

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA MEETING

Meeting held at The Devereux, 20 Devereux Court, Temple, London WC2R 3JJ  
On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 at 7.00pm.

### Minutes

**Chaired Rik Payne (RP)**

**Minutes taken by Lisa Payne (LP)**

**BMC Representatives Dave Turnbull (DT) Nick Kurth (NK)**

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence** – Ben Fillmore (BF) Clubs Rep, Sean Kerr, Tony Williams, Tim Wilson, Trevor Husband, Paul Cox, Mick Cooke & David Bibby

2. **Minutes of previous meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June**

Copies were available on the night and attendees asked to review, no issues were raised.

3. **Reports from Area reps**

**3.1 Clubs**

Sherry Macliver (SM) prefaced the report with the statement that the Clubs Committee had not been consulted on the re-branding proposal.

The Club's Committee meet in June and looked over the current guidance notes for clubs for any gaps or updates required.

Already planning the Clubs Seminar for the AGM next year with the aim to drive up attendance.

Grant applications – all successful clubs should by now have received an email confirming their application.

SM & (BF) met with Jane Thompson BMC Clubs & Equity Officer (JT) and Fiona Saunders Clubs Committee Chair (FS) to discuss contacting the London & SE area clubs of which there are 69, dividing the list between them making initial contact, building relationships with the clubs and getting feedback and suggestions.

**3.2 Youth** – No reports from the Youth Coordinators

**3.3 Hill Walking** – RP asked for volunteers to be in the Hill Walking group.

Chris Stone volunteered. LP added that the meetings would likely take place in Manchester approx. 4 times a year and will pass their contact details to the BMC Office.

4. **Re-branding proposal**

**4.1 Presentation from DT**

**4.2 Q&A Session**

RP asked that everyone try to keep it brief, state their name and whether they were an individual or club member. And that everyone try to stick to the subject of the re-branding proposal, not the issue of Governance, BMC management or personal emotive statements about BMC staff and executive.

Patrick Worthington – (Individual)

Noted that change is hard for everyone, but that this is a positive step for modernisation and for the protection of the organisation.

Martin Oldman – (Not so Trad)

Mentioned that most members he'd spoken with seemed not to care about the re-branding but some older members weren't happy with the proposal. So he wanted to know how the BMC go about resolving this, who do you listen to?

RP reiterated the consultation period and steps taken by the BMC to listen to its members, this was the only way to have a better understanding of the situation

NK stated that it (the BMC) wants to be able to take its members with them so it's important to understand the membership's position.

Steve Jary – (IBEX)

Main issue is with the word 'climb' and it could disengage people involved in other activities. The consultation with members was missing in this process and isn't a fan of focus group consultations.

Keith Vincent – (YETI)

Understands to the proposal better having seen the presentation, but the criticism is that he needed to see the presentation to understand it and get it (likes it and the logo) but if it needs this much explanation, then what's the reason for it? Also felt that the BMC got the answer it wanted from the consultation it did do, from how it picked the people to consult.

Stephen Waters (Individual)

When he thinks of the BMC he thinks of the abbreviation & logo rather than 'British Mountaineering Council'. Are the BMC trying to encapsulate too many things into one name/logo? Hates the logo

Tessa Park (IBEX)

Agreed that it's trying to encapsulate too many activities and suggested different sub names

Julie Cooke (OMC)

Emailed all members, had 2 responses, lack of consultation process was the main issue but felt that the way the BMC are now responding to this issue was praised. The feeling was new members would like the re-branding, they aren't likely to have people leave because of a name change.

Guy Molyneux (LMC)

Surveyed its members, of the 50 responses no one was in favour of the re-brand. Members felt it was undemocratic, didn't like the removal of the word 'Mountaineering' or the word 'council', they were not opposed to sub branding and were supportive of incentives to encourage new members, emotive in their dislike of Climb Britain and the logo, and felt the use of the word Britain was inappropriate.

DT responded to the last point, outlining discussions with Mountaineering Scotland who approved the use of Britain and that in many aspects, including but not limited to, access and conservation, funding and insurance the BMC does represent Scotland.

Heather Rumble (ULGMC)

Surveyed the members and within a week had responses from a quarter of members. 80% don't like the name and feel it's not inclusive. Wanted to see the evidence that this would attract new members.

Name not noted – observation was that they are not hearing enough about the strategy, outcomes and benefits of a re-branding

Laura Dempsey (ULMC)

Wanted to point out that it's not just over 40's that don't like the change, that younger members also dislike it.

Felt that 'Climb Britain' looks like a campaign rather than an organisation

Charlie (Alpine Club)

Loudly praised the presentation by DT, was grateful for the chance for a debate and that if nothing else this issue has 'woken up' the membership. But the general outcome from the AC debates is that they don't like the name, they want to join an organisation not a verb. UKC is a great brand, the forums have gone bananas on this topic and it's great that people are engaging with the BMC.

Name not noted (IBEX)

They have a passionate membership, mostly hill walkers, the feeling was Climb Britain will alienate hill walkers further than they feel already

Glad to be having the debate now, positive about the steps being taken now but feels this should have happened before the announcement.

Could sub branding be a way forward?

Ant Nasce (Individual)

Is mountaineer more inclusive than climb? He likes that Climb encapsulates more activities. Could we keep BMC but change Council to Climbing. As a boulderer, it seems alien to him to say he's a mountaineer. Worried that sub-branding could fragment the space.

BMCC British Mountaineering and climbing Council?

