



## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### NORTH EAST AREA MEETING

Friction Bouldering, Saltmeadows Road, Gateshead.  
on 29th February at 7.00pm

#### Minutes

##### Attendance

**NE Area Committee.** Josh Petty (Chair), Simon Litchfield (Social Media), Jon Punshon (Secretary & Members' Council), Jonathan White (Members' Council), Fred Williams & Chris Bullock (Youth & Competitions), Ella Farley (Access rep N), Adrian Wilson (Clubs).

**NE Area Members** Cameron Smith, Tony Williams, Andy Suggett, Rob Gilbert.

**BMC Board:** Andy Say

**Apologies for absence:** Alan Hinkes, John Herron, Graham Harkness, Mark Anstiss, John Spencer, Mark Goodings, Mark Hunter, Phillip Powell, Andrew Porter & Stephen Heiniger.

##### 1. Minutes from the previous Area Meeting held on 30th November 2023

The minutes from the previous Area Meeting were approved - subject to the addition of the electronic voting numbers on elections.

##### 2. Update on local issues

###### Climbing Walls.

Currently there is a vacancy.

###### Hillwalking.

Currently there is a vacancy.

###### South Area.

No report

###### Access North.

Trees at Kylloe still an issue with trees blocking top-outs at Kylloe in and high winds have exacerbated the problem. Scottish Woodland are the landowner but insist that anyone clearing the trees must have professional liability insurance and this has resulted in the need to recruit professional tree surgeons to clear. NMC has taken the lead on this clearance.

Tillington Mount - access currently denied as landowner is worried about liability. Steve Blake has referred the issue to Alec Burns, a local activist, to address the concerns and hopefully re-establish

#### **Access Central.**

No current issues.

#### **Competition and Youth.**

Chris Bullock provided a detailed report - Appendix 1.

In addition to this report he outlined the deep frustrations that have been developing over a number of years over the alleged poor central support for youth competitions. There is a strong feeling that Sport England funding is far too focussed on the elite climbers at the very apex of the pyramid, to the virtual exclusion of grass roots support.

Tony Williams asked whether Andy Say was aware of the Board / CCPG response to last year's letter of "No Confidence" from the majority of parents of the BMC Youth Team. Andy said that the recent departure of Paul Davies as CEO had delayed responses to a number of concerns but that there was a more positive feeling at Board and Members Council level with much improved information flows along with a much more collegiate, collaborative atmosphere developing following the recent appointment of a new CEO (Paul Ratcliffe). The conclusion to this discussion was that "Actions speak louder than words" and the NE awaits a positive re-focussing of youth competition funding along with a more enlightened attitude towards sponsorship and hoody logos.

The Youth 4 Nations event which has run for 3 years seems to have become a 2 Nations event this year with England and Wales not participating. The meeting was keen to know the reasons for the late changes in this event. Andy Say agreed to investigate this further.

#### **Clubs.**

Nothing to report.

#### **4. Members' Council Update.**

Past three months there have been no MC meetings although last night (28/2/2024) there WAS a meeting focussed on financial analysis and meeting the new CEO. It was reported that 2023 losses were sizeable but mitigated by cost savings and cutbacks and reserve depletion. Reserves are now sitting at a recent low and need to be grown. The 2024 budget proposal is for a balanced budget through much belt tightening.

#### **5. Actions**

#### **6. Any Other Business**

Committee members agreed to, where applicable, provide written reports to area meetings along with conforming to agreed time limits for verbal meeting reports.

#### **7. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday, 24 April 2024 at Friction Bouldering Gateshead.

#### **8. Close meeting**

About 10.00pm

Jon Punshon (Secretary).  
29th February 2024.

## Appendix 1

**BMC Northeast Area Meeting**

**Friction Bouldering Gateshead.**

**29th February 2024**

**Youth Report.**

- **UIAA Ice Climbing Continental Cup.**

The Ice Climbing Continental Cup was held at Sunderland Wall Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February. With a truly international field taking part. It was a spectacular display of Dry Tooling and very exciting with Ice Axes flying all over the place. Luckily all the spectators were safely behind a net, but I still jumped every time an axe fell. Huge congratulations must go to all the team at Sunderland Wall for all their hard work in putting on such a prestigious event and bringing world class international competition climbing to the northeast.

