

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA MEETING

Meeting held at The Old Kings Head, London
On Thursday 21st March 2019 at 7.00pm.

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies for absence - Attendance numbers 25 (9 women 16 men) (see attached list of attendees)

Chaired Chris Stone (CS) Minutes taken by Robert Dufton (RD)
Apologies – Rya Tibawi

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular first time attenders.

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 24th January 2019

The minutes of the meeting on 24th January 2019 were approved. 10 For, 0 Against, 6 Abstained.

3. AGM

3.1. AGM Weekend Programme

CS outlined the highlights of the AGM weekend programme. He particularly encouraged members who were representatives of clubs to attend the workshop on relationships between the BMC and Clubs which was being held as part of the Organisational Development Group work.

3.2. Details of resolutions

3.2.1. New Articles

- 3.2.1.1. CS outlined the response from National Council to the issue which the L&SE Area had requested at its last meeting be raised with NC concerning payment to volunteer board members. Legal advice given to the BMC was that it was better not to have a blanket ban and instead to specify the circumstances in which payments could exceptionally be made. There would also be a requirement that before any payments were agreed, a special procurement review would be undertaken under a policy to be adopted. Jonathan White (JW) questioned whether payments should ever be made and queried whether the policy was yet agreed. CS offered to find out and forward a copy to JW. Rik Payne (as a board member) explained that there were circumstances in which payments to board members might be in the BMC's interest. CS clarified that the proposed Articles would be put to the AGM as a whole rather than separate decisions being taken on specific provisions in the proposed Articles.
- 3.2.1.2. JW questioned the proposed threshold for members to put forward a resolution. The proposal is 0.5% of members or 25 members could invite National Council to consider an issue who can then take the decision to raise it as a resolution. RP explained that a percentage threshold ensured (a) meant that this would keep up with future growth in the overall BMC membership and (b) ensure that the BMC was not put to the expense (which could be c. £10k) at the behest of a very small number of members. However the opportunity still existed for a small number (25) to raise an issue with National Council which existed to represent members who could then require the Board to respond to an issue.
- 3.2.1.3. CS explained that contrary to the understanding which had been presented at the last L&SE Area meeting, it was now proposed that the increase in the annual membership fee of £6 would apply to all members (rather than being discounted by 50% for club members). CS reminded the meeting that a substantial part of the increase was to rebuild the reserves following a forecasted large deficit this year caused by an increased insurance premium payable by the BMC (which was a consequence of a substantial claim on the policy by a member who had been seriously injured as a result of an incident involving another member). CS presented information from the BMC showing the cost of membership

compared with that of other national sports clubs. JW, speaking on behalf of another member who was not able to attend the meeting said that the table was not a fair comparison as the benefits of membership differed. Tony Williams suggested that better communication of the circumstances of the incident in which the member had been injured would be helpful in understanding the background. JW endorsed this, pointing to how anonymous safety incident reviews were circulated promptly in the construction industry to ensure that lessons could be promptly learnt for wider benefit. TW explained that a full £6 increase applied to all members meant that the BMC would have a net increase in annual income after meeting the higher insurance premiums of c£250k. It was not clear how the BMC intended to use this additional resource. He questioned how the National Council would hold the Board to account for higher spending. Sherry Macliver (SM) regretted that this would mean an end to a principle that club membership was 50% of the cost of individual membership, though Vic Odell (VO) suggested that this had not always been the case. JW questioned whether the Board had fully thought through the implications for recruitment of student club members if the proposed membership fee was higher than the maximum fee which some universities/student unions mandated could be charged for membership of a club/society in their university. A member asked about future growth in the BMC membership because of an assumed 2020 Olympics effect. RP confirmed that the BMC would be targeting membership growth because of it.

3.2.2. Voting Process

- 3.2.2.1. CS outlined the voting process. Members should already have received an email from the Electoral Reform Society inviting members who were not planning to attend the AGM (or who did not wish to vote in person there) to vote by proxy. This could be the President or another member who was attending, e.g. CS or Robert Dufton (RD). If members had not received the email from the ERS then they were asked to contact the BMC office (kate@thebmc.co.uk)

4. National Council

4.1. Report from last meeting

- 4.1.1. A considerable part of the meeting had been to discuss the draft Articles.
- 4.1.2. Lynn Robinson, chair of National Council, had expressed their regret that two questions in the survey of members (referring to transgender people/sexuality) had been inappropriately phrased. Any offence was regretted. The wording of the draft survey had been reviewed by Sport England. Lynn Robinson will be publishing an apology on behalf of the BMC on the website.
- 4.1.3. National Council discussed the proposal of electing a deputy president and it has been deferred to a future meeting. In the interim a deputy chair of National Council will be appointed.

- 4.2. Matters to take to National Council – CS explained as no National Council meeting would be held this month, any matters which had been raised in the meeting would instead be taken by RP and CS to the workshop which NC members would have at the AGM weekend.

