

YORKSHIRE AREA MEETING MINUTES

Monday 1st June 2020; Via Zoom!

Present: over 25 in attendance, full register not completed due to limitations of Zoom.

- 1. Welcome & Introductions** – Chris Stone introduced himself; he now sits on the board of the BMC. The board has been meeting weekly to support staff, get Zoom running for meeting. He is focused on member engagement and access to the BMC, which links in with the work of the ORG and digital strategy stream of the board's work. The BMC welcome feedback on how the meeting went over Zoom for future use; please email c.stone@thebmc.co.uk.

- 2. Apologies for absence** – No apologies were received.

- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting** – March meeting was cancelled due to introduction of lockdown; December minutes are online for viewing.

- 4. Matters Arising from those minutes not covered elsewhere-** no matters arising.

- 5. BMC Response to Covid-19**
 - 5.1. Lynn Robinson on General BMC Response** – Lynn has attended all the area meetings during this round. The BMC office has been closed, with all staff working from home and some furloughed. However, the work of the BMC does continue. Revenue from insurance sales and membership has dried up; finances are OK for this year but next year may be trickier so important to keep supporting the BMC. Various articles and updates have been released via the website on the Covid response, for huts and clubs as well as general access issues. The AGM will take place as planned on 13th June at 3pm but is now virtual. To attend you need to register by the 10th June. You should have received an email along with voting instructions. The agenda is restricted as a result of the virtual AGM so the ORG

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resolutions have been deferred until the 2021 AGM. An 'Ask the Board' webinar will take place on 4th June; the agenda is available to view online. Various awards will be handed out at the AGM; please see online for list of recipients. The Youth Climbing Series has been delayed for this year and restart date is unknown; IFSC recommend at least an 8 week gap between walls reopening and competitions restarting.

5.2. Rob Dyer on Access Issues – reminder to leave crags if asked by landowners and to show common sense as per usual. The BMC have had to be reactive due to the faster than anticipated easing of lockdown. As of the date of the meeting, 6 people are allowed to meet outdoors but travel to Wales and Scotland is not allowed. There is a distinct possibility of lockdown being tightened in the future. From conversations with access reps, it seems that locals are concerned about visitors and the BMC are advocating a common sense approach aimed at giving consideration to these concerns due to potential implications for future access. However, on the flipside, the legacy of the Foot and Mouth crisis has showed that we were perhaps too quick to close down the countryside and the BMC are keen to avoid repeating this during this crisis. Fires have been a big issue over the last few weeks as outdoors has become the public's main space for socialising. There have been a large number of relatively minor fires; please report BBQs and fires wherever they are seen. Some local businesses have agreed to stop stocking disposable BBQs in line with the increased risk. Birds are on crags they previously were not; please report them as and when encountered. There is a need for a long term strategy for access to crags and uplands as total avoidance is not an option; Will Hunt raised issue of gamekeepers potentially using the lockdown as an excuse to extend raptor persecution. Rob Dyer agreed and pointed out reports of persecution have sharply increased since lockdown was introduced. Nidderdale is a hotspot for this and shows the need for climbers to exercise their rights to access crags where there is no reason not to. Please report any incidences of raptor persecution to Operation Owl.

6. Co-ordinators' Reports

6.1. **Gritstone: access & conservation** – Mick Johnson agreed that we should not 'roll over' regarding access to crags but should not antagonise either. Some complaints have been received regarding

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Huller Stones; Mick has spoken to the farmer, who was very reasonable and gave examples of climbers breaching access restrictions regarding dogs; please check the RAD! Ruin Bank is in good condition currently and the access agreement remains in place. At Caley, Mick and Paul Clarke have done some hand pruning around the boulders. Mick notes that it is very possible places look busier than they are due to people travelling to crags individually rather than car sharing. The Brimham NT car park has not yet reopened and the NT are asking people to avoid the area. 4 bolts have appeared on top of Far Crag; very strange as the rocks are very small. No idea who placed them but the next step is to remove and leave a note with contact details. Symptomatic perhaps of a large number of people heading outdoors who are perhaps unaware of the prevailing ethics; please educate people as and when you see poor practice.

6.2. Limestone: access & conservation - Nigel not in attendance due to ill health. YDNPA staff have been furloughed which has made communications and car park reopenings difficult. People are starting to trickle back to the big 3 limestone crags with no obvious issues thus far. Common sense needs to be the continuing policy.

6.3. Youth (Outdoor) - Vicky not in attendance.

6.4. Climbing Walls - Walls are obviously still closed. There is a UKC piece on potential reopening timetables from the ABC which is worth a read. Possibly reopening sometime in July with capacity likely to be the main issue. There is a marketing campaign called 'Climbing Walls Together' selling t shirts and hoodies etc. The BMC have also run a webinar with Rich Emerson of the ABC on the topic.

https://www.ukclimbing.com/news/2020/05/climbing_wall_reopenings_an_update_from_the_abc-72329

6.5. Clubs - Pete not in attendance. Very little to report in any case. How club huts can be reopening is being reviewed regularly; jane@thebmc.co.uk is the contact for this.

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7. **Hill Walking** - Chris not in attendance. Little to report that has not previously been discussed.

8. **National Council Update** – Doing a lot of work on member engagement and board performance, council management and organisation. A long term program for council meetings is being put in place. The communications plan will run up to 2021 so plenty of time to give feedback. The May update for ORG work is available on the ORG site.

9. **Individual Members' Issues** - none arising.

10. **Any Other Business** – Mountain Training raised as an issue for potential instructors as sessions and QMDs have obviously not been running. Lynn pointed out that 1-1 sessions are now allowed but not sure on assessments as yet; best bet is to email Mountain Training directly.

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