

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 23rd January 2019, The Maynard, Grindleford

Present:

Rob Greenwood (Chair)	Becky Hammond (Secretary)	Kim Leyland
Adge Last (LET)	Joel Mitchell	Mike Cheque
Andy Reeve	Simon Lee (UK Bouldering)	Martin Wass
Alison Cairns (National Council Rep)	Michael French	Tim Grice
Kym West	Colin Nave	Alison Bell
Henry Folkard (access reps coordinator)	Neil Foster (FRCC)	Spence Ramsey
Rob Dyer (BMC Access Officer)	Hazel Jones (Pinnacle Club)	John Cook
Tomo Thompson (Friends of the Peak District)	Chris Jones (Clogwyn MC)	Lisa Payne
Andy Cairns (visitor from the North West!)	Spenser Gray (Oread MC)	Graeme Hammond
David Brown (National Council Rep)	Tina Wilkinson	Richard Duckworth
Dave Turnbull (BMC Chief Exec)	Yvonne Alexander (Bowline CC)	Kevin Noon
Rik Payne (BMC Board)	Austin Knott (Area Hillwalking Rep)	Tom Wells
Graham Richmond (Bowline CC)	Peter Judd (Area Hillwalking Rep)	Susan French

39 people present

The relatively low attendance may be explained by the lack of email to Peak area members in the week prior to the meeting (due to staff illness)

1. Apologies:

Mark Warwicker, Lynn Robinson (BMC President), Steve Clark, Dave Parry, Robert Townsend, Louise Hawson (area access rep), Clair Reading, Gary Gibson, Mark McKenzie, Emma Holland, Glynis Judd, Chris Sweetman.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as correct.

3. Actions from previous meetings

- Millsom memorial plaque* – no progress yet in contacting the Millsom family
- Running Hill Pits notice to clarify access* – Sue Smith at PDNPA is working on this.

4. Access updates

Also see the Peak Area Newsletter available at <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/peak-area-newsletter-january-2019>

a. *Millsom memorial plaque at Stanage*
See above

b. *PDNPA car parking enforcement*
The PDNPA have announced in the local newspapers that they will be starting enforcing parking charges. The notice is a legal requirement, but we don't know when it will actually be implemented. Arrangements are apparently being made for volunteers to have free parking, but neither the Stanage warden, Louise Hawson nor Henry Folkard have heard what those arrangements will be.

c. *Derbyshire Police warning about car crime*
There was recently a spate of break-ins around Hathersage.

d. *Stanage Forum*
Next meeting will be 28th March – there isn't anything in particular coming up.

e. *Fletcher's Mill proposals, Greenfield*

The proposals for a large amount of housing at Fletcher's Mill have been re-issued, at almost the same time as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. It looks like the proposals are only the first phase of a development, with more to come. Mark Warwicker is monitoring the situation and will keep us updated. The BMC will be submitting an objection to the proposals.

f. Climbing in Winnats Pass

The National Trust is, quite reasonably, concerned about people climbing in Winnats Pass. The instructions in the current guidebook are pretty good: ie choose a quiet time with little traffic. The current concern has been prompted by children scrambling up a scree slope in Dove Dale & knocking stones onto people. John Fulwood has offered to help with scaling in Winnats Pass if necessary.

Wording of BMC RAD entry: "The landowners have expressed legitimate safety concerns with climbing in the gorge. The site contains a popular public road and the potential for passers-by to be hit by falling/dislodged rock is obvious. If you wish to climb or scramble in the pass, BMC advice is to limit visits to either very early or late in the day, midweek."

g. National Trust activities licensing

This was originally proposed a couple of years ago, and then went quiet. The National Trust's concern seems to be related to big events. Henry Folkard & Jim Walton (local AMI rep) are meeting with the NT to discuss it.

h. Topley Pike Quarry

Land around the quarry is being re-landscaped. There is a nice natural slab that would make a potential climbing venue. It is proposed that the quarry will be absorbed by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

i. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Rob Dyer and Rob Greenwood had a positive meeting with Tim Birch from DWT. DWT are keen for some support with some projects and seemed interested in what the BMC have been doing e.g. crag clean ups.

j. Ring Ouzel monitoring

Monitoring of nest sites will start 1st April onwards. Volunteers are needed who can help with this – contact Kim Leyland.

