



## SOUTHWEST AREA ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting held: **Online by Zoom**  
On: **30/05/2020 at 7pm**

### MINUTES

#### Attendance:

Mark Kemball, Helen Wilson, Philip Wilson, Mark Courtiour, Rick Sowards, Tony Bird, Mike Spooner, Frank Cannings, James Baldwin, Stafford Dyer, Andrew@AMC, Claire Willetts, Eddie Legge, Tim Meehan, Graham Moates, Matthew Bowell, Tanya Bowell, Nigel Hurst, Nigel B, Martin Corfield, Steve Goodwin, Nicky Goodwin, James Moyle, Colin Knowles, Trevor Smith, Lynn Robinson, Dave Turnbull, Chris Stone, James McHaffie, Cressida Allwood, James Mann, Barry Donovan, Becky Bagnall, Bob Watson & Henry Forrester.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** The co-opted chair Mark Kemball opened the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Ian Butterworth & Iain Peters.
2. **Quorum & Conflicts of Interest:** 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")]. No conflicts of interest were raised.
3. **Co-opting Chair and Secretary:** With James Mann resigning as Chair, Mark Kemball and Philip Wilson were co-opted to hold the positions, until elections can be held at the next SW Area AGM. **Note:** Because a binding vote in line with the current BMC Articles of Association cannot be held by electronic means alone e.g. by Zoom, a solution was required. The solution was to co-opt both participants to these positions until they can be confirmed in post, or new candidates elected at the next BMC SW Area AGM, to be held in December 2020. The legality of this solution was checked and approved by the BMC Board and BMC Compliance Officer in line with the current BMC Articles of Association.
4. **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 07/03/2020:** The minutes from the previous meeting, a draft of which had been produced to the meeting were approved with the following corrections to the document and published on the BMC Community site:
  - Rick Sowards (Wye Valley Rep) name being mis-spelled as Rick Shearer.
  - Mark Courtiour (Cheddar Rep) name being mis-spelt as Mark Courtier.
5. **Actions from previous meeting held on 07/03/2020:**
  - 5.1. Roche Rock Clean-up: Mark Kemball reported that this has not been organised yet. It has been re-scheduled for September 2020 at the earliest.
  - 5.2. Inaccessible Beach Climbing Venue Clean Ups: Iain Peters to organise this on the Culm Coast, possibly with the help of local fishermen to remove plastic rubbish collected to 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>. This has been re-scheduled for September 2020 at the earliest.

## 6. Matters arising not covered elsewhere:

6.1. James Mann was thanked for all his hard work and contributions as the previous resigning Chair.

6.2. Condolences on the sad news of the death of John Allen, while climbing at Stoney west in the Peak District was announced by the chair at the start of the meeting.

7. **Clubs Rep Volunteer Post:** Philip Wilson is currently the SW Area Clubs Rep. As he has now also been co-opted as SW Area Sec and is also one of the two SW Area National Council Representatives, it was agreed that an additional volunteer is sought to fill this post. Martin Cortiour expressed an interest in the position. **Action Point:** Philip Wilson to provide Martin Cortiour with more details regarding this with a view to him taking up this post.

8. **Update from Lynn Robinson:** An overview of the BMC's response to the Covid 19 situation was given. Highlights included how the work of the BMC has been affected, the impact on AGM (now virtual), the office and volunteers, the impact on climbing in general and the situation with huts. From the hut discussion Mike Spooner (Student Clubs) stated that he is to publish hut guidance notes for members and clubs in the next week. This will be published on the BMC web site and forwarded to clubs.

9. **National Council:** Helen Wilson gave a report on the last National Council Zoom and asked if there were any issues that needed taking to their next meeting.

10. **Equity:** James McHaffie (supported by Cressida Allwood) talked us through a presentation on the BMC Equity Policy. The BMC has recently achieved the Intermediate level of the Equality Standard for Sport from Sports England. This was well received.

## 11. Reports from Area Representatives/Officers/Anyone Else

11.1. Dave Turnbull summarised the indoor and outdoor effects and consequences of climbing with Covid 19 restrictions in place, which have huge financial implications for the climbing industry. He also highlighted that some areas were getting hammered (Harrisons Rocks). He agreed to maintain a watching brief.

11.2. Mark Kemball reported for Ian Butterworth (who could not attend the meeting) regarding climbing taking place at Fairy Cave quarry during the Covid 19 lockdown, when the quarry was closed to climbers and ignoring the advice in the BMC Regional Access Database. Meeting participants were worried that this could result in a climbing ban. **Action Point:** Ian is to email all combination lock holders reminding them of these obligations, backed up by posts on social media.

11.3. The chair handed over to Mark Courtiour who reported on a rise in the incidents of climbers ignoring seasonal restrictions during the recent bank holiday weekend and climbing at seasonally banned areas (around 40 incidents). Mark was worried that this could result in bans that could reverse all the hard-won access negotiations. Climbers were urged to consult the BMC Regional Access database before climbing at Cheddar. These transgressions appear to be due to a lack of knowledge rather than a wilful rules breach. **Action Point:** Mark Kemball and Mark Courtiour agreed to post a statement on all the relevant Facebook pages to try to educate these climbers.

11.4. The chair handed over to Barry Donovan who reported on problems at Avon Gorge. He reported on two recent ground fall incidents due he thinks to the inexperience of the climbers involved in

climbing outdoors. He concluded that there was an increase in the number of climbers venturing outdoors from climbing walls with limited outdoors climbing experience. These incidents have been flagged on UKC. **Action Point:** Mark Kemball agreed to contact Association of British Climbing Walls to ask the various climbing walls to send out emails asking beginners with limited outdoors climbing experience to take care when climbing outside.

- 11.5. Rick Swards (Wye Valley Rep) reported that the fence and combo lock had been vandalised. He also floated the idea of the BMC purchasing Woodcroft Quarry. Dave Turnbull said that in principle purchase of any crag was a possibility and could be looked at by the BMC. **Action Point:** Rick to speak to Rob Dyer BMC Access Rep to come up with a viable strategy regarding this. **Note:** Since the meeting further damage has occurred to the fence.
- 11.6. The chair handed over to Tony Bird (Walking Rep) who reported on problems on Dartmoor with inconsiderate parking and general litter (spent barbeques and toilet paper) over the recent bank holiday. BMC members were asked to avoid these hotspots.
- 11.7. Indoor climbing: No report due to climbing walls being presently closed.

**12. Poll Feedback on Using Zoom for Future Meetings:** An electronic poll was conducted as follows:

- 12.1.Q1 how do you feel about using zoom for SW area meetings: 45% thought Zoom was excellent, 30% good and 25% OK.
- 12.2.Q2 How would you like future SW area meetings to be held. 5% purely face to face (no zoom), 20% zoom only (no face to face) and 75% a mix of face to face and zoom at the same time or in subsequent meetings.

Further debate is to take place in future meetings on this topic as part of the BMC Membership Engagement strategy.

### **13. Any other business**

- 13.1. Frank Cannings asked what the BMC were doing about attracting more members to the meetings. This is perennial and unsolved problem. A debate ensued. Chris Stone who is leading the BMC Members Engagement strategy hopes that this will help to resolve some of the issues regarding this.

14. **Raffle:** This took place and the winners were Andrew@AMC and James Moyle. Their emails addresses are to be sent to the BMC and prizes awarded, following the BMC shop re-opening when furloughed shop staff return to work. **Action Point:** Philip Wilson to forward the winners email addresses on to the BMC.

15. **Date of next Area Ordinary Meeting:** TBA.