



Cyfarfod - BMC Cymru (North/Gogledd) - Meeting held at The Beacon.

26/04/2022

MINUTES - COFNODION

Attendance: 20 local area members. 3 BMC Officers.

1. Croeso'n ôl ! Welcome back!

2. **Apologies - Ymddiheuriadau** Andy Boorman, Neal Hockley, Kate Worthington, Chris Parkin, Geoff Bennett

3. Partneriaeth Ogwen – E-Minibus Scheme

Tarquin Shipley introduced Steve Owen Williams from Partneriaeth Ogwen who then presented an outline of the new e-minibus scheme to run at weekends and school holidays from Bethesda to the Ogwen Valley, supplementing the timetable of the T10. Ticket prices will match other bus prices.

Details are not yet finalised, and there are currently issues with recruiting drivers and insurance.

Action: TJ to post the job advert on BMC facebook page..

The minibus could be available for private hire, when not on shuttle service.

The purpose of the scheme is to fulfill an obvious need, to reduce emissions and to boost the economy of Bethesda.

The scheme is part of the SNPA's sustainability strategy and its Transport and Parking consultation.

Steve would like to receive comment and suggestions directly, by email steve@ogwen.org

The scheme was warmly welcomed by members who asked questions about funding, timetabling, pick-ups, extensions, promotion, over/under usage etc.

Ross Worthington suggested that the Police should be pro-actively involved in directing visitors to Park and Ride schemes such as this, in order to reduce parking problems in Ogwen and Llanberis Pass.

Members thanked Steve for his contribution and wished the scheme every success.

4. Minutes/Cofnodion* (Zoom – 18 Ionawr 2022)

Accepted: Proposed and seconded by Lun Roberts and Pete Johnson.

Matters Arising* - Materion yn codi*

- i. Bridleways letter is on the agenda
- ii. TS's proposal for an information and recruitment festival at the Beacon fell outside the BMC's description of a festival – but money for such an event was available from a different fund.
- iii. TJ did contact Caff with suggestions for a 'welsh' input to the Youth meet. 7 youngsters attended and it was a success, but no feedback received about 'welsh' elements during the weekend.
- iv. Ailsa Newcombe and Tiggy Price are the newly-recruited Youth Climbing Series co-ordinators.
- v. In-line with a strong preference expressed in area meetings, the BMC AGM will be on-line mid-week 7.00pm 18th May 2022.

5. Access and Conservation Officer for Wales – Tom Carrick

Tom introduced himself (to a round of applause), describing his background in Sports Science, Outdoor Instruction and Forest Management. Mae o'n byw yn Lanrug a mae o'n siarad Cymraeg.

In response to a question from Steve Long, TC explained that his job description included an element of

education, and he would write articles for websites and magazines. Some discussion took place about the need for an educative article in respect of the problems caused by widely-publicised, low-skill activities such as Snakes and Ladders (Dinorwig Quarries) and Fisherman's Gorge (Lledr)

TJ reminded members that it was easy to imagine that TC's job was all about fire-fighting access or environmental issues at technical venues, whereas equally important are hillwalking issues which can demand more work over a longer time-frame.

6. Hongian Ffest Update - 27-29 May 2022.

Since the last meeting, TJ had worked hard with Rhys Roberts of CellB, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Eben to put in a bid for a BMC Welsh-themed festival, 'Hongian Ffest'. The proposal was accepted and given £1300, which has since been match-funded by DMM – thank you DMM!

Alex Riley briefly outlined the plans, soon to be confirmed, for a series of talks, films, workshops, walks, stands etc. intended to celebrate the climbing and hillwalking in the Moelwynion. Welsh speakers will run, or be present at, most, if not all, the events, and simultaneous translation will be available for talks and films. Speakers of all languages, and all technical levels, English and Welsh, beginner to expert, young and old, will be welcome – this is not a festival for Welsh-speaking climbers only.

Funding has also been obtained to allow some under 30s to attend for free.

Promotional material to be out soon. TJ pressed the need for us all to support the event and make it a success. Other organisations, such as Ramblers Cymru, The Outdoor Partnership, Clwb Mynydda Cymru, and the Climbers Club will offer support. More first aiders are required.

Numbers uncertain at the moment.

7 BMC funding for SNPA Paths/Bridleways

Developments since the last meeting include:

- i. Work on the gravelled extension from the Maesgwm path to the Llanberis path has been halted due to complaints locally. Ironically, BMC had not complained about this section.
- ii. Attempts to use a 'Tramper' on the gravelled Crafnant bridleway failed due to the steepness of the track – as we had predicted.
- iii. Kate Worthington reported from a Local Access Forum meeting that anyone speaking out against a smooth level pathway, is easily labelled 'anti-access-for-all'. It is difficult to pitch the argument for rugged paths and bridleways in acceptable terms
- iv. TJ complained to SNPA about the wording of threatening, negative notices warning cyclists not to 'Speed' at the start of the bridleways. The notices have been replaced with improved (although not ideal) messaging.

Action Point from previous meeting was for TJ and NH to send a letter to both the SNPA and ACT (Access and Conservation Trust) asking for no more 'Mend-our-Mountains' money to be spent in Eryri without agreement through consultation with both user and resident groups.

