

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA MEETING

Meeting held by zoom call
on Tuesday 19 May 2020 at 19.00

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies for absence - Attendance numbers 42 (maximum)

Chaired Chris Stone (CS) Minutes taken by Robert Dufton (RD)

Apologies – Sherry Macliver

CS welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular first time attenders. CS welcomed Lynn Robinson, BMC President (LR), Dave Turnbull, BMC CEO (DT), Cressida Allwood, Equality & Diversity steering group chair (CA), James McHaffie, BMC Youth and Equalities Officer (JMCH) and Daimon Beail, Access Rep and member of Harrison's Rocks Management Committee (DB).

A poll was taken indicating that 11 had been to an area meeting before and 13 had not. When asked about geographical location, 7 were in London, 17 were outside of London.

CS said that the area had a new email address LondonSEarea@thebmc.co.uk

CS reported that he had been appointed by National Council as a Council Nominated Director of the BMC, and made this a standing declaration of interest.

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 10 March 2020

The minutes of the meeting on 21 November 2019 were approved.

3. Actions/Matters arising

CS reported on the cancellation/postponement of the physical events which had been due to take place up to September. CS said that encouraging young people into hill walking would be considered at the next meeting of the Hill walking Implementation Group meeting. There were no other matters arising which were not on the agenda.

4. Impact of Covid-19

DT reported on the impact of Covid-19. Access to the countryside for the purposes of climbing and hillwalking had been restricted but now was opening up. BMC was feeding views into Government alongside partner organisations. BMC had published guidance for members about doing this safely, and reflecting the very real concerns of rural communities who were concerned about too many visitors and the impact on them. Members may have heard that tragically an experienced climber had suffered a fatal accident at Stoney Middleton. The person concerned had been climbing in line with the new guidance.

The impact on the BMC as an organisation was significant. The income for the year would be reduced because of fewer new members and less insurance cover being purchased because of restrictions on overseas travel. BMC had reserves. This year the forecast was that the organisation would break even, but the impact was likely to continue into next financial year as well and a current worst case estimate was a £400,000 deficit. A proportion of staff were currently furloughed. Those who were still working were doing so from home.

DT responded to questions about regional access, the BMC online shop (which was not open because of it not being possible to fulfil orders) and about the advice being given to clubs about safety. DT emphasized

that the situation was changing rapidly and that BMC would keep its advice to members and clubs updated. Members were particularly asked to check the latest position on the Regional Access Database.

5. Equity Steering Group

CS introduced the work of the Equality and Diversity steering group and James McHaffie gave a presentation about what had been achieved in terms of equality and diversity and plans for the future. The BMC had recently achieved the Intermediate level of the Equality Standard for Sport from Sport England. This was an important milestone. A lot of work was being done on mental health in partnership with Black Dog. The steering group oversees five workstreams, each of which has a steering committee. These are:

Disability

Women's Development

BAME

Mental Health

LGBTQ (the most recent, and whose steering committee would be chaired by RD, Secretary of the LSE area and a founding member and immediate past president of the affiliated club Not So Trad (Southern LGBT Climbers).

In future the BMC would seek to collect data on diversity issues from members.

The aim was also to work in partnership with other organisations to encourage more participation in climbing and hill walking by under-represented groups. Ideas and suggestions for this were welcome. Simon Borden suggested looking at the work done on young people and access to hockey.

CS thanked CA and JMCh for their presentation.

6. CS explained that the BMC land management group had a sub-group, the Harrisons Rocks Management Group (HRMG), who looked after the two BMC owned crags in the LSE area. DB is a member of the HRMG, has written the Rockfax Southern Sandstone guidebook and runs the website Southern Sandstone Climbs www.southersandstoneclimbs.co.uk

DB gave an illustrated presentation about the work of the HRMG, covering access, bolting, clean-ups, woodland clearance, how access to the site was being managed during the Covid pandemic, including the large numbers of indoor climbers who were now visiting and who needed advice on sandstone climbing code of practice to protect the rock and themselves.

