

## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

### Lakes Area Meeting - Minutes

**KONG ADVENTURE - KESWICK - Wednesday - 5 September 2018**

Present – 25 per register including Jane Thompson (Clubs Officer for BMC)

#### 1. Welcome

- Mike Parsons welcomed all attending and he and the other area officers introduced themselves.
- Apologies received from Marian Parsons, Dan Robinson, Rick Graham, Stu Smith, Steve Reid, Alan Hinkes, Howard Manson and Alan Davis

#### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting.

- Minutes taken as read.
- There was an addition to the original minutes in that, 2 days after the meeting, Pete Sterling advised his resignation as Lakes Area representative on the BMC National Council. With the BMC AGM coming up it was agreed between the Lakes area officials and BMC office that Fiona Sanders and Mike Parsons would fill the gap at the National Council meeting before the BMC AGM and would stand for election, with anyone else, at the September meeting to fill the posts until the Area AGM in November.

#### 3. Matters arising from those minutes not included in the Agenda

- None

#### 4. Review of BMC post AGM

- By Fiona Sanders, (a member of IG Implementation Group) updated the meeting about this phase.
  - IG set up to consider the remaining recommendations of the BMC Organisational Review group and feedback received in the run up to the AGM 2018.
  - Implementation is a slight misnomer – it is more overseeing and steering the implementation, providing the Board and member with recommendations on how to take things forward
  - There are two workstreams - ( a ) - Board/CEO led for those that are operational and a legal issue and ( b ) NC/ Member led to look at areas such as -
    1. National Council;
    2. Engagement with members;
    3. Engagement with partner organisations such as Mountain Training UK, Mountain Heritage Trust, Mountaineering Scotland, Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC);
- Project manager to be appointed (deadline today) to work two days per week to bring together the work streams – for period up to BMC AGM.
- Looking for 2/3 other people, with expertise, to work with and help the group – details on BMC website – deadline next Monday.
- Timescale for IG
  - Establish Terms of Reference to put to National Council on 15/09/2018

- Prioritise recommendations to taken forward to the 2019 BMC AGM
- There was concern that this would all lead to many more jobs being created at the BMC – and a burden on members and subscriptions –
  - Fiona indicated that IG is looking at the cost/benefit of whatever is done.
  - Focusing on transparency.
  - Possible additional job of Finance Director – which does not exist at the moment..
  - As mentioned the Project Manager job only lasts till the 2019 AGM.

#### 5. Election of Lakes area Representatives to the BMC National Council.

- Due gratitude was expressed for the work done by Pete Sterling as the Lakes area representative on the National Council over the last 4 years.
- As mentioned above Fiona Sanders and Mike Parsons put themselves forward for election as Lakes area representatives to the BMC National Council.
- Interest by one attendee who asked what was involved and might be interested.
- Discussion ensued about whether better to have Area Chairman on the National Council – different areas have different policies and throughout the country it was about 50/50.
- Suggestion that as these appointments are in effect only till November that Fiona and Mike be appointed accordingly and that full details of what is expected on the members of the National Council be made available for the November / AGM meeting and members can then consider putting themselves forward at the AGM for the coming year.
- The above was proposed by Max Biden : Seconded by John Holden and approved unanimously.

#### 6. BMC National Council Report

- Fiona Sanders reported that the last National Council meeting was just prior to the 2018 AGM and attention directed at issues at that meeting
- The next meeting is on 15/09/2018
- Mike Parsons commented on his first attendance at a National Council meeting and he was impressed by the high calibre of membership and felt that the BMC was in good hands. Someone else commented that Mike had lived a sheltered life !

#### 7. Discussion of Ideas to take the BMC Lakes Area meetings forward

There had been a meeting of Mike Parsons, Fiona Sanders and Ron Kenyon to discuss ideas to make the meetings more interesting, better attended and more representative of members' interests in the area. Also reflecting the ideas emanating from the other areas, in particular Peak area, and the recent IG and membership surveys - to take us forward. The Lakes area has 2500 members.

