

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA MEETING

Meeting held at The Old Kings Head, London  
On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.00pm.

### Minutes

#### 1. **Welcome and apologies for absence - Attendance numbers 25 (7 women 18 men) (see attached list of attendees)**

Chaired Chris Stone (CS) Minutes taken by Robert Dufton (RD) BMC attendance Nick Colton (NC)

Apologies – Paul Kaye & Adrian Paisey

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular Nick Colton, BMC's Deputy CEO and all first time attenders.

#### 2. **Minutes of previous meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018**

Rick Payne (RP) as previous chair explained the post meeting note on the minutes and why the 2017 AGM minutes were not changed but instead an addendum was added. The minutes of the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 were then ratified. 20 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained.

#### 3. **Election of Area Secretary**

An election for role of Area Secretary took place as no-one stood at the November 2018 AGM.

Robert Dufton was proposed by (RP), seconded by Vic Odell (VO). Votes were 22 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained.

#### 4. **Updates from Organisational Review Group**

CS asked the room who was aware of the dedicated website for the ODG (5) and of those who has visited it to read any of the documents (4).

CS summarised the history and purposes of the Organisational Review Group (ORG) and the Organisational Development Group (ODG). The ODG had eight workstreams, four of which require significant member engagement and are being led by the President. Their work would result in changes to the BMC's Articles of Association which would be voted on at the AGM 31 March 2019. Other work would take longer and would come to the 2020 AGM. In some cases interim solutions were needed.

Workstream 1 – Strategy and Vision

CS explained that following a concern expressed at the last area meeting that only 6 months had been allocated towards developing the new strategy and vision, this had been raised at National Council. In response the Board has decided that there would be an open forum discussion on strategy and vision as part of the AGM which would ensure the amount of time that was available for this was maximised.

Workstream 5 – Governance

The ODG was consulting on draft documents. Areas were being asked to feed in their views at the next National Council meeting. Members were also encouraged to respond directly to the ODG. CS presented the key points on which a steer to CS and RP as the Area National Council representatives was needed.

## Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The MoU between the Board and National Council was required under the Articles of Association adopted in 2018. It was intended to bring together the Board's terms of reference and the National Council's terms of reference to define a collaborative and effective way for the Board and National Council to work together. The Chair of the Board and President would sign the MoU at the AGM.

CS invited Jonathan White (JW) as a member of the workstream sub-group to speak about the MoU. JW explained that the MoU was intended to focus on positive collaboration between the Board and the National Council, in addition to the provisions in the Articles which cover what would happen if there were ever a situation when the Board and the National Council disagreed. The MoU required compromises by both Board and National Council. The MoU currently described the role of National Council in part as "holding the Board to account". Strictly speaking, the Board is accountable to the members of BMC, but the National Council – via Area Meetings - is the main mechanism available between AGMs for the members to make representations and to ask the Board for explanations. Again subject to the point that it is the members which hold the Board to account, this phrase was intended to cover the scrutiny of the board and the wider positive input to the e.g. many BMC committees and also the other input that the President is currently considering.

The meeting agreed that there was no concern with the phrase "holding the board to account" being included in the MoU.

## National Council Terms of Reference

CS explained that the structure and long-term terms of reference of the National Council were being reviewed and will be presented at the 2020 AGM. The current proposed terms of reference would be interim.

## Deputy President

RP outlined the proposal for the role of Deputy President who would not be on the board but would support the President. The current post of Vice President would cease at the 2019 AGM. The proposal had been made by the President. JW said that the proposal meant that the advantages of the previous approach of having multiple "vices" as future senior leaders would no longer be available. RS explained that the BMC office had advised that the third option (the Deputy President being voted on by the members at the 2019 AGM) might not be possible to implement. Sherry Macliver (SW) said she was opposed to the second option (National Council selecting the Deputy President) as it was not consistent with a democratic approach. JW said that the decision on the role of Deputy President was not as significant as others matters, as it was only for the interim period until the 2020 AGM.

