



Peak Area Meeting

Venue: Zoom

Time & Date: 7.30pm, Wednesday 2nd September 2020

Minutes

- **Supporting documentation can be found at:**
 - <https://community.thebmc.co.uk/Event.aspx?view=report&id=4224>

1. Welcome & Introduction

Apologies: Linda Moran, Emma Holland, Mark McKenzie & Vikki Hughes.

Greeting & explanation of how meeting works:

Andy Reeve:

- Everyone will be muted, if you would like to speak electronically raise your hand.
- Link to the agenda & previous meeting posted in chat.
- Feel free to post in the chat but this will not be monitored.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th May 2020

No amendments.

3. National Council (NC) Update

David Brown:

- Summary document presented at meeting, uploaded to BMC website.
- The meetings have mostly been COVID related.
- There have been 3 board resignations and the chair has announced he will not be seeking a second term as Chair.
- Overall the NC has been critical but supportive of the board.
 - There are no minutes due to the sensitivity of the discussion
- A copy of the NC's letter to the board has been uploaded to the UKC's forum.
- The NC is hopeful with regards to the board's future.

Chris Stone: Update on the Board



- There are 3 public statements on the BMC website.
 - The first statement lacked detailed
 - The second contained more details & also tried to outline a forward plan.
- Jon Punshon resignation was in relation to the handling of an investigation.
- The two independent directors, Mathew Bradbury and Amanda Parshall, resigned due to behaviours on the Board in relation to others following this up.
- The Chair, Gareth Pierce, will not be standing for a second term.
- The Board spent 8 hours meeting with the National Council as they want to rectify the situation & move forward.
- The Board is looking at membership communication. There have been lots of positive communication with regard to COVID & through lockdown.
- Due to funding bids & wanting to maintain a positive relationship the Board have informed Sport England of the situation. The Board is receiving support from Sport England.
- The Board needs to be at full strength so NOMCOM putting in place recruitment for chair & independent directors.
- The Board have appointed 3 advisors. No vote but 'critical friends'. They are already providing critical input.
- The Board need to look at themselves. There will be a facilitating session to ensure we reflect & move forwards and an external board evaluation. The external evaluation is required & funded by Sports England. The two processes are separate but complement each other.
- The NC letter asked the Board to examine their conduct but was supportive.
- There's a strategic review consultation.
- A sub group has been formed on decision making to allow certain decision to be made quicker.
- The Board are aware of the unacceptable nature of missing minutes, the minutes have to go through the NC but as of today have been uploaded to the BMC website.
- An interim executive has been appointed for a 3-month term, they are working with the CEO and executive CEO to progress & achieve strategic goals.

Lynn Robinson:

- The Board disagreements are not about strategy.
- There has been phenomenal work from everyone during COVID.
- The Board resignations are bad but would like to thank everyone for their support.
- Andy Syme has been chairing the NC meetings as Lynn has a conflict of interest due to director history.

Questions/Discussion:

Q: *Simon* - The Board have been beating about the bush. There has been no explanation from either the Board or the NC as to the reason for the resignations. As a member-led organisation this is shocking.

A: *Chris Stone* - The Board have made clear what they can/have information on. The Independent Directors reasons are what they wished to be made public.



Q: *Simon* - Other concerning aspect is that legal advice sought over resignation letters.

A: *Chris Stone* - No legal advice sought to restrict publication of resignation letters.

Q: *Simon* - What was the legal advice?

A: *Chris Stone* - Advice was on whether statements to the board should be shared.

Q: *Simon* - Seems wrong that anything is restricted, are the board clear on reasons for resignation?

A: *Chris Stone* - Yes. Wanted to understand why people resigned & what was going on. We have spoken to everyone as to what actions drove them to resign and it seems an accumulation of actions. There isn't one person or thing to pin the blame on its a cumulative list of things.

A: *David Brown* - NC did not look for problem, the NC want to support the Board. An immediate decision was made to help not to know the minute details.

Q: *Simon* - Is there a theme centred on ORG not happening as quickly as some people want?

A: *David Brown* - No.

Q: *Mike Pinder* - There's no information to ask questions about, don't want to know what it's not about, want to know the problem. If the Board can't work together then we need a new Board. This would be an extreme response but there's no other information.

Information should be in the public domain, clear discussion, reasons & actions. The Board continues to make decisions then adding additional members not helpful.

Simon - The additional members are from the same pool of people but two independent directors have been lost, need more independent people.

A: *Andy Syme* - Could have called a general meeting but felt this was not appropriate. Had confidence in individuals so let the Board deal with it. It must be for the Board to sort, the NC is not a shadow Board. From what the Board have said we think they can resolve this but if they don't we will call a general meeting. I don't think we will find a better Board, these are competent people who can extract themselves from this situation. The legal advice could affect the way the Board & NC communicate, this has been recognised and is being investigated.

