

BMC North West Area Meeting 17th October 2023

Meeting to be held in hybrid format, at the BMC office, Didsbury and online via Zoom on Tuesday 17th October 2023. The AGM will follow on from the Ordinary Area Meeting, which begins at 7:30pm.

1. Welcome and apologies for absences

In attendance:

In Person: Agustin Guardiola, Andy Say, Bill Beveridge, Carl Spencer, Steve Charles, Roger Murray, Neil Fillingham, Michelle Hordern

Online: Matt Thompson, Les Ainsworth, Stuart Holmes, Steve Riley, Luna Borella, Paul Dewhurst, Michael Robinson, Phil Kelly. Late join on zoom - Rick Ginns, Tim Greenhalgh

Apologies:

Chris Manasseh, Martin Elliot and Dominic Oughton

2. Minutes of previous ordinary area meeting

Held on 26th July 2023

No Comments but error on name for Peter Trewin instead of Peter Train

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

None

4. Reports from area representatives:

4.1 Access - Lancashire (Including Headbutt wall fixed gear votes)

Les Ainsworth

Needing some support for help with cleaning

Denham Quarry

Now had some contact with local council for some tree removal

Lester Mill

Waiting on response from United Utilities

Dean Royd

One of our natural gritstone crags, about 45 routes, not very popular. At the top of a very steep grass slope. Couple of instances where climbers have fallen before first placement and ended up stumblin beyond the bottom due to the slope.

Some pegs are put in but not many spaces for this.

Suggestion to have some Bolts to protect the belayer, however there has been a statement for no bolts to be placed on any natural gritstone crags. Suggestion for bolt belays not bolt runners.

Funding is there for 2 dozen bolts if anyone wants to.

Andy Say Question - Are there any placements for cam placements for self protection at the bottom of the crag?

Les Ainsworth Response - No there isn't and the path is very narrow too.

Stuart Mentioned the catwalk at Mallam and having some protection for the belayer and asked if there is place for stakes at the bottom.

Response from Les Ainsworth - Not enough space for this at the bottom. There have been some instances of falling and both lead and 2nd climbers taking a fall back.

Suggestion in group and in chat for getting a picture for reference. Is a crag that isn't used much at the moment but may have no use without (Steve Riley).

Suggestion to focus on those that are climbed more and that our members will use. But images needed, this will be discussed in the next meeting.

Fairy Steps

Incident of hostility - Reminder to members use the RAD app to check for access restrictions. **Shooting Season is also about to start.**

Dallam Estate is a fairly hostile place also. We need to speak to their land agent to see if there is any progress.

Headbutt Wall (Wilton 1) - Fixed Gear Wall

Current pegs need replacing, replacing with other pegs would last for 10 years but bolts would last for 30 years (so long term this would be best).

Phil Kelly - highlighted that we had a vote last year and this was already voted for in Like for Like (peg for peg).

Discussion from Agustin, providing context for that vote. The term "like for like" in that meeting had the intent of meaning replacing peg for bolt because they were cheaper and longer lasting. Due to the confusion of the term "like for like" a more specific vote is suggested.

Vote was taken, however Paul Dewhurst, was also asking if there is space for a more modern piece of gear to be used there.

100% of people voted and peg for peg won.

Andy suggested, once there is a decision, there should be a fixed decision for a set time period (that way it's not being brought up all the time). However, with gritstone it may change on crags, so need to factor that in. Agustin will propose an update to the fixed gear guidance document at the next meeting to reflect this.

Suggestion that the Wilton management group need to be active, due to BMC liability should a decision be made and issues arise (such as an accident because a peg is removed and a climber is expecting a specific peg to be there).

4.2. Access - Cheshire & Merseyside

Alex Owens has stepped down, no one to replace at the moment.

4.3. Clubs

Good attendance at Wilton fest for local clubs. Next opportunity to connect with clubs will be the virtual meeting around Christmas.

4.4. Hill Walking - Steve Charles

Hill walks have been very quiet this year -

- 27th May was the Cheshire 3 peaks
- Wilton fest - winter hill walks (wasn't well advertised or supported)

Uplands Restoration

Winter Hill Feb 15th (5) and Further Rhodo clearance in November. Been successful with Bolton Conservation. Doesn't fall under BMC roles for clearance but worked well together.

Edale with National Trust and Cotswolds (12) - 15th June

Goyt Valley for moss planting on the 12th October was cancelled due to paperwork needed to go ahead (around archaeological concerns).

Kinder and Hayfield

Previous dates: on 12th February (5) and 5th September (13) were successful

Mend Our Mountains

3 days in Eryri (April, August, September) which have been well attended and supported by north west area members. Footpath construction, cairn scattering, clear drainage.

