

**Minutes**  
**BMC South Wales Area Meeting 3/9/2016**  
**Dynamic Rock, Swansea**

Chair: Will Kilner

Number Present: 23

BMC Officer: Nick Colton

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Apologies from Matt Everett, Alan Richardson, Kate Worthington, Zoe McLean, Roy Behenna, Graham Evans, Goi Ashmore, Will welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Dynamic Rock for providing the venue for the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record, proposed by Will Kilner, seconded by Peter Sheppard.

**2a Actions from the previous meeting**

Will reported that some of the bolts at Gilwern have now been replaced, making use of old bolt holes in order to minimise environmental impact.

Matt Woodfield reported that positive discussions are ongoing with the National Trust regarding access at Bacon Hole.

Possibility of holding a Pembroke Festival next year is still being explored, needs to be explored further with the local club. Liz Collyer agreed to follow this up.

**2b Matters arising**

**3. Access and conservation briefing**

Elfyn was not present as he has been away from work sick. All at the meeting wished him well in his recovery.

**4. Wales area update**

- a. Will informed the meeting that there is ongoing debate in North Wales re a number of proposed hydroelectricity schemes with some concerns about their visual impact and impact on current walking and climbing areas. BMC members in North Wales are in discussion with the relevant bodies to ensure that concerns are heard.

Juliet Stephens noted similar schemes in the Lake District do not appear to have that much of a negative impact. Will noted that there are concerns

that the actual construction work may stray outside what is agreed, e.g. widened access tracks currently found in the Llanberis area.

Pete Salenieks asked if there are any environmental impact statements or guidance available to support individuals in making representations regarding the schemes. Will said that if any such information is available it should be shared through the Wales area newsletter.

- b. Nick Colton informed the meeting that the DBS checking provider currently used by the BMC is closing, discussions are taking place regarding using the Welsh Sports Association for this service.
- c. Content for the newsletter is still needed; members were asked to send any relevant info to Will Kilner.

## **5. Clubs**

- a. Gwent Mountaineering Club have had their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner which was very successful. They are looking to put on more events to mark the anniversary, looking for ideas.
- b. There is a clubs meeting at the Alpine Club on 6 September Invitations have been sent directly to clubs.

## **6. Hill Walking**

- a. Nick C told the meeting that there is a hill walking strategy paper being produced. Pete S asked whether there will be any consultation on plans coming from this. Nick said that Carey Davies is understood to be planning to attend area meetings to discuss this and seek views. Will suggested contacting Carey direct for further information on this issue.
- b. The local Hill Walking reps have attempted to arrange a couple of events but these have not attracted much uptake. It was acknowledged that poor weather had been a factor in this.

## **7. Climbing**

A discussion was raised on the issue of whether retro-bolting is permissible without the consent of the first ascensionist. The BMC position statement was agreed at a later date than the local policy and there may be some differences.

Simon R said that he does not recall the national policy ever reaching an area meeting.

Will proposed deferring the discussion until the next meeting, enabling members to look back through local area minutes and national council minutes on the community area of the website.

[BMC drilled equipment position statement](#)

## **8. Events**

- a. The Gower Festival will take place on 16-18 September. The usual breakfast butties and evening quiz will take place. New event for this year: free 'youth days out' on Saturday and Sunday. All equipment is provided and there are spaces available for children and young people to sign up.

Matt Woodfield will be running an introduction to sea cliff climbing workshop on the Saturday morning. There are still some spaces available but these are limited. Information about the festival is on Facebook and on the festival website: [www.gowerclimbingfestival.co.uk](http://www.gowerclimbingfestival.co.uk)

- b. The Welsh Climbing Championships will take place at Boulders on 15<sup>th</sup> November. Volunteer belayers and judges are needed for the event.

- c. Proposed Pembroke climbing festival discussed earlier in the meeting.

## **9. Branding**

Nick Colton, BMC deputy CEO attended to update the meeting on the proposed branding changes and listen to views from the meeting. Nick gave a presentation regarding the background to the proposed changes (attached to the minutes) and explained that the background is that Sport England funding may be reduced in the future but that money had been provided to look at branding and commercial funding to help to offset any reduction.

The consultants for the project began their work in December 2015 with the proposed branding changes presented to the Executive Committee in May 2016 and agreed to be sent to the National Council. National Council were given the proposals in June and agreed them. There had been no suggestion of taking the proposals to local area meetings.

Following the current round of area meetings there will be a National Council meeting on 17 September and another on 3 December where feedback from the areas will be considered. Decisions on branding could go to the AGM in April 2017 if required.

The rationale for rebranding was to try to gain new members in the organisation, particularly amongst hill walkers and indoor climbers which would give the organisation a greater voice with landowners, parliament for existing work.

The issue was opened up to comments from the meeting:

*Martin Skinner – (on behalf of Gwent Mountaineering Club)* – The initial response within the club was negative. The overwhelming view within the club is that no change is needed at this time and that there should have been consultation through the area meetings. There was suspicion that this change would move emphasis towards elite performers. Martin's personal view is that a new image is needed, but that 'Britain' is not the right name when the organisation does not represent Scotland or Northern Ireland, especially if there is also a separate branding of 'Climb Cymru' coming as well. Believe that differences can be resolved – we all want the same things, access, information, safety but the executive needs to take the members along too.

