



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### North West Area ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting held online via Zoom  
On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 19:30

## Minutes

**Attendance (34 signed in, 39 counted):** Emily Pitts (KMC), Paul Evans (KMC), Andy Cairns (CC / FRCC), Alison Cairns (CC / Pinnacle + Peak NC Rep), Roberta Spagnul, James McHaffie, Carl Spencer, Chris & Anne Ensoll, Chris Stone (London & SE Chair), Christine Slater, Tim Greenhalgh (LMC), Craig Perkins, Cressida Allwood, Dave Turnbull, David Toon, Dom Hartin, Dominic Oughton (Rucksack Club), Dudley Pritchard, Les Ainsworth, Patryk Faff, L Nicholson, Lucas Huntley, Lynn Robinson, Mandy Glanvill, Mat And Rach ???, Mike app??, Rebecca Pearson, Joe Green, Richard Toon, Rikki Price, Steve Charles, Stuart Holmes, Tim Jepson, Tom Greenham, Tony Lowe, Wendy ??

#### 1. Welcome, quorum, apologies for absence

The chair Emily Pitts opened the meeting. A quorum was present in accordance with Article 28.6.1 of the British Mountaineering Council's articles of association. Apologies were received from Dave Robinson and Mark Hounslea.

#### 2. Minutes & Actions from the previous meeting held on 11/03/20

The minutes from the previous meeting on 11th March 2020, were approved without amendment. No actions were outstanding from the previous minutes.

#### 3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

None noted.

#### 4. Equity Steering Group Report

James McHaffie gave a presentation on the Equity Steering Group, covering success to date, the standard we have reached, next priorities, and the objectives for 3-5 years away. He also covered where members might want to get involved. There are 5 subgroups, covering disability, women's development, BAME, Mental Health and LGTBQ.

**ACTION:** EP to include question 'What more do members feel the BMC could be doing on equity?'  
For distribution on FB and area survey

Les Ainsworth asked how much resources the BMC assigned to Equity. JM replied that he spent around 2 days per week, rest was volunteer resource.

Richard Toon asked what guidance was available on equity as applied to club constitutions.

**ACTION:** Dominic Oughton took an action to investigate as part of his clubs coordinator role.

Lynn Robinson reported that Jesse Dufton, the blind climber featured in a recent Alistair Lee film, had received the Rehan Siddiqui award.

## 5. **BMC Response to COVID-19, coming out of lockdown.**

Emily Pitts opened by summarising the various items of advice which are available to members and the wider outdoor community from the BMC and Mountain Rescue. These are available as part of the presentation pack which will be released on the BMC communities site.

Dave Turnbull then gave a brief presentation on the BMCs work on the COVID-19 lockdown and returning to climbing and hillwalking, including the recovery plan and subsequent developments.

Regular meetings of all access reps are being held frequently to coordinate responses. At present climbers and hillwalkers are being very responsible nationally with very few incidents reported; no incidents are known in the NW area. Emily Pitts thanked the local community for their help. Dave Turnbull noted that the regulations in Wales were different and tighter than the regulations in England.

Richard Toon and Mandy Glanvill expressed concerns around farmers closing footpaths “due to Covid” and wanted a clearer / stronger BMC response on this issue. Mandy noted that in the Lakes even some locals were being turned back on paths. Tim Greenhalgh stated that farmers had received government advice that they were responsible for disinfecting gates and stiles.

Dave Toon expressed concerns that RAD was not being updated with recent access related changes, as it should be the master source of such information.

**ACTION:** NW area team to contact BMC office to update RAD with recent changes & identify process for updating RAD.

Resumption of club meets and use of club huts – it was noted that these would be a later priority when restrictions have eased further.

## 6. **Area reps reports**

6.1. Les Ainsworth gave a presentation covering his thoughts on returning to climbing safely and listing restrictions which he would like climbers to comply with, including parking guidance for Jumbles, Stronstrey and Pinfold (later added advice for Stanworth) and a request to temporarily avoid Withnell Qy, Shore Qy, Pudsey Qy, Castle Qy, Hall Stones, Craig Y Longridge & Witches Qy. The request to avoid CyL caused considerable debate both online and at the meeting, summarised under Any Other Business below. Les also repeated his usual request for climbers to help by cleaning up the crags they visit. A number of bird nesting restrictions are now in place (Wilton 1, Stronstrey, Deeply Vale and Roundbarn) and RAD has been updated for these. Finally Les gave an update on the Wired guidebook collective progress, with work continuing on Northern Rock, and Peak Gritstone and Lakes Sport Climbing about to go to the printers. Mark Hounslea could not attend the meeting but Emily reported on his behalf that there were no particular restrictions at the main Cheshire Crags (Helsby and Pex), and that access work continues at venues in public parks in Runcorn and St Helens. Tom Greenham stated that people have been parking carelessly at Harmers Wood and that this has the potential to cause issues. Stuart Holmes mentioned the Troy bolt issue – see AOB.

**ACTION:**MH to follow up Harmers Wood Parking

6.2. Dominic Oughton gave a presentation on his new role as area clubs coordinator. He summarised the goals of the recent ODG clubs strategy workstream, listed the issues which had been raised

as “needing further guidance / collaboration” by local clubs, and suggested some ways in which local clubs could stay engaged with their members while lockdown / restrictions were in place. Dominic listed some Rucksack club “virtual meets” which all were welcome to attend.

6.3. Steve Charles reported that we had 3 hillwalking conservation projects arranged for the year, but that the March NT moss planting (which became a hydrological project, with 12 people interested) and the April Snowdonia weekend projects had to be cancelled due to lockdown. The March project produced good links with local NT, so likely we will rearrange something when lockdown ends. The August Snowdonia weekend project is also likely to be cancelled. Steve asked for views on whether the area should continue to lead on local conservation projects, or whether this would be better handled by clubs. After some discussion it was agreed that a combination of clubs hosting “open” events and events created by area was a good way forward, with all groups working collaboratively. Discussion included consideration for BMC members who are not members of a club (62% of NW area BMC Members do not belong to a BMC affiliated club)

ACTION: Emily, Steve and Paul to discuss.

6.4. Stuart Holmes reported that YCS had one round remaining and the grand final. The remaining round will be cancelled, the final will be rearranged when possible, to be scheduled by Zoe when she returns from furlough. Caff have youth meets in the diary but may end up having to be cancelled. All local walls are currently closed, the ABC are working on proposals to re-open, believed to be Sept at earliest. Walls likely to re-open with reduced numbers and increased controls. Re-opening easier for bouldering walls than route walls.

ACTION: Stuart will investigate getting “walls profiles” published on facebook, to help get people back to local walls when they re-open.

6.5. Roberta Spagnul gave a brief presentation on the analysis she is currently doing on area facebook posts, to understand what makes posts successful, who is being reached (gender, age group), what messages and post types are successful etc etc. Dominic Oughton and Joe Green volunteered to help with area facebook posts. The email address [bmcnwcomms@gmail.com](mailto:bmcnwcomms@gmail.com) should be used for people to send news (text and/or photos) into the area.

ACTION: EP to a) schedule meeting with JG & DO b) add to the Facebook page c) Add to Google Drive for scheduling

## 7. **NW Events Calendar 2020**

Tim Greenhalgh gave an update on WiltonFest (scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> Sept). At the time of the meeting it was unclear whether it would be going ahead. Subsequent to the meeting Tim advised that in consultation with the BMC it has been decided not to proceed with the normal format; he was now investigating holding some form of online event, and is seeking suggestions. Anyone with ideas can forward them via the BMC NW area Facebook page or to [bmcnwchair@gmail.com](mailto:bmcnwchair@gmail.com).

## 8. **National Council report**

Carl Spencer (NC Rep) reported that the NC had been meeting online during the lockdown, with a reduced agenda focusing on priorities for ODG, the AGM and other strategic initiatives – digital strategy, clubs strategy, ToR for the wales group, essential Articles of Association changes, and the Governance Working Group.

## 9. **BMC AGM latest view**

Dave Turnbull reported we are using the same company for AGM proxy voting, and intending to live stream the AGM. Documentation will be issued later this week. Emily said that the area will help with distribution of information as it comes in. Paul asked that any area members who had not received AGM voting information by the end of next week (29<sup>th</sup> May) should contact him.

## 10. **Any other business**

- 10.1. Emily sent the video link for the Steve McClure video out by chat. She also did a prize draw.
- 10.2. Dave Turnbull stated for information that in the next financial year there were likely to be significant financial challenges for the BMC, with major drops in insurance income.
- 10.3. Richard Toon stated that in his view Mondays were a good night for BMC meetings, other nights not as good; Dominic Oughton agreed. There was some discussion around meetings, including whether to use meetings for specific topics, submeetings / "zoom rooms", whether to hold meetings physically, online or both; EP / PE to consider member survey for night of meeting / meeting location.
- 10.4. Wilton Management committee. Richard Toon raised a question around the Wilton Management Committee – whether it was still active, and who was on it?
- 10.5. Craig Y Longridge discussion. Differing views were expressed in the meeting (and in online discussions) as to whether to seek and take notice of the views of the occupants of the houses adjacent to CyL. After some discussion Les was authorised to seek views of the householders. This produced an excellent and rapid resolution to the issue on the day following the meeting, with almost all householders happy for climbing to take place, 1 undecided and nobody opposed.
- 10.6. Troy quarry bolts. Stuart Holmes offered to replace the bolt which had been reported as loose. This is on a flat area of crag top where belays are hard to find, not on a vertical rock face. He would replace it with a resin bolt to avoid corrosion issues. An online vote was taken with no opposition to replacing the bolt.

ACTIONS FROM AOB:        EP & PE to organise member survey including days of meetings  
   LA to find out about Wilton Management Group  
   LA to explore CyL householder views  
   SH to replace bolt at Troy like-for-like with a resin bolt

## 11. **Date of next Area Ordinary Meeting**

The scheduled date of the next area meeting is Tues 8th Sept. This may need to be held online due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Watch the BMC NW area Facebook page for further updates.

### **Post Note:**

In the most turbulent of times, it is heartening to see the presence of climbers, hillwalkers and mountaineers joining the meeting and engaging in the democratic process. We saw lively and respectful discussion, enabling people to have a say, develop perspectives and gain information to make informed choices. Thank you to all attendees.

I would welcome anyone who hasn't attended one of our meetings, or who has been away for a while to join us next time, where we will have further opportunities for debate, discussion and decision-making.

Best wishes,

Emily Pitts - Chair