That letter has now been sent and was shared with the meeting on screen. General approval was expressed. We await a response!

Co-incidentally, ACT is currently also in dispute with the SNPA over non-spending of previous funds for repair work on Cadair Idris.

ACT is likely to fund work in Pembrokeshire and/or Brecon Beacons, now rather than Eryri.

8. Reports:

Pwyllgor Cymru – no report, but a meeting had been held the previous evening.

Access and Conesevation

Gwyn Jones: Tremadog: The carpark is now up and running, but not being used much. Climbers still parking on the road. The open hours are not ideal 10.00- 18.00.

Chair's note: Soon after the meeting we heard that opening hours had now been extended: 8.00 – 20.00. Dave T felt that the charge of £3.50 was not unreasonable and that if climbers did not support the car park

we could lose it altogether. TJ displayed the current terms and conditions for the car-park and cafe.

Andy Boorman: N Wales coastal crags report was displayed, and was available on the area webpage. In respect of the suggestion that some BMC signage, indicating best parking and climbing practice, be trialled at Castle Inn Quarry, members felt this was a good move.

Dave T reported that a BMC fund now existed for crag restoration work. Areas can apply for a grant and will receive help to set up a project.

Policy and Campaigns: Eben Muse:

- Has been lobbying for BMC at party conferences. Many politicians have never heard of us, and there was a contrast with Ramblers Cymru who had a proper stand.
- The Agriculture Reform Bill is to be discussed in the Senedd soon. A meeting is planned with Plaid Cymru spokesperson.
- Access Reform Bill has stalled in the Senedd.
- .. The Cross-Party Group will meet again on 15th June – another opportunity to press on with arguments concerning expanding access in Wales. Lots of complex issues!
- A draft Welsh Language Policy was presented to BMC Senior Management Team. Plenty of interest, but no direct action, so needs to be pushed again. Eben has spoken to Gavin Finch about improving BMC Welsh communication.
- Speaking to Regional Development Officers of the Outdoor Partnership about grant funding for community projects.
- Working on small grants for environmental work on Gower to show that Welsh Officers can bring some money in!

Members Council: Tarquin Shipley

TS has joined the Finance Committee.

TS still feels overwhelmed by the scale and content of the Council meetings.

DT suggested that Members' Council should insist on the work of the BMC being simplified. Unreasonable burden on some volunteers at present.

Board/Directors Update: A written report was received from Peter Salenieks as our meeting was about to start. It is appended to these minutes.

9. Chair's Business:

Salt Lake City:

TJ had heard that the BMC had sent, or were sending, three officers to Salt Lake City at the time of the World Cup Competition, He felt that this was incompatible with the BMC's declaration of a climate emergency only a few years ago. After a short discussion, members asked TJ to write to the CEO asking for a justification of this decision.

One member did express the opinion that it was hypocritical to question this decision as no climbers were prepared to curtail their travel to climbing areas, especially abroad. The Chair disputed this assertion.

Action: TJ to write to Paul Davies, CEO.

BMC Youth Meet - - Llanberis, July 2022

Another Youth meet has been arranged in Llanberis. Contact Caff if you are interested in helping out.

Volunteers' Gala - - October 2022

In appreciation of their work, all BMC volunteers are invited to a Gala weekend in Coventry.

So far, TJ and TS have expressed their intention to attend.

Open Forum – (Articles) 20th April

No one present had attended this virtual forum which discussed the motion, due for consideration at the AGM, to amend the BMC's articles. Please see the Board update attached to these minutes for more information.

Collaboration with a NW Region path maintenance event.

Will Millar, our hill-walking rep., spoke about a proposal from Steve Charles to organise a joint conservation project with the North West region, based near Beddgelert, to do volunteer work for the National Trust. Members approved the idea.

Action: TJ to post on facebook to ascertain interest and get back to Steve Charles. WM to help co-ordinate.

Camping and Trespass

Matt Jones had enquired about the law of Trespass in respect of camping. Eben and Tom to look into this and maybe write an article for a BMC newsletter.

10. AOB – UFA

Drilled rods - Rhoscolyn

Four stainless steel rods in drilled holes have appeared at the top of the Sun Walls at Rhoscolyn. No one at the meeting knew anything about them, but the consensus was that they would not have been put there by climbers. More research needed. The rods clearly do not fit into the spirit of the N. Wales Fixed Gear Document.

Cairns

Ross Worthington alerted members to an article about Cairns being prepared for Trail magazine. It might be worth getting the BMC voice heard through the article. Contact Jenna at Trail.

Green Transport:

Ann Vowles reported that MT Cymru and MT England are organising a joint conference at which attendance is free/discounted if you travel by public transport or by lift-share. (Nods of approval!)

11. Date of next meeting : Dyddiad y Cyfarfod nesaf :

Tuesday 5th July 2022

NB The format, timing and venues for meetings will be notified at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled dates.

