



NORTH EAST AREA ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting held on Zoom
On 21 May 2020

MINUTES

Attendance: -

Simon Litchfield Secretary
Franco Cookson Access (Durham)
Jonathan White Director
Pippa Archer
Chris Bullock
Pete Forbes
Mark Goodings

Graham Harkness
Darren Milne
Philip Powell
Francis

11 in attendance

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The secretary Simon Litchfield opened the meeting. Apologies were received from Mark Anstiss, Mike Conlon, Jon Punshon

2. Quorum

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")].

3. Minutes from the previous meeting held on 21st May 2020

3.1. The minutes from the previous meeting held on 21st May 2020, a draft of which were available on the BMC website. These were approved.

4. National Council

4.1 Jonathan White reported:

a) Jon Punshon resigned from NC and Board and a statement was read on his behalf. He remains actively engaged with the BMC and has joined the Finance and Audit committee. Jon will give further details on his return.

b) Gareth, Board Chair, also decided to not to stand again.

c) Two of the three independent directors have also stood down.

The Board intentionally has a diverse membership in order to bring a range of views on how to progress.

5. Strategic Plan

5.1 A new staff member has been employed by the BMC to work on strategic review (started on Tuesday).

The background to it: Membership renewal being affected by COVID-19 has had a financial impact.

- Some staff members furloughed, which will end soon.
- Reserves have not been drawn upon.

- Organisation to survive.
- Loss of income including: travel insurance.
- Covid-19 impact means that more support is needed for clubs – particularly those with huts (e.g. reduced income generation) and student clubs.
- Olympics 2021
- Brexit (e.g. travel arrangements)
- Representation of under-represented groups.

Presentation and resources here: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/2021-strategic-review-consultation>

Francis: re: IT. RAD and near miss reporting tool had been useful for him in his experience of South East climbs. However, he only found it by accident. Better signposting / tabs.

Chris Bullock – encouraged that the BMC is listening. When plans are formulated, please consult with members before they are rolled out.

- Mark Goodings seconded CBs sentiment. E.g. around paraclimbing let downs. Youth Comp cash not reinvested.
- JW: Level of staffing and money is proportionately highest to competition climbing (other than access and conservation). But agrees it is important to get people back on board, get the resources (both staff and finances) best used and learn from mistakes. Nick Colton (plus three) now dedicated full to this area (most other areas in the BMC get c.a. 0.5 FTE).
- MG. Needs to continue post-Olympics, so that it is sustainable in the long term. Grassroots are key!
- CB – Communications with parents is a key link.
- JW: BMC has c.15 cttees, competitions cttee recently created by CPPG. These issues are on the radar.
- Consensus that grassroots are key, as it results in long-term membership.

Franco: What assurances that this destructive tendency of the BMC won't happen again? (in the light of UKC discussion boards). E.g. independent directors leaving etc.

- JW: Board is not always going to be unified but is trying to communicate within the constraints of confidentiality.
- The world keeps changing and so must the BMC. But ultimately most people are doing it voluntarily with their passion for Mountaineering in mind.

Francis – Needs to be better at publicises what it does through website. E.g. an about us tab.

JW - One problem is that the BMC is trying to be all things to all people. 30 staff, half are administrators (insurance etc), 10 specialist officers (training, comps, clubs, technical etc). Currently involved in 90 -100 groups.

6. Covid-19 Update

- Thanks to all who assisted and abided by Covid-19 restrictions.
- Walls now open for business
- Eldon Square closed for 6 months

7. Reports

Area reports:

South: No issues

Durham:

Stanhope: No go. Fences, bolt removal.

Hownsgill – all bolts removed, but who is unknown.

Bollihope: Police turned up in error. Access land, but sensitive with gamekeeper. Rob Dyer and Franco involved, talking to land agents etc.

8. AOB

Mark Gooding: We need to get back to discussing local issues rather than being stuck with National Council debates.

Francis – Zoom meetings in future.

JW: Yes, hybrid is the future.

9. Date of next Area Meeting

12th November 7.00.