DB responded to questions about parked cars impeding access to local residents and why the toilet block was closed (which was because it could not be cleaned properly and so would be a risk to users).

Questions were also raised regarding bolting at Bulls Hollow and a planning application that has been submitted close to Eridge Rocks. Which are going to be taken to the next HRMG meeting.

CS thanked DB and also thanked Emma Harrington who is also an Access Rep and a member of the HRMG.

7. BMC AGM

CS said that the AGM would take place virtually on Saturday 13 June 2020 and encouraged attendance.

8. Volunteer Awards

LR outlined the purpose and nature of the BMC volunteer awards.

The George Band award had been presented to Ron Kenyon, a Lake District activist, and Peter Judd, the Hill walking representative.

The Young Person's award had been presented to Kody Bradley the Yorkshire area youth coordinator

The Rehan Siddiqui award for diversity had been presented to the blind able climber Jesse Dufton.

9. Organisational Update

9.1 National Council

The National Council had met in May to consider the Covid-19 pandemic, the virtual AGM and updates on the Organisational Development Group work. They will be meeting again in June.

9.2 BMC Board

CS had been appointed to the Board, and subsequently was appointed by the Board to lead on membership engagement. The board was meeting weekly during the current crisis to support staff and members. The competition climbing group was being set up as an independent unit within BMC under the chairmanship of Rab Carrington.

9.3 Organisational Development Group

The ODG update as at May was available on the website. Some matters which were too complex to be discussed and voted on at a virtual AGM would be deferred to the 2021 AGM. The ODG communications plan was available on the BMC's ODG website (odg.thebmc.co.uk).

10. Reports from Area Representatives

10.1 Clubs

Tim Crocker, who had been co-opted at the March area meeting, was a member of many years standing and current President of the Rockhoppers climbing club. TC said that he planned to contact as many representatives of the 40 clubs based in the area in order to better understand the clubs and their concerns. He was also keen to see more sharing of ideas between LSE area clubs.

8.2 Hillwalking

Fabrizio Scaliogne had also been co-opted at the March area meeting. FS explained that because of the Covid lockdown it was not possible to hold hillwalking events. FS presented the results of a survey of area members about their interests in hillwalking. [The survey results are attached to the minutes.] BMC had published advice about hillwalking. FS encouraged members who might be willing to lead future walks to contact him

8.3 Youth

CS introduced Tanya Sage the area Youth representative. TS apologised that this was the first area meeting she had been able to attend. TS reported on the youth climbing series. Regrettably the final LSE regional heat in the Youth Climbing Series which would have taken place on 25 March 2020 had to be cancelled, as had the national finals planned for 25-26 April 2020. Currently the intention was to hold the national finals in September based on the results of the pre-lockdown regional heats. For the first time professional belayers would be used.

11. Area "Noticeboard"

There were no announcements.

10. AOB

Members present took part in a single question quiz via zoom chat. The question was what year was the South Downs National Park established. The quiz was won by Lottie Ion and Will Pook who were the first to state 2010. An honourable mention went to Emma Harrington who gave the full date: 1 April 2010.

