

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC CYMRU – NORTH WALES LOCAL AREA MEET

7.30pm, Tuesday 5 September 2017
at Vaynol Arms, Nant Peris, Gwynedd, LL55 4UF

MINUTES

Recorded by Rachael Crewesmith and Kate Worthington (KW), in absence of Iona Pawson

7.40pm Meeting Started

33 attended (incl Chair and BMC Office Staff)
5 females in attendance (incl Chair)

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Mike Raine, Chris Parkin, Pete Johnson.
KW welcomed and thanked all for attendance. Thanks given to Vaynol Arms for hosting. Thanks shown to Rachael Crewesmith for taking Notes for Minutes at short notice.
- 2. Note issues for AOB - None**
- 3. Accept minutes of the previous meeting – Great Orme Brewery 6.6.17–** Minutes accepted
- 4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere (from previous minutes) - None**
- 5. Actions from previous meeting –** KW had raised the query raised at June meeting via email to DT on 7 June 2017, regarding how information from the Organisational Review (OR) would be shared to members. Noted that Dave Turnbull would address this in his update to follow as processes from the OR have been delayed.

KW noted that she missed officially acknowledging presence of Dave Turnbull (DT) – BMC CEO and Elfyn Jones (EJ) - BMC Access & Conservation Officer for Wales – apologies and introduction. Welcome back to ex-Secretary, Calum Musket (CM) after a period away from North Wales.

- 6. Agenda Items –** KW asked members if they are aware of where to access Agenda document prior to a meeting, so they can review before attendance/ask questions etc. A mixed response. KW clarified details of BMC Community site/North Wales area page and Agendas for meetings are posted there apx 1 x week before meeting.

6.1 **BMC Organisational Review (OR) –** DT stood and spoke to members. From mid Feb until after the April AGM, the Motion of No Confidence brought against BMC consumed a lot of Officer time and the BMC in general. DT explained how this situation, along with other discussions within National Council, contributed to the setting up of an independent Organisational Review Group, now chaired by Ray Wigglesworth QC. DT explained reasons for OR and what the OR will be focusing on (strategy, structure etc). 10 x focus groups have been set up and will discuss items for OR. A BMC Membership Survey was also sent out and 5-6% of members responded (according to data analysts this reply rate makes the information relevant enough to use). DT asked the members present if they completed the survey – there was a low number of hands that were raised (apx 5-6 saw KW). DT apologises that the report is not ready for consultation yet, as there has been delays in producing it. DT feels the BMC has fallen behind other NGBs and is a little old fashioned – as there are so many committees (apx 26) and process with any project is slow. By next Local Area Meetings (Nov) there should be a Review Group Interim Report and a new Constitution Document ready for next AGM. KW mentioned concerns from members raised at June area meeting regarding how information concerning the Motion of No Confidence was disseminated with members, prior to the AGM and at the AGM itself – how legitimate is the Motion of No Confidence if it changes drastically from version shared before the meeting? Member comments: “Should it need more than 30 x people to raise a Motion of No Confidence?” DT suggested there could be an extra round of Local Area meetings to receive information about the OR, prior to consultation at the BMC AGM 28 April 2018 (venue TBC).

6.2 **BMC Response to Welsh Government’s Consultation Document ‘Taking Forward Wales’ Sustainable Management of Natural Resources’ –** EJ stood and spoke to members to introduce scope of this consultation paper (very wide spectrum of interests) but ultimately looking at addressing governance, structure and strategy for how National Parks in Wales are governed and managed – particularly regarding natural resources. Deadline for receiving responses to this large-scale Government consultation paper is 30 September. Members can respond individually or via a Club – EJ’s aim is to produce a BMC response that can be used to aid this reply if necessary. BMC has been looking at Chapters 3 and 4 (not including aspects of water access, as outside the BMC’s mandate to respond), but has met with other land based recreational/sporting bodies to promote a more balanced response and agreements. EJ keen to garner BMC members’ thoughts on response to Chapter 4 and the proposed concept of opening the

countryside for better access to water, for cycles/bikes and to sea cliffs/coast. Should some footpaths be excluded (as per Ramblers' viewpoint) and how would this be managed? Would more open access for cyclists (mostly mountain biking) spread riders amongst wider area and reduce pressure on current access routes? Discussion in room about how increased access could ONLY work if users are more widely aware of agreed codes of conduct and behaviour (which many current MTB riders already support). Calum Muskett would like to see BMC rally its membership to action support in favour of opening access (with increased work on promoting good practice codes of conduct) and this would counter-act other landowner groups (i.e. Countryside Alliance) who are very 'anti-bike' (SIC). EJ agreed an improved Access Charter or Code of Conduct would be necessary to help target behaviour and education towards access. EJ confirmed that the Snowdonia Society are also heavily involved in responding to the consultation. EJ also confirmed understanding that opening access would NOT mean having to address all footpath furniture to be appropriate for horses/bikes – individuals would have to assess paths on an individual basis for their planned use. EJ confirmed that BMC have been speaking closely with Ramblers and the two organisations agree on many issues. KW thanked EJ for his continuing work on this issue and EJ is due to write website article to members to raise more awareness.

