

BMC Peak Area Meeting

3rd November 2023

Sir William Hotel, Grindleford

Present

37 people attended the meeting in person. The meeting was planned as a hybrid face to face/zoom meeting. Due to unexpected issues with wifi connection, the zoom attendees were unable to join, including the board representative (Roger Murray).

Apologies

Ian Milward, Adam Swinton, Peter Judd, Austin Knott, Caroline Brunt

Clubs – Paul Justin

67 students club members attended the BMC run Student Safety Seminar at Plas Y Brenin on 7/8 October. This event has been running for many years, it is organised by staff, very well supported by qualified volunteers and greatly appreciated by the student attendees. The 2023 event was very successful and deserves to be recognised and celebrated as an example of BMC 'good works'.

The next Peak area clubs forum will likely be combined with NW area to get a larger representation of clubs and is anticipated within the next few months.

Concern over a large student club group using Birchin for a meet had been raised on social media. Louise Hawson met with Eastern Moors Partnership earlier that day. They want to be notified of groups of over 15. The objective is to give guidance on how to avoid issues. For example, a specific parking area for a larger group may be possible. The Green Guide to the Uplands (nearly ready to publish) will cover group use, there is also advice on The BMC website with paper copies available. A request was made to put the groups issue at Birchin on RAD (now done).

Hill Walking

In their absence, Peter and Austin shared a detailed written report which is attached to these minutes

Members Council (MC) – Sean Milner (SM) and Sam Harris

A greater level of collaboration between council and BMC staff is needed so events are planned to build transparency, trust and openness.

Good things around the BMC should be celebrated more widely (web site, Facebook, UKC etc).

SM has been appointed Deputy President of members council and also sits on the nomination committee that is currently looking at the CEO vacancy.

MC reps had been briefed to pass several matters that might come up at area meetings for response to the board member attending that meeting. Due to the technical issues preventing Roger Murray from connecting, there was no board member present and the MC reps didn't feel able to comment on several points raised, in particular around the financial situation. The guidance to MC members is that there are topics on which staff should be communicating rather than MC members. SM commented that with the information he has seen, he is comfortable with the BMC financial situation going forward.

Louise Hawson asked if MC gets time to talk about important BMC matters such as access. SM said that yes they were reasonably covered.

There were a number of points raised around the room to which the MC reps felt restricted in how they could respond based on their meeting brief.

Neil Foster commented that MC reps not being able to engage with the room on MC issues isn't ideal. Judith Brown referred to a post on UKC from the President revealing information from a MC meeting before the minutes were issued. She has written to Andy Syme on this and he has agreed that it should not have happened. Various points were made around how area meetings and other formal BMC channels should be the forum for communication, not social media. There was general unhappiness in the room about the level of information supplied by the MC reps. Steve Clark said that communication between MC and the board was beginning to improve but still some distance to go. Concern was expressed about what is perceived as a lack of transparency and honesty in relation to GBC. Concern was also expressed at the virulence towards some BMC staff members expressed in social media.

Access Henry Folkard (HF), Louise Hawson (LH), Jon Fulwood (JF)

HF:

At national level:

In proposed forthcoming legislation, BMC priorities are access to woodland, mapping natural features and terminology in the acts.

A manifesto on access has been issues alongside other groups.

HF then reviewed a range of other national issues around wild camping, access and national park charters.

Peak district

Proposed Derwent Reservoir expansion: Severn Trent confirm that, assuming the Secretary of State signs off, there will be no change to the dams for at least 25-50 years. This is because of the effectiveness of the environmental campaign and the early start in getting objections registered.

SWT are holding an open day at Fairholmes on 18th November. HF plans to attend and can raise matters of interest to Peak Area members.

The National Trust has extensive plans for Kinder including another 4000 dams (of which 3500 will be stone) and 83,000 sphagnum plugs. The BMC has a strong relationship with the National Trust in the Peak.

HF and JF were shown round the Hope Valley cement works and made a number of suggestions around the legacy of the site.

10 new footpaths have been achieved through 'Farming in Protected Landscapes'

Eastern Moors partnership attended 107 fires this year, 223 people were asked to leave, the Burbage fire damaged 21.4Ha.

2023 was not a great year for Ring Ouzels but not an historically unusual one.

The M57 link road hearing was adjourned

Cressbrok dale – A revised settlement has been reached, with some land going back to the previous landowner. The group has been given a piece of land on which they want to build a chapel. Local residents have requested a further letter from The BMC asking for enforcement action to be expedited. It was suggested that this same letter could also cover Midhope Moor.

HF commented that the Peak Area access team get great support from the access team in the office and just get on with the job.

Proposal: The BMC should ask the planning authority to re-double their efforts to expedite enforcement in Cressbroke Dale and for the removal of the Midhope Moor matting.

Passed unanimously.

LH:

Pay and Display now in place at the Stanage car parks. BMC is very worried about Burbage Bridge being cash only, pushing more cars onto road verges and creating a road safety issue.

Path resurfacing is on-going around Stanage on bridleways and paths.

Locals have complained around increased night use at Stanage (bouldering and MB), issues being general increase use and impact on wildlife from the lack of an overnight rest period.

Loose rock has been cleared from the top of Millstone. The belay stakes may need revisiting.

Repair to the flood damage on The Causeway is planned.

JF:

Derwent Mountaineering Club have done a deep clean at Black Rocks.

Car sized blocks have been cleared from The Cornice.

Millersdale - signs explaining the clearway have been installed.

Wyoming Brook – tree clearance work should be finished by March. The car park has been resurfaced.

Masson Lees – clay pigeon shooting takes place some Sundays. A meeting is planned to seek advanced warning of when clay pigeon shooting is going to happen. Note potential for damage to permadraws in the dry tooling area from clay pigeon shot.

Rivelin – the landowner has requested that climbers approach the crag from the left hand side, not from below the pinnacle. The buttresses to the right hand side of the crag are now open for climbing.