This section of the meeting was to get feedback and ideas from those at the meeting -

- Lakes area Newsletter
  - There was general agreement that the Newsletter was very useful with a lot of good information.
  - Newsletter needs content and will look to members etc for news and information with a deadline set
  - Newsletter to go out with agenda prior to the meetings

**Action point – Ron K to promote deadline for content for next Newsletter - Contacts, Facebook, BMC Community Site**
- Use of BMC Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/LakesAreaBMC/>
  - Now 178 members – looking for 500

**Action point – please all invite other BMC members and friends.**

- Being an open group anyone can use it – however there are four moderators to review what is posted.

- Some people do not like Facebook and will not use it – however it is recognised how useful this platform is and major means of communication for many – in particular young people. We agreed that multi-channel communication was the way forward.
- [There is the BMC Community Page](#) which is useful section of BMC website with standing information e.g. details of meetings, agendas, minutes etc. This however is not working as well as BMC HQ had hoped so some rethinking is going on.

**Action Point – Fiona S to review Community Site and update link with Facebook**

- Meeting agendas
  - Agreed good to have –
    1. A “friendly” agenda promoting meetings with essence of meeting with key issues which goes out to all members before the meeting.
    2. More detailed agenda to outline the structure of the meeting which will be available at the meeting.
  - There was discussion of incorporating the “friendly” agenda into the Newsletter however it was indicated by one person that she found out about the meeting via Facebook – therefore feel important to have a separate “friendly” agenda which would be on the BMC Community Section; emailed out to members and also on the Lakes Area Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/192553650902324/about/>
- BMC Lakes Area activity, afternoon, day or weekend
  - Feeling was positive to link an informal gathering e.g. barbeque, in the summer, with a meeting.
  - Idea of a weekend event/meeting – but feeling best to keep mid-week
  - Someone commented that we should not “beat ourselves up” when looking at the higher attendance at Peak area meetings – they ( a ) have more members and ( b ) geographical communication across the area is much easier.
  - Many consider live video recording of meetings in the future to allow members to view online.
- A short talk/film every meeting.
  - Idea of having a speaker or a short film (15 – 30 minutes).
  - Ask the local club to put on “a slot”.
  - Individuals able to speak by arrangement – a sort of Speakers’ Corner.
- Locations and dates for 2019.
  - Agreed to 4 meetings – 2 in the South Lakes and 2 in the North Lakes.
  - Good to have a location at a climbing wall – giving chance to go to the climbing wall beforehand – especially with concessionary rate (thanks to Kong Adventure for today).
  - Consider a meeting at Eden Rock to be close to Carlisle and attract members there – but it is a long way from Barrow !! – but that is the nature of Cumbria.
- Developing Skills and Bouldering Masterclasses
  - Not discussed – but consider in the future.
- BMC Youth Meet – 2019
  - Looking to hold over weekend of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019.
  - Maximum 16 young climbers age 12 – 18.

- Looking for suitable adults to help – who will have to have DBS check.

## 8. Cumbria Bolt Fund

- No report.

## 9. Access updates and news - James Bumby

### ● Raven Crag (Langdale)

- Large rockfall, which looks like it was caused by the dry weather - this has made the descent path much more exposed.
- Still unstable elements and dangerous to the area below – in and around Revelation.
- An abseil point has been established on the east side of the crag leading down (35m) to the bottom of the ordinary descent path (near start of Centipede). This was not put here by the BMC !
- Wire strop should be in place for abseil for the weekend.
- Abseil publicised to the west of the crag has been checked but considered could not be recommended.

### ● Castle Rock (Crack above North Crag Eliminate)

- Durham University have installed system measuring the crack over a 24 hour period.
- Camera in location above Matheson Avenue – to record “the moment” the block falls.
- The crack was originally 4in wide but it is now possible to climb inside - but not recommended !!!
- From the monitoring it is evident that the crack is widening faster and faster.
- Warning notices are located on the approach from the car park.

### ● Farleton/Hutton Roof

- This is more in connection with mountain bikes but concern at damage to fell side in this SSSI.