*Nick Colton* – The BMC fully intends to ensure that access, safety etc remain the cornerstones of what the organisation does.

*Colin Knowles* – Echo Nick's view: access and conservation come top of the priorities for the BMC

*Will Kilner* – Concern would be that the membership numbers in Wales do not lend itself to a separate organisation

*Julie Stephens (South Wales Mountaineering Club)* – Don't believe the word 'Climb' works for hill walking, skiing, other aspects of mountaineering. It sounds like an instruction rather than an invitation. Don't like the word 'Britain' rather than 'British' as it refers to the place rather than the people.

*Stephen Arnold (Dynamic Rock)* – The BMC needs more marketing, not a rebrand in order to bring in young people. Feel the BMC does not currently support climbing walls in experience of Dynamic Rock.

*Simon Rawlinson* – I see some good work done with youngsters but worry about the BMC remit. There seems to be no benefit to youngsters in joining the organisation, they're not interested in access and conservation yet.

*Nick Colton* – Some academies at climbing walls have saved money on competitions through membership, also provide grant funding. Other benefits include retail discounts. I joined to support what the BMC does.

*Stephen Arnold* – Why is the organisation trying to rebrand to attract young people when there isn't a reason given for them to join?

*Will Kilner* – BMC does run the Ready to Rock scheme for young people

*Nick Colton* – BMC runs youth climbing series

*Richard Wilson* – How was the decision taken to rebrand? It seems to be about commercial and marketing issues rather than a planned out rebrand.

*Nick Colton* – Explained the funding was offered by Sport England and so the opportunity taken up to have consultants look at commercial aspects and branding.

*Richard Wilson* – Who chose the consultants?

*Will Kilner* – They were appointed by Sport England

*Peter Salenieks* – What are the benefits of the rebrand in terms of making up for any reduced funding?

*Will Kilner* – Alongside the branding proposals there's a detailed document about commercial opportunities.

*Peter Salenieks* – If we haven't considered the reasons for the rebrand then why do this now? There's a lack of governance in the way it was handled.

*Nick Colton* – It was discussed at National Council. If National Council had decided to bring the proposal up at areas, this would have been the first meeting available to do so after the branding proposals were finished.

*Peter Salenieks* – It could have been brought up at the AGM and at area meetings before.

*Nick Colton* – It was minuted in National Council minutes that the consultation was going on. The Executive Committee only decided to proceed in May, after the AGM had taken place.

*Peter Salenieks* – It could have been reported after the AGM

*Colin Knowles* – The CEO reports to National Council at every meeting so the information is available in National Council minutes.

*Will Kilner* – It wasn't reported at area meetings.

*Peter Sheppard* – Was reported at the last area meeting.

*Will Kilner* – We could report all of the information from National Council meetings but it would make the area meetings very long.

*Simon Rawlinson* – Could have at least mentioned there was a rebrand consultation underway.

*Peter Salenieks* – The September National Council minutes mention 'commercial consultancy' and 'management review' consultancy underway but there is no mention of branding.

*Nick Colton* – It wasn't a 'rebranding' consultation. The actual proposal wasn't expected.

*Will Kilner* – The actual rebranding proposal wasn't brought up until the last National Council meeting. It's been in the background for some time. I can only report so much to the local area meetings.

*Nick Colton* – The rebranding consultation was still going on during the AGM, the first time the Exec discussed it was after the AGM, it was just research until then.

*Will Kilner* – It wasn't intended as something to keep secret. Didn't expect the reaction that has happened but now feel we should try to move forwards.

*Peter Salenieks* – The shortcomings in governance need to be examined and reported on.

*Will Kilner* – Agree this needs to be looked at.

*Colin Knowles* – You feel the BMC's obligations were not met?

*Peter Salenieks* – Yes

*Jenifer Green* – You've done the research, now need to set down clear objectives of what you want to achieve and then put ideas for this to the members. Clear objectives will help to decide if it has been successful afterwards.

*Colin Knowles* – The idea was that the Climb Britain name would be brought into various areas gradually.

*Simon Rawlinson* – If Sport England funding were removed, how does this leave the BMC?

*Nick Colton* – Currently 20% of funding comes from Sport England. Currently in discussions about next round of funding. Sport England will invite bids for set areas but the next round of funding hasn't been decided yet.

*Will Kilner* – As an example, the hill walking officer post and much of the development officer post funding came from Sport England. A drop-off in funding led to there being no South East development officer appointed.

*Colin Knowles* – If we lost 40% of Sport England funding some officer posts would have to be sacrificed. We need to attract new members for this, still think the rebranding is needed – the BMC would like to have two posts to influence government.

*Nick Colton* – Sport England and the consultation looked at commercial funding streams. Having major sponsors for the competitions would assist.

*Liz Collyer* – How would the rebrand be funded?

