



## **Cyfarfod - BMC Cymru North/Gogledd - Meeting held via Zoom.**

25/10/2021

### **MINUTES - COFNODION**

**Attendance: 10 local area members. 4 BMC Officers.**

#### **1. Croeso ..... Welcome**

This meeting followed on from the 2021 AGM

**2. Apologies - Ymddiheuriadau** Pete Johnson, Lun Roberts, Kate Worthington, Ross Worthington, Geoff Bennett, Mike Rosser, Tarquin Shipley, Neal Hockley.

#### **3. Minutes/Cofnodion (Zoom – 6 July 2021)**

Accepted as a true record. Proposed: Adam Haynes Seconded: Will Miller

#### **Matters Arising - Materion yn codi**

3a. Now furlough is over a schedule for paid-Officers and Directors' attendance at area meetings has been circulated.

4. The Fixed Gear document has been notified to clubs by PS, and EM is working with Alvin Foy to establish an area on the BMC website for Welsh-specific documents. Once a weblink to the document is available TJ will post on Facebook.

6. TJ's complaints about the lack of consultation with areas prior to the recording of the Wild Horizons podcasts have been listened to and acted upon for the current series, which includes one on Yr Elen and one on Eifionydd, the latter 'yng Gymraeg'.

#### **4. Future funding/staffing arrangements for Access and Conservation in Wales**

Elfyn Jones explained that his proposed retirement early next year, combined with very tight BMC finances could lead to a net loss of staff time dedicated to access work in Wales. EM's appointment covers Policy and Campaigns, but not Access and Conservation on the ground.

Neal Hockley has put together a strong 'Strategic Case' for replacing Elfyn with a like-for-like, full-time post. That document will inform the Board when considering budgets and staffing, and has been supported by BMC Cymru, both the area Chairs, Mountain Training Cymru and Dave Turnbull.

Paul Davies and Peter Salenieks articulated the difficulty of balancing the loss of Elfyn's contribution with a difficult financial position. All options are being explored.

Dan Lane warned of a possible loss of membership if access work in Wales was compromised.

The Chair added that the potential expansion of the Access role in Wales to include elements of education and recruitment, especially amongst young Welsh climbers, had been included in the 'Strategic Case'.

There was general appreciation of Elfyn's work in Wales over many years .... but he hadn't actually retired yet!

#### **5. The Role of BMC Patrons**

(Tarquin Shipley had asked the Chair to present this item on his behalf.)

Council reps. have been asked to suggest names of people who might become BMC patrons, and this led to a broad discussion about what qualities a patron should have to carry out the role.

There did not appear to be a definitive BMC guide to what a patron should look like, but PS suggested that they should command respect and have the influence to open doors. Finding someone who can do this

within a Welsh context is important.

Dan Lane said that we should wait until we learn more about the function of a patron before asking for names.

Chris Stone (by email) said that Members' Council would set up a working group to look at the issue of patrons.

## **6. Bysiau a Safleoedd Bysiau yn Ogwen Buses and bus stops in Ogwen**

(Tarquin Shipley had asked the Chair to present this item on his behalf.)

The T10 TrawsCymru bus service through the Ogwen Valley, suffers from the lack of bus stops for hillwalkers. There are no stops between Ogwen Cottage and the campsite at Gwern Gof Uchaf, in contrast to five sizeable car parks along the same stretch.

Steve Williams agreed and added that buses sometimes don't turn up which discourages people from using the service.

Can BMC Cymru lobby for an extra bus stop or stops for hillwalkers?

Andy Bowyer contacted the Transport for Wales office, who said they could look into any query.

TJ to discuss further action with TS.

Chair's note:

The TrawsCymru website indicates that it is funded through the Welsh Government and is designed (as the name implies) to be a cross-Wales express coach service. This is a very different service to the Sherpa bus, which caters specifically for walkers and climbers. The website also apologises for a lack of drivers forcing late cancellations.

## **7. Reports: Pwyllgor Cymru: Neal Hockley reports:**

Since the committee last met in September...

1. We have lobbied for a full time Wales Access and Conservation officer to replace Elfyn when he retires next year
2. I have met with Dave T, Elfyn and Eben to discuss the BMC's "Strategic Action Plan" for Wales, to ensure it makes the case for the above and other priorities of the membership.
3. Eben, Dave T Elfyn and I met with Lucy Valerio to work further on the proposals for creating a Welsh entity (Ltd company) within the BMC family. Eben and I will be meeting with the BMC's IT and HR experts to discuss other aspects - Y Pwyllgor Cymru will be submitting a detailed paper to the board at the end of 2021, and consulting widely with the membership within and outwith Wales through 2022.

