

BMC Peak Area Meeting

1st May 2024, Sir William hotel, Grindleford

Chair: Andy Reeve (AR)

Secretary: Judith Brown (JB)

Present: 44

Apologies: Michael Smith, Rebecca Hammond, Sam Harris, Austin Knott, Adam Jenkins, Louise Hawson

Minutes of last meeting Amendment: in the last paragraph minuting Simon Lee's (SL) motion, Neil Foster is misquoted. He was clear he wanted the motions to be debated but other comments were made by Steve Clark (SC).

Clubs report: Paul Justin

Paul Justin (PJ) reported there had been several successful webinars. The best attended was one on how to deal with incidents on club meets; the North West and Peak joined. These events are providing valuable opportunity for clubs to talk to each other. One for student clubs is to be held on the 22nd May.

PJ wants to stand down as Peak Area rep. He is now Chair of the Club's Committee. There are 20 clubs in the Peak and the role is to be the link with the BMC and to ensure a flow of information and an enabling role to help clubs discuss common issues. The rep would have a seat on the Clubs Committee, and could be either a paper member or be more actively engaged. They meet 4 times a year. Andy (AR) reiterated how valuable this role is.

Access: Henry Folkard

Severn Trent consultation report: HF replied that the issue of wider access on land and water didn't seem to be mentioned. The reply expressed delight that anybody had read the document (laughter!) and said the points would be addressed.

Midhope plastic track: the land owners have appealed to Natural England, their grounds being that removal of the matting will cause more environmental damage. It is likely to go to a public enquiry (again). The matting is degrading and the longer this goes on the harder it will be to remove. The meeting expressed surprise and dismay.

Parking charges at Stanage apply 9am to 6pm and are being enforced. Charges at High Neb only apply to the tarmacked area. £5 in change is needed. It was asked if they could all be card operated. Some Peak car parks are but Burbage Bridge is coin only. It was suggested this is brought up at Stanage Forum. John Fulwood (JF) is the BMC Access Officer and is joining the Forum. The police have been asked to check parking as well as burglaries. The Park has a new member of staff and a new 10 year plan. It was suggested it would be a good thing for the Park to take advice from Danny Uldall on Eastern Moors, which is very effectively managed.

The Oread and Derwent Clubs have performed a very welcome and good clean up at Wildcat.

Horseshoe Quarry pond is full of newts, including great crested newts.

Surprise View car park is locked out of hours (to prevent raves). It is opened at 9am but there needs to be better signage to warn people who wish access earlier, e.g. on rope courses. The sign is currently on the inside, it would be helpful if one was on the outside as well.

Graham Hammond asked if Belmont Hall was banned as he had a recent access problem. No one knew the answer and many didn't know where it was!

Hill Walking: Peter Judd

Peter Judd introduced Austin Knott's (AK) Hill walking report. Austin was busy running the Staffordshire Walking Festival that he started two years ago. A successful BMC walk was held last weekend, as part of the festival, to the site of aircraft wrecks. Peter said the Peak Area volunteers had been involved in planting sphagnum moss, removing tree guards and removing sitka spruce. This really helps cement our relationship with the National Trust. There are lots of other national events too, e.g., Fix the Fells. A Hill Walking rep for Member's Council is still needed. The deadline for elections has gone but this is an important role and a volunteer could be co-opted.

Members Council: Sean Milner

Sean was reluctant to say too much about Simon's resolutions before Simon had been officially contacted. MC unanimously voted not to take the resolutions to the AGM. The petition signatures were still being verified. One resolution was really close to the required numbers and one wasn't. Some members at the meeting thought it was unforgivable not to take the resolutions to the AGM and that Simon had had barriers put up against him. He was asking reasonable questions. The 2022 accounts were published but much more detail was being asked for. One member stated that two thirds of the Reserves had been lost in the last three years.

Steve Clark (SC) added some detail. The 2022 Accounts were done on our old accounting system which provided much less detail than required. It would apparently be cost prohibitive to provide the level of detail requested but CEO Paul Ratcliffe (PR) will do his best. SM described PR as a breath of fresh air. 2023 has not been signed off yet but much more detail would be able to be provided and PR was keen to be able to do this.

There was discussion of the process to get resolutions to the AGM and the 5% threshold. SC said that the process needs to be looked at for the future.

There was further, circular debate on Simon's resolutions. Questions were asked about the fact that Simon had been asked to present to MC but that MC had already decided not to support the petitions. The timeline of who knew what and when was uncertain. However at the time of the meeting attempts were still on going to ascertain whether the 5% threshold had been met. There was much unhappiness expressed about the whole situation linked to the proposed resolutions.

Sean announced that due to work commitments, Sam Harris had to resign as Peak Area rep. He was hoping someone would stand, and although middle aged men were welcomed, MC was trying to encourage more diversity.

Volunteer awards. Because AGM is online, the awards would be done by the recipient's local area. The awards are:

George Band Award (major contribution volunteering over a long time, **Rehan Siddiqui Award** (diversity), **Lord Greaves Award** (access and conservation) and **Young Person's Award** (under 26 who has done a lot for the BMC)

Also, HF reminded members they can nominate volunteers for the Torch Award, a National Award for people who take part in and promote voluntary work in sport and other related outdoor activities within local communities.

Roger Murray, Chair of the Board of Directors

Roger had been delayed in the office so he was only able to briefly speak to us.

He introduced himself as a volunteer, just like us. He told of his long experience in the mountains and in business. He said the last year had been one of the worst years in business he'd ever had.

He acknowledged some of the financial communication issues but said the schedule of release of documentation is poor but when stakeholders and funding bodies are involved it might be expected.

The 2022 Accounts had been prepared without the detail expected. A new accounting system has been introduced and is going to be able to provide all the detail wished for. However, there have been lots of hiccups and delaying the audit. Training staff to use it takes time. Unfortunately, training has not been as efficient or effective as it should have been. He would rather spend valuable finance time making sure that all staff know how to use the system; if we have the right processes, we can do the right accounts and all the reports are churning out to the Board and MC. From now on both will have the same reports.

AOB

Kim Leyland, Access rep and nest monitoring, says ring ouzels are nesting, please take care

SC has lots of VHS videos to give to a good home.

Emails inviting to Members to meetings are still not getting through. One Member has told the office and been told twice it will be sorted, but it hasn't happened.

Next meeting: 31st July ; Area AGM 18th October

Sean Milner gave a talk "Three generations on Kilimanjaro"