

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of The Peak Area Meeting Wednesday 20th March, The Maynard, Grindleford

Present:

Rob Greenwood (Chair)	Becky Hammond (Secretary)	John Cook
Ed Douglas (Alpine Club)	Lynn Robinson (BMC President)	Steve Clark
Dave Garnett (MAM)	Spenser Gray (Oread MC)	Martin Kocsis
Graeme Hammond	Chris Radcliffe (Oread MC)	Colin Nave
Kym West	Paul Sanderson (Rucksack Club)	Neil Foster (FRCC)
Richard Waltham	Austin Knott (area hillwalking rep)	Duncan Campbell
Kevin Noon	Michael Smith (Yorkshire Ramblers Club)	Judith Brown (Peak CC)
Simon Lee (UK Bouldering)	David Brown (national council rep / Peak CC)	Frag Last
George Taylor	Alan Smith (Buxton MC)	Thomas Dunne
Pete Tapping	Robert Townsend (The Mountain Club, Stafford)	Danielle Hoyle
Martin Wass	Louise Hawson (area access rep / Peak CC)	Rob Dyer (BMC officer)
Kim Leyland	Henry Folkard (area access rep)	Marie Richards
Geoff Nichols (Castle MC)	Jo Jennings (Castle MC / Peak CC)	Mike Cheque
Saffra Wright (Buxton MC)	Peter Judd (area hillwalking rep)	Andy Reeve
Gill Radcliffe (Derwent MC)	Adam Long (area access rep)	Jenny Wass
Spence Ramsey		46 members signed in

Non-members in attendance

Andrew Bainbridge (Sheffield Hallam Climbing)	Colin Brown (Scottish Mountaineering Club)
Mike Price (Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group)	Alice Reavey
Emma Price (Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group)	Emerson Buckingham (Derbyshire Constabulary)
Danny Udall (Eastern Moors Partnership)	Mark Thomas & colleague (RSPB Investigations Team)

1. Apologies:

Tim Grice, Emma Holland, Clare Reading, Glynis Judd, Alison Cairns (national council rep)

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Agreed as correct.

3. Actions from previous meetings

- Millsom memorial plaque* – Andy Reeve has emailed the family but not yet had a response.
- Running Hill Pits notice to clarify access* – Sue Smith at PDNPA is working on this.

4. Wildlife and rural crime

Emerson Buckingham introduced himself. He is one of 32 part-time Wildlife Crime Officers with Derbyshire Constabulary. They deal with anything from plants to birds of prey and everything in-between. They also deal with CITES (Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species) eg ivory.

Mark Thomas is head of the RSPB investigations team. They are a team of approx. 12 people, and they are purely civilian. They use a lot of covert techniques to gather evidence which can be then be passed on to the police and presented in court. He explained that raptor persecution is a big issue. The team has to be focussed on conservation, consequently issues such as raptors will take priority over finches (for example). Nesting and breeding conservation are important.

Emerson brought along a selection of legal and illegal animal traps.

Gin traps are illegal – they have teeth which grab an animal's leg.

Fenn traps are legal – they look a bit like a big mouse trap and come in various sizes. They must be set appropriately for their intended quarry (ie correct location) and must be checked at least every 24 hours. It's

good practice to place them in some sort of cage or tunnel appropriate to the intended quarry. It is difficult to prosecute illegal setting of Fenn traps, because there are no specific requirements. Sometimes Fenn traps are placed on top of poles/fenceposts to catch birds of prey: this is illegal. If you see one like this you should take a photo of it, disarm it safely (using a stick) and inform the police. The RSPB are concerned that Fenn traps have caught various birds and may catch Ring Ouzels.

Mole traps are legal to be used anywhere.

Free-running snares are legal. Self-locking snares are illegal. The difference is in the way the wire is threaded through the eyes. If free-running snares get rusty and stop free-running then they become illegal. Again they should be set of their intended quarry – ie about 9 inches off the ground (to catch foxes and rabbits). Snares set with lower to the ground are illegal, because they will capture badgers etc.

It is illegal to destroy legal snares (criminal damage).

Snares sites are usually traditional, and you will often find several snares in an area around a stink pit.

If you think a snare is illegal, take photos of it and inform the police who will check it and deal with it.

Snares may injure fell-runners, however they aren't marked by signs because they will inevitably be damaged. Injury to fell-runners etc would be a civil matter. There is a conflict between the use of snares/traps and open access under CRoW.

Finch traps are used more commonly in the lowlands. They are illegal. They are small rectangular cages designed to capture small birds, usually placed near a bird feeder.

Magnum (body grip) traps are legal but uncommon.

If a grey squirrel is captured it must be killed – it is illegal to release grey squirrels into the wild. However it is illegal to allow any animal to suffer in a trap (Animal Welfare Act applies to any animal that is domesticated or under the temporary control of man).

Rural access disputes are usually a civil rather than police matter.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act gives different degrees of protection to different birds. All birds have protection to some degree. The lists probably need reviewing, eg Short Eared Owls should be added to Schedule 1.