12. Dates of 2020 Area Meetings

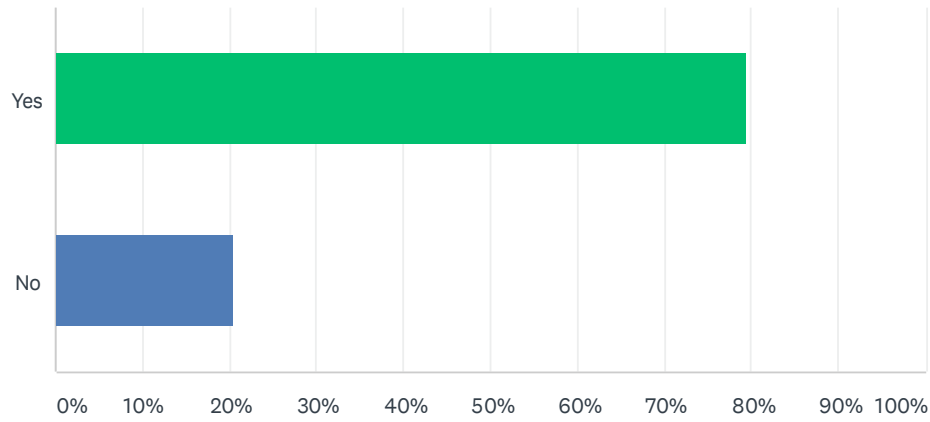
Thursday 10 September

Tuesday 27 October 2020 (venue tbc)

Minutes written by Robert Dufton

Q1 Would you be interested in attending a led walk in the area?

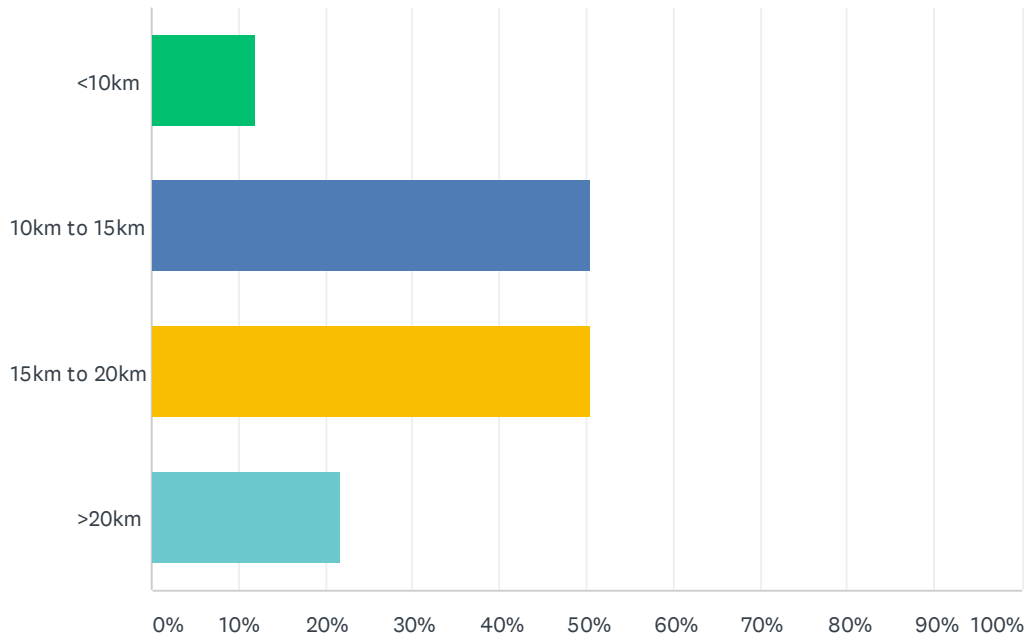
Answered: 156 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	79.49%	124
No	20.51%	32
TOTAL		156

Q2 How long would you like a day walk to be?

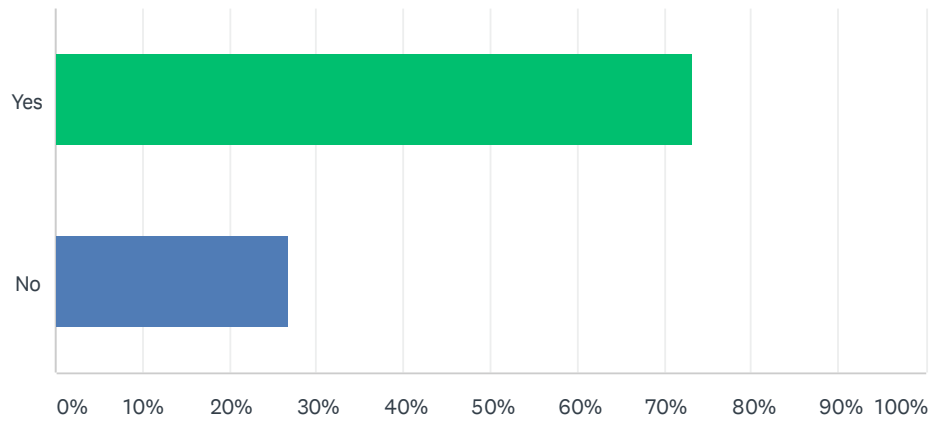
Answered: 151 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
<10km	11.92%	18
10km to 15km	50.33%	76
15km to 20km	50.33%	76
>20km	21.85%	33
Total Respondents: 151		

Q3 Would you be interested in an interactive walk where you'll be involved also in navigation, talks, preparation etc?

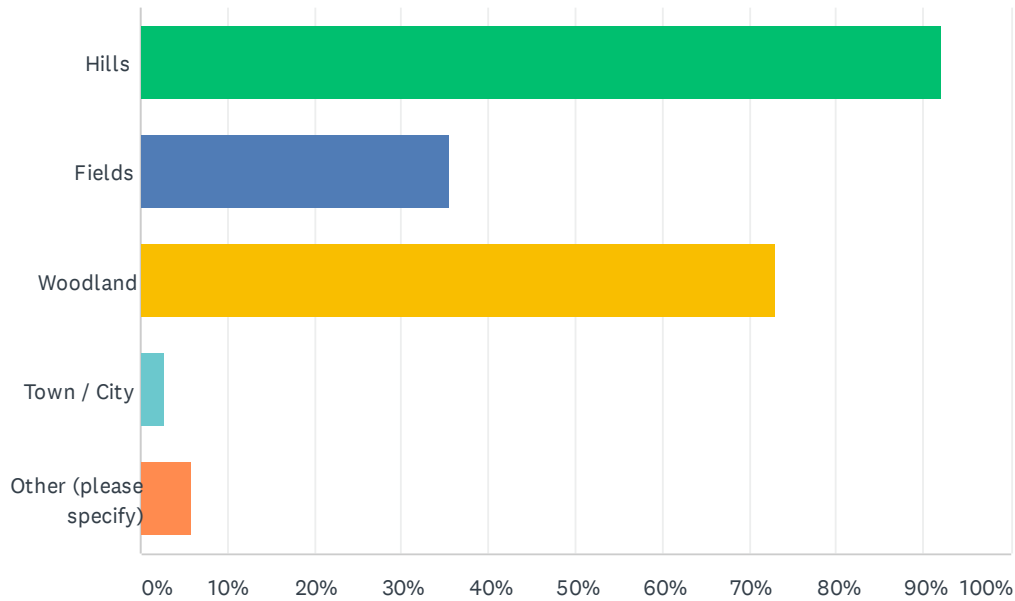
Answered: 153 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	73.20%	112
No	26.80%	41
TOTAL		153

Q4 Which landscapes do you prefer?

Answered: 152 Skipped: 4

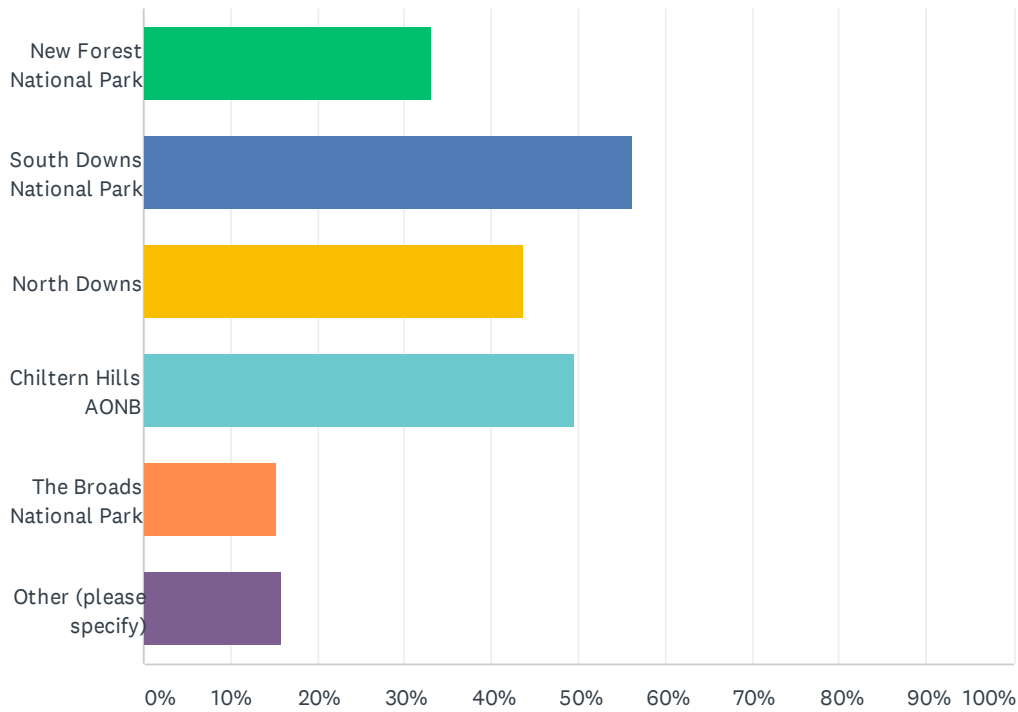


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Hills	92.11% 140
Fields	35.53% 54
Woodland	73.03% 111
Town / City	2.63% 4
Other (please specify)	5.92% 9
Total Respondents: 152	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	rivers and canals	4/24/2020 5:31 PM
2	sea/coastal	4/19/2020 1:22 PM
3	Any water - sea, canal, river, lake and villages can be interesting to pass through and stop off at pub/cafe	4/17/2020 3:45 PM
4	all	4/17/2020 9:18 AM
5	coastal	4/16/2020 7:26 PM
6	Scottish winter	4/16/2020 5:58 PM
7	Rivers and Canals	4/16/2020 4:58 PM
8	Coastal	4/16/2020 4:39 PM
9	River and lakes	4/16/2020 4:34 PM

Q5 Where is your preferred location for a walk (in the London & South East Area)?

Answered: 151 Skipped: 5

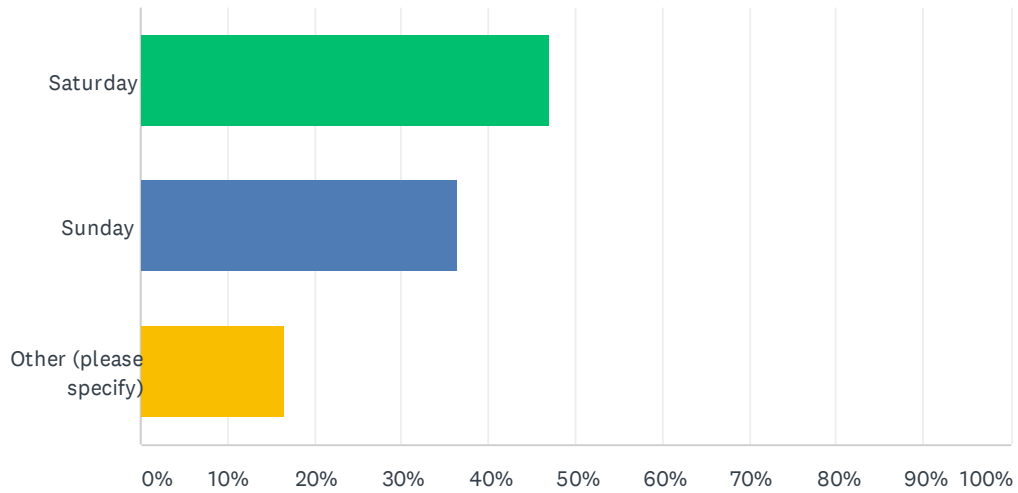


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
New Forest National Park	33.11%	50
South Downs National Park	56.29%	85
North Downs	43.71%	66
Chiltern Hills AONB	49.67%	75
The Broads National Park	15.23%	23
Other (please specify)	15.89%	24
Total Respondents: 151		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	High Weald AONB	4/18/2020 10:21 AM
2	Anywhere driving distance from London for a day trip	4/18/2020 8:46 AM
3	Wealden areas and The Ashdown Forest	4/17/2020 3:45 PM
4	Coastline	4/17/2020 3:00 PM
5	Coast	4/17/2020 10:12 AM
6	North Norfolk Coast AONB	4/17/2020 9:14 AM
7	All, or further afield	4/17/2020 8:27 AM
8	Thames Path, Ridgeway	4/17/2020 12:15 AM
9	There are some nice bits that aren't national parks!	4/16/2020 10:10 PM
10	South coast	4/16/2020 7:49 PM
11	North Wessex Downs	4/16/2020 7:46 PM
12	Anywhere	4/16/2020 7:39 PM
13	Coastal, Rivers	4/16/2020 7:26 PM
14	Any of the above	4/16/2020 7:14 PM
15	New Bond Street and Sloane Street	4/16/2020 6:31 PM
16	Coastal walks, East of England.	4/16/2020 6:25 PM
17	No	4/16/2020 6:16 PM
18	Ashdown Forest	4/16/2020 5:10 PM
19	south of London	4/16/2020 5:00 PM
20	Surrey, Cotswolds - basically in the western half of the south east.	4/16/2020 4:39 PM
21	Essex coast	4/16/2020 4:39 PM
22	Surrey Hills	4/16/2020 4:36 PM
23	National trust	4/16/2020 4:34 PM
24	Barton Hills National Nature Reserve	4/16/2020 4:27 PM

Q6 When would you prefer for a led walk to take place?

Answered: 151 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Saturday	47.02% 71
Sunday	36.42% 55
Other (please specify)	16.56% 25
TOTAL	151

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Either or a weekday	4/20/2020 10:30 AM
2	Wednesday	4/18/2020 9:58 PM
3	Any Day	4/18/2020 12:24 PM
4	Week Day	4/17/2020 4:41 PM
5	My work routine is very random and it would be nice to have options	4/17/2020 3:45 PM
6	Monday	4/17/2020 2:32 PM
7	Any weekend day or both	4/17/2020 8:27 AM
8	Either	4/16/2020 10:10 PM
9	Any day	4/16/2020 7:49 PM
10	Thursday	4/16/2020 7:21 PM
11	retired so a weekday is fine otherwise Saturday	4/16/2020 7:14 PM
12	Not in the way of climbing, please	4/16/2020 6:31 PM
13	Any day	4/16/2020 6:25 PM
14	No preference	4/16/2020 5:58 PM
15	A range of days - I work weekends and have variable day off in the week	4/16/2020 5:37 PM
16	midweek	4/16/2020 5:10 PM
17	Any day works for me	4/16/2020 4:58 PM
18	Mid week	4/16/2020 4:52 PM
19	Either	4/16/2020 4:44 PM
20	Don't mind Saturday or Sunday	4/16/2020 4:41 PM
21	Any day of the week	4/16/2020 4:36 PM
22	both	4/16/2020 4:34 PM
23	Any day	4/16/2020 4:33 PM
24	Thursday or Friday	4/16/2020 4:24 PM
25	Don't mind	4/16/2020 4:21 PM