5. Hillwalking update

The Hillwalking Symposium in November was really well attended with around 60 people from around the country. The event consisted of workshops and walks. There was a fascinating discussion about access and wild camping. There was positive feedback, and it's hoped to repeat in a couple of years. Many thanks to Cath Flitcroft and Carey Davies for organising.

Peter Judd & Austin Knott will be leading a walk at the BMC AGM weekend. The walk will be on Saturday 30th March starting from Buxton at 10.15am.

6. Mend Our Mountains

Around £620,000 has been raised so far, and there are currently grant applications in with trusts etc. £90,000 of the £140,000 target has been raised so far for the Great Ridge but it is hoped that the target may yet be met by those outstanding applications.

Cut Gate is at around £55,000 - 60,000 (the target is £70,000) and needs a further push. Consideration is being given to running a last-minute public appeal to get it over the line.

7. 70th Anniversary of the National Parks & Countryside Act – event in Winnats Pass 27th April

The National Trust are heavily involved in planning this as part of their "People's Landscape" theme for 2019. 'Big' people will be speaking including Jarvis Cocker, Sue Hayman, David Blunkett and a famous actress whose name cannot yet be revealed.

Winnats Pass was the site of some of the big access rallies.

8. National Council report

See David Brown's written summary attached.

The last NC meeting included the annual presentations by all the specialist subcommittees. David described it as "eye opening" the huge amount of work that is done on our behalf by volunteers. Several subcommittees emphasised the need for more Administrative and Officer support for their work across the board. Dave Turnbull pointed out that there are high expectations from members, which will impact on

subscriptions. BMC Members will need to decide priorities. Subs increases have been below inflation for the last 10 years.

Hillwalking prompted the longest discussion & most questions.

Proposed subscriptions increases

A significant claim against the 3rd Party Liability Insurance has been made. As a result the insurer will be increasing the premium by £175,000 per year or more (double the current premium) whilst reducing the level of cover provided – so further top-up cover will need to be found.

In addition, there will be additional costs associated with the organisational review.

The BMC will end the current year in an ~£200K deficit due to the unforeseen insurance premium increase, and subs will need to increase from 1st January 2020 to cover this.

There are currently two proposals which the meeting was asked to consider and provide feedback.

1 – increase subs by £2.50 per club member or £5.00 per individual member to cover only the increased costs of 3rd Party Liability Insurance

2 – increase subs by £3.00 per club member or £6.00 per individual member to cover the insurance costs and organisational review costs.

Discussion included the following:

- It's positive that if you're a BMC member then you're covered
- A subs increase keeps the money under our control / "masters of our own destiny": grants and funding from other organisations have strings attached.
- The budget no longer balances. In the past some clubs have been vociferously opposed to increases. If the Organisational Development Group's recommendations cannot be implemented due to lack of funding then that's a waste. The organisation is still recovering financially from the 2017 AGM Motion of No Confidence. The amounts proposed are not significant, and an increase is imperative to ensure continued insurance. There is no alternative and both Clubs and individuals would find it prohibitively expensive to gain insurance except through a very large group policy.
- The insurance claim has been made against someone who was a club member not an individual member. Local clubs are responsible for introducing a lot of people to climbing, so it would be sensible to load some more of the insurance liability onto the Club
- There is no standard required to be a BMC member, but most Clubs have some sort of standards for membership to varying degrees, which could be seen as reducing the risk.
- Every subs increase that is weighted more heavily to individual Members increases the disparity in membership fees between Club & Individual Members. This discussion needs to happen in the next couple of years, but probably not right now.
- Would like to hear that there are other efforts to grow income other than just increasing subs and attracting new members.
- The BMC is developing a membership package for indoor climbers, but no mention of increasing the hillwalking membership. Can't do both at the same time.... Disparity between stated commitment to hillwalking and what's actually happening.
- Peak Area Newsletters are in big demand at National Park Centres – presumably they are picked up and read by non-members, so there is interest in the organisation. Membership could be promoted via that route.

An initial show of hands showed that option 2 had overwhelming support of the majority.

A third option was suggested:

3 – to distribute the insurance-associated increase evenly across all members regardless of club/individual membership.

This was supported by a majority show of hands.

Note approximately half those present indicated that they are members of clubs.

Concerns were expressed about a possible backlash from clubs.

Also the potential financial impact on clubs who have their AGMs between now and 31st March and therefore need to set their next subscriptions before they know what the BMC increase will be. It was suggested that an incremental increase might help reduce the impact on clubs where this applies.