It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a Schedule 1 bird at, on or near the nest. So if you accidentally disturb a bird whilst climbing, leave the site immediately. But if you continued climbing that would become illegal.

The RSPB use CCTV to monitor the nests of Schedule 1 birds.

The Derbyshire Constabulary Rural Crime team has 9 full time officers. They deal with things such as agricultural machinery thefts etc. Car break-ins aren't a specifically "rural" crime.

Badgers are fully protected in law – Badgers Act 1992.

Bat roosts are protected even when not in use.

RSPB find that Derbyshire Constabulary are helpful with monitoring and protecting raptors. The issues occur when the birds travel out of the DC area, because other police forces are not as good. In 2018 11 out of 37 tagged/tracked Hen Harriers disappeared. 10 out of the 11 disappeared over grouse moors in the northern Peak District.

Covert monitoring by police has to comply with RIPA. The RSPB work to RIPA standards (monitoring nests/traps, not houses/cars) but deliberately don't inform the police until after the evidence has been gathered.

Peregrines are doing well in the White Peak, but in the Dark Peak they don't produce any young (monitoring suggests that they're being deliberately taken out).

Maximum punishment for Schedule 1 bird crime is £5000 fine and/or 6 month prison sentence. Legal costs of gamekeepers operating illegally are often met by their employers. Removing firearms licenses can be effective.

Egg theft has consequences all over, due to international trade.

How can we help?

If you see something suspicious or out of the ordinary – report it to police via 101 (ask for Wildlife Crime Officer).

If crime in progress, call 999. If it's a bird offence, also inform RSPB.

Photos / video footage are important.

5. Access updates

Also see the latest edition of the Peak Area Newsletter.

Moorland tracks for shooting

Midhope Moor and Rushy Dlat Dike: PDNPA planning refused permission for both. They are both going to public inquiries.

Foulstone Delph a track is forming and being infilled with stone.

Foulstone to Cut Gate – stone dumped in track. A PDNPA have issued a stop order.

Winnats Pass Kinder anniversary event 27th April

Lynn Robinson will be speaking, alongside the director-general of the National Trust and others.

There has been a useful meeting between the National Trust and Mountaineering Instructors Association.

Staden Quarry has been sold to Nestle, apparently to protect the water supply rather than for building on.

Stanage – parking charges at Hollin Bank (Plantation) have increased but not currently being enforced.

When enforced, it will be the same as in Hathersage village.

Stanage Forum open meeting will be held in October.

Heritage Open Day in September at North Lees Hall.

PDNPA are commissioning a review of the buildt estate (North Lees Hall, Cattiside Cottage, toilets, campsite, etc). The BMC will ensure that the core principles are communicated.

Gardoms Edge

Some unauthorised tree felling has been carried out recently, mainly around Apple Buttress plus further right in a grotty quarried area. It's thought not to have been climbers: the selection of trees has been rather odd as it hasn't particularly benefited the crag or climbers, and enquires amongst climbers have drawn a blank. An oak at the top of Apple Buttress has been removed, plus trees below the line of the path beneath the crag. Some of the stumps have been left rather high, and the arisings left piled in strange places (eg in the gully/route the the left of Apple Buttress). It has opened up the crag to people viewing it from a distance, so it does look pretty.

New signs on the gate indicate that the estate have noticed that the work has taken place and it is not permitted.

Baslow Edge cattle - Danny Udall reported that the National Trust & RSPB are working with the tenant on how to maintain public safety. There were various options, but the farmer has chosen to remove the cattle. Contrary to rumour, nobody has kicked a cow.

Ring Ouzels – Kim Leyland has got loads of volunteers, and doesn't need any more for this season. You can report Ring Ouzel sitings on Moors for the Future's MoorWild app or via their website.

6. Hillwalking

Peter & Austin will be leading a walk at the AGM weekend – Saturday 30th March 10.15am from Buxton Station, 10 miles.

The AGM will also include a session on the BMC's Vision & Strategy (9.30-11am on Sunday 31st March).

Mend Our Mountains – the Cut Gate project is pretty close to full funding, and they're looking at contractors. Great Ridge was the project with the biggest target, and has done well but only approx. two-thirds funded (but there's still time).

ShAFF – Saturday 23rd March 6.30-7.30pm celebration of Mend Our Mountains and launch of the Hills to Oceans (H2O) campaign for getting litter off the hills. Free event but need to register.

Pick and Play run by Peak Mountaineering. Sunday 12th May. Collect litter and participate in some activities as a reward. Over 140 people participated last year.

Hillwalking Implementation Group still making progress and recently had a useful discussion with Mountain Training UK.

7. Mend our Mountains

Covered under hillwalking

8. 70th Anniversary of the National Parks & Countryside Act – event in Winnats Pass 27th April

Covered under Access

9. National Council report

See written summary from David Brown (attached)

David highlighted the proposed increase in subscriptions, as the amounts proposed are different to those discussed at the last area meeting.

Richard Wilson, former treasurer of the Mynydd Club, expressed dissatisfaction at the significant impact it would have on smaller clubs and his view that this would lead to clubs disaffiliating. This had been discussed at the previous area meeting so was not extensively covered again.

