



BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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DE CYMRU / SOUTH WALES ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting held online
On Thursday 8 July 2021

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

In absence of the Area Chair, Peter Sheppard (Area Secretary) took the chair in accordance with Area ToRs.

Elfyn paid tribute to Gareth Pierce who sadly passed away at the weekend.

Apologies had been received Dorian Thomas, Luke Allum, Emma Davies, Matt Woodfield, Goi Ashmore.

A quorum was present in accordance with Article 7.1 of the British Mountaineering Council's Terms of Reference for Areas ("Area ToRs").

2. Acceptance of previous meeting minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 26 April 2021, a draft of which had been posted on the BMC website were approved.

3. Y Bryn Wind Farm Proposal

BMC are being seen as a consultee after making representations previously. Elfyn has briefly reviewed these papers and it does not appear there is any impact on recreational access.

A paper was circulated before the meeting. No one has raised any objections to this proposal.

Pete Salenieks asked if there was any information on grid connection, high voltage cables etc.

4. Updates

4.1. Access - General (Elfyn) –

Access reform programme – final report submitted to Ministers to make a decision on what proposals to take forward. Open access to the coast being pushed.

Cycling on access land and footpaths – 2 options put forward – BMC have not given a position on this. Need to keep a watching brief.

Site meeting with NRW – Space Mountain – peregrine nesting site. Right hand side will need a seasonal bird restriction (probably affecting about 25% of the crag, right of and including the route ‘Nuns and Soldiers’), but the left-hand side should be ok.

Tarmac – Pant Quarry. Mixed success. Still cannot allow access, the site will be re-opened as a working quarry within months, and HSE have instructed that the public must be excluded. They are regarding us as a stakeholder and will be willing to discuss post-quarrying restoration plans for 5-10 years time.

4.2. Access - Gower (Stuart Burns) –

Not much new to report, fairly restrictions in place e.g. Trial Wall, no other issues at present.

Hoping to meet with the National Trust soon to discuss various sites.

4.3. Access - Pembrokeshire (Steve Quinton) –

Pretty quiet in Pembrokeshire. The Pembroke Respect the Rock video has now been posted on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SArnUhiF1UM>

Online briefing for Range West still in place. Nesting restrictions pretty much the same as previous years.

<http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales/things-to-do/outdoor-activities/castlemartin-range-recreational-access-brief/>

There have been a small number of infringements – possibly people new to the area, not understanding the red pots, and people not following the rules for Range West access including driving a car into the range. There was a recent celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Range West Trespass. Please do help to self-police Range West

4.4. Access - South East (Eben Muse) –

Elfyn has covered most of this already. Farmer at Coed Ely was busy but amenable. No update from NRW re Cwm Dimbath

In policy role – getting a cross-party group together. Partnered with Climate Cymru. Trying to get local people involved in BMC Podcasts.

John Harwood asked for an update on Cefn Coed – there is no change to the situation. He will catch up on Llangattock in the autumn, and send date information to Tim Huddy shortly.

4.5. Hillwalking (Emma Davies) –

Nothing to report from me except that the National Park replied on Craig y Nos footpath blocking and asked Matt to report it to the Police

Going to light a candle on top for Gareth this evening.

4.6. **Climbing walls** (CJ Griffiths) –
Nothing to report at the moment.

4.7. **Clubs** (Peter Salenieks) –
Membership has dropped due to COVID; -11% generally and -46% in student clubs. There are various recruitment campaigns on-going to try to increase membership. Guidance on re-opening of huts will be out soon – waiting for official update on rules from UK and Welsh Gov. A 'Find Your Adventure' Campaign is being launched aimed at getting more people involved in clubs and more clubs to join BMC. There is a meeting planned with Elfyn, Eben and the CEO and The Outdoor Partnership to discuss increasing participation.

4.8. **Members Council** (CJ/Steve) –
Next meeting is 17 July. We have now got 2 NECs in place (rock climbing and Mountaineering) and have recently co-opted 2 for hill walking and indoor climbing. We are still short of an NEC for club members. Unsure how many of future meeting will be face to face or Zoom but considering one meeting that will include a MC and volunteers activity weekend. New structure for meetings includes 'vision events' focusing on one aspect of BMC work; rock climbing, indoor climbing, hill walking and mountaineering.

4.9. **Mountain Training** (Matt Woodfield) –
Matt confirmed in advance of the meeting that there is nothing of interest to update the Area.

4.10. **Student Clubs** (Luke Allum) –
Apologies and a written update were sent:

Student clubs have had a rough year, as far as I am aware all clubs in south Wales have managed to refill committees which is great.

Matt Woodfield is helping some clubs address skill fades through his professional work as technical advisor which should alleviate some stress from some fresh committees.

The BMC role needs to include engagement through their new national 'find your adventure' campaign series and making sure new and graduating climbers get signposted to appropriate local adult mountaineering clubs in South Wales. The overall message is that clubs are open and safe.

BMC also have been looking at creating a database of clubs contact details to help collaboration of local / travelling student clubs for pooling of resources during this tricky time of 18 months of limited travel for students. Unsure on progress of this.

Speaking to most clubs in our area they have taken the chance of a quiet year to update paperwork and things which is great for student clubs who often can be fairly relaxed / behind on these matters. BMC affiliation was near non-existent this year but as far as I am aware clubs are planning it starting in September.

Clubs are hoping to run competitions in the new academic year and I hope Cardiff will head this up with the help from CJ and Roc-Bloc as a fresh venue.

South Wales in general is in a good position, most clubs managed some activity and as a region we achieved far more than any clubs seemingly did in national meetings.

We have a great network between the few clubs and are pooling resources and I am helping build these links. Hopefully an academic year starting with a decent amount of training, competitions and activity will bring back clubs stronger than they went into the pandemic.

- 4.11. **Campaigns and Policy Officer report** (Eben Muse) Eben has helped to set up an all-party group at the Welsh Parliament for hill walking and mountaineering which will be chaired by Huw Irranca-Davies. BMC Cymru has partnered with Climate Cymru to work on climate campaigns. Some podcasts have been produced for the website and Eben is planning to record a Welsh Language one. We are still working on how BMC Cymru will be constituted.

5. Any other business

- 5.1. South East Wales Access Rep until the AGM – Alex Seekings is interested and will informally shadow Eben over the next few months with a view to being elected into the role at the AGM.
- 5.2. Board Update – 2 new directors; Martyn Hurn and Andy Sime (new President), we are still in financial difficulty due to COVID/loss of insurance and new membership income however, this is starting to pick up slowly. Board is considering raising subs annually in line with RPI. Flexi-Furloughing has helped save money but this will end soon. We have new staff at BMC office; Commercial Officer and Performance manager. Shauna Coxey is in Japan preparing for Olympics – all wishing her good luck!

6. Date of next meeting

- 6.1. The next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 19 October, which will be the AGM.
- 6.2. Provisional dates for future meetings: Monday 17 January 2022, Tuesday 19 April, Monday 11 July.

Note: The date of the next meeting was changed to Monday 18 October after the meeting due to availability constraints.