Post Meeting Note – within 2 days of the Peak Area Meeting further meetings with our insurers suggested that future premiums will be even higher than previously discussed. Area Meetings are being advised of the most up-to-date information available.

9. Proposal for the Role of an Interim Deputy President

A paper was circulated

This would be a stop-gap until National Council is revised in 2020 (via amended Articles of Association). Area Meetings are being asked to provide feedback on the proposal.

Discussion points included:

- The current workload of the President is considerable, and although diminished because the President is no longer a Board member, it is still considerable and will probably continue to be.
- If we don't want a President who is always retired or not working then we need to give them some sort of financial compensation.
- It would be useful for a Deputy President to have complementary skills to the President.

A show of hands agreed support for the need for an Interim Deputy President.

The discussion then turned to how they might be appointed.

- There are current National Council members who would be willing and able to be Interim Deputy President.
- A vote by the whole membership at the AGM would have logistical challenges (i.e. deadlines for resolutions), that mean it would not be a viable option this year.
- An EGM or other form of whole-membership vote after the AGM would introduce delays in appointing the Deputy President and therefore limit their usefulness.
- An elected Deputy President risks re-introducing the inadvertent succession of Deputy President being assumed to be the candidate for President, which should not be the case as Presidency should be open to the whole membership.
- Short term expediency for this year suggests that the person should be selected from National Council.

The consensus was that the Deputy President should be selected from the current National Council as other options are not practicable.

10. Clubs

David Brown is our rep on the BMC Clubs Committee. They have asked to be a standing item on area meeting agendas, but there was nothing specific to discuss.

11. BMC Officers

Nothing to add that hasn't already been discussed.

12. Peak Area Newsletter

January 2019 edition available at <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/peak-area-newsletter-january-2019>
Contributions always welcome. Please email articles and photos to peakarea@gmail.com.
Deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is 4th March.

13. Any other business

a. Use of the term "Holding the board to account" in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and National Council

Simon Lee raised that the phrase "holding to the Board to account" (by National Council) which is used in the MOU was too imprecise for an official document and suggestive of greater powers of the National Council actually now has. Following discussion a show of hands supported a text change to an alternative phrase such as "formally scrutinising and challenging the board". Alison Cairns confirmed this would be escalated at the next National Council Meeting. Subsequent to the meeting Simon had further dialogue with the John Roberts of the ODG on the subject and a copy of an email is attached.

b. Role of Treasurer

David Brown raised a concern that after the 2019 AGM there would no longer be an elected Treasurer, and therefore no National Council representative on the Finance & Audit Committee. There was some discussion before it emerged that this was David's personal concern and not a discussion that had been requested by National Council. It was felt that it should be raised at National Council and they should propose a solution.

c. Organisational Development Group

An update on the current work of the ODG is available on the website at odg.thebmc.co.uk. Four key governance documents have been published:

- Interim National Council Terms of Reference
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Amended Articles of Association
- Board Terms of Reference

Feedback and comments are actively invited, and can be made on the website or sent to odg@thebmc.co.uk

d. Dave Gregory

Dave Gregory, a stalwart of guidebook writing for many years and active Peak climber, passed away recently. He has donated his body to medical science, so there will not be a funeral. However there will be a wake on 10th February.

14. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 20th March 2019, 7.30pm at The Maynard Arms, Grindleford, S32 2HE.

The meeting was followed by a talk by Carey Davies, BMC Hillwalking Officer, Guardian Columnist & writer.

BMC – National Council Meeting Summary **Saturday 1 December 2018 at the BMC Offices**

A very long full day meeting including the annual review of all the Specialist Committees.