Neil Foster expressed his view that if any club feels the need to disaffiliate then if members were full informed of the benefits of BMC affiliation then they might change their minds.

It was noted that the insurance claim that has significantly contributed to the need for a subscriptions rise is a live case.

There was some talk of the idea of a recruitment campaign.

Further to discussion at the previous area meeting, two members of National Council will have places on the Finance and Audit Committee

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

Rob Dyer had nothing to add that hasn't already been discussed.

12. Peak Area Newsletter

March 2019 edition available at <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/peak-area-newsletter-march-2019>

Contributions always welcome. Please email articles and photos to peakarea@gmail.com.

Deadline for contributions I usually a couple of week before the next meeting.

13. Any other business

None

14. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Wednesday 12th June 2019, 7.30pm at The Maynard Arms, Grindleford, S32 2HE.

The meeting was followed by a very interesting presentation from Mark Thomas, RSPB Investigations team.

BMC – National Council Meeting Summary

Saturday 9 February 2019 at The Beaufort Hotel, Chepstow

Another long full day meeting attended by Gareth Pierce, Chair of the Board of Directors for the first time.

- **2019 BMC AGM** – Sunday 31 March 2019 at 12 noon (at Buxton). **PLEASE ATTEND – OR AT LEAST VOTE**
- **Subscriptions 2020** – Subscription increases above inflation are a Reserved Matter and the Board have to consult with National Council before the Membership is asked to vote at the AGM. An updated paper (from that previously considered by Areas) was discussed in great detail: in a series of votes NC overwhelmingly supported:
 - Uniform increases of £6 per head for both Individual and Club Members.
 - Implementation of increases at the earliest possible time; 1 May 2019 for Individual Members, 1 October 2019 for Student Club Members, 1 January 2020 for Club Members.
 - Implementation of campaign to recruit new members to offset any potential non-renewal.
- **National Council Nominated Directors** – Rik Payne (formerly of L&SE) is stepping down from the Board and, following a closed ballot, Fiona Sanders (Lakes) will be recommended at the AGM.
- **75th Anniversary in 2019** – starts at SHAFF followed by Keswick then Kendal.
- **Travel Insurance** – Howden's, the BMC's Insurance Broker, are not particularly concerned at the effect of Brexit.
- **Organisational Development Group** - A lot more discussion on ODG issues, including the Terms of Reference for the Board and the Interim National Council, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and National Council and some relatively minor changes to the Articles of Association. There was also a discussion on Partnerships and Clubs
- **Deputy President** – There will be temporary arrangement to provide Lynn's little helper.
- **Demise of the position of Treasurer** – After some discussion, the Chairman said that the Board would consider the effect of the demise of the position of Treasurer, and proposals would be brought forward for two National Councillors to sit on the Finance and Audit Committee such that National Council could see the finances and not just be told about them.
- **Reports** – (Selective)
 - North Wales:** Ogwen Valley parking problems are being considered by Transport for Wales and efforts are being made to ensure access for climbers and walkers is not reduced.
 - South Wales:** Llandarcy quarry (close to Swansea) is being developed and the Developers are keen to permit climbing if an appropriate liability agreement can be agreed.
 - Lakes:** Discussions have taken place with Fix the Fells about how the BMC can support/influence their work. Increasing visitor traffic and a lack of Park & Ride schemes is becoming problematic and the Area would like other Areas to share their experiences. 2019 is the Year of Green Action, and the current review of National Parks and AONBs is an opportunity for the BMC to lobby and influence.
 - Midlands:** Concern was again expressed at the lack of progress on implementing the Hill Walking Strategy. The need for more help with the Youth Climbing Series was raised and appears to affect several Areas, partly because YCS and BMC Areas are not necessarily co-incident.
 - North East:** A change in entry deadlines for YCS events has caused a lot of discontent: despite request no one from HO attended the meeting but apparently lessons have been learned.
 - North West:** A very constructive separate open Meeting was held to discuss various access problems which apparently have a 3 year backlog of issues.
 - South West:** Another Area commenting on operational issues concerning YCS. The late changes to the bird restrictions on Lundy have been taken up by the Access Team resulting in an amicable solution.

Board of Directors: An additional Board Meeting was held in January. It was agreed to proceed with the appointment of the Nominated Director positions and that a Welsh language policy should be developed. On-going discussions on the ODG Work streams and an acceptance of the need for strong communication of financial information between the Board and NC.

President: More travels in her sabbatical year!

CEO and Office: Resources are a continuing problem but the appointment of a Governance & Compliance Officer will enable some staff to focus more on their own work areas. The agreement of Vision, Mission and Values Statement need to be accelerated to enable new strategic and business plans to be developed to help make the office work more productively.

Finance: Year-end surplus is likely to be about £46k but the forecast deficit for 2019 is in the range £140-249k.

David Brown

BMC Peak Area Representative on National Council

The full Minutes, all 17 pages, can be downloaded from the BMC Web-site:

<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-national-council-minutes>