

MINUTES

NORTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE

Meeting

Thursday 12th Sept 2019

7.00pm. Durham Climbing Centre, Newcastle.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Mark Anstiss welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for the delayed start.

In attendance

Jon Punshon	National Council/acting secretary
Mark Anstiss	Chair / National Council
Chris Bullock	Youth
Mike Conlon	Access South
Nick Colton	Head Office – Deputy CEO
Mike Fachini	
Steve Blake	
Richard Davis	
Bob McAdam	

2. Apologies and Absence

Mark Goodings
John Herron
Franco Cookson
Jonathan White
Simon Litchfield

3. Minutes of previous Meeting

Mark Anstiss ran through the minutes from the previous meeting 30/11/2017. Accepted as fair and true. No matters arising from previous minutes.

4. Reports from National Council

MA offered copies of extensive minutes for those interested.

Last NC meeting included a discussions relating to events at the AGM, details of the draft Strategic Plan and recent proposals from the ODG.

5. BMC Strategic Plan & recent work of the Organisational Development Group (ODG)

MA outlined the ODG proposals for a reconstituted National Council (paper provided).

Discussion then ensued surrounding the proposal that **areas retain 2 NC representatives but only one vote**. The meeting felt that, should the 2 representatives disagree, then any vote that they cast should be an abstention.

The BMC Strategic Plan (2020-2024) is currently in draft form (copy available to the meeting). Nick Colton explained the process behind the development of the plan and talked the meeting through the graphic that is being used to summarise the plan.

The meeting discussed the values outlined in the plan. It was suggested that “safe practice” was not explicitly mentioned in the values and perhaps should be. Secondly, it was noted that the values make no reference to **promoting** any of the activities that the BMC oversees but the Mission Statement appears to.

6. Forthcoming events

See youth report

7. Co-ordinators reports

Access North – Steve Blake

Proposal to build a monument close to **Great Wanney** – SB attended the planning hearing. The application was refused but an appeal is likely. SB informed the meeting that a “block vote” of the type submitted by him on behalf of BMC members following an online survey, was treated as ONE VOTE by the planning authorities and that, in future, for any protest to have effect, individuals must make their own representation to the planning authority in these matters.

Vindolanda Quarry – it transpires that this small venue has recently been subjected to increased interest verging on “overload”. There were reports of 3 minibus loads of climbers arriving simultaneously.

Access South – Mike Conlon

There was a lengthy discussion following updates on access developments at two sport climbing venues close to the village of Stanhope.

Stanhope Dene, update – a retired solicitor was recruited to appeal to the church commissioners re the recent ban. There is a legal view that, since climbing activity predated the recent purchase of the quarry – then climbing should be allowed to continue. This avenue of enquiry is being further investigated. Currently the RAD indicates that climbing is not permitted at this venue.

Ashes Quarry - climbing is currently permitted and the RAD now indicates this (amber status / access sensitive).

Richard Davis (one of the principal developers of these bolting ventures) informed the meeting that there are two areas at Ashes – East and West, and that although the development of East is in its infancy, it could prove to be a good venue for group use.

It was agreed that these new developments:-

- Should not be excessively promoted
- there should be an attempt to educate users as to appropriate etiquette
- use of helmets should be encouraged because the existence of loose rock.

Nick Colton informed Richard Davis that there was arguably a potential liability issue associated with placing bolts. Richard felt that the bolting was sound but the rock may fracture in places.

Peak Scar – the estate had concerns about walkers straying near cliff edges. Repairs / replacements have been made with help from BMC and CMC.

Raven Scar – recent evidence of crag cleaning!

Camp Hill / Clemitts – climbing ban at Clemitts is still in place and there has been a request to meet with the estate to discuss this. On a CMC meet at Camp Hill discussions took place

with the gamekeeper about the Clemitts ban and he indicated that the head gamekeeper seemed reluctant to reconsider his position on the ban.

Tranmire – Bilsdale Hall at the foot of the crag is under new ownership and the new owner seems concerned about liability for climbing activities. MC has met with the new owner and explained the position re open access land and has also facilitated a meeting with the local National Park Ranger as well as providing the owner with a copy of the BMC's "Climbing and occupiers liability" document.

Clubs - Nothing to report

Steve Blake asked Nick Colton if there was any software or IT tools that might be available from the BMC to assist clubs with membership club admin. Nick will report back.

The impact of the recent £6 increase in subs were discussed. It was agreed that the impact on local clubs would be monitored.

Walls

Nothing to report

Hillwalking

Nothing to report

Youth – Chris Bullock

The NE BMC youth meet was very successful and as a result of enthusiasm generated by the meet, young NE climbers have travelled to Youth Meets in other regions. Thanks to all volunteers working with James McHaffie from BMC.

Junior British Bouldering Champs – recently held at Harrow Wall, London last June – NE attendees included some podium positions.

Scottish Youth Climbing Champs – held at Ratho this month – strong NE presence.

Future events – British Lead and Speed Champs 21st & 22nd Sept in N Wales at Beacon Centre and Euro Champs – Lead and Speed (seniors) also at Ratho 5th and 6th October.

8. AOB

None

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 28th November – 7pm. Newcastle Climbing Centre. TBC