- **The Specialist Committees support the army of “hidden” volunteers who are so vital to every aspect of the BMC.** Although the specialist Committees now technically report to the Board, all 12 presented their Annual Reports to a joint meeting of the Board and National Council. There was a full interchange of questions and answers, and discussion on their Terms of Reference and Forward Plans: the Board approved continuation of each of the Committees with very few amendments.
 - **Training, Youth & Walls Committee** includes the **Child Safeguarding Group**: CSG had a difficult year, particularly in relation to a number of appeals and complaints which arose from the selection process for the GB National Development Squad. The Winter Skills lecture series (supported by Lowe Alpine) continues to grow and they are working on a solution to enable accident and near-miss information to be collected and disseminated, to help reduce such incidents
 - **Technical Committee** is now in a healthy state in terms of membership numbers and knowledge but a new Chair is being sought and more female involvement would be welcomed. Co-operation with CEN, UIAA Safety Commission and BSI continues, there was a successful Student Safety Seminar and a new Climbers’ User Guide to Bolts published, but there had been no BMC funding to local bolt funds since 2013. Brexit should not have any impact on the Committee (?).
 - **Land Management Group** has undertaken management and mapping work at recently acquired Crookrise, and continues to pursue the possible acquisition of Craig y Forwyn. A Land Acquisition Policy has been approved but a lack of resources, including staff time, meant that management plans for BMC sites were not completed, and this shortage also impacted on plans to dedicate Harrison’s and Bwlch y Moch under CRoW. Horseshoe Quarry was re-bolted followed by a post-mortem: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/horseshoe-rebolting-round-up>.
 - **International Committee** is in ongoing discussions with the Alpine Club on ways to improve collaborative working, including a newly revived Alpine Climbing Group. It continues to attempt to persuade Himalayan countries to liberalise their expedition rules and has joined the European Union of Mountaineering Associations (EUMA), to lobby the European Parliament. The work being undertaken by Colin Knowles in facilitating talks between the UIAA and the IFSC is being undertaken for the Board of Directors. No BMC International Winter Meet was held in 2018, due to budgetary constraints, but a 2019 Summer Meet is planned and perhaps one in 2020 Winter.
 - **Huts Group** continues to support Clubs with huts with a rise in enquiries on all aspects of acquiring, maintaining and running a hut, even the consideration of installing electric car charging points at huts. The 16 sets of Guidelines have been reviewed; 3 revised and one withdrawn. The Huts Group could clearly profit with additional volunteer input.
 - **Hill Walking Implementation Group** has made relatively modest gains in 2018 but much of its strategic plan was still undone; it has been re-submitted to the Board. Mend Our Mountains has been the highlight of the year; it had taken up probably 90% of officer time, but had raised over £500k so far. The BMC’s first hill walking symposium was received very positively and the hope is that hill walking will not be neglected as the BMC develops its strategic plan; the HWIG still have some concerns about hill walking’s image problem within the BMC. The work of this committee generated more discussion than any other including relations with partners (National Trust, etc.), other walking organisations (The Ramblers, etc.), allied activities (mountain bikers, etc.), other conservation bodies (Fix-the-Fells, etc.) and service bodies (Mountain Training, etc.) – a **lot** of positive comment and support.
 - **Guidebooks Committee** completed the fifth series of definitive climbing guides with the publication of Peak Limestone South. A sixth series is not planned and work has begun on a selected climbs guide for Peak Gritstone as part of the Wired climbing guides series together with

developing a strategy for database management and an *app*: the database was set up by the Climbers' Club and that other clubs and the BMC have contributed money and time to the project and own/populate zones within it.

- **Finance & Audit Committee** meets in advance of the Board meetings to guide the BMC in all financial matters. Budgeting for 2018 and beyond has been particularly difficult due to the uncertainty over Sport England funding: fortunately, a review of insurance broker costs has resulted in expected savings of £30-40k in 2018 and similar in 2019. Most of the members are longstanding, and the FAC is looking to recruit new members. With the proposed changes to the Articles of Association, the Membership's oversight of this important committee will be very much reduced if the role of Honorary Treasurer is lost after the 2019 AGM.
- **Equity Steering Group** have not run any new projects in 2018 due to lack of funding and the loss of BMC's equity officer, but the establishment of sub-groups has improved efficiency and the group is hoping to upgrade the BMCs Equality Standard for sport from Preliminary to Intermediate level. Other specialist committees were encouraged to co-operate and co-ordinate with the work of the ESG, and acknowledged they need to be more proactive about raising awareness.
- **Competitions Committee** selection policy for the GB Development Squad has been tightened up, and a selection event for the 2019 squad has been held. There has been some concern over the distribution of events in some areas and lack of support in others but financing and potential commercial sponsorship remains the significant challenge.
- **Clubs' Committee** provided significantly more support for student clubs, improved online resources, a programme of training courses and enhanced communications with affiliated clubs, particularly in respect of disseminating guidance on the implementation of The General Data Protection Regulations. The aim is to keep Clubs at the centre of BMC Activities.
- **Access Management Group** is a good, small team of expert volunteers and supported by three BMC Staff: they are involved in a wide range of practical and political work, which is often time consuming and reactive although they would like to be more proactive. It is clear that the Group find resources limited which makes work on the ground challenging: additional administrative support would help, especially in Wales but overall it was obvious that the BMC's environmental work needs more resources

Immense amount of work by volunteers and staff – thanks, but please do it again next year!

