

Midlands Area Meeting

Zoom meeting held on 19/3/24 at 7pm

Minutes

BMC Members present – Becky Walker, Phil Simster

Committee members present – Darren Johnson, Claudia Sarner, Ian Wyatt, Richard Law, Rich Hartfield.

Apologies for absence: Andy Harper

1) Welcome and apologies for absence.

Chair Darren Johnson opened the meeting. He explained that he was keen to hear from everyone, and excited to help share what has been going on in the area.

2) Minutes from previous meeting, held 19th Oct 2023

Richard Hartfield agreed to contact the previous chair, Andy Potter to see if any minutes from 19th of October meeting could be found.

3) Actions from previous meeting, held 19th Oct 2023

- Ian Wyatt explained that following on from the appointments of Darren Johnson and Richard Hartfield, he set up meetings with them to discuss their new roles.
- Ian Wyatt followed up on previous discussions about a possible new Leicestershire climbing guide. He made materials available to Andy Harper on google drive.
- Member, Phil Simster stated that he had contacted Nick Dixon about possibility of him being guest speaker at a future meeting. Phil explained that payment would be required for Nick to take part.
- Darren Johnson proposed putting an item on the next meeting agenda to allow discussion on ideas for bringing more numbers to future meetings.

4) Matters arising not covered elsewhere

None discussed.

5) Members Council

Ian Wyatt began by thanking Claudia Sarner for her time on members council. He stated that the two key topics that have kept cropping up are BMC finances and GB climbing, and their interrelation. Ian's summary is as follows:

Last autumn a £200k accounting 'hole' was discovered in the finances of GB Climbing; the BMC is responsible for these finances even though GB Climbing is largely funded with grant allocations from UK Sport and Sport England. Furthermore, last year there was another large claim on the BMC's Third Party Liability insurance which has resulted in a £300k increase in the insurance premium. The wider context of both of these events is that membership growth has been well below what was predicated a couple of years ago. Paul Ratcliffe (new CEO), the Fiancee and Audit Committee along with the Board have prepared a recovery plan, which includes the need to build the membership. This ties in with the work I outlined that I have been involved with in revising the membership offer.

Darren Johnson proposed drafting a letter formally inviting the BMC CEO to the next area meeting, so that he can discuss the financial situation.

6) Clubs Committee: Ian Wyatt explained that at previous Clubs Network meeting in Feb, he'd arranged for David Johnston Smith from Mountain Heritage Trust to attend to talk about archiving. David couldn't attend due to illness. Ian had subsequent conversations with David about the idea of

setting up an archivists working group on a national or local basis.

7) Archiving of club materials from Darren Johnson

Darren spoke to an archivist at Shropshire Council, which was local to him. The archivist stated that they are willing to take on archiving duties for clubs and can digitise and hold information on behalf of clubs. This same level of support would also be available from all other local councils throughout the country.

8) Clubs Committee continued:

Ian Wyatt spoke briefly on Midlands Club network. They were able to respond with feedback to the BMC's safeguarding, and climate & sustainability action plans.

Ian spoke about the recent webinar on critical incidents. He noted that Darren Johnson was a very powerful contributor at the webinar, and thanked him for his contribution. Ian mentioned that he had also been looking at the challenges surrounding youth and multi-sports clubs who wish to become affiliated with the BMC. BMC member Becky Walker raised a question about her caving club, which is seeking to become BMC affiliated. Becky asked what the timescale might be for this pending application getting resolved. Ian assured Becky that the clubs committee are trying to be as supportive as possible in helping the caving club to reach an agreement with the BMC board for their inclusion. As of yet, there was no timescale on when it would be resolved.

9) Chairs report

Darren stated that since the previous meeting, he had been seeking to learn and experience each different outdoor activity associated with the members of the BMC, whilst meeting participants and listening to their stories. He had enjoyed hearing peoples views and noted that in his experience, different activities appeared to attract different demographics of people. He spoke of the high engagement shown by other BMC members in response to his posts on the Midlands Area Facebook page.

Claudia Sarner sought clarification on a paragraph in Darren's report regarding the term 'Mountain Instructors'.

A discussion followed about making members of the public and BMC members more aware of the support provided by the BMC.

10) Access updates

Access West – Richard Law had updated access restriction advice for Pontesford Rocks regarding Peregrine nesting on the RAD.

East Midlands – Andy Harper not present.

11) Youth updates – Claudia Sarner informed that she had been seeking to develop better links between youth competitions and people willing to volunteer as judges or belayers. 23 people have recently been sent from midlands competitions to the national finals. A fundraising effort with young climbers was undertaken, raising several hundred pounds for Edale Mountain Rescue. There is a national-level attempt to form a partnership between BMC and Youth Sport Games. There is a national-level pilot scheme allowing clubs to make a youth club offer.

12) Vacant volunteer positions

It was agreed that information on the vacant positions of Hillwalking rep, Climbing rep, and the Members Council role should be sent out with the agenda for the next area meeting.

13) Date of next meeting

No date was yet agreed.

