



## Cyfarfod - BMC Cymru North/Gogledd - Meeting Pen y Pass

3 September 2019

### Minutes

1. **Croeso – Welcome.** 31 members present, including Tim Jepson TJ (Area Chair), Elfyn Jones EJ (BMC A&C Officer for Wales), Dave Turnbull DT (BMC CEO), and two junior-family members.

TJ explained the reasons for the order of the agenda items.

2. **Ymddiheuriadau – Apologies**

Bonny Masson, Chris Lloyd, Steve Hobdell, Mike Pycroft, Geoff Bennett, Martin Doyle, Ross Worthington.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting.** 4 June 2019, Bragdy Conwy.

a. There were no **Corrections**

b. **Matters Arising:**

**Cynllun Iaith Cymraeg.** EJ hoped to get someone from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office to address the Board in the near future.

**Waymarking for Ultra Events.** MR and EJ have concluded that a conference is not a good way forward.

**Descent from Idwal Slabs.** EJ has spoken to Cliff Rhys Matthews who recognises the sensitivity of the issue.

**Options Paper.** All-Wales tele-conferences are now arranged, and matters are moving forward.

**Parking in Snowdonia.** (from a previous meeting minutes) The SNPA has announced the 'commission of a study' into the issues of parking in the Snowdon area, to be headed by Catrin Glyn in the Snowdon Partnership Office. BMC Cymru is not a member of the Partneriaeth Yr Wyddfa.

**Action:** Invite a Partnership Officer to the next meeting to ensure a dialogue with BMC Cymru on the issue.

4. **Additional agenda items for AOB** None

5. **Reports:**

**Eisteddfod.** EJ and Myfyr Tomas reported a successful celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Clwb Mynydda Cymru, and the stand on 'Y Maes', shared with BMC, Partneriaeth Awyr Agored and Mountain Training Cymru had worked well.

**National Council.** Reps. Indicated that NC business could be covered under existing agenda items.

**Other Reps.** Simon Paton had provided a report for the newsletter. (Thank you, Simon.) No other reports were presented.

## 6. Access and Conservation – EJ – Mynediad a Chadwraeth

Elfyn was thanked for his excellent, detailed and informative notes, published in the Newsletter

- i. The huge loose blocks and pinnacle on **Shadrach** (Tremadog) have now been 'removed', the area cleaned up and warning signs taken away.
- ii. RSPB is now charging for **parking at S Stack**. Climbers are encouraged to mitigate the costs by joining RSPB, sharing transport and/or using public transport.
- iii. New restrictions on Gower to protect **nesting swifts** may be a sign of changing times. Diminishing habitats and a warming climate will result in the need to protect different species at different venues.
- iv. The unnegotiated re-development of crags by local climbers at **Cefn Coed** (nr. Merthyr Tydfil) has been insensitive, probably illegal and detrimental to the careful work of our BMC Access and Conservation Officer in Wales. Ill-considered development and excessive gardening of crags, without reference to landowners or environmental best practice (of which there have also been examples in N Wales) is behaviour that must be questioned and challenged.
- v. The **Snowdon Live** weather site has not been well-advertised by SNPA, but has had many 'hits' via the BMC website. The site may not be able to operate throughout the winter due to icing and reduced battery-life.
- vi. **Access Reforms** in Wales are moving forward towards the implementation phase. EJ will support the BMC's interests throughout this period, with particular attention given to access to Welsh coasts and cliffs, and to the multi-use of paths by walkers, bikes and horses.
- vii. DT confirmed that Carey Davies, the BMC's dedicated **Hillwalking Officer**, has now left his post and will not be replaced. Carey's work will be absorbed into other aspects of the BMC's work.
- viii. The biennial **Access and Conservation Conference** will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> November in Manchester, with the theme of 'Challenging Behaviours', exploring ways in which climbers and hillwalkers can act more sustainably in future. This could be an uncomfortable conference for some members!
- ix. DT informed the meeting that the BMC aimed to become plastic-free next year, and is discussing whether or not to declare a 'climate emergency'. Surveys have indicated that the impacts of climatic/environmental change are high priority concerns amongst members.

