greenwood (chair)	Peter Judd
Henry Folkard)	Graeme Hammond	? Long
Kasia Osipowicz	Jon Rowe (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)	Cameron Anderson
Michelle Cullimore-Pike	Ian Kynaston (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)	Mel Brown
Neil Foster)	Greg Bristol (Peak Climbing Club)	Spencer Ramsey
Geoff Sayers	Rob Dyer (BMC Access officer)	Claire Reading (FRCC)
Simon Cundy	Dave Turnbull (BMC Chief Exec)	Mark Warwicker
Kim Leyland	Total signed in = 28	Total present = 29

1. Apologies

Valerie Partington	Cath Lee	Tim Grice
Gill Radcliff	Dave Parry	Dave Garnett
Sue Smith	David Brown	Simon Lee
John Coefield	Luke Barley	Pete Hammond
Lynn Robinson	Rick Gibbon	Alan James
Austin Knott		

2. Actions from the last meeting

Action	Who	Complete?
Feedback to National Trust re Activity Licensing proposals		Yes – see below

3. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust / Roaches update – Jon Rowe (Roaches Warden)

Peregrines nesting on Hen Cloud in the usual place on the big slanting ledge, but this year it is a new young pair and nesting is about a month behind the normal timescale. Peregrine Watch is in place to monitor and educate the public, and Smartwater protection is in place.

Footpaths – no work done this year apart from some minor repairs on some of the restored paths. Planning work for 2017 including walking around in the rain to see where water flows (need to keep it on the moor rather than running off). Doxey Pool needs repair as it's totally washed out at one end.

Part of a bid for The South West Peak Project: 4/5 projects will affect the Roaches, including wading birds (e.g. curlews), Roaches Gateway (footpaths) and interpretation.

Parking is a massive issue. SWT do not have any control over this but are trying to work with parish council and local landowners to improve the situation. Traffic wardens are employed by Staffordshire County Council. Minibuses are allowed to park in the bus stop (which is no longer used by buses as there's no longer a bus route) but not sure about cars. SWT are hoping that a local landowner will be able to provide temporary parking using a rule which allows it up to 28 days per year.

Grazing – in response to a specific question. Cattle were introduced to improve the structure. Sheep have been retained because they graze differently, although the numbers of sheep have been reduced and they are now more native breeds. They are monitoring and may still need to adjust the numbers. The presence of people and weather affects exactly where the stock choose to graze. The fenced off area next to Roaches Wood needs repair to try and keep the sheep out, but the work cannot be done until after the bird breeding season has finished.

Larches – are a different habitat and need different management. There are a lot of mature larches and the windclipped appearance is very characteristic. They are hoping to increase the number of deciduous trees and understorey vegetation.

Rhododendrons and laurels – SWT are seeking consent from Natural England to remove these. They hope to organise a working day with climbers helping with this work.

Drones – SWT have a **no drones policy**. They upset ground nesting birds, peregrines and people. Jon hopes that people will feel confident to challenge anyone operating drones (see April's meeting notes for a summary of the legal position).

4. **Access updates** – Henry Folkard, Kim Leyland, Rob Dyer

Ring Ouzels: 11 pairs at Burbage (more than expected), but minimal restrictions due to the locations. Five have fledged, one is still ongoing and five failed (including one due to predation and two which were close to footpaths). On site signage was particularly effective in reducing disturbance of one nest. The second round of nesting is in progress.

Nesting restriction violations and crag etiquette: A Ring Ouzel nest failure at the Cowper Stone has been attributed to disturbance by climbers: fresh chalk appeared after the signs were placed on site. This is very disappointing. Perceived increased disturbance at the Moscar end of Stanage may be due to increased climbing activity, or due to increased monitoring of Ring Ouzel sites compared to previous years. It was suggested that increased on site signage may be required if climbing around there is becoming more popular.

Nesting restriction violations have also been an issue elsewhere in the country e.g. Cheddar and Pembroke. Bad behaviour, or perceptions of bad behaviour, cost us in terms of access. Those present felt that many established restrictions are accepted by climbers and breaches are usually an honest mistake. However there was a feeling that newer climbers / those coming from an indoor climbing background may not be as aware. Some of the information is provided in a relatively subtle manner (e.g. Pembroke – you need to know to look for a leaflet) but there's a difficult balance between this and attracting too much unwanted attention.