### ● Walna Scar

- The Commoners Commission has agreed that the area, used for parking, should be declassified as “common land” and so able to be developed as a car park.
- Concern that there was to be a time limit with the locking of the fell gate at 9.00pm. John Holden had received communication from which he believes this was not the case. He will look this out and forward to Ron.

**Action – John Holden**

- Need to review the situation as unrestricted access is needed to allow climbers and walkers to return to vehicles at anytime – in particular when returning from the fells and Dow Crag late in the evening.

### ● Car Park Crag – Grange, Borrowdale

- There had been a rockfall on to right-hand side of Car Park Crag – believe this is National Trust land and need to review this.
- Ownership to be checked.

**Action point – Tom Burditt**

## 10. Environmental and Landscape issues.

### ● Seathwaite (Borrowdale) road head

- Tom Burditt (National Trust (NT) – General Manager – North Lakes (Thirlmere >> Ennerdale) updated meeting on situation –

## **GENERAL SITUATION**

- NT welcomed text by BMC about the road head situation.
- The road and verges are owned by Highways and NT own the surrounding land.
- Technically cars do not have a legal right to park on the road or the verges. Parking available for about 150 cars.
- Road head is the access point to the central Lakes and in particular Scafell Pike which has led to more and more problems of parking and the road becoming blocked to the hamlet creating its own issues.
- NT is working with various agencies and organisations and this year there have been vehicle counts over the year including during February; Easter; May Day weekend; last week/this week
- Average number of cars – 150 : Peak number – 265 - these numbers have surprised NT and others.
- Boulders were positioned along the final straight and corner before that. Highways and landowner urging to remove – but feeling is that the siting of these boulders has helped control the situation in a way.
- Now looking at solutions –
  1. The current “Local Plan” does not allow new car parks in the Lakes – it was considered that the new “Local Plan”, currently under consideration, should be looking at solutions to sort out traffic and parking problems”.

## **REMEMBRANCE SERVICE – GREAT GABLE – 11/11/2019**

- A number of cars were damaged last year when a number of cars were parked affecting access to the hamlet.
- The service is for FRCC members and anyone else – FRCC, British Legion and NT not responsible for the parking but keen to promote control etc –
  1. Free parking at Seatoller and Honister Pass car parks.
  2. Car sharing.
  3. Parking further away – and walking or cycling or car sharing to road head.
  4. Use of bus service – looking at idea of additional buses by Stagecoach.
  5. Idea of Temporary Traffic Order to control parking at Seathwaite not taken forward but available for other busy times – e.g. bank holidays. – police have no powers at the moment

## **COMMENTS**

- With the new Local Plan – potential of having parking at the head of Borrowdale – however concern that Seathwaite is a special and prominent location and could look at car park further down the valley. One email received indicated that this is “bleeding obvious solution”.
- Concern at creating a theme park in the Lakes – bringing in more and more people – many who don’t appreciate or look after the Lakes.
- There does not seem to be a coherent policy to get people in and out and about the Lakes.
- There are very little practical ideas in the Cumbria Local Plan for years 1 – 10.
- Idea of Park (in Keswick) and Ride - but beware – hopper bus for Kentmere was a waste of time. Considered bus service needs to be 6am to 9pm – and every 20 minutes. Is this practical with issues of locals, hotels, cafes etc.
- LDNP does not seem to be accountable !!
- Does the Lakes need Cumbria Tourism – promoting to get more people into the Lakes ?

- Some consider that UK is bad at managing tourism compared to Austria, Switzerland.
- Look to invite Steve Ratcliffe (Director of Sustainable Development - LDNPA) to speak at the next meeting.

**Action point - Ron / Mike**

- After discussion on the broader issues of the need for a transport plan to support valley head 'honey pot' hill/crag access areas the following proposal was made to enable our NC reps to take the issue to NC - **“National Council to work with National Trust and other agencies with regards to influence the LDNP transport plan to be more practical in the short term”**.

