

BMC South West Area Meeting

Venue: The Quay Climbing Centre, Exeter EX2 8AX

Date: Saturday 16th March 2019 7:00pm

MINUTES

Present and signed in:

James Mann (Chair, Plymouth), Mark Kemball (Sec., Bude), Tony Bird, Colin Sharp (Exeter), Philip Wilson (N.C., Bristol), Helen Wilson (N.C., Bristol), Trace Sutton (Dorset) Sam Parsons (Dorset), Dave Hillebrandt (Holsworthy), Martin Hallett (Dorset), Henry Forrester (Plymouth), Paul Roberts (Ivybridge), Ian Lee (Newton Abbot), Iain Peters (Greece, Germany, Tavistock), Anna Baradad (Bristol), Mark Courtiour (Cheddar), Peter Salenieks, Tom Williams (18).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

James welcomed everyone to the meeting; apologies were received from Ian Butterworth, Colin Knowles and Will Hornby.

2. Previous meeting's minutes and any matters arising

The previous meetings minutes were accepted, there were no matters arising..

3. Climbing wall rep

Henry Forrester was elected as climbing wall rep; proposed by Iain Peters, seconded by Martin Hallett.

4. West Cornwall access rep

We do not have a West Cornwall access rep. James asked everyone to look out for someone suitable and willing to take on the role (ideally they should be based in West Cornwall).

5. 2019's meetings, dates and venues

the dates of the meetings for the rest of the year are 8th June, 7th September and 23rd November (including AGM); these will be held at the Quay, Exeter unless there is a reason to hold them elsewhere. At the AGM we will decide if we should continue to hold our meetings at the Quay or move around the area – it was suggested that those attending meetings should record where they are from to help in deciding if the Quay is suitable.

6. Strategic Plan

Helen and Peter reported on the Organisational Development Group's progress – while the meeting recognised that the work is very important for the BMC's future, the information available is confusing and very difficult to follow. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to provide members with a short (1 or 2 paragraph) progress summary each month. Helen agreed to follow up on recommendation 6 – digital strategy and recommendation 24 – competitions, and provide a short summary of progress.

7. Area Youth Co-ordinator's report

Henry, who is assisting Julian Wills with organising the SW YCS, summarised where we stand – the third round – bouldering at the Hangar, Plymouth went well, although there was some difficulty contacting the office on the day to check queries about

entries. The fourth round (roped climbing) will be held at The Life Centre, Plymouth; following difficulties with the previous roped climbing round it has been agreed to reduce the number of routes to 4 and to limit the number of competitors to 120. Henry reported that Nick Colton had called him to ask if it was possible to increase the numbers, but Henry said this was not on safety grounds. Henry also reported that as wall manager he had not received the numbers in each category for the next round from the BMC office (it had been agreed in a conference call on 31st January that the wall manager and AYC should be sent the numbers by 15th March, fortunately, Julian had forwarded them to him to assist with planning).

The meeting felt that competition climbing was not being properly supported and after some discussion, it was agreed that the following should be sent to the BMC president, CEO, deputy COE, office staff involved with competitions and all members of the National Council:

The SW area of the BMC are worried that by concentrating on essential restructuring of the organisation the BMC is currently ignoring grass roots needs in terms of competition climbing. Young competition climbers are potential life-long BMC members but need support in terms of the organisation of competitions, their welfare and training.

8. BMC area briefing notes

James summarised these; they had previously been made available via the BMC SW area Facebook page.

9. Feedback from National Council

Helen and Philip reported back on the 9th February's National Council meeting, however, they expressed frustration that the minutes of the meeting were not yet available and warned that their recollections of a 9 hour meeting held some 6 weeks ago might not be entirely accurate. Questions were asked as to why the BMC subs increase recommended to the AGM was different to that suggested at the previous area meeting. They could not recall the reasoning, but pointed out that although the National Council were to be consulted on above inflation subs increases, the decision was up to the Board.

10. Coastguard callouts

There was nothing to report on this – James then showed an extract from one of the “Sea-cliff climbing essentials” BMC TV films. Many of the people at the meeting were not aware of the films. Once again frustration was expressed at the quality of the BMC website and that although there are many useful resources on the site, they are far from obvious or easy to find and not very well publicised.

