



LAKES AREA MEETING

On Wednesday 7 July 2021 at 19.30

MINUTES

Present - F.Bennett (Chair), F Sanders, K Sanders, M Parsons, R Kenyon, P Powell, K Taylor, M Hetherington, I Armstrong, A Cairns, A Salisbury, R Outhwaite, A Hinkes, Matthew C, P Powell, T Rogers.

Special guests - D Chalmers (CEO of Friends of the Lakes); J Cornforth (National Trust)

Apologies - D Brown, G Campion

1. **Welcome and introductions by FB.**
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting - available on the BMC Community website**
3. **Matters arising from that meeting or not covered elsewhere**
4. **BMC - Update by Fiona Sanders (BMC Director)**
 - **Impact of Covid 19 affecting travel insurance and income to BMC**
 - **Having more social media attention to highlight membership and invite new members**
 - **Lot through members but also to a wider audience.**
 - **Lot of new people to the likes of the Lake District through the pandemic, could be potential members.**
 - **Reviewing BMC membership packages**
 - **Looking to increase the BMC membership subs by the RPI - looking to be by £1 at the next AGM.**
 - **Advertising for a commercial officer and operations manager and looking at other ways to raise income and not just rely on member subs.**
 - **Marketing PR exercise to raise profile and grow clubs via the new operational partnership with several other leading organisations in the UK including Ramblers Association, Ordnance Survey and YHA.**
 - **Olympics – Shauna Coxley going to Tokyo, with Head of Performance – this is funded by Sport England and therefore not having an impact on the finances of the BMC.**
 - **Winter Olympics - Ice climbing to be included in the next Winter Olympics in Beijing 2022.**
5. **LDNPA Plan 2020-2025 Consultation**
 - **Douglas Chalmers (FOLD) commented as follows –**
 - **Comments to LDNPA in by deadline**
 - **Heavily subscribed**
 - **2000 looks**
 - **FOLD supportive of number of elements but huge reservations regarding transport.**
 1. **The aspirations do not go far enough to reach carbon reduction targets.**

2. Too many cars in the National Park.
 3. Major ask !
 4. Needs to look at feasibility study to look at management of transport.
 5. LDNPP (Partnership) under pressure from commercial areas to ensure there are no constraints whatsoever to the volume of visitors in the Lake District.
 6. There needs to be a better visitor experience – and not end up in a huge traffic jam (not everywhere !).
 7. In 2019 FOLD held a Sustainable Transport Conference - but nothing happened since – admittedly the pandemic and associated issues have not helped. Ideas such as road charging with exemptions for locals etc .
- Comments from others –
 - Series of comments put together and agreed by the BMC from executive of Lakes area - these were submitted to the LDNPA - copy to be put onto BMC Lakes Area Facebook page. Not actioned by RK.
 - Ken Taylor mentioned that the Access Management Group has a working group looking at sustainable transport nationally.
 - Ian Armstrong - raised concerns of the local climbers and accessibility to the area for cragging.
 - Ron Kenyon raised issue –
 1. Similar to Ian and access to the likes of the Central Lakes for climbing on Great Gable and also winter climbing
 2. Also that each valley is different and has own issues and there is no solution of one fits all
 - Mike Parsons raised (In ref to Ian Armstrongs comment) and emphasised the issue that there is no user group on the LDNP Partnership -
 1. Closest group is the Local Access Forum – but no resources at its disposal
 2. There is a business group !!
 3. BMC were there as observers.
 4. Dave Turnbull now has meetings with Richard Leafe and issues directed through him to RL
 5. Rob Bishop (BMC) sits on the Local Access Forum.
 - Mike Parsons also mentioned that there is an Ullswater Valley group looking at the area – which highlights usefulness for each valley. “CAST” - Cumbria Action for Sustainable Transport created initially focussed on the Ullswater Valley.
 - Main concerns of FOLD –
 1. Management of visitors - making it easier to get about.
 2. Concerns of planning - big hotels are getting bigger !
 3. Upland farming families
 1. Land management needs experienced land managers
 2. Farming needs focused flexible funding
 3. Farmers need a secure future – not false promises.
 4. Too much uncertainty.
 4. FOLD had supported the Valley Action Plan but this was stymied by the LDNPP as too complicated.

