

BMC South West Area Meeting

Held on Saturday 23 November 2019 at the Quay Climbing Centre, Exeter
starting immediately after the Area AGM.

MINUTES

Present and signed in:

Mark Kemball (Bude), James Mann (Plymouth), Helen Wilson (Bristol) Philip Wilson (Bristol), Rob Seymour (Hayle, Cornwall), Gavin Kelly (Tavistock), Tony Bird (Weston S.M.), Nigel Hunt (Bristol), Tommy Yorke (Cambourne), Grahame Irwin (Broadhempston), Dave Hillebrandt (Holsworthy), Mike Virtue (Exeter), Iain Peters (Welcombe), Peter Salenieks (Cotswolds), Pen Farthing (Exeter) Mark Courtiour (Cheddar) Martin Hallett (Dorset), Jon Garside (BMC Office).

1. James Mann welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dave Hope, Colin Knowles, Ian Butterworth, Will Hornby.
2. The minutes of the last meeting were summarised.
3. Matters arising – Roche Rock clean up – Pete Greening has suggested some time in February – date to be decided.
4. 2020 meetings dates and venues. We decided that on a trial basis all the 2019 meetings should be held in Exeter at the Quay as this is the most central point of our large area and is accessible within a two-hour drive from most points in the region, with the plan to review this at this meeting. There has been some discussion of this on social media with some Bristol-based climbers feeling disenfranchised by the meetings being held in Exeter. It was pointed out that Bristol, being a large conurbation has a large number of climbers who could become involved in BMC work if meetings were held there. It was also pointed out that it was unrealistic to expect members from West Cornwall to travel to Bristol for a meeting. Suggestions were made that we ought to be able to allow people to attend the meeting via “Skype” or similar. After much discussion we decided that the first meeting of 2020 will be held in Bristol (venue to be a climbing wall if possible) and the remainder of the meetings should be held at the Quay, Exeter. Dates as follows:

7.3.20 – Bristol
30.5.20 – The Quay, Exeter.
12.9.20 - The Quay, Exeter
31.10.20 - The Quay, Exeter (+AGM)
5. Area briefing notes – these were summarised by James Mann. Iain Peters asked if these were necessary and suggested it would be better if they were simply put onto the BMC website along with the meeting’s agenda etc. to save time.

6. Volunteer awards – the details of the three awards were summarised and we were asked to consider nominations.
7. Area festivals – we decided we would like to hold another West Cornwall climbing festival next year.
8. BMC strategic plan – Helen reported that consultation on the draft 2020 – 2024 strategic plan has closed and that the plan is now finalised ready to be put into action in 2020. The plan is available on the BMC website.
9. Organisational Development Group – Helen summarised where we are with this at the moment.
10. Access
 - a. Fairy Cave Quarry – there is a possibility that this may be sold, the would-be purchasers want to build a house within the fenced area but are sympathetic, in principle, to climbing.
 - b. Brean Down – following some bolts being placed without permission, the National Trust threatened to ban climbing (in fact they cannot as this is access land); however this has now been resolved. Please consult landowners before placing bolts (especially when the landowner is generally sympathetic to climbers).
 - c. Wood Lane Quarry (Weston S.M.) – please stay away for the moment; there should not be any problems long-term as the owner is sympathetic to climbing.
 - d. Burrington Combe – bolts have been placed on an area of rock used extensively by activity centres for abseiling. The centres are unhappy about this, the meeting voted to support them in whatever the centres decide to do about this.
 - e. Avon – the following report was sent in by Colin Knowles:

At the last BMC Area Meeting I reported on a public consultation in Bristol regarding some proposed options for changing the road system at the western end of the Cumberland Basin. On behalf of the BMC and with the full support BMC Access Officer Rob Dyer I made a submission on our behalf regarding the negative impacts of the proposed Western and Hybrid options, whilst noting the opportunity for the improvement of road crossings in the Suspension Bridge area. Subsequently Bristol City Council has opted to progress the Eastern option. It is unclear what the implications are in the long run, and so I will maintain a watching brief. On November 15th I had a site meeting in the Gorge with the two Councillors from Clifton ward. I explained the importance to them of:

 - safe road crossings;
 - paving needed in crucial areas;
 - bus stops in the vicinity of Main Area;
 - additional sites for cycle hoops;
 - improvement to informal descent path at the northern end of Main Wall.

Given the current political flux it may be a timely period to actively press our case on all these matters.
 - f. Marsland – Iain Peters expressed concern about the condition of the fixed belay and abseil point on the Central Slab. This is likely to become a more popular venue for lower

- grade and less experienced climbers once the Culm guide is published. A possible long term solution is to place belay bolts but this would be a departure from the existing fixed gear policy and we should consult widely before making a decision.
- g. Vicarage Cliff – it was suggested that we perhaps ought to place another belay point / lower-off above Sol. Discussion followed and it was pointed out that climbers seem to be happy to belay here then traverse to use one of the other abseil points so this is not needed.
 - h. Culm beach clean – Iain Peters suggested it would be good to do a beach clean, to remove plastic etc. from some of the more inaccessible beaches on the Culm coast. Clean ups are already organised on those beaches which can be reasonably easily accessed by the general public. Iain will contact the National Trust and local Coastguard to see if this is feasible.
 - i. Stakes – Iain pointed out that we have a good supply of galvanised stakes – could people use these where ever they are needed.
11. Clubs – nothing to report beyond our continuing search for someone to take on the role of Area Club Coordinator.
12. Hill walking – there is a National hill walking weekend being held in Ambleside 14th and 15th March.
13. Walls – a new wall, Tide, has opened in Cornwall at St. Issey, near Wadebridge.
14. Youth – Julian Wills, area youth coordinator for the southern part of our region sent in the following report:
- Several suggested improvements to the BRYCS have been implemented by the BMC, the most noticeable being the split of the SW region into South and North sections. This will make the regional series more manageable and put less pressure on venues (110 max cap on each event). South West South is Cornwall, Devon and Dorset.
 - Other changes to the series include funding for centres to employ belayers for the roped rounds.
 - Unfortunately, BMC have refused to implement the idea of different coloured t-shirts for each region at the Grand Finals, even though this would help volunteers recognise their participants and make it more of a regional team feel. They state additional cost of having different colours is the issue (which is a weak argument at best).
 - A new venue for the SWS series is being used - The Tide in Cornwall. Other venues are Hangar, Lifecentre and Quay.
 - Volunteers would be much appreciated to help out at the series.
15. The next meeting will be held in Bristol on 7th March – venue to be decided.
16. Following the end of the meeting's business, we were treated to an illustrated talk by Dr. Dave Hillebrandt – "A Neurotic's Guide to Mountain Medicine and Climbing First Aid".