TJ 28/4/2022

Attachment:

Directors report received too late for the meeting:

Talking Points for Directors BMC Area Meetings April 2022

1. 2022 AGM

The AGM will be held on the evening of Wednesday 18th May starting at 19.00. As explained in January, reluctantly the Board decided that the AGM will be virtual this year ... and we look forward to reinstating a full AGM weekend in 2023.

We want to engage with you, be able to explain what the BMC has delivered in 2021 and provide an insight into the future. So, please ensure that you attend and vote – you will need to register and if not participating in the meeting itself, then you will need to allocate your proxy votes.

2. Addition to Objects within the Articles

We will be proposing the addition of an “*Object*” to the Articles as follows:

“Encourage and promote membership of the BMC to Mountaineers and those interested in mountaineering”. This will be put forward as a separate resolution.

We are doing this in order to ensure that we can grow membership, and thus become more representative of the millions of people in England and Wales who already enjoy our sports – activities. Our intent is that this will help us engage with under represented groups in within our sports – activities – for instance women and girls and ethnic minorities.

In addition, the lack of clarity around how we grow our membership is eating up large amounts of time within the leadership and staff and is simply getting in the way of running an efficient business.

There is an “*Open Forum*” Meeting planned for 19.00 on Wednesday 20th April at which those who wish to undertake a deep dive into this proposed change of the articles can participate.

3. Other changes to the Articles

There are a range of other changes to the Articles which are covered in a separate resolution. These were discussed at an “*Open Forum*” Meeting which was held on Wednesday 2nd March. These changes cover:

- Required in order to widen our membership and be able to accept new generation clubs
- Required in order to meet the demands of the Code of Sports Governance, which was issued in December 2021
- Some changes to articles associated with Areas

4. 2021 Financial Outcome and progress against budget in 2022

The BMC ended the 2021 year with a deficit of approximately £0.11 million, which was funded out of reserves leaving the organisation at the start of 2022 with reserves of £1.11 million. Given the circumstances, this was a good outcome, albeit at the expense of not making progress on renewing the back and front-end IT systems nor on refreshing our marketing and communications.

Positively, UK Sport granted £0.56 million in support of elite competition climbing and we managed to retain our staff through the pandemic by accessing £0.14 million of funding from the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Clearly the pandemic has negatively impacted membership numbers and sales of travel insurance. Despite this we have seen a steady rebuild of membership through the second half of the year and notably of Club membership.

Looking to 2022 we are planning to again run a deficit as we rebuild the BMC after the pandemic and ensure that we can both represent and support the membership as well as continue to improve our delivery as a Sports Governing Body. Having said that, during the first quarter of the year, the build in membership and insurance sales has been better than expected and this gives the Board and Senior Leadership some choices with respect to how best to use the underspent funds.

5. Sport England (SE) Funding

The Phase Two funding submission was made to Sport England at the end of February and at the end of March Sport England indicated that we have been successful in our submission and have given us an indication of the size of the award.

The funds that will be released cover 5 years and focus on the three areas of Governance, System Development and Talent. Whilst this is a request to “*Sport England*” – the funds will have many benefits across the whole of the BMC irrespective of geography or activity.

We are working with our Partners, the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) and the National Indoor Climbing Awards Scheme (NICAS) on exactly what we must deliver by when, along with getting clarity on the resourcing that will be required.

6. Wales

Neal Hockley, the Chair of the Wales Committee was invited into the January 2022 meeting of the Board. An excellent presentation and discussion followed during which we explored how within the existing framework the Wales Committee could both do more and be seen to be better representing the needs of hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers within Wales

7. GB Climbing – The 2022 Competition Climbing Schedule

We are back to having nearly a full year of Competition Climbing complete with a schedule and dates for each competition in place

8. International Mountaineering Committee and Representation

The International Mountaineering Committee, with the Board and the Staff have reviewed how best to both represent the interests of British Mountaineers on the international stage ... for instance through UIAA and the European Mountaineering Association (EUMA) at the same time

as delivering on the business of expeditions, grants and awards and working hand in hand with the Mount Everest Foundation.

The conclusion is that we should keep the International Mountaineering Committee focussed on their core work on grants and expeditions whilst formalising a group which considers how best the BMC leverages its expertise strategically on the international stage – this group is to be called the “*International Strategy Group*” and is led by the President, Andy Syme.

9. Development of a Senior Leadership Team

The Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Gavin Finch, was appointed in December 2021 and he has made substantial progress on assessing and developing a refreshed approach to communications and marketing

We have just completed the process of recruiting a full-time CFO, Joelle Chisholm, who starts in May.

The BMC recognises that it needs to increase its presence in Wales and be seen to do so. During 2021 we appointed a Policy & Campaigns Officer and decided that we must maintain the position of an Access & Conservation Officer dedicated to Wales.

10. Volunteer Gala

We are delighted to announce that we will be inviting our volunteers to a Gala Dinner and based at Warwick University over the weekend of the 8th and 9th October.

11. Ukraine

The BMC is leading UK Sports Governing Bodies in putting in place a web based system where British mountaineers can offer to host Ukrainian mountaineers who either have already or will in the future flee from their home country. The system builds on what the UK government already has in place for hosting Ukrainian families with families in the UK, whilst maintaining the protections for both the refugees and the hosts that are built into the UK government system.