



Cyngor Mynyddda Prydain Cymru – Gogledd
BMC Cymru/Wales – North

Annual Report Adroddiad Blynyddol October 2021

From the Chair

Despite a year of ever-changing covid restrictions, both government- and self-imposed, demanding much BMC attention locally, there have still been plenty of opportunities for members to enjoy the hills and crags. Travel restrictions forced renewed interest in little used public rights of way and climbing venues, snow on the mountains offered some of the best skiing and snowshoeing for years and even the predicted 'staycation' chaos in the National Park proved to be easily avoided by anyone who had wider aspirations than Yr Wyddfa or Y Glyderau.

Those covid restrictions led to another year of on-line area meetings, unfortunately without any sustained increase in attendance, at which there was a welcome decrease in the dominance of Organisational Review issues on agendas. There is now an expectation of moving to a mix of on-line and face to face meetings in 2022.

The past year has seen the Pwyllgor Cymru Committee stabilising its membership and role, which, combined with the appointment of a Policy and Campaigns Officer for Wales, and a new staff structure for Access and Conservation in Wales, should offer better support for the North Wales area in future, and drive forwards the interests of all BMC members operating in Wales.

Good working relationships with the South Wales area and the Pwyllgor Cymru ensured the successful organisation of an All-Wales Climate Project event in March, an Environment and Access hustings, in April prior to elections in Wales, and also contributed to the production of an excellent BMC Manifesto for the outdoors in Wales.

Furlough arrangements for paid BMC staff have highlighted the importance of voluntary work by members. Members in North Wales have continued, with minimal support, to develop arguments, ideas, guidelines and recommendations in a series of vitally important areas of concern including National Park Path Maintenance policy, Transport Management in Eryri, the Carneddau Landscape Project and The Use of Fixed Gear on North Wales Crags. A detailed focus on all such issues has to be maintained over a period of many years before the results of any influence we have can be seen. Few issues of import can nowadays be dealt with in one or two brief discussions.

However, as an area Chair, I have been disappointed on occasions by the attitude of some paid BMC officers towards the work of volunteers. Two examples illustrate that disappointment; firstly, the decision to advise paid officers that they should not consider attendance at area meetings (even on-line) as a priority, and secondly, the failure to consult with North Wales area officers before production of podcasts about Cwm Idwal and Yr Wyddfa. Subsequent contact with relevant, paid BMC officers to discuss my concerns did nothing to allay my fears that the contribution of volunteers is sometimes undervalued, unrecognised and misunderstood. Such attitudes seem perverse within a 'member-led' organisation.

Last year I announced that I would be standing down as Chair, only to continue in post when no replacement was forthcoming. This year, I have decided to put myself forward for re-election, but I will happily stand aside if any member wants to take on the role.

Currently North Wales has only one area representative on the Members' Council, and urgently needs to find someone willing to become the second. The work of a volunteer is important, but always enjoyable as part of a collaborative team of like-minded members. The work doesn't need to be onerous, and I would like to hear from anyone who feels that they could have something to contribute to the volunteer work of the area. Hopefully, as fewer covid restrictions become the norm, we can once again hold practical volunteer events, such as a Tremadog Clean-Up, to get more people involved.

I would like to thank unreservedly all those many members who have volunteered during the last year, whether it has been negotiating access, joining a working group, judging at a climbing competition, setting up Zoom polls, flagging up an issue, or just attending a meeting. Your contribution is much appreciated.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I note the death of Gareth Pierce, who died while walking with friends in the hills he loved. Gareth gave great support to the North Wales area, and to the Welsh language, during his time as Chair of the BMC Board. Dan ni'n dy golli di, Gareth.

Tim Jepson
Cadeirydd BMC Cymru (Gogledd)
05/10/21

Youth Development

I would really like to praise the athletes from the North Wales Youth Climbing Academy. They have all worked really hard over the summer and they have returned to competitions after Covid with their heads held high, knowing that they've put in an enormous amount of effort. Many of the athletes have achieved podium places and

are currently on track to make the grand final. They have really done themselves, their coaches and the area proud!

The last round of the Youth Climbing Series is at the Beacon on 6th November. We are still looking for volunteers in a range of roles including: belayers, judges and ushers. Please could members get in touch via email (jemma.c.powell@gmail.com), if available and willing.

Jemma Powell
05/10/2021