*Nick Colton* – From the BMC budget, but this would be part of ongoing renewal of stationery etc that needs to take place in any case so would not be as great a cost as it appears.

*Rosie Palmer* – There are three climbing walls represented here. What are you going to do to support climbing centres? What will you do to attract new members?

*Nick Colton* – Don't know.

*Simon Rawlinson* – Parents are really keen (on the rebrand) if it will support their kids with development pathways.

*Rosie Palmer* – We make a loss on competitions, don't get anything from the BMC

*Colin Knowles* – We have been thinking about shifting focus, haven't thought constructively about how we interact with climbing walls. This needs to happen.

*Nick Colton* – What would you want to support you?

*Rosie Palmer* – Contributions to kit, coaching courses. Our route setting develops kids.

*Colin Knowles* – The climbing wall industry, the BMC and ABC have a relationship.

*Will Kilner* – The area meetings are the forum for this. The concern is that if the BMC fund staff training, what about individual instructors and other centres?

*Simon Rawlinson* – It's slightly different in that the BMC is coming into walls to take money from the customers

*Nick Colton* – We try to get people into clubs, climb outdoors.

*Rosie Palmer* – We run courses without BMC help, it's difficult to see what the BMC wants to do.

*Stephen Arnold* – Wouldn't it make sense to interact with the walls to engage young people? We have 12,000 members on our database.

*Simon Rawlinson* – There were 6-8 BMC young people's courses this year

*Will Kilner* – South Wales walls want more support. Tell me your ideas to take to the National Council meetings.

*Julie Stephens* – Don't see a reason for BMC support in indoor walls

*Martin Skinner* – On the relationship between Climb Britain and Climb Cymru – would CC be a logo or a separate organisation?

*Nick Colton* – This is just ideas at present, came as a proposal from the branding consultation.

*Will Kilner* – it's complicated at present with translations, hasn't really been looked at properly and isn't in line with the Welsh Language Commission's approach to bilingual naming.

*Peter Salenieks* – I would be concerned it's divisive. If trying to develop the appeal to indoor climbers affects others in the organisation. Hope we can move forward and learn from the BCU rebrand which had no consultation.

*Colin Knowles* – We don't have high membership in other areas as well – hill walkers and boulderers, not just indoor climbers.

*Trefor Beese* I consider myself a mountaineer – I tick off mountains, Corbetts, but what has a climbing wall got to do with mountaineering? What has a sea cliff got to do with mountaineering? I renewed my BMC membership after this announcement but almost feel there should be a third organisation between climbing and rambling for mountaineering. The BMC will be left with climbers and will be bankrupt as lots of members will leave.

*Ken Beyer* – Climb Cymru should be bilingual – 'Climb Wales / Dringo Cymru' or it won't be understood in England.

*Will Kilner* – As I understand it there isn't an exact translation for climb – dringo means rock climbing.

Discussion took place regarding the definition of climb in Welsh, all agreed this issue would need more careful consideration.

*Martin Skinner* – We already have Mountain Training Cymru (not bilingual).

*Peter Salenieks* – We seem not to have discussed the extent to which Climb Cymru would be a separate organisation. I would feel uncomfortable having to choose between two organisations.

*Will Kilner* – The Wales issue wasn't considered correctly and needs to go back to the National Council.

Further discussion took place regarding the colours in the proposed logo – red white and blue represent England and Scotland, not Wales.

*Colin Knowles* – People feel we have an internationalist outlook and maybe red white and blue doesn't fit. There is a connection – the MCoFS cede their

UIAA representative to the BMC, but it's understood that the word 'Britain' and the colours may cause issues.

*Nick Colton* – The British climbing team has Scots in it but the BMC manages the admin and registrations for this.

The discussion was brought to an end with all present being asked to indicate their feelings on different options with a show of hands. Numbers were:

Remain as the BMC with no rebrand: For – 11, against – 5, abstained – 2

Full rebrand to Climb Britain: For – 0, against – 18, abstained – 2

Alternative uses of the name 'Climb Britain' such as in a campaign akin to 'Mend our Mountains': For – 13, against – 4, abstained – 3

Rebrand to an alternative name: For – 14, against 0, abstained 2

## **10. AOB**

- a. Little Tor Crag: Matt Woodfield noted that there are four old pegs in a poor state of repair at the belay ledge on the left corner. A number of low grade routes end here with little other adequate protection. Matt proposed replacing the pegs with bolts. As per the local policy this would need to be voted on at the next area meeting. In the meantime photos of the pegs were requested by Simon Rawlinson in order to give members information to decide on. Matt to post photos on the area Facebook page, Will to attach photos to the minutes / agenda for the next meeting on the BMC community page.



### 11. Date of the next meeting

Date TBC, proposed to be held at Boulders Climbing Centre in Cardiff.

Agenda Item	Action	Owner	Progress
2a	Explore possibility of Pembroke Festival with local club	Liz Collyer	Ongoing
2b	Provide photographs of the state of the belay pegs at Little Tor and circulate via social media and attached to the minutes	Matt Woodfield / Will Kilner	Completed