



Staying local in the Rivelin valley.
Photo: Peter Judd.

PEAK AREA NEWSLETTER



May 2020
peak.area@thebmc.co.uk

Rocking Chair

Andy Reeve



Usually there is plenty to write about here, and ironically – given the dearth of climbing and hill walking of late – there is even more going on from the BMC Peak Area’s perspective than usual.

The biggest question from the eyes of many walkers and climbers was how long it would be until we could get back to different forms of outdoor recreation. The BMC issued a statement at the start of the UK’s restrictions advising against climbing. Updated information from the BMC, which follows the official guidance from the

government – including what the BMC is doing to influence how this is interpreted by other outdoor recreation stakeholders – can be found on page 2.

Other big news at a local level is that the next BMC Peak Area meeting will be an online affair. This is something that Ana (our honourable and forward-thinking secretary) has been keen to get underway for some time, and the current restrictions have provided a catalyst for this. I’m really looking forward to seeing how this changes the demographic of virtual attendees, particularly as the traditional format of having evening meetings in one location does not suit everyone. Let’s hope that an online format gives us something useful we can keep and incorporate into

Next meeting: Wednesday 20 May, 7.30 p.m.
The Internet. Register [HERE](#).



all future meetings, while not demonstrating too much technological incapability on the part of us who are delivering it.

Looking further ahead, there is plenty going on behind the scenes from the hard work of your local BMC reps: important access updates including lots of work continuing for the future of Stanage, more sphagnum bog moss planting (genuinely excitement here, really!), and planning for the BMC Peak Area walk courtesy of our hill walking reps.

Lastly from me, I sincerely hope that you are all taking good care of yourselves. It is no understatement to say that this is a particularly unpleasant time for many, so please endeavour to treat yourselves gently through the ups and downs. As the hills and wild places become accessible to our usual activities over the coming weeks and months I hope to see you all out there and share in the pleasure and peace of mind that they gift us. See you out there soon.

Register for the online Peak Area meeting by clicking **HERE**.

Can I Go Climbing or Hill Walking Again?

As lockdown evolves, access to the outdoors is now changing. However, crucially this is still different in England, Wales and Scotland. The BMC's key message to climbers and hill walkers is to be cautious in your actions, respectful of local communities and extremely vigilant in avoiding transmitting the virus.

Following the announcement of new government guidance on 10 May which comes into effect on 13 May, the BMC published general and detailed advice for climbers and hill walkers online.

Read it here:

www.thebmc.co.uk/can-i-start-climbing-and-hill-walking-again



Looking down on
Sheffield from Rud Hill.
Photo: John Coefield.

Access News

Louise Hawson

Stanage

Last month, along with Friends of the Peak, the BMC met with the Peak District National Park Authority team to discuss next steps for the ongoing options appraisal to determine the future of the various assets on the estate. Our key concern was that the proposed options focused solely on the revenue-generating potential of these assets, and not on the role they play in delivering the overall vision and purpose of the estate.

We received assurances from the PDNPA team that the final list of options drawn up will include suggestions that came up from the consultation which may require additional, external funding, and that these will be considered alongside the internally funded options that were consulted on.

The three 'packages' of options presented in the consultation will not be the only options on the table for senior

management and members to consider.

The PDNPA team are currently reviewing which options they will take forward, and how they will phase the investment needed. The Stanage Forum will be consulted as part of this process.

A summary of the consultation and our response are available on the BMC website: **www.thebmc.co.uk/the-future-of-stanage-have-your-say**

Hill Walking News

Peter Judd, Austin Knott & Vikki Hughes

Some quick notes from your hillwalking reps covering Mend our Mountains, obstruction of rights of way, a call for ACT Trustees and some events being planned ahead. These were pulled together before the Covid-19 announcement from the Prime Minister on 10 May. We're all aware that the BMC access team has been working hard to develop proposals for phased re-opening of the outdoors for hill walking and climbing and we would urge you all to keep an eye of the BMC website and Facebook page for any updates. As well as regular briefings/Q&A sessions from the access team and CEO there have also been some fun items such as the History in the Hills and Mega Mountain Pub Quiz, both hosted by Mary-Ann Ochota. All of these are available in the videos section of the main BMC facebook page: www.facebook.com/pg/BritishMountainneeringCouncil/videos/

While mentioning social media some other BMC areas have brought in a social media rep who has helped to manage the area's social media presence. One of the hill walking reps, Vikki Hughes, has volunteered to get to grips with this for the Peak Area. Well done, Vikki. During lockdown she's also been keeping herself busy by building her own home climbing wall, reportedly operating under the name of Death by Misadventure!

Mend Our Mountains update

Our area's two BMC Mend our Mountains-funded repair projects are still held up for various reasons. We've spoken to the people responsible for project management

(within the Peak District National Park Authority and the Moors for the Future Partnership) and here's the state of play.

Cut Gate is to be repaired alongside the adjoining North America bridleway. 860 metres of path has already been repaired on North America and the scar from the old path is recovering. They weren't able to finish off the full length they'd hoped (around 1,200 to 1,450 metres) because they started later than planned due to access arrangements difficulties. Work stopped for the bird nesting season just before Covid-19 restrictions came along and, Covid-19 permitting, should restart in the autumn.

