

**BMC Cymru Mid Wales Area Meeting and AGM
21st November 2019 at 7.30 at the White Lion, Machylleth**

1. Welcome: From the Chairman Huw Gilbert

2. Apologies: Don Sargeant, Tim Sparrow, Lei Bramich, Steve Culverhouse, Joe Doherty, Jane Lloyd-Francis.

3. In Attendance: Huw Gilbert (Mid-Wales Outreach Group Chairman), Elfyn Jones (BMC Access Officer), Dave Williams (BMC Access Volunteer), Mark Bramich, Myfyr Tomos, Terry Taylor, Rob Johnson, Iain Wright, Gary Morgan.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:

a) Craig y Merched access path: Dave Williams informed the meeting that all involved parties have now agreed on the route of the access path to Craig y Merched. The path is now marked with posts and with stile crossings as required. Dave Williams was thanked by all in the meeting for the large amount of work that he has put in to bring this matter to a satisfactory close.

5. BMC Update:

a) Welsh Government (WG) extension of access rights to coast and countryside: Elfyn Jones informed the meeting that WG intent to extend the access rights to coast and countryside was progressing as hoped. WG are in the process of setting up 3x expert groups whose task is to decide ways of implementing the findings of the access review which will in turn lead to the writing of new access laws. The groups are to report by summer 2020 with implementation of the new laws planned for summer 2021.

b) Wales National Development Framework (NDF): Elfyn Jones explained to the meeting the purpose of Wales NDF. In the simplest of terms it contains the framework in which large scale infrastructure such as motorways, commercial forestry, and energy production are planned out. Given that WG have themselves set quantifiable renewable energy targets, the development of new or the expansion of existing wind farms could occur. Also possible is an increase in the number of planned small scale hydroelectric schemes. As likely land based sites for both would be in the uplands and given that much of Mid Wales has little or no landscape protection status there is potential for future conflict of interest within a 'renewable energy vs valued landscape' context.

c) **BMC in Wales – Draft proposals:** Huw Gilbert and Elfyn Jones presented the meeting with a brief summary of ‘The Options for Cymru’ draft paper. The unanimous view of the meeting was that they agreed with the recommendations within the paper, were grateful for the work of those involved in producing it and kindly ask if those involved would please continue to carry forward the recommendations to implementation. It should be noted here that the timescale for implementation given in the paper is for the recommendations to be presented for approval at the BMC AGM in June 2020.

d) **BMC Volunteer Awards:** Huw Gilbert with the help of Elfyn Jones informed the meeting about the existence of BMC Volunteer Awards which are a means of offering recognition and reward to those who have given outstanding voluntary contribution to the BMC. Nominations can be made via a form on the BMC website.

e) **General Access and Conservation Update:**

i) **Range West:** Elfyn Jones informed the meeting that last year 360 climbers visited Range West and that there were no reported incidents of infringement of the MoD rules of usage.

Dates for 2020 will be added to the BMC website in the new year.

ii) **Climate Change Policy:** Elfyn Jones informed the meeting that discussion is taking place to establish a BMC Climate Change Policy, and that this will be a significant marketing/comms theme in 2020.

iii) **Trees at Tremadog:** Elfyn Jones informed the meeting that work is required to make safe and maintain the health of trees at Bwlch y Moch, Tremadog; not necessarily connected are the facts that Ash Die Back has been identified at Bwlch y Moch and that some large trees (not just Ash) pose a genuine risk to the road and nearby buildings if left unmanaged. Contracted work will be carried out in the near future to address this. Also likely is a small scale crag clean up by volunteers early next year.

6. Local Issues:

a) **Cwm Cau to Mynydd Moel Path:** Myfyr Tomos informed the meeting that £45K from the BMC Mend our Mountains campaign had been given for

repair work to the Cwm Cau to Mynydd Moel footpath on Cadair Idris. The total cost of the project is estimated at circa £140K. Funding has also been provided by Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The required stone will be delivered to the base of the mountain over the Winter with work scheduled to start in Spring 2020. It is estimated that the work will take 4 to 5 years to complete. Huw Gilbert noted that potential projects for the Mend our Mountains fund were discussed in previous Mid Wales outreach group meetings and that this project was the one recommended by the group. Huw Gilbert noted that this was a good example of the value in holding area meetings and the sharing of area suggestions and opinion on a national level.

b) Replacement of Belay Stakes and placement of Belay Bolts at Barmouth Slabs:

i) Following on from discussion at the previous meeting (5th June 2019) Joe Doherty, Learning and Adventure Manager at Outward Bound Aberdyfi has purchased the belay bolts that he intends to place at Barmouth Slabs and the belay stakes that will be used to replace the current stakes are being made. Since the last meeting Joe Doherty has made further efforts to consult other interested parties (i.e. other local outdoor centres/providers and local climbers). It was unknown at the meeting how much communication Joe Doherty has had with the landowner.

ii) Huw Gilbert read to the meeting an email from Joe Doherty of which the following extract is given.

What I do not want to do and are not reasons for bolting are;

- Making life easier for instructors to set up (as Tech advisor for the centre I am absolutely against this);*
- Placing bolts near or on climbs used by our regular climbers;*
- Going straight for a bolt when actually there is natural gear or a stake would suffice.*

What I do want to do is;

- Open up more breathing spaces on parts of the crags that are overgrown or not used at all by climbers;*

- *Carefully replace the current stakes so that we don't a situation where the stakes can't be replaced;*
- *Sensitively bolt some parts of the crag and tuck them away and are not obvious where possible.*

Accompanying the email were a presentation of slides showing where each proposed stake and bolt placement would be. In summary the proposal is for: 22x current stakes to be replaced, 4x new stakes to be added, 10x belay bolts added.

iii) The views of the meeting were unchanged from the previous discussion with the same list of concerns raised (contained in the minutes of the meeting dated 5th June 2019).

iv) The next stage of the work for Joe Doherty will be the replacement of the belay stakes and the placement of the belay bolts. Joe Doherty is in the process of arranging a date which all local outdoor centres/providers could make so as to be there when the work is taking place. Dave Williams volunteered to be there as well and Huw Gilbert will ask Joe Doherty if he can involve Dave Williams when selecting the date.

c) **Re-election of Volunteer Appointments:** In accordance with the required time frames the following appointments within the Mid Wales outreach group were put up for re-election (no new volunteers were forthcoming).

- i) Chair: Huw Gilbert. Proposed by Mark Bramich and seconded by Rob Johnson. Votes 8 to 0.
- ii) Secretary: No candidate forthcoming. Huw Gilbert will continue to carry out the function of Secretary as well as Chair.
- iii) Access Rep: Dave Williams. Proposed by Huw Gilbert and seconded by Mark Bramich. Votes 8 to 0. Dave Williams was actually voted into post at the North Wales Area meeting so this is really just a ratification of that.

7. Club Update and Issues: 3x local Mountaineering Clubs or Clubs with huts in the Mid-Wales Area where asked if they had any items for discussion at the meeting. No items were offered.

8. Any Other Business: No other items were raised.

9. Next Meeting: In order to match with the North and South Wales Area meetings and the BMC AGM (13th June 2020) the next Mid-Wales outreach group meeting will be held in May 2020. Huw Gilbert did mention however that there is scope to carry out discussion of issues outside of formal meetings or even to call a meeting before May 2020 if required.