**Action point – Fiona / Mike**

- **Road on west side of Thirlmere**

- Following storms in march, which caused major tree damage on the west side of Thirlmere, the road and footpath on that side of the lake have been closed – with what appears to be limited activities going on with the tree clearance.
- An email was sent, by Ron Kenyon (Area Secretary) to the CEO of United Utilities (Steve Mogford) expressing concerns at the delays in opening of the road and footpath.
- Ron spoke with Paul Philips (Thirlmere UU manager) and received email from Steve Mogford.
- Points in email as follows –
  1. Along with damaged trees there is a lot of loose soil and boulders resulting in unstable slopes – hence closure of road and lakeside path.
  2. Nearly completed work on area along to Dob Gill car park - looking to open road along to car park – best completion date – 7<sup>th</sup> September.
  3. Have cleared trees along the lakeshore path but issues with boardwalk sections.
  4. Initial expectations were to be in a position to lift all the restrictions in early autumn and the team have indicated that these timeframes have not changed.
  5. Fiona Heslam had had indication from Highways that expected open date for road as 8<sup>th</sup> December !
  6. Further communication to clarify various issues.

**Action point – Ron Kenyon**

- **Fix the Fells (FTF) - Mend our Mountains -**

- This subject had been mentioned at the last meeting where there was discussion about footpath construction and idea of holding a conference on footpaths. As the BMC was targeting to raise £1m, under Mend our Mountains, for path construction through UK, it was considered we should have some say on the nature of their construction, user suitability and costs.
- Indication of concerns at the construction of paths in the Lakes.
- We had tried to contact Richard Fox (FTF Ranger) and now have dates for a site visit.
- Attendees gave their feelings and the meeting - needless to say there was a wide breadth of opinion.
  1. First person felt that the paths were good and modern pitching is much better.
  2. As a side effect – it gets rid of cairns.
  3. Construction of path reduces human created erosion.
  4. Concerns about when wet – when the blocks become very slippery.

5. Some felt that drainage is overlooked.
6. Paths created up fellsides – initially by footmarks, then steps and then these are eroded, by water, into channels and then valleys – need to stop this by the creation of the path.
7. Too many people in one place (sounds familiar)
8. Some did not want paths at all and wander the fell side at will.
9. Feeling that the path construction in Scotland is better with more attention given to drainage issues
10. Concerns about the jaggedness of the blocks affecting use by mountain bikes on Scarth Gap, which is a bridleway.
11. There was a diversity of views as to the chief cause of path erosion. Many assumed it is feet. Others strongly voiced the view that water and lack of adequate drainage were the key issues with need for better path design/construction.
12. Mountain bikers and horse riders using bridleways also needed to be heard but this meeting did not embrace these on this occasion.
13. Tom Burditt (NT) indicated his close involvement with Fix the Fells
  - a. Drainage runs are a major part of the FTF project with volunteers going round on a regular basis to clear drainage channels – and if that can't be done then report back and more major work done by FTF team
  - b. Spider digger on Maiden Moor sorting drainage / pitching issues etc
  - c. Pitching is last resort

**Action point – Arrange meeting with Richard Fox (FtF)**

- Possibly look to inviting Joanne (from Fix the Fells) to the next meeting (along with Richard Fox) for discussion on footpaths and Fix the Fells.

**Action point – Mike Parsons / Ron Kenyon**

**11. Clubs report.**

- Jane Thompson indicated that Fiona Sanders is standing down as the Clubs Rep for the Lakes area and we are looking for someone to replace her at the Area AGM in November.
  - Requirement to attend Lakes area meetings; Engage with Clubs and attend 4 committee meetings in the year
  - Enthusiastic
  - Fiona and Jane available to answer further questions

**12. Hill Walking Representative and Hill Walking Issues - Stu Smith**

- No report

**13. Any Other Business.**

- Jean Altshuler indicated that there is a good article by Dennis Grey about Tom Price in the online 'Footless Crow'.  
<http://footlesscrow.blogspot.com/2018/08/tom-price-im-stranger-here-myself.html>

**14. Next Meeting and AGM**

- Wednesday 21 November 2018 - Eagle and Child - Staveley