Mountaineering isn't as inclusive to him as climbing is.

RP mentioned that indoor climbing, bouldering and hill walking are all areas which the BMC wants to ensure is included in the drive for new members.

Mark Stitson (ULCMC & Individual)

Initial reaction was the re-branding excluded Hillwalkers but felt DT had done a great job at this meeting at expanding further on the re-branding, felt it should go to an AGM.

Nick (Individual)

Wanted to know if those organisations who had gone through re-branding had seen any increase in their membership, sponsorship and support?

NK confirmed that British Cycling had a massive increase in all the above

Liz Holley stated that British Canoeing hadn't seen the same increases

Peter Hinchliffe (Individual)

Hillwalker, member of BMC for 1 year, was shocked at the proposal and probably wouldn't have joined if the organisation has been called Climb Britain. But praised the presentation by DT as highly beneficial.

Felt that of the options discussed at the end of the presentation, option 3 (stick with BMC but have a sub-brand) was the best way forward. Thinks the new logo is awful.

Jonathan White (AC)

Membership survey said that people would opt for the club to de-affiliate but he added that this was a discussion that has come up time and time again within the membership in terms

of whether they as a club could justify the affiliation fees. Ski Mountaineers could feel alienated.

Frank Harrison (Individual)

Wouldn't be a member if not for the BMC name, doesn't associate himself with 'Climbing or Climb'

Vic Odell (CC)

The CC conducted a survey asking for its members opinions on the Climb Britain name and logo. The answers ranged from a few being wholly supportive to one that answered 'crap and crap' the majority of opinion was in the middle, but did not like the name or logo.

He also understands the need to move with the times but feels there's a real worry about excluding people.

Added that this should be a democratic decision and wanted to know what was going on with the BMC governance?

RP reiterated that this last point was a subject the meeting agreed to leave for a future meeting and that it would be added to the minutes for the next agenda.

Patrick Worthington added that we should support the BMC in their attempts at evolution But said that branding agencies shouldn't be implicitly trusted

Name not noted (AC)

Stated that the BMC name was recognised everywhere and has taken years to develop this brand, so why throw it away?

Liz Holley (LMC)

Wanted the BMC to be clear on its objectives, is it to increase membership or participation? If the main aim was attract young people, why hasn't the BMC followed up with a sub website suggested for younger members? The money comes mainly from members so why did you choose not to go ahead with the membership survey suggested?

Stephen (ULGMC)

Don't throw away the strong BMC brand. Change is hard but this is the first time since the announcement that he's felt the BMC is speaking to him (membership)

General feeling was more communication with members was needed

Paul Kaye (Individual)

Commented on an earlier comment about an AGM and that he felt it wasn't well attended. Praised DT on a brilliant presentation and hasn't been surprised by the backlash. But agreed that in order to attract new members a change was needed.

Feels it's totally inclusive of all activities, whereas mountaineering doesn't feel inclusive to him. He doesn't like the logo.

Sandy (Individual)

Feels BMC is an established brand and knew it was inclusive of other activities and if Climb Britain had been around when she was looking to join an organisation she feels that she wouldn't have known to find it with that name.

Chris Stone (Individual)

Mostly a Hillwalker but looked at the BMC when started indoor climbing, he feels 'Climb' makes perfect sense, but the connotation to the word climb doesn't help the situation and isn't against re-branding.

James Hancock (IBEX)

Hillwalker/Trad Climber – BMC not a perfect fit but Climb Britain is too far off. What assurances can he make to novice and new members about the process and to assure members that hillwalking is still a key part of the BMC.

NK – stated that nothing changes under the surface in terms of the policy and resources of what the BMC does, change of name or not.

Anna (AC)

Survey of members 33% response rate showed 78% don't like the name, 87% feel they should have been consulted 73% feel there should be an EGM

But added that sub-branding could be a positive outcome.

Khalid (NLMC)

There have always been issues with whether the club re-affiliates each year, this isn't helping. He asked whether corporate sponsorship was really wanted, and if the name changes to drop mountaineering and mountaineering features in many clubs names, should they be looking at changing those too?!!

Michelle Hart (CC)

Process has been undemocratic. Asked, whose fault it was that potential new members don't know who the BMC are? We employ people at the BMC to do this. The BMC brand is strong. The statement that this came from "we all climb stuff" seems like a throwaway statement and not something to build a re-branding from.

Concerned about diluting the message if we re-brand.

Nick (Individual)

Historical element of the BMC shouldn't be thrown away, name sucks, stick with BMC

Liz Holley (LMC)

Reiterated that despite her earlier rant she supported the BMC and wanted to ensure that they are not trying to fix something not broken.

The Q&A session came to an end to allow time for the guest speaker and at this point the attendees were asked to give a show of hands to the 4 options covered in DT's presentation.

1. Not rebrand – 90% of the attendees
2. Full Rebrand – 1 member
3. Stick with BMC with Climb Britain Sub brand – 80% of the attendees
4. Other name options – 80% of the attendees.

After a short break and raffle prize donated this month by Ellis Brigham (£30 gift card) won by James Read followed a fascinating presentation from TJ Halbertsma – In the centennial year of the 1909 Expedition by Robert Peary to the North Pole, TJ recounted his expedition following in Peary's footsteps to the North Pole.

### **Date and Location of next meeting**

November 10<sup>th</sup> 2016 – 7pm.

Devereux Pub near Temple.

Guest speaker – Calum Muskett.