## 7. BMC Business:

**All-Wales Developments.** Neal Hockley reiterated and summarised the on-going discussions related to a future, enhanced presence for BMC Cymru in Wales. The Board now requires BMC Cymru to present a 'high-level' document laying out BMC Cymru's preferred options, with cost-benefit analyses, plus evidence of models adopted by similar organisations. Neal felt that such a document could be produced quite quickly, from the work already done, and would necessarily focus on the bottom-line need for an officer, based part-time in Cardiff, able to monitor and influence key devolved policy issues of concern to climbers and walkers. DT warned that, if there was a financial consequence of restructuring BMC Cymru, a spending request must be submitted to the Finance and Audit Committee as soon as possible, before next year's budget plans become fixed. Before any agreement can be reached, BMC Cymru's future will need to be subject to exacting scrutiny at Board level, debate at National Council, and to a consultation survey sent to all members living in Wales ..... and potentially those resident in England, but active in Wales, too.

**Strategic Plan 2020-2024.** TJ alerted the meeting to notifications they should have received asking all members to complete a survey about the draft Strategic Plan (2020-24). He briefly introduced the

accompanying paperwork and chaired a discussion about issues that members might want to address in their responses, including:

- No explicit reference to 'increased participation' in the Mission statement. (Ray Wood)
- Little recognition of a devolved Wales anywhere in the Plan (EJ)
- The ranking of 'Sustainability' within the list of Value statements.
- Absence of the word 'Safety' in either Values or Themes.

Members felt this had been a useful insight into ways of effectively responding to the on-line survey. The area's views should also be conveyed to National Council by reps.

### **Organisational Development Group – Update**

TJ asked DT to talk to the paper produced by the ODG for this round of area meetings. The paper focuses on the recommended changes intended to improve mechanisms by which members can express their views and be better represented at all levels throughout the organisation. The paper also recognises the need to represent the interests of all climbers/hillwalkers through area events, clubs and partnerships. The ODG welcome feedback on the recommendations from members.

### **8. Chair's Correspondence.**

**Waymarking.** Although the N. Wales area is no longer planning to hold a conference on this issue, it remains a topic of wider concern, not only for the BMC, but also National Parks, County Councils and local communities (eg Llanberis). The problem is not simply waymarked routes, but the poor organisation of 'events' which leads to congestion, erosion, over-crowding and litter. We have to accept that the hills are no longer the preserve of hillfarmers and recreational walkers, but have become the setting for a huge variety of charitable activities and commercial events on an industrial scale, making use of modern technology and social media to engage huge numbers of people who have no other interest in the hills. How can the BMC best challenge this trend?

**Fixed Gear on Rock Climbs.** TJ has spent some time and effort to try to bring together key protagonists from N Wales to discuss the local use of fixed equipment on rock climbs. This had been prompted by several recent developments, including: Centre use of Barmouth Slabs; Bolting of Tyddyn Hywel quarry, Anchors at Rhoscolyn; Lower-off slings in the Moelwynion, and the forthcoming guidebook to Pen Lleyrn .... all of which have been brought to TJ's attention. However, although keen to share the principles which steer their actions, those protagonists proved reluctant to have an open debate at a BMC meeting. Nevertheless, TJ believes that there is very little difference between the various viewpoints and that if the issues were aired and understood publicly, there is the potential for N Wales to provide a model of best practice which could be used by other areas, with a strong, trad., adventure ethic, co-existing alongside quality, sustainable sports climbing, both within the same region and even on the same crag.

9. There was no **AOB**

Cyfarfodydd Nesa'

**Mis Tachwedd 19 November 2019**

Next Meetings

**The Beacon** AGM and Local Area

7.30 Food 8.00 – 10.00pm Meetings.