### **Access and Conservation: Elfyn Jones + Access Reps.**

EJ had made his written report available on the BMC Community website prior to the meeting. The Chair ran through the issues covered in the report and invited questions. There were none to report. No Access Reps. were present at the meeting.

### **Policy and Campaigns: Eben Muse reports:**

- Met with EJ to discuss what constitutes a 'Welsh' member.
- Welsh language policy still in progress and Welsh language podcast coming out in the next few weeks.
- Working with Neal, Dave, and Elfyn to work out a timetable and what our database capabilities should be when it comes to restructuring the way BMC Cymru exists within the BMC Corporate structure.
- Continue to work on political lobbying front, CPG established but not active at present (Paul Donovan is the secretariat). Need to push this.
- Continue to work with partners, WEL and Climate Cymru, on climate- and biodiversity- related issues affecting climbers, and on maintaining a BMC profile.
- Joined IWA thinktank as a member org, allowing access to summits and seminars within the Welsh political sphere, opportunities to network and also in the medium-term to write for their publication which is quite widely distributed and well received.

### **National Council Rep.:**

No report submitted.

### **Clubs + Director/Board Updates: Peter Salenieks reports:**

1. The Mend Our Mountains (MOM) campaign is being developed for its 3rd iteration and Dave

Turnbull is providing quarterly updates to area officers so that areas can stay in touch with what is going on.

2. The #FindYourAdventure campaign, to draw new members into BMC-affiliated clubs is progressing. Now attention is turning to how we might engage with clubs/groups traditionally not associated with the BMC.
3. Membership numbers have started to increase albeit slowly as COVID restrictions are lifted and people are starting to get back to some kind of normality.
4. We are in Phase 1 of the Sport England funding process and are aiming to establish a stepped change in funding for the National Governing Body area so that we can focus, amongst other areas, on grass roots development and activities across our regions.
5. A Commercial officer has been appointed, starting in December.
6. Furlough has finished and the BMC staff are back to normal hours.
7. The Board is in the process of agreeing budgets, which due to the consultation undertaken will not be completed until December.
8. The next BMC AGM is likely to be on 14th May 2022 - hoping to do it in person but we are looking at all options.

## 8. Chair's Business:

### **Carneddau Fencing**

EJ informed the meeting that money was likely to become available to provide fencing in several locations on the Carneddau in order to protect the fragile Montane Heath from sheep and mountain bikes. EJ wants to canvas members' opinions about such an initiative, before he enters discussion with Park Officers.

AN: If it is done sensitively and with stiles in the right places, he couldn't see why we should object.

DL and AV agreed. A wire fence should not be opposed.

Stephen Williams reminded the meeting that Cwm Idwal has fenced-off areas. TJ added that fenced-off areas are educational resources for groups on the hill.

### **Chipping – Idwal descent + Dinas Cromlech**

It has been reported that the Idwal Slabs descent and the approach to Cenotaph Corner have both been hammered/chiseled in an attempt to sanitise these polished scrambles. Such damage is illegal (without consent) and contrary to the ethics current in N Wales. No one present had seen the damage. SW and DL expressed their opposition to such developments, but it was hard to know what could be done about it.

AN saw such actions as a continuation of the urbanisation of the countryside.

The Chair suggested a facebook post to gather more information.

PS suggested taking it to Members' Council, as the guardian of BMC ethics and ethos.

There was clearly a need for education – similar events have taken place in S Wales.

### **Ailwynebu/Resurfacing – Capel Curig to Crafnant.**

EJ reports:

The National Park is planning to 'resurface' the bridleway from Capel Curig to Crafnant using Welsh Government funding. In view of the dismay that members have expressed about similar work on the Bwlch Maesgwm bridleway (which now includes remedial concreting of recently washed-out sections that were originally stone paving and bedrock) the BMC needs to act to influence the nature of the Crafnant path work before it is too late.

Members confirmed Elfyn's concerns and urged him to get more information about what was planned. On numerous occasions the Park has promised the BMC a part in the consultation process, but it appears that plans are well advanced without any contact with user groups.

Chair's note: Immediately following our meeting, EJ started discussions with those members who produced the BMC Cymru (Gogledd) 'Principles for Path Works in the Uplands' document in order to decide on the best strategy for getting our ideas heard and acted upon by the National Park.

9. **AOB – UFA**

There was none.

8. **Date of the Next Meetings: Dyddiad y Cyfarfodydd Nesa':**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Andy Newton pointed out that the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2022 was the Easter Monday. TJ promised to look into alternatives at the January meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

TJ 28/10/2021