



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### North West Area ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting held online via Zoom  
On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 19:00

## Minutes

**Attendance (23 signed in, not all attendees present for whole meeting):** Les Ainsworth (Lancs Access Rep), Bill Beveridge (MC rep), Steve Charles (Hill walking), Mark Chung, Katie Coffield, Tim Dobson, Martin Elliott, Paul Evans (Area Secretary, KMC), Augustin Guardiola, John Glynn, Tim Greenhalgh, Rebecca Hart, Andy Holland, Stuart Holmes (Area Youth and Walls Rep), Howard Jones, Nigel Lyle, Dominic Oughton (Area Clubs Coordinator), Emily Pitts (Area Chair), Dudley Pritchard, Carl Spencer (MC rep and CND), Richard Toon, Dave Turnbull (BMC head of ACES), Adrian Woods.

#### 1. Welcome, quorum, apologies for absence

Emily Pitts opened the standard section of the meeting. A quorum was present in accordance with Article 28.6.1 of the British Mountaineering Council's articles of association. Apologies were received from Katie Allen, Mark Hounslea and Dave Robinson.

#### 2. Minutes & Actions from previous meetings held on 26/03/21, 06/07/21

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were approved – see matters arising below. Approval of the minutes from the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 was accidentally omitted from the area meeting of 06/07/21, these minutes were also approved at this meeting.

#### 3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

Richard Toon raised concerns relating to the 2021 Wilton Fest. It was disappointing although understandable that the BMC were unable to contribute to costs this year, but what had raised most concerns amongst attendees was that no members of BMC staff had attended the event. Carl Spencer (who did attend) and Dave Turnbull both spoke at length relating to the circumstances around this, and the fact that the BMC had been forced to furlough staff was a contributing factor. It was agreed that the minutes should express the areas concern around this, and that we should seek reassurances to prevent a recurrence.

#### 4. Area reps reports

4.1. Access – several topics were covered under this heading – slides are available on the BMC local areas site (and on BMC NW Area facebook page)

Les Ainsworth gave an update on Lancs access issues, covering Deeply Vale, Montcliffe, Silverdale, Hoghton, Thorn Crag, Troy, Cadshaw, Warton, Noggarth, planned clean-ups at Wilton and Egerton, and the latest on local guidebooks. Les asked –

- Whether members had strong feelings either way about the planned phone mast at

Trowbarrow. There were no strong feelings or consensus.

- Whether members were happy for Stuart Holmes to install 4 further lower offs on the remaining routes at Montcliffe which would benefit from them? The meeting voted on this and the suggestion was passed, 0 against, 4 abstaining, 17 in favour.

Tim Greenhalgh raised a question about replacement of the fixed gear on the route “Mein Kampf” at Deeply Vale. Paul Evans commented that this was a topic which required wider consultation than at a single area meeting, and that this would be for the new chairs and secretary to take forward.

Bill Beveridge asked whether in view of recent new routing activity the areas fixed gear policy needed an update? Paul Evans commented that to his knowledge no area meeting had ever actually approved a policy on replacement of fixed gear on existing routes, though various drafts were extensively discussed in the period 2013 – 2017. It was felt that this might benefit from a separate dedicated meeting. Carl Spencer commented that it was best to approach this by discussing specific routes at specific crags.

On behalf of Mark Hounslea, Paul Evans reported that there were no known access issues at Cheshire Crag, and urged members to get in touch if they became aware of any. He recommended that members visit the “friends of Pex Hill” facebook group to get the latest news on Cheshire Crag. Pex Hill itself is benefiting from considerable clean-up efforts from the local activists.

4.2. Dominic Oughton presented an update of NW clubs news, of which there is lots. Detail in Dominic’s presentation, available online at the BMC NW area site. Key points were -

- The BMC “clubs are open / #FindYourAdventure” campaign to encourage Club membership is progressing very well, 18 clubs nationally including 5 NW based clubs had signed up for the initiative.
- A total of 4 webinars had been held.
- There has been much activity on social media (FB and Instagram).
- Clubs had reported success from use of the self-assessment checklists.
- Several clubs have already begun to report benefits in terms of increased interest from potential members.

4.3. Steve Charles gave the latest hill walking news. The slides for this are available on line at BMC NW area site. Topics covered included the national hill walking survey, Mend Our Mountains 3 (Dave Turnbull commented that discussions with sponsors for this event are progressing well, and this is likely to go ahead). A report on local events held in 2021, and planned upland conservation projects. Steve also reported on the mountain ringlet butterfly survey and plans for a future walks calendar. Steve said that the BMC was shortly to start Winter Skills lectures, both face to face and online. He also said he had been in discussions with Dominic about clubs hosting open walks. Stuart said there is a mountain training event on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov which may be of interest to hill walkers. He will provide details and we can advertise on the area facebook page.

4.4. Youth and Walls – Stuart Holmes reported that new walls have opened in the Manchester area – SummitUp at Oldham and Blochaus in east Manchester. He said that the new Youth Climbing Series format was in general working well, but there had been some points which needed attention. Carl Spencer commented that this would receive considerable airtime at the next members council meeting. Stuart also said that there was a national “vision event” coming up for indoor climbing. He was going, and would welcome input from members. Stuart Holmes has been co-opted as the nationally elected councillor for Indoor Climbing, in the absence of anyone putting their name forward at the AGM.

## **5. NW Events Calendar 2022**

There are several hill walking events intended – see Steve Charles' presentation. Other events will be added as details are confirmed.

## **6. Feedback from Members Council (MC) meetings**

Carl Spencer reported that member numbers were starting to recover. There is a funding bid going in to Sport England during November. A commercial officer has now been appointed and starts on the 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. All head office staff have now returned to their normal hours – furlough has finished. The board is working on setting budgets at the moment. The national AGM is likely to be a face to face meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022. And the next members council meeting will not be purely online – it will be a hybrid (mixture of face to face and online).

## **7. Any other business**

- Richard Toon asked whether clubs with huts should consider installing EV charging points – his club, the Lancashire Mountaineering Club, was doing this. He also suggested that the BMC should work with clubs to consider a wider green strategy for club huts. PE to raise with Dominic.
- Tim Greenhalgh requested that the area consider holding meetings on Mondays, since they were then least likely to clash with club meeting nights.
- Dudley Pritchard said that he greatly appreciated virtual meetings, and hoped that the area would continue with them, since travelling to face to face area meetings was inconvenient for him.

The Area Ordinary meeting was then closed, and the Area AGM commenced – see separate minutes.

## **8. Date of 2022 Area Meetings**

The dates for 2022 meetings are as follows –

- Tues 18<sup>th</sup> Jan, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April and Tues 21<sup>st</sup> June are Area Ordinary meetings
- Mon 24 Oct is an Area Ordinary meeting and the AGM.