

BMC – National Council Meeting Summary Saturday and Sunday 2/3 December 2017 at the BMC Offices

A very long meeting – spread over two days to meet all the specialist Sub-committees and Review the ORG Report, as well as the usual business.

- **The specialist Sub-committees are the “hidden” volunteers who are so vital to the work of the BMC.**
All 12 presented their Annual Reports and National Council considered each of their Terms of Reference and Forward Plans; all were approved with very few amendments.
 - **Access and Conservation** has obviously a huge workload and it is clear that ongoing Volunteer support is vital, and that Brexit and access changes in Wales are creating additional uncertainties and increases in workload.
 - **Land Management Group** has completed the purchase of Crookrise, a superb traditional gritstone crag and part of the Barden watershed walk above Bolton Abbey. The BMC now own 9 crags and have access agreements with a large number of land owners in England and Wales: the volunteers and office staff are already thinly spread and additional resources will be required.
 - **Finance Committee** now has an additional **Audit** function. A third Independent Director, Amanda Parshall, with specialist financial credentials has joined the Executive Committee.
 - **Guidebooks Committee** has completed Peak Limestone South and is now at the printers.
 - **Clubs’ Committee** continues to support Clubs particularly in respect of disseminating BMC benefits and information to their Members and the implementation of The General Data Protection Regulations.
 - **Huts Group** continues to support Clubs with huts and there was a discussion about why huts were not being used to their full potential by other Clubs and Individual BMC Members.
 - **Hill Walking Implementation Group** has launched Mend Our Mountains/Make One Million but, due to the Motion of No Confidence, Sport England will not fund the BMC’s Hillwalking initiative until 2018.
 - **Technical Committee** has done much work on belays and bolts but more Chartered Engineers are currently needed.
 - **Competitions Committee** has had another successful year and Zoe Spriggins has taken over as Competitions Programme Manager (from Rob Adie). There’s an ever expanding range and size of competitions but some walls are now having difficulty accommodating the BMC Youth Climbing Series.
 - **International** continues to work with the Alpine Club and the Mount Everest Foundation to award (small) expedition grants and represent the BMC at UIAA.
 - **Equity Steering Group** continues to oversee equity, diversity, disability and mental health issues and will consider Welsh language issues.
 - **Training & Youth Committee** includes the **Child Safeguarding Group** which has received a green RAG rating from the NSPCC. Now called the Training, Youth and Climbing Walls Committee.

- **The independent Organisational Review** was discussed at length – a whole afternoon. Each Area gave a brief summary of the comments following the ORG presentations at their meetings followed by a wide ranging debate covering every aspect of the ORG Recommendations. Emma Moody of Womble Bond and Dickinson, ORG’s Legal Adviser, and Fiona Sanders of ORG attended the meeting.
 - There was unanimous appreciation for the work of ORG and the thoroughness of the recommendations even if there was general concern over some of the conclusions and the detail in particular.
 - There appears to be a general ‘*resigned acceptance*’ of the need for a fundamental improvement in the governance structure. However, there was a wide ranging feeling that a lot more detail is required on how the proposed new structure would work in practice, general concern that direct member representation would be reduced, and concern about the speed at which the Membership are to be asked to vote on a final recommendation to change the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Nearly half the Recommendations require a change to the M&AA.
 - It was agreed to prepare an outline *implementation plan*, even if we don’t know exactly where we’re going.

- **The “normal” National Council Meeting**
 - **The Meeting started with a reflective view on the previous day’s discussion on the ORG Report.** All this did was reinforce the varied opinions concerning the Recommendations, particularly some very vocal minorities, but with an over-riding desire to implement what is best for the BMC and its Membership.
 - **Finance:** the latest forecast suggest a deficit of £112k for 2017. This is based on *verbal promises* of £149k Sport England funding up to March 2018.
 - **Executive:** Simon Lee’s tenure as Commercial Partnerships Manager has been extended for another year and Amanda Parshall, a corporate lawyer of 15+ years’ experience has joined the Executive as the third Independent Director.
 - **Area Reports** – all Areas spent most of their Meetings discussing the ORG Report.
 - Lakes:** Concern over the proposed Thirlmere Zip Wire Planning Application and the Walna Scar Car Park.
 - South West:** Continuing concern over the issue of the effectiveness of the Coastguard Service in carrying out sea cliff rescues.
 - **BMC Representation on Mountain Training England:** to be considered further at January/February Area Meetings.
 - **Clubs:** 3 Clubs were admitted; RBC Women’s Climbing Group, University of Worcester Climbing and Mountaineering Club and London School of Economics Rock Climbing Club.
 - **Volunteer Strategy:** Lynn Robinson, Vice President, is developing a volunteer strategy

David Brown
BMC Peak Area Representative on National Council

The full Minutes can be downloaded from the BMC Web-site:
https://www.thebmc.co.uk/downloads/The%20BMC/bmc_organisation