



SOUTH WEST AREA ORDINARY MEETING

Held at Redpoint, 40 Winterstoke Road, Bristol. BS3 2NW
On Saturday 7th March 2020 at 5pm

MINUTES

Attendance: Mark Kemball (Acting Chair), Philip Wilson (Acting Sec & NC Rep), Helen Wilson (NC Rep), Barry Donovan (AMC), Annabel Tall (AMC), Dan Donovan, Colin Knowles, Ian Butterworth, Nigel Barry, Helen Barry, Christine Sloman (AMC), David White (AMC), Andrew Twenlock (AMC), Peter Collins (AMC Treasurer), Tony Bird (Walking Rep), Rick Sowards (Wye Valley Rep / GMC), Mike Spooner (Student Clubs), Libby Houston, Alan Howell John Booth (WASC), Charlotte Rivers & Mark Courtiour (Cheddar Rep). Note: Advanced apologies to anyone whose name I have been unable to decipher correctly from the signing in sheet.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The chair Mark Kemball opened the meeting. Apologies were received from Avon MC David & Becky sent their apologies for members non-attendance due to this coinciding with their Scotland meet with around 30 members away. Richard Nadin, Iain Peters (Atlantic Coast Rep), Marti Hallet (Portland Rep), & Julian Wills (AYC South), David Taylor (AYC North) & James Mann (Chair). In the absence of the chair, Mark Kemball & Philip Wilson agreed to act as chair and secretary respectively for the meeting.

2. Quorum

It was noted that a quorum was present in accordance with [Article 28.6.1 of the British Mountaineering Council's articles of association (the "Articles")].

3. Minutes from the previous meeting held on 23/11/2019

3.1. Minutes from the previous meeting held on 23/11/2019, a draft of which had been produced to the meeting were approved without amendment. The chair to email the agreed minutes to the BMC.

4. Actions from previous meeting held on 23/11/2019

4.1. Roche Rock Clean-up – This has not been organised yet, it has been re-scheduled for Sept 2020.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

5.1. No matters arising not covered elsewhere were discussed.

6. National Council

A brief was given on key points of interest to members of the Dec 2019 National Council (NC) meeting:

6.1. Organisational Development Group (ODG) Progress – This was discussed. For those interested in the ongoing work of the ODG, more details can be found at: <https://odg.thebmc.co.uk/hc/en-gb>.

6.2. Board Sub-committee BMC Wales: The set-up of a committee of the Board to steer the BMC's activities, engagement and policy work in Wales as well as concluding the review of options for future governance arrangements for the BMC in Wales was discussed very briefly and the link shown via overhead projector in the meeting. The link to this web site can be found at: <https://odg.thebmc.co.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360006417218-BMC-Cymru-Committee-draft-Terms-of-Reference>.

- 6.3. The Members' Webinar occurring on the Thursday 2nd April 2020 at 6.30 pm was also publicised. This is for members who want to hear the details of proposed changes to the Articles of Association, the results of the governance review and the proposed Members' Council future composition and ways of working. Information about booking a place on the webinar will be communicated shortly via the BMC.
- 6.4. Club Strategy Paper: This was viewed on screen, then briefly discussed. Feedback was positive. See <https://odg.thebmc.co.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360006380957-Proposed-strategy-for-Clubs-2020-2024>. It was agreed that this was a worth-while document and would stand the BMC in good stead moving forward. Questions and feedback were noted by Mike Spooner the author of the document who attended the meeting.
- 6.5. Competitions: It was noted that this is now set up and running as a separate department within the BMC.
- 6.6. Nominate a volunteer for a 2020 BMC Award: This was publicised, discussed and the link shown on screen in the meeting to encourage members to nominate any volunteers for this award. Details can be found at <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/nominate-a-volunteer-for-a-bmc-award>.

7. Reports from Area Representatives/Officers/Anyone Else

- 7.1. The chair handed over to Mark Courtiour (Cheddar Rep) who reported:

Cheddar General Note: Members were reminded that the winter open season ends 15/03/2019, thereafter restrictions apply. Anyone unsure of where to climb should consult the BMC Regional Access Database (RAD) or current guidebook. He also reminded members of the need for insurance to climb here is required.

Regional Access Database (RAD). Nigel Barry asked why this is not being updated of late. Helen & Philip Wilson to investigate with BMC Head Office.

Ebbor Gorge: Natural England have after a successful annual trial, agreed to formalise this and allow further climbing development in designated areas.

High Rock: Is being cleared of ivy from periphery climbing areas and a new 3 metre (high) fenced bund constructed. This will take up most of the car parking spaces to keep the public out of the rock fall zone beneath it. No climbing will be possible while work is being undertaken (but may be possible in the evenings when work has finished). Post work access to climb here will probably be via a combination locked gate in a new fence. We still await a date for this event.