It was suggested that the Regional Access Database should have a more prominent position on the BMC website.

Other access updates:

- The Moscar estate is now owned by the Duke of Rutland.
- There was recently a fire in the upper Derwent valley. Please phone 999 if you ever see any evidence of fire!
- Longstone Edge East – the final decision has been confirmed and quarrying is prohibited
- Longstone West – there has been a planning application to delay the restoration by 20 years.
- Midhope Moor – horrible matting has been laid down to provide vehicular access
- There's a planning application for housing on the lorry park at Matlock.
- Birchen Edge – The Eastern Moors Partnership (EMP) are looking to put in direct access from the carpark.
- Burbage/Millstone – the lease from Sheffield City Council to EMP has not yet been signed but is expected this month.
- Millstone – concern about loose boulders that pose a risk to people above and below the crag – these include the boulder that is used as a belay for Skywalk. A site meeting has been arranged with Danny from the EMP.
- Off-roading issues are ongoing (e.g. Three Shires Head).
- United Utilities are selling off bits of land e.g. Winder Harbour, and aren't insisting that the new landowners maintain existing access agreements. The Peak and Northern Footpaths Society are trying to negotiate with the landowner at Windy Harbour. Henry Folkard will take this up with

the Peak District National Park Authority. It was noted that the withdrawal of Higher Level Stewardship funding will likely lead to removal of various concessionary paths.

5. **National Trust Outdoor Activities Licensing**

Rob Dyer reported that there had been a national teleconference that morning. There seems to have been a softening of the position and it is likely to only be for pay-for-entry sites. There has been lots of feedback from instructors, centres, etc including from the Peak Area hillwalking reps. A Peak Area proposal has been sent to John Stewart of the Peak District NT. It is common ground that for big events there is an opportunity for payback, but it is clear that the NT have received the message that imposition will not work.

6. **National Council Report** – Rob Greenwood

Key points from last National Council:

- Mountain Rescue England and Wales are no longer listed as observers (they haven't attended for eight years). The Association of British Climbing Walls and the Women's Development Group have been invited to attend.
- Travel insurance is doing well
- Finances are in good order.
- Legal support for bolt installers – see AOB

7. **Hillwalking update** –Peter Judd (Hillwalking Rep)

Mend Our Mountains campaign experienced a late surge and exceeded the fundraising target – felt to be due to being featured on breakfast television. It provides tangible evidence that people care about the hills, and shows how good the BMC can be at promoting this. The Peak fund raised over £12,400. There is some uncertainty as to how this will be used as the PDNPA now say they need £27,000 to carry out the work on Ringing Roger. The BMC have offered £17,000 by topping up from the "general" fund. They are exploring how much work can be done using the funds available.

BMC AGM Walks were well attended with 24 people on the Saturday and 11 on the Sunday.

Hill Walking Working Group – future is under discussion, looking at successes and outstanding things (With reference to the original strategy that was produced two years ago). The initial feeling is that there has been excellent progress but there's still more to be done as the BMC is still not yet the natural home of hillwalking. There is likely to be the opportunity for someone to take over from Cath Lee as an area hillwalking representative from November – if anyone is interested please contact Peter or Cath.

8. **Update from BMC Officers** – Rob Dyer

The Access team have been busy, especially with new/revised restrictions in the Lakes & Cornwall.

The purchase of Crookrise in North Yorkshire is going through.

Scaling work has been done to remove loose rock above the car park at Horseshoe Quarry.

The national Coastal Path continues to be rolled out – the Access team are working alongside local area access reps. The Coastal Path gives a legal right to access any land (including cliffs) on the seaward side of the path, so is very significant for climbers.

The BMC has produced a guidance booklet for challenge events – it will be circulated via fundraising organisations etc as well as being available on the BCM website.

The BMC office refurbishment will start in July for about two months. This will cause some disruption but normal service will continue as much as possible.