CS asked for a show of hands for the three options:

1. Do nothing (no post past 2019 AGM)
2. Agree that a Deputy President post is require and voted on from within National Council
3. Agree that a Deputy President post is require and voted on, by the members at the 2019 AGM

Votes were: option 1 - 4; option 2 - 3; option 3 - 13.

## Restructuring of National Council

CS outlined three key issues about the restructuring and requested a steer from members.

- Number of locally elected representatives (Area reps) – One or Two?

The meeting discussed the pros and cons of one or two elected reps and whether one or both should have a vote, it being understood that if the decision was to have two elected reps but only one voting, then the other elected rep would be allowed to be in attendance at the National Council meeting. JW said he was in favour of two elected reps, both having a vote as at present. On a show of hands, no one favoured only one elected rep, and the proposal that each of the two locally elected reps should have a vote was preferred (13 people) to the alternative proposal that only one rep be voting (10 people).

- Should the Chair / representative of each BMC specialist committee be on National Council?

The meeting discussed the pros and cons of the role of specialist committee reps on the National Council. JW raised the concern that as the Board would appoint specialist committee reps this meant that over half the National Council would be appointed that way, and so it would not be as effective as a member representative body. Vic Odell (VO) spoke in favour of the Board appointing specialist committee reps to the National Council, but not to steer its work. John Tomlinson (JT) was not in favour of the board appointing the representatives. The meeting agreed unanimously that there should be specialist committee reps on the National Council but that they should not be voting members.

- Should Partners organisations be represented on the Group, and if so, who and how?

The meeting discussed the role of partner organisations. RP read out the list of organisations. In response to a question, RP said that the belief was that giving the representatives of the partner organisations a vote on the National Council would increase their interest and commitment to the role. Charlotte Perry-Houts (CPH) suggested it would be inconsistent to decide not to give specialist committee reps a vote but to allow the reps of partner organisations to have one. The meeting decided, with overwhelming support, that representatives of partner organisations should not have a vote.

Other issues:

The name of National Council. The ODG were currently recommending that it become the Members' Assembly. This was not discussed in detail and RP suggested it could be addressed by other means.

SM asked whether the governance proposals included a mechanism to ensure an appropriate balance on the National Council between individual members and club members. RP and CS agreed to take this point back to National Council for consideration by the appropriate workstream.

JW was concerned that the Treasurer would no longer have an automatic place on the Board.

JW was concerned about the provision in the articles which allowed Directors to be paid for services provided to the BMC. He said he would prefer a complete bar on payment of Directors.

JW was concerned by the proposed high level of thresholds for members to put forward resolutions.

CS and RP thanked attendees for the helpful guidance they had given which they would feed into the ODG's work via the National Council at its next meeting on 9 February 2019. CS reminded everyone that they were encouraged to feed in their views on the governance review individually to the ODG.

## 5. National Council

### 5.1 Report from National Council

#### Specialist Committees

CS reported back on the work of the specialist committees which had been reported to Council. Training, Youth & Wall – The winter lecture series had been attended by well over 1500 people. International – The BMC is seeking 25 volunteers to take part in an International meet in May 2019. Guidebooks – Android and iPhone apps will soon be available for the Wired guidebooks.

#### Subscriptions

RP reported that National Council was considering a proposal to increase the annual membership fee. The likely rise would be £5 or £6 for a full individual member (50% of these figures for club members). £5 related to the increase in insurance premium that the insurers whom the BMC arranged to provide public liability cover for members would be making. The premium was likely to double or even nearly treble. This was because a very substantial claim had recently been made arising out of a serious injury to a climber. The balance of the proposed increase, £1, was to pay to implement the changes recommended by the ODG. The meeting agreed that the membership fee would have to rise reflecting the increased cost of insurance cover, and they were also supportive of the additional amount for the ODG work. They supported a £6 rise.

## AGM

The AGM will be held on Sunday 31 March 2019 in Buxton. CS encouraged members to attend.