2 days in Lake District (April and June) around Langdales working on the footpath

Upcoming Events

Invasive Species Clearance

Hayfield: 4th November 2023

Winter Hill: 15th November 2023

Moss planting

Goyt Valley: 14th November 2023 and 27th February 2024

Open Walk with Rusac Club from Hayfield into High Peak (contact Steve Charles if interested (email below)).

Next years plans:

Get Stuck In - National Sign Up

- 4 events in Eryri,
- 3 in Lake District

Removal of Invasive species

- Winter Hill (with Bolton Conservation)
- Hayfield and Kinder (with National Trust)

Moss planting on 27th February (with Moors for the Future) at Goyt Valley mentioned above.

Suggestion if clubs offer open walks to attract new members (1 walk a year for non members to join in) to build a walk calendar and attract new members to clubs across the areas.

Contact for Walks: Stevecharles25@gmail.com (idea for restorations, want to arrange walks or have ideas on that, contact Steve).

Stuart in planning for 2024 with the Mountain Training Association (MTA) for conservation work - spoke about MTA having more volunteers from there with leaders needing to log days on their schemes. Michelle also raised these discussions with MTA being continued with her.

Stuart mentioned following in person meeting where and feedback: Should be noted that 80% of MTA trainers were not on any social media.

Event Brite has been useful for getting people booked on but then lots of cancellations (approx 70%) despite the events filling.

Suggestion: Could a non-refundable payment when they join to offset costs of hosting these events (goes to mend our mountains). Around £5.00-£10.00 would be reasonable.

4.5. Youth and Walls

Condolences to Jessica Baker

The North West Area of the BMC would like to express its sincere condolences to the family, friends and our members who knew Jessica Baker. Jessica recently passed away in a crash in Merseyside. These condolences have been sent to her family but we would want to express these again. She was very involved with youth and walls events in the area and the family are regularly involved in volunteering. Their family have shared a link with information for her funeral and links for fundraising for a wall in her honour, along with any tributes -

[Tribute Page to Jessica Baker](#)

The Youth Climbing Series has been successful so far and well attended.

GB Climbing - Paul Ratcliffe and others have been doing listening sessions

(athletes, coaches, staff, parents and partners).

- Athletes are feeling more positive and like they are being listened to more.
- These are anonymous listening groups.
- They will be pulling all of this together and a document will be prepared once they have spoken with the board.
- Potential to make change in the right direction quickly but there will be some challenged.
- Document will follow once spoken with the board, though this will be anonymised and around general themes.

5. Report From Most Recent Members' Council

BMC youth pilot - have gone really well and been focused more on indoor climbing but this will continue to grow and develop.

JBLCC last weekend and well attended.

Last **Youth Ready To Rock** Courses for the year 30th October in North Wales and 3rd November in south Wales).

Recruiting for a new CEO.

Aimed to have this by December. They are exploring this from a wide background to find someone with the right skills who also understands the area that BMC covers and where it should work towards.

No interim CEO during this time due to cost and time to train and map what is needed. Each senior management team is mapped to a director currently to ensure that SMT have support in their areas. This has worked positively and the board is moving forward quickly.

A question around the need for a CEO from Stuart. Could this be a general manager instead. Response highlighted the need with the large workload consistency and organisation. Board and staff of SMT are clear on what is needed in a CEO and consistent with a need for a CEO. Funding, organisation, negotiations, forming partnerships, communications and other skills.

Compliance legislation changed which affected the BMC's ability to sell Insurance during July. There was a temporary solution in place until August. The profit remained similar during that temporary period with the solution. They will focus on how we can do this effectively going forward and improve.

GB Climbing

Highlighted the work that GB climbing have been doing recently with the listening group (mentioned above).

In a robust position financially, but the outcome of 2023 will depend on UK sport and how much money they can access through grants and funds from that side.

Other

Aim for an open Forum in January to be confirmed so that information goes to the members council first.

Partners Assembly will continue to go ahead and work to get Plas y Brenin stable again.

Safety Committee looking at some of the incidents and guidelines from Scotland.

They are working on getting sport england funding to help with this piece of work, so it can be thorough and a good piece can be put out to the public.

The debate of Dartmoor will continue after an appeal has gone through again.

6. Open positions

North West Area Representative

Cheshire and Merseyside Area Rep (2 members to be voted on)

Members council representative

Anyone who is interested in the role of secretary use bmcnwchair@gmail.com

7. North West events calendar

Recap of upcoming events

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8. Any other business

None

9. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed