

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the 49th National Council meeting held at
Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig on Saturday 18 June 2016.

In attendance

Voting members:

President	Rehan Siddiqui	(RS)	Chair
Vice-President	Emma Flaherty	(EF)	
Vice-President	Nick Kurth	(NK)	
Honorary Treasurer	John Simpson	(JS)	
CEO	Dave Turnbull	(DT)	
Cymru Wales (North)	Anthony Eccles	(AE)	
Cymru Wales (North)	Jim Kelly	(JK)	
Cymru Wales (South)	Will Kilner	(WK)	
Lakes	Ted Rogers	(TR)	
Lakes	Peter Sterling	(PSt)	
London & SE	Lisa Payne	(LP)	
London & SE	Rik Payne	(RP)	
Midlands	Iain Blanch	(IB)	
Midlands	Phil Simister	(PSi)	
North East	Alan Hinkes	(AH)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Rob Greenwood	(RG)	
South West	Colin Knowles	(CK)	
South West	Gareth Palmer	(GP)	
Yorkshire	James Rowe	(JR)	

Observers:

Independent Director	Brian Smith	(BS)
Clubs	Fiona Sanders	(FS)
Competitions	Ian Walton	(IW)
Equity	Kamala Sen	(KS)
Land Management	Martin Wragg	(MW)
MT Cymru	Mike Rosser	(MR)
Plas y Brenin	Jackie Bryson	(JB)

Staff:

Deputy CEO	Nick Colton	(NC)
Secretary	Tony Ryan	(TRy)

Note: * = supporting paper circulated.

Actions

1. **Welcome & apologies for absence**
- 1.1 **Welcome**
- 1.1.1 Rehan Siddiqui welcomed everyone to the meeting, including newly elected vice-president Emma Flaherty and Iain Blanch, who was standing in for Roger Fanner as a Midlands area rep.
- 1.1.2 Apologies were received from Mark Anstiss, Nick Bond, Deirdre Collier, Rich Emerson, Roger Fanner, Tim Greenhalgh, Iain McCallum, Dave Musgrove and Dave Wilkinson.

- 1.1.3 RS began by recording a note of congratulations to Shauna Coxsey on being crowned the 2016 bouldering world cup champion, and receiving an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours.

The news that the IOC Executive Board has supported the proposal to add a package of five new sports (including climbing) to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games programme is very positive, and bodes well for the final decision, which will be taken in Rio in early August. RS emphasised that should climbing be included in the 2020 Olympics, the BMC's core work would continue as normal and not suffer.

- 1.1.4 It was noted that BMC honorary member Ken Wilson, one of the most influential voices in British climbing, had passed away earlier this month. A tribute to Ken will feature in the summer issue of Summit magazine, and we plan to commemorate Ken's life and legacy at a special event organised in conjunction with the Climbers' Club (note: date now confirmed as 30 July in Sheffield).

- 1.5 RS also reported that the BMC had recently been informed by a firm of solicitors that we will be receiving a sizeable legacy from an individual who passed away earlier in the year.

- 1.6 RS concluded by extending National Council's best wishes to Nick Bond and Elfyn Jones both of whom are suffering ill health at the moment.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest in relation to agenda items

- 1.2.1 No conflicts were declared.

2. Note issues for AOB

- 2.1 a. EU Referendum: should the BMC take a position? (Colin Knowles, Pete Sterling).

b. Hydro schemes in Snowdonia: call for BMC support (Anthony Eccles, Jim Kelly).

c. Bolting/fixing equipment: liability statement (David Brown).

3. Minutes of the previous meeting*

3.1 Actions from previous minutes

- | | | |
|--------|---|-----------------|
| 3.1.1 | Ref 3.2.1: Convene annual Budget Review Group in July. | Done |
| 3.1.2 | Ref 3.2.2: Investigate possible amalgamation of Huts and Clubs committees. | Done |
| 3.1.3 | Ref 3.2.3: Fixed equipment paper – Rupert Davies and Martin Wragg to formulate wording – ongoing. | Action: RD / MW |
| 3.1.4 | Ref 3.2.4: LMG to consider purchasing and leasing policy word changes – next meeting in November – ongoing. | Action: RD |
| 3.1.5 | Ref 3.2.5: Investigate Wales funding opportunities – initial meeting held with Kate Worthington – ongoing. | Action: DT |
| 3.1.6 | Ref 3.2.6: New member data breakdown – Arun Patel liaising with Roger Fanner? – ongoing | Action: DT |
| 3.1.7 | Ref 3.2.8: MHT name change – rebranding implications? – ongoing. | Action: DT / CK |
| 3.1.8 | Ref 3.2.9: Quarries paper – Roger Fanner working with office on advice note – DT to raise priority – ongoing. | Action: DT |
| 3.1.9 | Ref 3.2.10: Chalk overuse. | Done |
| 3.1.10 | Ref 3.2.11: Clubs and Young People on June NC agenda. | Done |
| 3.1.11 | Ref 5.1.2: Re-engage with North West area – ongoing. | Action: TR |
| 3.1.12 | Ref 6.2.1: Annual Report distribution plan. | Done |
| 3.1.13 | Ref 6.3.1: Add Alan Hinkes to NC member list. | Done |
| 3.1.14 | Ref 6.3.2: Add ABC and WDG to NC member list, remove MREW. | Done |

- 3.1.15 Ref 9.2.1: AMG response to NT activity licensing scheme – Dave Musgrove to circulate text – ongoing. Action: DM
- The minutes of the April 2016 meeting were signed by the President. Agreed
- 4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere**
- 4.1 Mend Our Mountains** – Phil Simister noted that the campaign had never passed through National Council for discussion and approval, and asked whether it should have.
- Colin Knowles noted that <50% of donations had come from members, and asked how we might better engage them. Rob Greenwood added that we should also examine how we can engage more with non-members who donated.
- There was general agreement that the campaign had been very positive for the BMC in terms of national press coverage and relations with countryside organisations, in particular the National Park Authorities.
- 4.2 National Council meeting at BMC AGM** – PSi felt that holding the meeting at 4.30pm on a Friday made it difficult for some people to attend, and also questioned the value of the meeting. CK said that one of the reasons for having this meeting was to try to ensure that the AGM would be quorate.
- A discussion about starting the meeting later on Friday, or holding it on Sunday concluded with the decision to try a Sunday morning start (precise time to be decided) at the 2017 AGM. Action: KA
- 5. Reports**
- 5.1 Areas**
- 5.1.1 Lakes.** * 25 people attended the June meeting, held at the CC hut in Borrowdale, which included a presentation by Gareth Field from the National Trust on its event and activity licensing pilot scheme.
- Further guidance from National Council in relation to liability insurance cover for members placing bolts was requested (see AOB item). The Cumbria Bolt Fund constitution has been re-drafted and will be presented for adoption at the September meeting.
- The area seeks assurance from the Executive that no resources will be diverted from core work such as access, should climbing be selected for the 2020 Olympics (ref: statement by RS in 1.1.3 above)
- 5.1.2 London & SE.** * 43 people attended the June meeting, which included an insightful talk by Jim Milledge on 50 years of high altitude medicine. Rik Payne and Lisa Payne were re-elected as area chair and secretary respectively; the area is seeking a new hill walking rep.
- The area has four youth co-ordinators, who don't always attend meetings or provide written reports. Nick Colton agreed to work with co-ordinators on a communication plan. There was also a request for Rob Dyer to write to relevant organisations about the Southern Sandstone code of practice. Action: NC

- 5.1.3 **Midlands.*** 38 people attended the June meeting, which included an excellent talk by Mina Leslie-Wujastyk on managing expectations and energy levels in climbing.

The main issues discussed were (lack of) progress on access to disused quarries and area climbing guidebooks. Clubs rep Charlotte Potter has moved out of the area, so Michelle Aukland has resumed the role she fulfilled in 2014/15.

- 5.1.4 **North East.** The main topics discussed at the June meeting were plans for a climbing and walking festival in 2017 and concern about some recent climbing accidents. The area had also discussed the National Trust licensing scheme.

- 5.1.5 **North West.** No area representative in attendance and no report submitted.

- 5.1.6 **Peak.*** 29 people attended the June 'outreach' meeting in Staffordshire, which was preceded by a hill walk along the Roaches Skyline. The meeting included a presentation from Staffs Wildlife Trust on footpath work and environmental projects at the Roaches.

The meeting discussed recent violations of bird nesting restrictions at Stanage and how to improve communication to reduce such incidents.

The meeting felt that the wording of the statement about liability insurance cover for members placing bolts needed 'tightening up' and feedback from a legal perspective.

- 5.1.7 **South West.*** 13 people attended the May meeting in Zelah, near Truro.

Plans for the 2016 Cornish Climbing & Walking Festival (10-12 June at Bosigran) were discussed, as well as a 2017 festival which is now booked for Lundy (week beginning 26 August).

In the Avon Gorge, an on-site meeting with the wildlife protection officer is planned, to discuss peregrine-related access issues.

- 5.1.8 **Yorkshire.*** c.45 people attended the June meeting, which included a talk by Andy Houseman on the first ascent of Link Sar West in the Karakoram.

The meeting generally supported the idea of rebranding the BMC, but expressed concerns about the lack of specific information. The latest development in climbing's bid to become an Olympic sport was well received.

- 5.1.9 **Cymru Wales (North).** c.30 people attended the June meeting in Nant Peris.

Topics had included the National Trust licensing scheme, potential problems (parking) arising from the sale of Tremadog Café and the BMC Women's Development Group.

Dan Yates of the Save the Conwy campaign had talked about the impact of hydro-electricity schemes, and the meeting discussed what the BMC could do to support the campaign. (ref: subsequent paper in AOB).

National Council agreed that the Access Management Group should formalise a position statement and write to the Director General of the National Trust to express its concerns about these developments which seem at odds with the Trust's core purpose.

Action:
DM

- 5.1.10 **Cymru Wales (South).*** 6 people attended the meeting in Pembroke on the Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

The 2016 Range West briefings have been well attended, but the area hill walking day, planned for 7 May had been cancelled due to lack of uptake. The Gower Climbing Festival returns for an eighth year in September. A 2017 Pembroke festival is also being considered.

5.2 **Finance***

- 5.2.1 John Simpson presented his report. The yearend forecast now stands at a £21k surplus.

Positive variances included an upturn in travel insurance sales. Negative variances included £5k to the Climbers With Cancer award, increased AGM costs of up to £5k due to unsold accommodation and a reduced income (c.£6k) from Climb magazine subscriptions.

Membership numbers and trading figures are up on the same period in 2015 and the BMC's balance sheet remains healthy.

The current Sport England funding period ends in March 2017; our 2017-21 bid is yet to be submitted, so there is currently some uncertainty in the 2017 budget.

A question was asked about membership churn rates, and what we do to retain members. The meeting asked Lynda Buckley (BMC Membership Team) to circulate a note detailing the churn rates and procedures for addressing churn (email reminders etc).

Action: LB

5.3 **CEO report***

- 5.3.1 DT reported that membership was 81,559 on 1 May, which is 2,654 up on 1 May 2015. The breakdown is 56,251 individual and 25,308 club members. Over 90% of individuals pay by direct debit, and the half price offer continues.

Travel insurance sales and income for the first four months of 2016 were up by c.10% on the same period in 2015. Most of the increase is in annual policies, with increases in sales of Rock and Alpine & Ski policies, on which we have run special offers. Although average margin is down on 2015, the increase in volume (and goodwill) has made up for this decrease.

Sport England's 2017-21 strategy - Towards an Active Nation - has a major focus on inactive people. The BMC application will be submitted in late August / early September.

PSt asked about a replacement for press & PR officer Tina Gardner, who is leaving the BMC on 7 July. DT confirmed that there will be a replacement, but the recruitment process has yet not begun.

PSt suggested an interim appointment, given the 'window of opportunity' presented by the possibility of climbing's Olympic inclusion, as well as possible rebranding of the BMC in the coming months. Appointment of an agency (with an outdoor focus) could address the temporary lack of cover and their work would not be affected by the impending disruption of the office refurbishment work.

A vote was taken on whether to appoint an agency, with immediate effect to provide three months of cover:

Proposed – CK; Seconded – RP
For – 18; Against – 2; Abstentions – 0

Action: DT

DT also recorded a note to thanks to Dave Hillebrandt who is standing down as the UK representative on the UIAA Medical Commission.

5.4 Executive*

5.4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 May 2016 were accepted.

6. Constitutional issues

6.1 Meeting dates for 2017*

6.1.1 The proposed meeting dates were discussed. It was pointed out that the AGM date (22-23 April) is the weekend after the Easter weekend, and this would preclude members who choose to take a two-week holiday around the Easter weekend from attending the AGM.

RS agreed to ask Kate Anwyl to consider the date options and report back.

Action: KA

6.2 Conflicts of interest register

6.2.1 Attendees were asked to read and sign a conflicts of interest policy document, and hand it to Tony Ryan at the meeting or send it in to the office.

Action: all

7. Policy issues

7.1 BMC Strategic plan (review)*

7.1.1 The strategic plan was last updated in June 2015. At its meeting on 18 May, the Exec discussed the 2016-2020 period, and agreed to take the following proposed amendments / additions to National Council:

- Retain our three key strategic aims: hill walking, young people, membership.
- Add a snappy one-page executive summary.
- Add reference to health/well-being benefits of climbing and walking.
- Add reference to the importance of Wales to the BMC.
- Add statement promoting British crags and encouraging climbing on them.
- Add reference to the significance of the 2020 Olympic Games.
- Add reference to rebranding and modernisation (if agreed).

The above points were all agreed and in addition it was agreed to separate the current, 'Clubs & Areas' section into two individual sections.

Agreed
Action: DT

7.2 Commercial development & branding*

7.2.1 DT summarised the three separate pieces of Sport England-funded consultancy work undertaken over the past 12 months, which looked at: management and governance (Portas); commercial development (b-focused); and branding (Thinkfarm).

The process had culminated in a recommendation to rebrand the BMC, in order to modernise, connect with new and younger audiences of climbers and walkers, and develop our commercial potential. The specific recommendation (new name and logo) was discussed and agreed by the Exec on 18 May.

DT then gave a presentation which outlined how the proposed new name and logo was developed, revealed the name and logo – Climb Britain – and asked for feedback.

The new name was received very positively, and the meeting discussed the trademarking process and timing of a public announcement.

A vote was taken on whether to adopt Climb Britain as the new registered trading name of the BMC.

Proposed – RG; Seconded – JK
For – 18; Against – 0; Abstentions – 1

Agreed

The meeting agreed not to publicise the new name until the trademarking procedure has been clarified. It is likely that the name change will be phased in over a c.12-month period.

7.3 BMC vision & mission statements*

7.3.1 A review of our statements had been prompted by a recommendation from Portas in 2015, but was overtaken by the commercial development and branding consultancy projects. With rebranding now agreed (7.2.1 above), now would seem an ideal time to introduce fresh vision and mission statements.

PSt suggested the Exec should present some new statement options. NK asked whether Portas or Thinkfarm had a contractual obligation to deliver a proposal.

Action: DT

7.4 2020 Olympics*

7.4.1 Following the IOC Executive Board recommendation (re: item 1.1.3) to add five new sports (including climbing) to the 2020 Olympics, it now seems likely that climbing will make it into Tokyo 2020. The BMC is now taking some initial actions to deal with the impact and opportunity of this situation.

RS made a commitment that the BMC's core work would not suffer as a result of climbing getting into the Olympics. The BMC will apply for additional funding from UK Sport for Olympic-related activity.

Jackie Bryson thought it might be useful to talk with other sports which have recently been through this process, such as golf and rugby sevens. Nick Kurth asked whether we thought that British representation within the IFSC was sufficient.

Ian Walton asked whether the meeting felt competition climbing fitted into the Climb Britain brand and there was a general feeling that it did. DT encouraged a much closer association between the BMC and the national team rather than a separation of identity.

7.5 Clubs & young people – discussion

7.5.1 RP had requested this be discussed, as we have no comprehensive policy for guidance to clubs on integrating young people.

Fiona Sanders asked for this item to be deferred, due to lack of time for discussion.

Action:
KA/TR

8. Club applications for membership*

8.1 There was a discussion about whether the new approval system was being properly implemented. Roger Fanner had circulated an email expressing concerns about two recent applications (South Norfolk Climbing Club and Grafham Climbing Club) and requesting clarification about how the default email agreement system is supposed to work.

It was agreed that this issue should be added to the September meeting agenda, and that DT should remind the membership team about implementation of the procedure.

Noted.
Action: DT

9. AOB

9.1 EU Referendum

9.1.1 There was a brief discussion about whether the BMC should take a position on the referendum. Some members felt strongly that the BMC should take a position, others felt strongly it was case of individual / personal choice.

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 Saturday 17 September 2016, Lake District – venue and start time tbc.

Summary of action points from the 49th meeting:

Ref	Action	Involving	Target date
3.1.3	Re-circulate fixed equipment paper	RD / MW	Immediate
3.1.4	LMG to consider purchasing and leasing policy word changes	RD	September
3.1.5	Investigate Wales funding opportunities	DT	Immediate
3.1.6	New member data – check progress	DT	Immediate
3.1.7	MHT name change	DT / CK	Ongoing
3.1.8	Quarries paper	RD	Ongoing
3.1.11	Re-engage with North West area	TRy	Immediate
3.1.15	AMG response to NT activity licensing scheme	DM	Ongoing
4.2	Set start time of Sunday National Council at 2017 AGM	KA	Ongoing
5.1.2	Communication plan for area youth co-ordinators	NC	Ongoing
5.1.9	AMG position statement re. hydro-electricity schemes	DM	Immediate
5.2.1	Churn rates and membership retention procedures	LB	Immediate
5.3.1	Appointment of interim press & PR agency	DT	July
6.1.1	Review 2017 AGM date in relation to Easter	KA	September
6.2.1	Sign and return Conflicts of Interest policy document	All	Immediate
7.2.1	Check trademarking of 'Climb' related names	DT	Immediate
7.3.1	Exec to present new vision and mission statements	DT	September
7.5.1	Include Clubs & Young People discussion on Sept. agenda	DT	September
8.1	Include club membership application procedure on Sept. agenda	DT	September

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

Signed _____ Date _____
 Rehan Siddiqui, President & Chair