

BMC North West Area – Co-Chairs’ Report 2021-2022

2021-2022 was the first year with co-chairs Katie Allen and Agustin Guardiola, and secretary Katie Coffield. In the last year we have held 4 ordinary meetings (19 people average attendance), and 1 Fixed Gear meeting.

Date	Format	Type
18th January 2022	Online (Zoom)	Ordinary
19th March 2022	In person at Wilton Quarry 1	Fixed Gear
27th April 2022	Online (Zoom)	Ordinary
29th June 2022	Hybrid – in person at BMC HQ and online (Zoom)	Ordinary
17th October 2022	Hybrid – in person in Frodsham and online (Zoom)	Ordinary + AGM

Hybrid meetings were the most popular option based on survey results, however due to the increased logistical requirements of hybrid meetings we are planning to alternate between hybrid and online meetings next year.

There have been substantial developments regarding fixed gear. Following a consultative process including discussion at Area Meetings, we reached agreement on a Fixed Gear Guidance document for the North West Area. This has been an ongoing topic of discussion over the last few years, and we are proud to have a document in place now.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this process, providing feedback and voting. It was all key to produce a well-balanced document that reflects the climbing ethics and views of the North West, and provides a framework through which changes to fixed gear can be agreed upon.

The latest document was voted through at Wilton Fest 2022, and can be found here: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/fixed-gear-guidance-on-north-west-crags-and-quarries>

In terms of access, the main update is regarding Hoghton estate. Following the breaking of the lock in 2021 and subsequent loss of that climbing season, we also lost the 2022 season. There is a possibility for a season next year, and proposals for how this can happen are under discussion.

The youth climbing series is currently ongoing, and the BMC Student Safety Seminar is returning to Plas y Brenin this year. Rock Over is planning to open two new walls, at Middlebrook near Bolton and at Wythenshawe.

The Find Your Adventure campaign has been very successful in the last 12 months, with 5 Phase 1 Clubs signed up in the North West.

Restoration events have been very popular this year, including planting 6200 sphagnum moss plugs, 4 rhododendron removal sessions at Winter Hill, and participation in the Stop Press Snowdonia and Million Mile clean-up 2022 conservation events.

We have set up an Instagram account (@bmc_northwest) to try and increase visibility and member engagement, Steve Riley has been helping run it, which we are very grateful for. Members are encouraged to send in content for us to feature.

Mark Hounslea (Merseyside & Cheshire Access Rep), Katie Coffield (Secretary), and Katie Allen (Co-Chair) are all stepping down at this year's AGM. We would like to thank them for all their hard work, and wish them all the best.

We would also like to give particular thanks the rest of the volunteers: Carl Spencer (Members Council Rep), Bill Beveridge (Members Council Rep), Steve Charles (Hillwalking Rep), Les Ainsworth (Lancashire Access Rep), Dominic Oughton (Clubs Rep), and Stuart Holmes (Youth & Walls Rep).

Finally, a massive thank you to Tim Greenhalgh for the time and work put in to organise Wilton Fest which was a big success this year.

Looking forward, we are looking to recruit a new Secretary, a Cheshire & Merseyside Access Rep, a Lancashire Access Support Rep (to support the existing Access Rep and encourage succession planning), and a Hill Walking Support Rep (to support the existing Hill Walking Rep) for the coming year.

Katie Allen and Agustin Guardiola
October 2022