Cut Gate however still needs some landowner permissions sorting relating to access to the work site(s) before work can begin there, but hopefully that will begin in the autumn too, once North America is finished.

Great Ridge repair work, you may remember, needed planning permission. The Peak Area and the BMC national office wrote a joint letter in support of the initial application at the time. That application has since been abandoned on the advice of the planners. A new, slightly redrafted, application has gone in (application reference: NP/HPK/0420/0307) that covers the whole of the route from Hollins Cross to Back Tor (rather than a patchwork of work only between the two) in the hope of getting a bit more funding to allow a more continuous repair. Hopefully the Peak Area and office will be up for us sending another letter of support.

Apparently the national park is drafting a bid to a funding body in the hope of going some way to bridge the remaining funding gap. They are about £70,000 short to finish the most badly damaged sections – do you know any benefactors or trusts who might respond positively to a bid to fund such conservation/sustainable recreation work?

There are also agreements to finalise with landowners including for the helicopter lift site but they're making progress with that. It's still hoped that they'll be able to start work, restrictions permitting, in the autumn.

Public rights of way obstructions

During lockdown it's been interesting to see people out using their local public rights of way as part of their daily exercise. The hill walking reps have been made aware of some locations within the Peak Area where landowners or managers have blocked footpaths, byways and bridleways. These rights of way are the legal responsibility of highway authorities. It would be quite easy to go into a polemic but the simple answer is if you find a right of way that has been obstructed please report it to the local highway authority where the problem is. Within the Peak Area there are seven local authorities: Barnsley MBC, Cheshire CC, Derbyshire CC, Kirklees MBC, Oldham MBC, Sheffield City Council and Staffordshire CC.

The most direct way to report any rights of way issues is through the respective authority's website. If you're not sure which highway authority would be responsible use a third party site such as:

www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/big-pathwatch.aspx

ACT trustees: call for applicants

BMC charity the Access and Conservation Trust (that aims to promote sustainable access to cliffs, mountains and open countryside by facilitating education and conservation projects) is looking for two new trustees to support and guide its work. This is a fascinating opportunity to discover more about, and get involved in, the valuable work they are doing, not least for hill walkers. They are looking for people with experience in the following areas in

particular: fundraising and being a company secretary of a charity or not-for-profit. Do you know anyone who might have such a background or be interested, or can you help promote this opportunity via your own networks please? Here's a link that explains what's involved and how to apply (applications are due in by the end of May): **www.thebmc.co.uk/act-bmc-conservation-charity-trustee-role**

Plans for better times

Area hill walk: You'll remember that there was going to be an area hill walk in April, from Hayfield, up on Kinder Scout, across to Harry Hut and returning via Lantern Pike. The walk was scuppered by the lockdown, so it was postponed. The intention is that once circumstances allow a new date will be set for the walk. If you want to know more or simply just register an interest in the walk please drop an email to Austin Knott: **austin@walkthemoorlands.co.uk**

Sphagnum planting activity: Just before lockdown the BMC launched its Climate Project (**intouch.thebmc.co.uk/the-climate-project/**) with a focus on peat bog restoration. To support this, and following our first successful and popular sphagnum planting day last year, Peter Judd is looking to organise a similar day in the autumn. The event will depend upon what any restrictions allow, but if you're interested in taking part please send an email to Peter: **peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk**

Real3Peaks Challenge: This tends to happen the second Saturday each October (although there are regional variations) and fits well with the BMC's Hills to Oceans campaign. Last year members supported events in the Peak Area on the Great Ridge and Roaches. We'll let you know when details become available for this year's local events.



Peak Area Meetings: 2020

20 May, 7.30 p.m., The Internet. Register [HERE](#).

2 September, 7.30 p.m., TBC

4 November, 7.30 p.m., TBC

Forthcoming Events

<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions most forthcoming events have been cancelled or postponed. For latest information on forthcoming events in the Peak Area, please keep an eye on the BMC's community pages.

BMC Peak Area Contacts

Peak Area Chair: Andy Reeve.
andymreeveuk@gmail.com
Secretary: Ana Wass.
peak.area@thebmc.co.uk

Peak Area Reps (your voice on the BMC National Council):
David Brown and Alison Cairns.
<http://community.thebmc.co.uk/peak>

Access Reps Co-ordinators:
Henry Folkard and Louise Hawson.
henry.folkard@bmcvolunteers.org.uk
louise.hawson@gmail.com

Peak Area Hill Walking Reps:
Peter Judd, Austin Knott and Vikki Hughes.
Peak10roam-bmc@yahoo.co.uk
austin@walkthemoorlands.co.uk
vikkihughes@btinternet.com

Peak Area Newsletter Editorial:
Dave Parry and John Coefield.
peakarea@gmail.com

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the representative body that exists to protect the freedoms and promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, including ski-mountaineers. Find out more: www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-governance