11. Incident reporting update

Nothing further to report.

12. Access and any local issues

- a. Ebbor Gorge – Mark Courtiour reported on the recent access agreement – climbing is allowed on one buttress which has a number of sports routes on it. It is hoped that more access will be allowed in future. Details to be found on the RAD.
- b. Cheddar – Mark reported that all is well here and reminded everyone of the importance of sticking to the terms of the access agreement, particularly not climbing before 6pm in those areas where climbing is allowed after 6pm. Again full details are on the RAD.

c. Durnford Quarry – Colin Knowles has sent in the following report:
Following discussion with the Parks Area Manager (Tom Penn) about Durnford Quarry (51°26'21.94" N 2°39'45.71" W) where the north face is of possible interest as a sport climbing venue, Tom and I have agreed that the following is accurate:

"Durnford Quarry lies within Ashton Court. This land is owned by Bristol City Council (BCC) bristol.gov.uk/museums-parks-sports-culture/ashton-court-estate. Quarrying has taken place at this site since 1880.

BCC leased the land to Tarmac to allow for mineral extraction (limestone) tarmac.com/durnford-quarry. At that time the lease was subject to a Planning Control which specified that at the end of the lease Tarmac must have backfilled the quarry.

In 2016 Tarmac renewed the lease for a further 25 years. The Planning Control remains unchanged.

Today it is recognised that quarries such as this one at the end of their life can provide outdoor leisure opportunities such as rock climbing, abseiling, mountain biking, zip-wiring, diving. Such a development at Durnford Quarry would be consistent with BCC policies, and might support the BCC Parks Department requirement to develop revenue streams from BCC-owned land.

To change the end of life status of the quarry to one suitable for leisure it would be necessary to:

- a) obtain the agreement of the lease (Tarmac);
- b) put through a replacement Planning Control; and
- c) obtain the support and consent of the lessor (BCC).

The British Mountaineering Council thebmc.co.uk/, the body recognised by Sport England as responsible for rock climbing, notes that there is a strong demand for good quality sports climbing venues in the Bristol area as the popularity of sports climbing continues to increase. It is possible that a section of Durnford Quarry might be suitable for sports climbing."

The next obvious thing to do would be to undertake a physical survey of the site to determine if in fact it would be suitable for Sports Climbing. This would entail gaining permission from the Tarmac Area Manager. On our side is the implicit agreement of BCC Parks that this would be a worthwhile investigation. If the Area Manager was disinclined to give permission then permission would have to be sought from higher up. So maybe it would be best to start from higher up?

d. Hound Tor – Dave Henderson sent in the following report:
The owners of Hound Tor have expressed concern about school and commercial group use of the crag. This has come about for two reasons:

Firstly, the owners' insurers have advised them that they will not be covered for unauthorised group use; the owners believe that a majority of group users have not been asking permission to use the tor.

Secondly, the owners consider the venue is becoming over-used by groups and this has caused problems with erosion.

I have been in touch with the main contact representing the owners and also Rob Dyer at the BMC and we're currently putting together a plan. The liability issue seems to be a grey area as the land is 'Open Access' and the groups are predominantly 'educational' but we're attempting to clarify this. Rob has contacted the National Park and is awaiting further information from them.

The insurance issue does not concern recreational climbers.

In the meantime, the only action to take is to remind group users to ask permission to use the tor.

It was pointed out that the Tor is on access land.

- e. Chudleigh – climbers should be aware that there is a large loose block on “Tar Baby”.

13. Club Issues

Philip summarised what the club committee was doing. Trace said that as a member of the Wessex M.C. committee she was not aware of the club committee's work – Philip said he had contact details for two members of all SW clubs but these may well be out of date.

14. Hill Walking Issues

Tony spoke of the H2O initiative. It was agreed that we should organise a litter-pick / clean up at Long Quarry Point on the day of the next area meeting Saturday 8th June

15. AOB

16. Date of next meeting

Saturday 8th June 7pm at the Quay unless we can find a suitable venue close to the Long Quarry Point clean-up.