### 5.2 Matters to take to National Council

Charlotte Perry Houts (CPH) and Seb Gastaud (SG), members of NotSoTrad – Southern LGBT Climbers, raised the current BMC Equalities Survey. They welcomed the fact that the survey was being undertaken. However some members of their club had pointed out that two of the questions were inappropriately worded and had caused concern. CPW explained that the survey had already been amended, which was welcomed. However it would be appropriate to add a note or explanation to state that the wording of the survey had been amended after it had opened and also apologising for any concern which had been caused by the previous wording. CPW said that NotSoTrad would be happy to offer advice to the BMC on issues concerning LGBT people. The President of NotSoTrad had also written to the BMC head office in similar terms. SG said that the problem caused by inappropriate wording could potentially affect members in all clubs, and that some of them in the circumstances might not feel able to raise their concerns with the officers of their club or directly with the BMC which would be regrettable. CPH and SG thanked the BMC for the way in which they were handling this now. CS and RP said they would raise the matter and NotSoTrad's offer of future help at National Council.

## 6. Reports from Area Representatives

**6.1 Clubs** SM reported that all clubs could now nominate a member to be the lead for communications with the BMC. This person could be in addition to the nominated lead for subs and membership.

**6.2 Hillwalking** CS said that there would be a walk on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 meeting at 10.30 at Haslemere to walk to the Devil's Punchbowl and another on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019 meeting at Eastbourne for a walk to Birling Gap and Beachy Head.

Rya Tibawi (RT) reported that she had attended the first BMC Hill Walking Symposium in November. It had been a very positive event.

**6.3 Access** CS reported that the proposal to install a bridge to the Isolated Buttress at Harrison's Rocks was going through a pre-planning application consultation process. CS also drew attention to the current discussion on the Southern Sandstone Facebook group about the problems caused by over-brushing and excessive use of chalk.

## 7. AOB

CS reminded members that 2019 was the BMC's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and information about how this would be celebrated was expected.

## 8. Date and location of next Area Meeting

21<sup>st</sup> March 2019, 7.00pm at the Old Kings Head, followed by the guest speaker Olie Hunter Smart, the adventurer and photographer (<http://www.oliehuntersmart.com>).

After the meeting, there was a raffle for a £50 voucher generously donated by Ellis Brigham Mountain Sports and then an excellent presentation from Juan Avendano, Performance Coach and GB Development Squad Coach about youth development in competition climbing. The discussion covered long-term athlete development, the role of parents and guardians in supporting developing athletes, and the future of funding.

Minutes written by Robert Dufton

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## **List of Attendees**

<b>Robert Dufton</b>	<b>Not So Trad and Climbers Club</b>
<b>Sophie Hewett</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Catriona Mitchell</b>	<b>Ibex Mountaineering Club</b>
<b>Sebastien Gastaud</b>	<b>Not So Trad</b>
<b>Malcolm Donne</b>	<b>Red Rope</b>
<b>Chris Chorney</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Henry Collis</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Tim Croicon</b>	<b>Rockhoppers MC</b>
<b>Jonathan Albert</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Charlotte Perry-Houts</b>	<b>Not So Trad</b>
<b>Vic Odell</b>	<b>Climbers Club</b>
<b>Ben McDonald</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Jenifer Burdet</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Ed Neil</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Rya Tibawi</b>	<b>Climbers Club and Individual member</b>
<b>Peter Payne</b>	<b>Alpine Club</b>
<b>Jim Robinson</b>	<b>Surbiton and Kingston Mountaineering Club</b>
<b>Sherry Macliver</b>	<b>Alpine Club</b>
<b>Jonathan White</b>	<b>Alpine Club and Individual member</b>
<b>John Tomlinson</b>	<b>North London Mountaineering Club</b>
<b>Kieron Desmond</b>	<b>North London Mountaineering Club, HMC and Individual member</b>
<b>Scott Whitehead</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Jeremy Leong</b>	<b>Individual member</b>
<b>Richard Steele</b>	<b>Individual member</b>