

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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NORTH WEST AREA MEETING

7.00pm, Tuesday 13 September 2016
Manchester Climbing Centre, M12 5ND

MINUTES

Recorded by Tony Ryan, as area currently without a secretary

Meeting start delayed until 8.00pm, due to heavy rain affecting travel conditions

Present: Les Ainsworth; Marcus Buckley; Lindon Gill; Tim Greenhalgh; Stuart Holmes; Innes MacDonald; Phil Moore; Emily Pitts; Jennifer Raffle; Peter Scott; Rehan Siddiqui (BMC president); Carl Spencer (Chair); George Wostenholm.

BMC staff in attendance: Lynda Buckley, Jon Chittenden, Nick Colton, Alex Messenger, Arun Patel, Tony Ryan.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence: Carl Spencer welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was the first one since January. CS explained that the area had been without a secretary since January, and he was unable to take on the burden of the secretarial role in addition to his role as chair. He felt that no major issues had arisen in the interim which necessitated a meeting until the rebranding and the subsequent reaction to its announcement.

Since the January meeting, the new Lancashire Rock guidebook had been published. CS wished to record thanks to Lancashire access rep Les Ainsworth, BMC guidebook co-ordinator Niall Grimes and the team of volunteers who had worked hard to bring the guidebook to fruition. In addition, CS wished to thank Tim Greenhalgh and other local volunteers for putting on another successful annual WiltonFest in spite of poor weather.

Apologies had been received from Richard Toon (Clubs Committee rep).

The meeting agreed to begin by discussing the rebranding.

2. BMC rebranding: BMC president Rehan Siddiqui acknowledged the response to the rebranding announcement, and accepted that members should have been consulted; this is happening now through the area meetings, and RS assured the meeting that the rebrand is not a done deal and a consensus agreement on the way forward is being sought. RS felt it was important for members to see how the decision to rebrand was reached, and that would be explained in a presentation by deputy CEO Nick Colton.

NC said that the presentation he was about to give was the same one being presented at all September area meetings. A series of slides showed the timeline of the rebranding process, beginning in 2015 when the BMC was offered funding by Sport England to enable consultancy work on our branding. They showed the reasons and thinking behind the rebranding and the process by which the Climb Britain name and logo was developed.

As with other area meetings, a Q&A session followed the presentation. Some comments / questions from the session:

CS: If it had been BMC money, do we think we got good value from the consultancy?

Emily Pitts: how do we ensure that we take discussions forward in a balanced way?

Gordon Wostenholm: is there anything we can share about the consultation with non-members and other stakeholders?

Lindon Gill: did we not anticipate the backlash?

Peter Scott: this was a massive decision, and it didn't appear initially that the scale of negative response was fully acknowledged.

EP: in general, negative responses on social media do tend to outweigh positive reactions.

PS: I'm a ski tourer, and don't see a place for me in Climb Britain.

CS: is anyone in the room positive about the rebrand? Jennifer Raffle: Initially I didn't think I liked 'Climb' but having read about the process, I do like it now.

Stuart Holmes: people have strong views about the process, but that's not what we're here to discuss.

LG: the only way to bring everyone along is to allow a vote at the AGM.

EP: I'd like to know how 'on the ground' volunteers view the potential impact of the rebrand.

JR: Members delegate decision-making to National Council and the Executive.

CS: Surprised that National Council voted convincingly for the rebrand when opinions expressed on social media have been overwhelmingly negative. Situation can only be resolved at AGM, and as chair of meeting, I don't wish to allow a vote by 20 people attending the meeting to influence the outcome. NC: the meeting needs to give its National Council reps a feeling for its views, so that they can report to National Council.

Les Ainsworth: If name does change, I will continue to use BMC when in negotiations over access. It appears that the consultants talked to indoor climbers and hill walkers, but not to outdoor climbers. They could have gone to Stanage. NC: I think they thought that most outdoor climbers understood the BMC.

EP: is there scope for surveying the membership?

Innes MacDonald: I'm not in favour of the rebrand, but think that Climb Britain could have a place within the work of the BMC.

LG: Has the risk that the introduction of a sub-brand might create division within the membership and lead to a break-up of the BMC been considered? NC: this needs to be discussed and analysed.

George Wostenholme: Climb Britain won't attract walkers, it will alienate them.

There was a discussion about whether to hold a vote on four options for going forward, to enable National Council reps to give an indication of the meeting's feelings on rebranding. The four options were:

- Remain as BMC
- Full rebrand to Climb Britain
- Alternative uses of Climb Britain
- Other name options

CS was reluctant to have a vote, believing that the meeting wasn't representative of the membership in general nor of the members who usually attend North West area meetings. He asked whether a poll on Facebook might provide more representative feedback. LA said that the meeting needed to give the National Council reps a view, but to avoid selective consultation and be fully inclusive of the membership, the issue needed to go to the AGM. Marcus Buckley thought that we could agree that it's an important enough issue for all members to have a say.

A show of hands was taken on the four options:

	<u>FOR</u>
Remain as BMC	9
Full rebrand to Climb Britain	5
Alternative uses of Climb Britain	4
Other name options	0

With limited time remaining for the rest of the meeting's agenda, it was decided to go next to the access report.

3. Access: LA reported that the peregrine watcher at Hoghton Quarry was being unreasonable in not permitting access to climbers long after other peregrine site restrictions had been lifted. LA request for BMC chief executive Dave Turnbull to write a letter to the Police Wildlife Protection Officer.

ACTION: LA to contact BMC access officer Rob Dyer to compose letter.

Bolts had appeared on two routes at Warton Main Quarry, in contravention of the area policy and without the owner's permission. It's not known who placed the bolts.

4. Guidebooks: LA very pleased with the new Lancashire Rock guidebook. Unfortunately, first ascent information is not included, but is available online. LA proposing to publish a first ascent pamphlet. Please advise LA of any corrections or additions.

5. Fixed equipment: CS reported that the previous meeting in January had agreed a form of words, and that an abbreviated version of this policy had gone into the new guidebook.

CS suggested that route-by-route discussions should be commenced, and that a list of routes for consideration at future area meetings should be created.

TG asked about replacing the peg on Shivers Arete (Wilton 1) with a glue-in bolt. It was felt that this discussion should be deferred to the next area meeting in the Belmont area, as it needed more local representation. CS felt that it should go to the Wilton Management Group.

6. Date and venue of next meeting: Monday 14 November, 7.30pm, at the Wilton Arms.

The meeting will be the area AGM. The area needs a new secretary and area youth co-ordinator. BMC office will publicise these volunteering opportunities prior to the meeting, to encourage interested members to attend. The chair also stated that he would be happy to step down if a suitable replacement comes forward.

Meeting closed 10.00pm

Minutes taken by Tony Ryan
(stand-in secretary for the meeting)