- 4.3. CS explained that RP would be stepping down as a representative of the L&SE Area on National Council with effect from the conclusion of the AGM on 31 March 2019. CS thanked RP for his service in the role (and that of Lisa Payne too). The proposed new Articles contained a provision whereby the chair of an area could co-opt a member to serve as a National Council representative until the next AGM. CS said that RD had expressed an interest in being co-opted. CS invited anyone who was also interested to contact him. Assuming there was no other interest then, assuming the Articles passed then CS intended to co-opt RD with effect from 1 April to serve until the next Area AGM.

[Post meeting update: In accordance with the Articles of Association adopted on 31st March 2019, Chris Stone will seek agreement from National Council to co-opt Robert Dufton to fulfil the vacancy of National Council Representative for the London & South East Area until the next area AGM.]

5. Update from Southern Sandstone

- 5.1. CS advised members that main gates of the car park at Harrisons were now locked from dusk to dawn in response to anti-social behaviour
- 5.2. CS reported that Michael Phelan, one of the members of the Harrisons Rocks group, had produced a draft management plan for Stone Farms Rocks, the other sandstone site owned by the BMC which has been well received by Natural England.
- 5.3. Members of the Harrison's Rocks Management Group have been doing a lot of clearance work lately, making a start before all the plants start to grow wild in the spring. The areas include Wonderful area left and right, Crucifix wall and Birch Tree wall left. These areas are a little further left of the unclimbed wall area, which is incredibly popular. By clearing these areas and bolting where needed, it will

hopefully encourage climbers to spread out along the crag. There is no doubt unclimbed wall has some very good routes, but there are some very good routes in these cleared areas as well.

- 5.4. An open meeting of the Southern Sandstone group would be held on Sunday 19 May 2019 (normally meetings were held at c. 18.30 or 19.00). Further details would be posted on the L&SE website page.

6. Reports from Area Representatives

6.1 **Clubs** SM had nothing additional to report

6.2 **Hillwalking** CS mentioned the Glover review of National Parks and AONBs. BMC was responding. The Mend our Mountains campaign was about to close. Grants were being made for works in the New Forest and South Downs National Parks, benefitting outdoor activities in the L&SE area. CS said that there would be a walk on Saturday 11th May 2019 meeting at Eastbourne for a walk to Birling Gap and Beachy Head.

6.3 **Youth**- no update.

7. AOB

- 7.1. Members present asked for clarification of the impact of Brexit on the separate travel insurance. A member suggested that the BMC was using the phrase "UK resident" in the insurance proposal form in an ambiguous way: it had a precise legal meaning, but it seemed likely that the BMC merely intended "having a UK address". CS advised any members concerned about cover to contact the BMC office and agreed that communication needed to be clear.
- 7.2. CS drew attention to a new BMC national campaign Hills 2 Oceans targeting the impact of plastic on the environment. The aim of the campaign to remove litter from mountains and crags to stop it getting in to the oceans. He was proposing that there should be a litter pick-up event in the area in the summer and invited members to suggest appropriate countryside locations which could benefit from this.
- 7.3. CS mentioned that an area member, Jonathan White, was standing for election to the BMC board at the AGM and invited JW to say a few words. JW explained that he was standing for the post of member with experience and interest in clubs, and outlined his past experience and BMC roles. There were two candidates for the post who had been selected by the nominations committee from a long list.
- 7.4. CS said RD and he believed that given the considerable progress which was being made with the ODG process and the work on the Articles, it would be appropriate to ensure that future area meetings allocated more time to discussing the issues which members wanted to engage with. He planned to use a workshop style for these future discussions. The topics could build on the forthcoming views from the BMC workshop on engaging with members, including engagement via social media.

8. Date and location of next Area Meeting

Thursday 6th June 2019, 7.00pm at the Old Kings Head, followed by guest speaker Nick Colton

After the meeting, there was a raffle for a finger board generously donated by Entre-Prises. The raffle was won by Joanna Froy.

Olie Hunter Smart, the adventurer and photographer (<http://www.oliehuntersmart.com>) gave a presentation about his 2017 journey in India. He had walked the length of the country over 8 months, partly to investigate the stories of people affected by the migration caused by the 1947 partition.

Minutes written by Robert Dufton

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List of Attendees

Robert Dufton	Not So Trad and Climbers Club
Sophie Hewett	Individual member
Catriona Mitchell	Ibex Mountaineering Club
Jonathan Albert	Individual member
Vic Odell	Climbers Club
Thomas Wheelock	Surbiton and Kingston Mountaineering Club
Sherry Macliver	Alpine Club
Jonathan White	Alpine Club and Individual member
Kieron Desmond	North London Mountaineering Club, HMC and Individual member
Rik Payne	Individual member
Jacquetta Morris	Individual member
Robert Ainsworth	Individual member
Tony Williams	London Mountaineering Club and Climbers Club
Daisy Box	Individual member
Fabrizio Scaglione	Individual member
Katherine Mason	Individual member
Neil Raitt	Individual member
Simone Tagliaro	Individual member
Joanna Froy	Individual member
Balandivo Di Donato	Individual member
Mike Lawrence	Individual member
Rosemary Scott	Fell & Rock Climbing Club
Elizabeth Tocknell	Individual member
Rachel Tocknell	Individual member
Paul Kaye	Individual member
Chris Stone	Individual member