Following a branding consultation exercise funded by Sport England, a recommendation will be made to the next National Council meeting to change the name of the BMC. Watch this space!

It is very likely that climbing will be included in the 2020 Olympics (three categories: bouldering, lead, and speed climbing). It is vital that the BMC supports this but core activity must remain a priority and not be adversely affected.

9. **Peak Area Newsletter**

Items for the next newsletter should be sent by 24th August – email peakarea@gmail.com.

10. **Any other business**

BMC legal support for bolt installers

David Brown had sent a paper (appended) and had two questions for discussion:

- The statement only refers to bolt installers Should the policy of support extend to all forms of fixed equipment; belay stakes, abseil chains, and similar?

- The support only extends to a person who is a BMC Member at the time of the claim. I cannot see a solution to this predicament: perhaps the BMC should be prepared to “provide technical support and advice” to former members who find themselves facing a claim even though they are no longer insured. Or, perhaps the BMC should have a system of Life Members.

There was some discussion. Third party liability insurance only covers current policies: that is how it works.

The BMC would try to protect members. It's the insurance company's call, but they often use the BMC as an advisor.

There were various views on the statement. The conclusion was that it needs tightening up and a legal review.

Outside Crag Cleanup Saturday 11th June – this year supported by the BMC. Fill a bag with rubbish from the crags, take it back to Outside and enjoy the barbecue!

11. **Date, time and venue of the next meeting**

Wednesday 14th September at The Globe Inn, 144 High Street West, Glossop, SK13 8HJ.

To be followed by Nigel Vardy (aka Mr Frostbite)

Frostbite in Alaska - Appendicitis in Greenland - Near Drowning in Borneo - Rope Failure in the Kumbu - Reported missing in Annapurna

Would you go climbing with this man???

Some people call him brave, some call him mad. Losing limbs to severe frostbite would put off all but the few, but to Nigel it was the springboard to climb, achieve and conquer. He continues on life's adventure, forcing new boundaries and new experiences every day of his life...

As Nigel says - "I don't want to die in an unused body..."

AS ALWAYS:

- Chair of the Peak Area is Rob Greenwood – robgreenwood@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Access issues/access volunteer work please contact Henry Folkard – henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- With regard to the meetings, agenda items or any other issues please contact Becky Hammond, Peak Area Secretary – becky@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
- Check out the Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/bmcpeakarea> and 'like' us if you can
- Articles for the newsletter are always welcome: please send them to peakarea@gmail.com

BMC Peak Area Discussion
on
“BMC Legal Support for Bolt Installers”

At a Lakes Area Meeting in early 2016 the issue of the BMC’s legal support for bolt installers was raised. Apparently, the main concern was that, in the event of a third party claim against a Member who had placed a bolt, would the BMC support the Member or would the BMC side with their insurers in order to protect the long term viability of the third party insurance scheme?

This issue has nothing to do with the ethics of placing bolts, nor the standards which constitute good practice: the issue raised was specifically about the relationship between the BMC and the Member in the event of a potentially large third party claim.

On 13 April 2016 the BMC (CEO) issued the “Fixed equipment statement”, now agreed with Perkins Slade, as follows:

All BMC members receive £10m of 3rd party liability insurance cover as a standard component of BMC membership. This insurance provides wide-ranging cover for all recognised climbing, hill walking and mountaineering activities including the placing of drilled equipment. Members placing drilled equipment of an appropriate standard and in accordance with good practice – see bolt installers guide: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/Download.aspx?id=216> – will be covered by BMC liability insurance in the event of a claim being made against them that arises from an allegation that the equipment failed. The BMC will provide technical support and advice to any climber who places such equipment in accordance with good practice and is subsequently party to a claim. It should be noted that the person placing the fixed equipment must be a member of the BMC (and thus hold the liability insurance) at the time the claim is made. All climbers using in-situ drilled equipment to ascend climbs should make their individual assessment of the state of the equipment (and the risks involved) and must take personal responsibility for their actions and any subsequent accidents or injury – see bolt users guide: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/boltguidance> .

The BMC National Council has not yet ratified this statement and the Peak Area may wish to comment on the proposed BMC response.