- **The “normal” National Council Meeting**

- **Organisational Development Group** - A lot of introspection on ODG issues, much of which is open for discussion at the Area Meeting or by any Member as a direct communication.
- **2019 BMC AGM** – Sunday 31 March 2019 at 12 noon (at Buxton).
- **BMC 75th Anniversary in 2019** - ?
- **Reports** – (Selective)
 - Mountain Training:** two new award schemes had been launched – Rock Skills and Indoor Climbing Assistant.
 - Lakes:** Honister Zip-wire approved but Friends of Lake District taking the decision to the Secretary of State. Concern over increased use of E-bikes. Rockfall at Castle Rock.
 - North West:** a new team is in place; Chair, secretary,...
 - President:** more travels!
 - CEO and Office:** Confirmation of continued funding from Sport England has enabled James McHaffie to return as youth & equity officer, and the recruitment of two part-time talent development coordinators. A replacement Marketing Manager appointed.
 - Finance:** see paper on Subscription issues.

David Brown, BMC Peak Area Representative on National Council
The full Minutes, all 22 pages, can be downloaded from the BMC Web-site: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-national-council-minutes>

Addendum to item 13a

Sent: 25 January 2019 11:15

To: 'Rob Greenwood' <robgreenwood@bmcvolunteers.org.uk>; Becky Hammond <becky@bmcvolunteers.org.uk>; Alison Cairns ; David Brown

Cc: 'John Roberts'

Subject: Holding the Board to Account

Hi All,

John Roberts got in touch with me (thanks John) and drew my attention to the fact that National Council does have the power to convene a General Meeting (1% of members can do this also) that might for example table a Motion of Censure or Motion of No Confidence in the Board.

I have now read the relevant clause (AoA clause 12 copied below) and this coupled with the structured process before a GM is confirmed means that I now accept that "holding the Board to Account" is an acceptable (though far from perfect) phrase to use in the MoU as NC does in fact have a formal route to progress disputes outside the AGM in a meaningful and structured manner although the ultimate decisionmaker is the membership rather than the NC.

John said he is not averse to the suggestion of a change and he will definitely make sure its discussed at NC and the Board. However, he also points out there are tight timescales and the phrase 'holding to account' also appears in the AoA and the NC ToR so if changed would need to be altered in all three draft documents.

I think it should still be amended if possible as more precise and less loaded phrases are available. However, I also appreciate that there is a lot to be done before the AGM.

If not amended I think that going forward BMC representatives should be instructed to be very careful how they bandy this phrase around (especial as it seems to have gained traction and become a meme) as without qualification it can make it sound like NC has some sort of direct power or veto on Board decisions which is not the case and could mislead most members who are not fully au fait with the AoA, myself included.

Best Simon

12. NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS 12.1. Not less than sixty Clear Days advance notification of the intention to hold a General Meeting must be given to all persons entitled to receive notice stating the place, date and time of such meeting and the purpose of it. 12.2. Where a General Meeting is requisitioned by the National Council under Article 11.5, the National Council must first: 12.2.1. Promptly meet with the Board to discuss the reason for seeking to requisition the meeting and confirm their proposals for that meeting; 12.2.2. Where the Board supports the reason for the meeting and the proposals for it, then due notice shall be given and the General Meeting shall proceed accordingly, or with the agreement of the National Council, defer the issue to be discussed at the next scheduled General Meeting; 12.2.3. Where the Board does not support the reason for the meeting and the proposals for it, then it shall set out the reasons for its view and the National Council shall re-consider if it still wishes to pursue the matter; 12.2.4. Where the National Council does still wish to requisition a meeting, then the matter for which the meeting is sought shall, where one or both parties feels it is appropriate, be referred promptly to expert opinion or mediation (to be agreed between the Board and the National Council, depending on the subject matter of the proposals being put forward); 12.2.5. The Board and the National Council shall, where an expert opinion is sought, consider that opinion in deciding whether to call a General Meeting; 12.2.6. Where the Board and the National Council have mediated a particular matter, then the outcome of that mediation shall be taken into account in determining whether to call a General Meeting; 12.2.7. Only if the above avenues are exhausted may a General Meeting then be called; 12.2.8. If a General Meeting is so called, the fact that this process has been followed and the outcome of it shall be reported to the Voting Members;