- 7.2. The chair handed over to Mark Davies who reported that a bolted route had been chopped at Rock of Ages and asked why. It was clarified that this crag is currently classed as a trad crag as it had a trad route on it. Representations at a future SW Area meeting to change this can be put as an agenda item for discussion (with any vote to change this being held at a subsequent meeting).

- 7.3. The chair handed over to Ian Butterworth who reported on Fairy Cave Quarry:

The quarry is now not being sold to a sympathetic to climbing 3rd party due to the cost of clearing toxic waste from the site from the non-climbing area on the far side of the road. The ruin near the entrance is to be sold to a 3rd party.

Damage to the fence above Robs Crack has also occurred. Possibly due to top rope set-up or quarry access to do surveys (the main quarry survey stone/point is located here).

The Ash trees to be affected by Ash tree die back is also a concern as 80% of all ash trees in the quarry are expected to be affected. As these are popular belay / lower offs & abseil points it was noted by Mark Courtiour that the wood becomes very brittle and prone to sudden snapping and as a consequence professional tree surgeons are now not prepared to ascend them in this state if felling them. This change in the tree wood occurs at around only 30% leaf loss, so climbers beware.

- 7.4. The chair handed over to various contributors who reported on Avon Area:

Colin Knowles appealed for a volunteer to help with Avon Gorge issues to Bristol City Council. Anyone interested can contact Colin Knowles via the SW Area.

Burrington Combe: 1st bolts on sports climb have been chopped with an angle grinder and 1 second bolt damaged (half sheared) and dangerous, so beware.

7.5. The chair handed over to Rick Sowards (Wye Valley Rep) who reported:

Yat Fest: To be held at Symons Yat is again scheduled for 4 – April, with camping at the Biblings. This is again being organised by Graham Hassell and may be of interest to BMC members. It is being mainly publicised via facebook. Rick is to speak to Graham regarding additional required BMC publicity.

WoodCroft Quarry: This combination lock entry to the Wye Valley is working but may be changed. Behaviour at the quarry has improved by 95% on last year.

Shorn Cliff: Rockfall reported on UKC, which is in fact caving excavations.

7.6. The chair handed over to Mark Kemball reporting on behalf of Marty Hallet (Portland Rep), Iain Peters (Culm Rep) and Julian Wills (AYC) who reported:

Neddyfields Cliff: Concern shown about a large crack opening up at its top.

White Hole: Some Ministry of Defence (MOD) signage and keen-eyed security guard activity above reported. The advice is to keep a low profile here.

Battleship Buttress: The newish steps down to this area have started to be used by members of the public. This leads nowhere to nowhere else. Signage has been added to deter this as it could be dangerous to the public. Climbers are advised to discourage non-climbing access.

BMC stakes: Are available for use on the Atlantic Coast (Bude to Godrevy Point & Carn Gowla). Please contact Iain Peters via SW Area if required.

Blackchurch Crag: The estate is in the shooting season, the footpaths remain open even during this event. Care is needed on the approach to the crag. It is recommended to keep to the paths.

Inaccessible Beach Climbing Venue Clean Ups: Iain Peters proposed to organise this on the Culm Coast, possibly with the help of local fishermen to remove plastic rubbish collected. This could tie in with and be supported by the BMC's Hills to Oceans campaign. See: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/more-rubbish-to-remove-with-bmc-hills-2-oceans>. Iain to contact the BMC if interested.

SW Area Youth Competitions: This has been split into SW Area North & SW Area South due to the large volumes of competitors. Competitors must be BMC members to take part to encourage serious participants only to take part. He added that the communication and the support from Zoe Spriggins at the BMC Head Office has also been very good this season. Colin Knowles highlighted the huge rise in numbers internationally as well and that European wide competitions between countries would very likely adopt a tiered structure similar to ours.

8. Any other business

It was proposed by Mark Kemball and all agreed that we should support the Climbers against Cancer (CAC) event which coincides with our next area meeting at the Quays Climbing Wall in Exeter. A sponsored climb indoors to the height in metres of Scafell Pike is taking place by 2 junior members of their youth squad (both only aged 10). See: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kathryn-bowstead>. There will also be a raffle and Frank Cannings will be giving his Helicopter Lundy Rescue crash rescue talk! We are donating the cost of our food that the BMC pays for this meeting. This usual fee to us is being waived by The Quay Climbing Centre. Mark Kemball to pass on our thanks.

8. Date of next Area Ordinary Meeting

The Quay Climbing Centre Haven Rd, Exeter EX2 8AX. 30/05/2020. 7pm start.