- **Youth Climbing Series.**

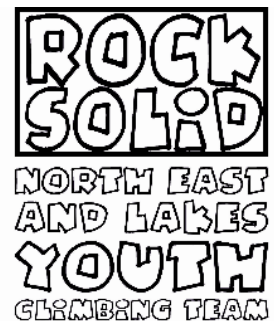
A national online meeting of all AYC's took place on Thursday 15 February to review last year's YCS and discuss plans for 2024. Plans for a review were discussed to standardise the design of each region's hoodies, whilst I can see why this was raised, I am genuinely concerned, as we have more sponsor logos on our North East and Lakes hoodies than any other region. Putting company logos on the hoodies is one way we attract sponsors. So, this must be considered.

However, it emerged after the meeting that this was already a done deal rather than a review.

Furthermore, the Northeast and Lakes have been told to change the colour of our team hoodies the reason given "Green is the colour of Ireland." Mountaineering Ireland are a bright lime green colour which does not clash with our dark green hoodies in any way.

Scotland are blue, as is the south West North albeit different shades which any reasonable person can tell apart, but this combination appears to be acceptable, but different shades of green are not. Go Figure.

Whilst the change of team colours could be regarded as a minor issue, worse still we have been ordered to do away with our Rock Solid Team name and logo for YCS Hoodies. It's no longer acceptable for BMC events.



I have been doing some research and according to the history books the Hoodies came into being in 2004,

The London South East had T-shirts first and they named their team the “Margate Massive” We adopted Hoodie in 2004 and the kids and parents at the time named our team “Rock Solid”, and the logo was born. After which all other regions followed suite. So, the NE & Lakes led the way with hoodies and our name and logo has remained unchanged for twenty years without any problems. But now it unacceptable.

We have been in contact with the BMC directors who have said they will bring the issue up at the members council, but they have not heard of any of this. We have also spoken with GBC / CCPG and they cannot recall discussed this either. So where has this BS come from.

The Northeast & Lakes parents will be discussing this in due course, but I don’t expect a response that the BMC will find favourable. I suspect that this may well be the straw that breaks the camel’s back regarding our future relationship with the BMC.

All dates have been published for the 2024 series, but venues have still to be announced.

Round 1.	Saturday 14/09/2024
Round 2.	Saturday 28/9/2024
Round 3.	Saturday 19/10/2024
Round 4.	Saturday 02/11/2024
YCS Grand Final	Saturday 23 to Sunday 24/11/2024

- **Rock Solid Inter Wall Trophy 2024.**

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March, Durham Climbing Centre.

I wrote to fourteen climbing centres across the Northeast and Lakes to promote our new inter-wall boulder competition, where climbing wall teams go head to head to win the Rock Solid Inter-Wall Trophy, supplied by Core Climbing Holds. I am delighted that eight climbing walls have agreed to take part, three politely declined for this year and alas three just did not respond. This is a new project for Rock Solid which we aim to make an annual event.

If anyone would like to help on the day, we are in desperate need of judges, this is a bigger boulder competition that we normally run with sixty-four kids having five attempts at twenty problems. So, more judges than usual are required.

- **Eden Rock Newcastle.**

The new wall being built at Benfield Business Park will be opening soon, Eden Rock is currently advertising for a manager for the facility and other team members. So, if you fancy a job!

- **BMC Four Nations Cup.**

The BMC have taken the decision not to run this year’s English and Welsh rounds of the Four Nations Cup.

No reason has been given publicly for this decision. Climb Scotland and Mountaineering Ireland are going ahead with their rounds. So, for this year the UK only consists of two nations.

- **2024 Rock Solid Bouldering series.**

The dates have been published for the Rock Solid Boulder Series over the summer. Now in its third year. I'm pleased to announce that Black Diamond have come onboard as our primary sponsor, with Beyond Hope Ltd. returning as sponsors for another year and additional support from Dirtbag Climbing.

If anyone has contacts for companies that could provide prizes or any kind of additional sponsorship, then please let me know.

Three venues have been secured and we are in discussions for the fourth.

Round 1.	Saturday	08/06/2024	-	Friction Bouldering, Gateshead.
Round 2.	Saturday	29/06/2024	-	Climb Newcastle, The Valley, Byker.
Round 3.	Sunday	14/07/2024	-	Rock Antics, Middlesbrough.
Round 4.	Saturday	10/08/2024	-	Venue to be announced.

- **BMC Northeast / Rock Solid Northumberland Youth Meet.**

Eat and Sleep Lindisfarne Bunk House Friday 21<sup>st</sup> to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024.

This is an ideal opportunity for young indoor climbers to experience an introduction to outdoor climbing in a safe and supervised manor, which we hope will inspire them to take up outdoor climbing in the future.

### **Chris Bullock**

Area Youth Co-ordinator  
Rock Solid Youth Climbing Team