6. Impact of Covid-19 – Post Lockdown

- Joe Cornforth (NT - Borrowdale) reported –
 - Heaving at Bank Holiday
 - Last year was horrendous - this year not quite as bad - but !!
 - Most people on the lake shores - less people on the fells - but still there.
 - Stills lots of rubbish to bring down from Sprinkling Tarn.
 - Volunteer wardens (100) at fell access points been useful to get out messages to those going onto the fell

7. Belay system at Upper Heron Crag

- Issue of the belay system at crag raised over time and recently.
- Vegetation at the top has grown over the years and now necessary to place belay rope at the top prior to climbing. Idea of placing belay bolts along the top has been suggested. Currently not agreed as national policy except in some situations e.g. belay system at Sergeant Crag Slabs, which was placed due to ecological reasons
- Points as follows –
 - Mark Hetherington and Ian Armstrong climbed there recently and put in place the belay ropes, which is done with nut places (no trees or blocks for slings !)
 - Joe Cornforth (NT owns the land) indicated it could be a good idea and would seem no objection from NT - but there are other issues !
 - RK recalled first ascents and seemed not a problem then – but the name of one of the routes “Bilberry Topping” hints at the issue.
 - Crag not massively popular – possibly put off by description in guides.
 - 29 ascents of the most popular route on UKC – whereas 10 times that much at Sergeant Crag Slabs of Lakeland Cragman.
 - Issue of need to “promote” mountain crags to increase usage.
 - Idea of having a crag clean up and remove the vegetation – MH indicated this would be a huge and difficult job.
 - Keith Sanders raised the issue that after the pandemic restrictions access to a number of crags is now more difficult and the crags have been climbed on less. Is this reflected by the general decline in trad climbing - and would warrant a future debate about this and related issues to make trad climbing more attractive with the likes of bolted belays and better control of abseil points etc etc

Action Point - possible issue for future meeting or a separate special meeting !!

- Issue here is not the same as Sergeant Crag Slabs - way walking off does not create an issue.
- Access to the crag area up from left and then along to top.
- Issue of having to carry another rope !!
- Bolted belays are more of a convenience issue - but would probably increase popularity.
- Concerns of “crossing the line”
- Mixed feelings of the climbing community - also feeling that bolts would be removed if placed there !!
- Generally agreed -
 1. Leave matters as they are for the time being.
 2. Have better instructions in the next guidebook.

8. Access Issues



- Nest on Lower Falcon
 - Issue reported in the Area Newsletter. Kestrels in the nest have now flown and access signs removed. Thanks to members of Carlisle MC for reporting the situation.
- Block on the Fang, Swindale
 - Issue reported in Area Newsletter - thanks to Cliff Lowther for reporting and climbers for help in removal of the block.
- Hodge Close - Rockfall
 - Large rockfall in the "Stiff Little Fingers/Secret Affair on 27th June. Not sure if it has affected other routes in that area !

9. Lakes Fest – Duddon Valley

- Various other events at the end of September and now looking to have on the weekend of 24th April 2022.
- Comment by Rik Outhwaite on promoting such events and issue of transport - RK indication promotion of access to railway station at Broughton and able to ferry to Seathwaite.
- Mention that there is a campsite next to the pub which might be of use - Anne/Ron to report to the group.

10. New Lakes Area Secretary from next AGM

- Notice given that RK would like to stand down which is 24th October..

11. Any other business.

- Looking for Area Youth Coordinator to run 2021 Youth Climbing Series (YCS) in the NE and Lakes Region - details on Lakes Area Facebook page
- Mountain Ringlet Butterfly - survey being done during July - again details on Lakes Area Facebook page.

12. Next Meetings

- Meeting dates -
 - Wednesday 20/10/2021
 - Wednesday 26/01/2022
 - Wednesday 20/04/2022
 - Wednesday 06/07/2022
- Suggested meeting venue for October 2021 at Lyon Equipment at Tebay with zoom link -
 - FB to check with Lyon
 - Chris Stone (BMC London area) is looking into hybrid meeting systems

The BMC was founded in 1944 with membership open to all, "regardless of race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or socioeconomic status".

<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/a-brief-history-of-the-bmc>