

BMC Peak Area – National Council Meeting Summary Saturday 21 September 2019 at Blencathra Centre, Threlkeld

The usual full day meeting; the most relevant issues, all very abbreviated:

- **Constitutional Issues –**
 - **ORG:** Fiona Sanders (National Council Nominated Director) now ODG Chair. Limited Area feed-back on September up-date.
 - **Competitions:** 3 different governance models are still being considered; a department within the BMC with ring-fenced finances, a not-for-profit subsidiary with its own Articles and Board, and a joint subsidiary with partners. Watch this space.
 - **Wales Working Group:** there is a need to rethink how the BMC works in Wales, because policy development, finances, etc., are devolved to the Welsh Government. Four options now being considered, including a limited company with some federal relationship to the BMC – this option was not originally considered by the ORG. There was discussion on who should be formally consulted; the whole of the BMC or just ‘*Welsh*’ Members.
 - **Partnerships:** Rob Bishop is newly appointed Partnerships Manager. It was noted that the Access Management Group and the Access & Conservation Trust don’t necessarily work closely: recommended a review of their relationship.
 - **National Council Reconstitution:** planned for endorsement at the 2020 AGM. The aim of the reconstitution is to improve the Council’s representation and effectiveness without reducing its size, through innovation and changes in five key areas; 1 Culture and behaviour, 2 Meeting cycles, structure and agenda, 3 Reporting and communication, 4 Improved working practices, 5 Technology. The timely presentation of papers continues to be of concern.
 - **National Council Membership on Finance & Audit Committee:** With the demise of the post of BMC Treasurer at the last AGM, David Brown is currently the only National Council Representative on FAC. A second NC Voting Member is needed but there were no *volunteers*.
 - **National Council Nominated Directors:** 2 (of the 3) NC Nominated Directors are standing down; Roger Fanner and Wil Kilner and were formally thanked for their work over the years. There was much discussion on the appointment of the replacement Board positions (the first time that it has been done) and nominations will be considered at the December NC Meeting. The Board’s skills matrix has been updated by NomCom and will assist in any vote.
 - **New BMC Youth Club affiliation category:** to make it easier for the BMC to support clubs for under 18’s. Approved unanimously.

- **Policy Issues –**
 - **Digital (Blue) Membership Category:** a long fractious discussion following a very poor presentation, even using old subscription rates. The Association of British Climbing Walls also has concerns on some elements of what is being proposed. The idea is to offer a *cut-down* membership aimed predominantly at younger wall climbers and possibly hill walkers. Eventually: ***“National Council approves a trial of the digital membership category, subject to the Board of Directors signing off the associated trial risks.”***
For – 16; Against – 2; Abstentions – 1.
More work needed; assessment of risks to be presented to next National Council Meeting.
 - **Strategic Plan:** discussion on paper presented to last Area Meeting. Respondents to the on-line survey expressed a desire to increase emphasis on sustainability and some thought the representation of Competitions, Talent and the GB Teams as a separate strategic theme gave it undue prominence. The question of whether the BMC should actively promote climbing, hill walking and mountaineering was again raised and there was a suggestion that the BMC’s values be aligned with Mountain Training and other partners of the BMC. More to do, but a less than perfect Strategic Plan better than no plan at all.

- **Volunteering Strategy:** work on-going on this very important part of the BMC. Need to know more about our volunteers. A training day for Area Chairs and Secretaries is planned for early next year and guidance on how to run a successful festival.
- **BMC Climate Emergency Declaration:** Paper prepared by Cath Flitcroft, Access Officer on behalf of the Sustainability Working Group. The BMC Office target is to achieve net zero emissions by 2020, if necessary by offsetting, which will be reduced over time. Is offsetting an appropriate method? Not been to the Board yet.

Lunch time presentation by Mountain Heritage Trust: superb, a wake-up call!

• **Reports –**

- **Board of Directors:** July Board Meeting supplemented by 2 telephone meetings. Simon McCalla, Independent Director is standing down and a replacement is being sought. As part of the Liability Insurance Review, the longstanding Participation Statement is being re-considered.
 - **President:** Verbal up-date on recent work and activities.
 - **CEO and BMC Office:** CEO not in attendance: there were currently some pressures on staff capacity, particularly in support of the current governance and organisational workload.
 - **Finance:** the six-monthly set of accounts to 30 June 2019 indicate that previously reported year-end deficit forecast of £300k has come down to £194k (due mainly to a reassessment of the partnership agreement with Cotswold). Significant variances included cyber security testing costs and lower advertising revenue from Summit magazine.
 - **Mountain Training UK:** two projects being developed in partnership with the BMC; draft youth walking and climbing pathway infographics, and an update to the Climbing for All guidance on working with people who have mental and physical disabilities.
 - **Plas y Brenin:** Ruth Hall is the new CEO.
 - **Cymru North Wales:** considered the future of the BMC in Wales.
 - **Cymru South Wales:** Gower Festival very successful. Want Strategic Plan to have more measurable aims.
 - **Lakes:** Meeting included a talk by 17-year-old environmental activist Amy Bray about changing attitudes to waste.
 - **London and SE:** some concern expressed about trying to do too much with insufficient resources.
 - **Midlands:** some concern expressed about the proposed reduction of area votes on National Council from two to one while still retaining two reps per Area.
 - **North East:** very positive feedback about the first Youth Meet held in the Area for many years.
 - **Peak:** lowest attended Area Meeting in years and years! The Area formally voted asking NC to support a motion to implement the Hillwalking Strategy. After discussion NC voted: ***“National Council urges the Board and senior officers to ensure that future work plans and resource allocation arising out of the new strategic plan properly embrace the hill walking aspects of strategic themes 2 & 3 of the plan, and do so in a proportion that reflects the very significant share of our membership who presently identify hill walking as their primary activity.”***
- For – 18; Against – 0; Abstentions – 0.**
- **South West:** blanket fee for walls hosting rounds of the Youth Climbing Series well received. Some concern that some ODG recommendations rely on an up-dated website – but no indications in Strategic Plan on how or when.
 - **Yorkshire:** plans to submit a request for funds for materials to repair the Kilnsey footpath, and is developing plans for an Area festival next year.

David Brown, Peak Area Representative on National Council

The full Minutes (13 pages) can be downloaded from the BMC Web-site:
https://www.thebmc.co.uk/downloads/The%20BMC/bmc_organisation