

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Minutes of Midlands Area Meeting 4 September 2019 Old Edwardians' Sports Club, Solihull

Present: Andy Potter (Chair & Bowline Club), John Edwards (Sec & West Brom MC), Roger Fanner (SolihullMC), Andy Railton (Bowline Club), Claudia Sarner (Bowline Club), David Jones (WestBromMC), Phil Simister (SolihullMC), Jane Thompson (BMC Clubs & Volunteers Officer), Tamsin Mayberry (SolihullMC), David Sampson (Bowline Club), Rik Payne (ODG), John Street (Free@Last), Neil Currie, Kerry Elford, Matt Ramsey, Sarah Ramsey (nee Atkins), Mark Walton, Charlotte Whitmore (individual members) **(18)**

1. Welcome & Apologies: At 8.20pm Andy opened the meeting as all the climbers had had left the climbing wall in the adjoining room and were seated. He reported that Emma Twyford regretfully could not be with us tonight but invited those in attendance to sample the pizzas that were available at the side. The only apology that had been received was from Richard Law.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting:

Due to an IT failure the minutes of the last meeting had been lost and were therefore unavailable for circulation.

3. Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere: Andy asked if anybody could remember anything that should be raised but nothing was put forward by those present.

4. Reports from Area Representatives:

4.1 Access East: Andy Railton said that access at Charnwood Quarry had worsened and is now very problematic. An industrial fence has been erected across the entrance at the lower level. Access is just about possible by abseil via Nanpantan Slab. The RAD has been updated and he is trying to contact owners.

4.2 Access West: Richard Law had emailed to say he had nothing specific to report.

4.3 Climbing Walls: It was reported that although Warwick Climbing Wall had re-opened, at least one local had stopped using it. Apparently, it is more expensive to park than to climb!! However, at the moment it has the only speed wall in the West Midlands. Claudia Sarner praised the climbing wall at The Free@Last where we were meeting.

4.4 Youth: Claudia reported a change to the Youth Competition. In 2020 youngsters will be free to enter in areas where their friends are and not be restricted by their postcode. She said that, as usual, the BMC will need lots of volunteers for belaying, judging and other roles. She and others said they felt that volunteering was enjoyable and inspiring. Dates for rounds are:- 25th Jan, 8th Feb, 7th & 21st March and Finals are 25th & 26th April. Claudia mentioned there would also be some youth climbing Outdoor Meets that people could get involved in.

4.5. Hill Walking: David Jones urged members to read the 'Vision' strategy and the strategic plan in relation to hill walking and let the BMC know their views. He reported that the Hill walking group had asked the Board whether they were to be wound up or given a new remit. They were told to continue and in particular asked to organise another national hill-walking event. He said they were open to suggestions as to what sort of event would be best – a conference, a walking weekend with walks of differing difficulty or skills

development such as navigation & scrambling.

David said the Real Three Peaks Challenge clean-up had gone well and that there had been another hill cleaning exercise on the Wrekin at the last Midland meeting.

4.5. Club Issues: Andy Potter said that the group is still conscious of communication problems with affiliated groups and that items he had sent out were not being brought up at his own club's committee meetings! He and Jane had been looking into BMC insurance provision for clubs and a new 'master version' should be available soon. Several new one-day courses can now be booked via the BMC website, including ones on first aid, rescue and committee members' issues, including one in Birmingham at the start of December.

5. National Council:

5.1 Report from last meeting: Roger Fanner had attended at Plas y Brenin and he reported on some of the main points including the departure of Carey Davis to become editor of TGO and that Andy Syme is the new Deputy President.

5.2 Matters for the next Council Meeting: None were raised

6. News from HQ

The 2014-19 strategy plan is over so a new one is being produced, based on a model used by the RYA which involves reviewing to ensure it is effective. It is all high level and no detail yet but BMC need people to look at it and make their views known as once the strategy is fixed, the business and human resources plans will be produced, and reviewed, in line with the strategy. In particular is anything missing? Individuals should have had an email about this and a post has been put on the Midlands BMC Facebook page. Some in the audience felt that not enough prominence was given to BMC social media and comments were made that they rarely consulted the Area page.

Rik Payne went through the latest update from the ODG (formerly ORG): "Improving how your views are heard throughout the BMC" and the 'Key Recommendations'. If the 2 Area Representatives are only to have a single vote, there was some concern as to what might happen if they disagreed. Some strong views were expressed on the undesirability to shortlist suitably-qualified volunteers who stood for election; reducing these to 2 – 4 candidates on a ballot paper could lack transparency and might perpetuate the same old ideas being presented to the Board. No vote was taken but it appeared that the majority were not strongly opposed to these proposals,

7. Any Other Business:

Andy Potter reminded attendees that the Midlands will need to find a new National Council Representative, a new Secretary and new Club's & Climbing Walls Representatives at the next meeting.

8. Date & location of next meeting:

The next meeting & Midland Area AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2019 at Old Edwardians Sports Club, Streetsbrook Road, Solihull, B90 3PE starting at 7.30pm,

The meeting closed at 10.10pm

Written by John Edwards