Q: *Rupert Davies* - As an ex BMC exec member I have sympathy. You think certain things shouldn't be communicated. I have confidence in the NC. When someone's on the Board or NC they may think there's been good communication but it's not. From the outside we need a definitive steer or clear insight else confidence will be lost.

A: *Chris Stone* - Will take this on board.

Andy Reeve - Difficult to take the right line & communication is slow as the Board are communicating internally.

Mike Pinder - The Problem is Andy has personal accreditation, but this is 'Andy' saying this. We need the board to communicate with members not the Board just communicating to the NC.

Lynn Robinson - Thank you for feedback. Will take it onboard.



4. 2021 Strategic Plan Review

Chris Stone:

- The strategic review is on the BMC website, there is a survey on there for feedback.
- The purpose of this is to trigger discussion on themes & produce priorities.
- Feedback up until the 11th September.

Henry Folkard:

- The directors should recognise the excellent work already going on. With COVID and money issues why would anyone prioritise BMC membership? The things that affect members, environment & access, should be prioritised as both are of interest and widely visible. There are more people joining from non-traditional backgrounds, numbers should not be prioritised but quality membership. Membership in some areas is already really high and may not be sustainable. Point 4a does not uphold access to countryside. Access is vulnerable, especially where high volumes creates nuisance. The Board upheaval is bad and not beneficial to the BMC, work with the membership. Thank you to Chris.

David Brown:

- There are two issues, the concept of looking for new members by saying we want them to go outside but we actually want the people who are already outside to join. We need to utilise existing volunteers specialities & competencies.

5. ODG Update

Alison Cairns:

- The update is on the area community page.
- Two papers out for consultation, the first one by 11th September
- The Welsh BMC has formed & is meeting
- Governance working group report being finalised & will be published shortly

Questions/Discussion:

David Brown: Review of the specialist committees goes to NC then the Board.

Steve Clark: Alison's information & reviews will maximise benefit to members.

Q. Louise Hawson - Does the club strategy feed into the member strategy for the strategic plan?

A. Alison Cairns - Whilst they're connected there is no direct focus on aiding clubs to grow memberships.

A. Andy Syme - Aim is to make clubs stronger which aids membership recruitment & retention.

A. Lynn Robinson - Plan in place to liaise with student clubs.



Q. *Mike Pinder* - ODG survey feedback in obscure part of BMC website. Information needs to be easy to access & find.

A. *Chris Stone* – Will investigate

6. Hillwalking Update

Peter Judd:

- Mend Our Mountains Part 2. Work is hopefully beginning in autumn.
 - Great Ridge now has planning permission but issues with contractor access
 - Same with Cut Gate
- Postponed area walk
 - Hopefully soon. BMC investigating group events for climbing & walks.
- Sphagnum planting
 - Talking to National Trust hopefully possible.
- Real 3 Peaks litter pick
 - Dovestone reservoir one of the worst places for litter so a group of 6 people will be doing a litter pick on the 3rd September.

7. Access Update

Louise Hawson:

- Access should not be taken for granted, some areas get really busy, bad parking etc annoys the landowners and we could lose access in these areas.
- Peak District residents Parish Council meeting highlighted van & 'wild' camping as an issue. Van camping is a particular issue in the Peak, particularly vans with no toilets. As the BMC we want to promote leave no trace.
- Options appraisal for Stanage. Thanks to those who responded as individuals. Looking at buildings & opportunities. Stanage Forum will be monitored. Open meeting won't be live online but looking at getting input & feedback.

Questions/Discussion:

- Hills to Oceans litter picking equipment can be applied for or collected from Go Outdoors or Alpkit in Hathersage to aid litter picking in the Peak.

Henry Folkard – Access is often affected by non-climbers. In Padley Gorge you get a £100 fine & 3 points but in Wales your car is towed.



Kim Leyland – Ring Ouzels

- Good year this year. There was a lack of climbers in lockdown and the birds didn't move up the crags. Good news for birds & climbers.

Q. Martin Wass – Wild camping hasn't historically been a problem. Van camping and squatting are not wild camping. We need to be clear on what wild camping, particularly with the new trespassing consultation.

A. Louise Hawson – Yes, wild camping often used to mean anything not in a campsite, we need to be clear.

8. Any Other Business

- Officer Recruitment:
 - We still need a Club rep for the Peak area if anyone is interested.
 - Elections at the next general meeting if anyone wants to run for a position feel free, info will be on Facebook.
- Climbing outdoors etiquette
 - Don't climb through to bolts on sports climbs.
- Peak District Grit Wired Guide
 - Available from the BMC shop.

9. Date and venue of next meetings: 4th November 19:30