- 6.3 **Access and Conservation update** – EJ spoke to room: Craig y Forwyn. Be sure to shut gate when accessing climbing areas – as sheep have recently escaped via a gate left open. "We need to keep our house in order". EJ asked climbers to be very low key if accessing CyF as negotiations are still ongoing with new landowner/s (no formal agreement is in place currently). Middle section of CyF still officially no access. Suggestions and support from room that the BMC should look at purchasing CyF to maintain and continue good access (although this would also mean looking at parking to minimise impact on limestone grassland, part of SSSI). DT – BMC looking at ownership relies on strong local support. Martin Doyle (MD) commented that the crag is of huge 'national importance' and should be 'acquired' (by the BMC) to maintain historical significance and future use – 'need to maintain access' for these reasons. This view supported by Calum Muskett and others in the room (including local climbers and instructors). CM proposed that the room take a vote on whether 'CyF should be acquired by the BMC to safeguard future access as it is a crag of local, national and historical significance'. MD said he would propose a vote on this subject (CM would second). DT/EJ commented that the issue should be taken to NC if members feel it is of weight to discuss and agree at a higher level. With land ownership there will come a price to the BMC for upkeep and maintenance etc, reminded EJ. Do members really want this to become an issue up for official discussion by the BMC. Unanimous agreement in the room. **Topic will be sent to NC (16 Sept) to be discussed.**

Climbing in slate quarries – including Twll Mawr area. Due to two recent accidents, landowner First Hydro and Gwynedd Council are increasingly concerned re implications of owning this land and public access. Please access and climb responsibly and please do not antagonise landowners if approached. Member asked if the issue could be shared via information in Summit Magazine.

EJ keeping tabs on change of ownership at Llanddulas Cave, supported by Andy Boorman (AB).

A reminder that there is a seasonal restriction to all users (not just climbers) at Angel Bay/Great Orme, due to large seal population/breeding (till end of October).

Ongoing discussions between BMC and landowner re the proposal of limited, discreet steps to access Lower Pen Trwyn, via EJ and AB. A set of steps seem the most logical solution.

- 6.4 **Hillwalking Update** – Anthony Eccles (AE) as Hillwalking Officer has been part of the current Hillwalking Implementation Group, chaired by Peter Judd. Amongst discussions it has been noted that the most recent edition of Summit magazine was very short on any hillwalking material and which contradicts the proposed 25% of Summit coverage should be dedicated to hillwalking. DT commented that 61.7% of BMC members identify hillwalking as their primary activity and the next edition of Summit magazine will strike a better balance. DT also confirmed BMC will be working on another Mend our Mountains campaign to raise further funds for footpaths (£100k raised in 2017). Cwm Idwal/NT: Members in the room also commented on disappointment on how little National Trust consulted user groups/local organisations on the erection of a new bridge crossing the Idwal Stream at back of Cwm Idwal. EJ agreed NT consultation was poor and will write to NT asking for better communication in any future planning proposals. A reminder to members that Snowdonia Society are holding a 'Make a Difference' weekend on 29/30 Sept, which includes a clean-up walk in Cwm Hetiau led by IFMGA Guide, Rob Collister. Please support. The Outdoor Partnership/UIAA are also hosting a Respect the Mountains conservation event on Sat 30 Sept at Plas y Brenin.

- 6.5 Ogwen Mountaineering Festival 2017 – Festival organiser, Steve Jones (SJ) spoke to room about plans and events scheduled for the 2nd year of this local mountain festival – please show support by attending during the day or buying an evening lecture ticket. Flyers handed out. 'Please help to spread the word' – SJ.

7. **AOB** – none noted

8. **Date of next meeting** – W/C 20 November 2017 (date/venue TBC) to include Ordinary Local Area Meeting and BMC Cymru AGM (Election of Volunteer Roles).

Meeting closed 9.10pm – 20 mins given to refill drink glasses before slideshow to commence at 9.30pm