

BMC South West Area Meeting

Meeting held on Saturday 7 September 2019
at The Quay Climbing Centre, Exeter EX2 8AX starting at 7:00pm

MINUTES

Present and signed in:

James Mann (Chair, Plymouth), Mark Kemball (Secretary, Bude), Philip Wilson (National Council, Bristol), Helen Wilson (National Council, Bristol), Mark Garland (North Devon), Ian Butterworth (Frome, Somerset), Mark Courtiour (Cheddar, Somerset), Mac Graham (Torbay, Devon), Kieran Ryan (Devon, Caving, DCVC), Lisa Allwood (Plymouth, SDMC), Ray Allwood (Plymouth, SDMC), Trevor Smith (Plymouth, SDMC), Colin Knowles (Bristol), Peter Salenieks (Cotswolds), Mike Virtue (Exeter), Henry Forrester (Plymouth), Gavin Atkins (Exeter).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

James welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were received from Marti Hallet, Tony Bird, Iain Peters, Pete Callaghan and Simon Fletcher.

2. Previous meeting's minutes and any matters arising

Colin reported that Simon Fletcher and Dan Donovan had been to Lundy to help ringing peregrines. There was some discussion of the "Accident and Near Miss Reporting Scheme" – how will the data be analysed once we have a large data set so that lessons may be learnt? Trevor suggested that it might be a good idea to involve one of the universities which specialise in sport / outdoor activities as a possible undergraduate or graduate project. It was asked if climbing wall incidents are included, we did not know, but Henry and Gavin explained that the ABC has a separate incident reporting system, but that this is not available for the public to view the data.

3. Clubs Committee Rep

We have not yet found a replacement for Philip Wilson, he will continue in the role until someone else is found.

4. West Cornwall Access Rep

Mark had contacted Dave Hope, he is willing to take on the role as an informal contact with the understanding that because of his work he may not be able to attend meetings.

5. Area Youth Co-ordinator's report

Henry, who helped Julian run the last SW YCS series, reported that, following suggestions based on last year's competition, the SW has now been split into 2 regions (North – Gloucester, Wilts and Somerset) and South (Cornwall, Devon and Dorset). Also, the walls are now being paid a blanket fee to run the comp regardless of the number of competitors and they are being paid for up to 6 belayers for the roped competitions.

6. BMC Youth Meet at the Count House

James announced that the BMC is running a youth meet at the Count House (19-21 October, the first weekend of Devon's half term). Suitably competent and experienced volunteers to help with this would be welcome.

7. BMC area briefing notes – James summarised the briefing notes.

8. Feedback from National Council and Organisational Development Group Update

Helen spoke about the progress on this and urged everyone to give feedback on it via the BMC website.

9. BMC Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024

This was discussed and two points were raised: it is not clear what the success criteria will be and also although digital strategies are included; it is not clear that the BMC website will be properly sorted out – this has long been a source of complaints at area meetings and National Council.

10. Coastguard callouts

There have been 2 callouts in the Bosigran area: in one, the coastguard struggled to reach the base of Bosigran main cliff, needing the help of climbers and were clearly unhappy operating there; in the second, they were unable to access the base of Bosigran Ridge even though it was a calm sea, the casualty eventually was taken out by helicopter. The worry is that with this level of incompetence, sooner or later someone will die who should have been saved. In a separate incident on the North Coast, 2 climbers retreated by abseil from their high point to a ledge above the sea to wait for the tide to drop. Members of the public, observing this from the coast path called out the coastguard. On realising this was happening, the climbers phoned through to a relative who contacted the coastguard telling them there was no need of a rescue, however, a helicopter eventually arrived and the climbers told the winchman they did not need rescuing. This was reported in the local press.

11. Crag clean-up

Roche Rock was suggested as a suitable place for a clean-up – we agreed to hold this sometime in winter when the vegetation has died back.

12. Access and any local issues

- a. Avon Gorge road consultation – Colin spoke to the meeting about the consultation. Some of the options are likely to have an adverse effect on climbing in the Suspension Bridge Buttress area. As Colin knows the area well and comments have to be in shortly, he will prepare a response.
- b. Ash Hole Cavern – Kieran said that concerns had been raised about this venue. We should note that it is a scheduled ancient monument and re-equipping it would be illegal.
- c. Cheddar – Mark Courtiour reported that Longleat have agreed to continue the extended access arrangements. This is because climbers have (by and large) stuck to the terms of the arrangement this year.

13. Club Issues – none.

14. Hill Walking Issues – none.

15. AOB

We pointed out that at the next Area AGM, James (chair), Mark K (secretary) and Helen (National Council) will have completed 3 years in those roles, although under the present rules they can carry on for another 3 years, if anyone wants to take over...

16. Date of next meeting

Saturday 23 November 2019 at "The Quay", starting at 5pm.
Note: this is also the Area AGM.