



The BMC in your Area: a guide to Area Meetings for BMC Area Officers and Representatives

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1. Introduction

1.1 About this document

This document defines the roles of BMC Area Officers and Representatives and provides guidance on how to run your Area smoothly and efficiently. It defines ‘who does what’ and explains the role of your Area in the BMC’s wider decision-making structure. It also provides practical advice on the organisation of Area Meetings and sets out the ‘formal’ regulations which apply to the Areas as defined in the [BMC Articles of Association](#) (AoA).

The BMC has an “Equity on the Board” action plan which sets out objectives around diversity on the BMC Board of Directors, particularly around ensuring a minimum of 30% of either gender. To achieve this, we recognise that we need to develop initiatives at a grassroots level, including greater diversity at local area meetings. More representative meetings are important because organisations with more diverse decision-artmakers tend to make better decisions. Since area meetings are often where volunteers first start their path to becoming BMC decision-makers, their diversity ultimately affects that of BMC committees.

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2. BMC Area Meetings

2.1 Geographical definition of BMC Areas

The BMC's work in England and Wales is divided into ten 'Areas' as follows:

a. Cymru North Wales

b. Cymru South Wales

For the purpose of membership administration and communications, the boundaries of Cymru North Wales and Cymru South Wales have yet to be set, and all members in Wales receive communications about all Area Meetings in Wales.

There is also a Cymru Mid Wales outreach group, which meets from time to time.

c. Lake District

The Area covers the whole of Cumbria, focusing on the Lake District National Park, but also including the Eden Valley to the north and east, and the area to the south of the national park.

d. London & South East

This is a very large geographical area which encompasses the whole of south east England and East Anglia. It contains almost 30% of the BMC's total membership.

e. Midlands

The Midlands covers the area extending from the Leicestershire quarries in the east across to Shropshire and Welsh Border crags such as Llanymynech.

f. North East

The North East Area runs from Northumberland, through Tyne and Wear and Durham then into Cleveland. The North York Moors are overseen by this Area.

g. North West

This Area includes the whole of Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire including such venues as the Wilton quarries, Frodsham, Helsby and Frogsmouth Quarry.

h. Peak District

The Peak Area focuses on the Peak District National Park but includes many outlying areas extending to the Churnet Valley in the south, Shooters Nab in the north, Hobson Moor Quarry in the west and various outcrops in the Sheffield area.

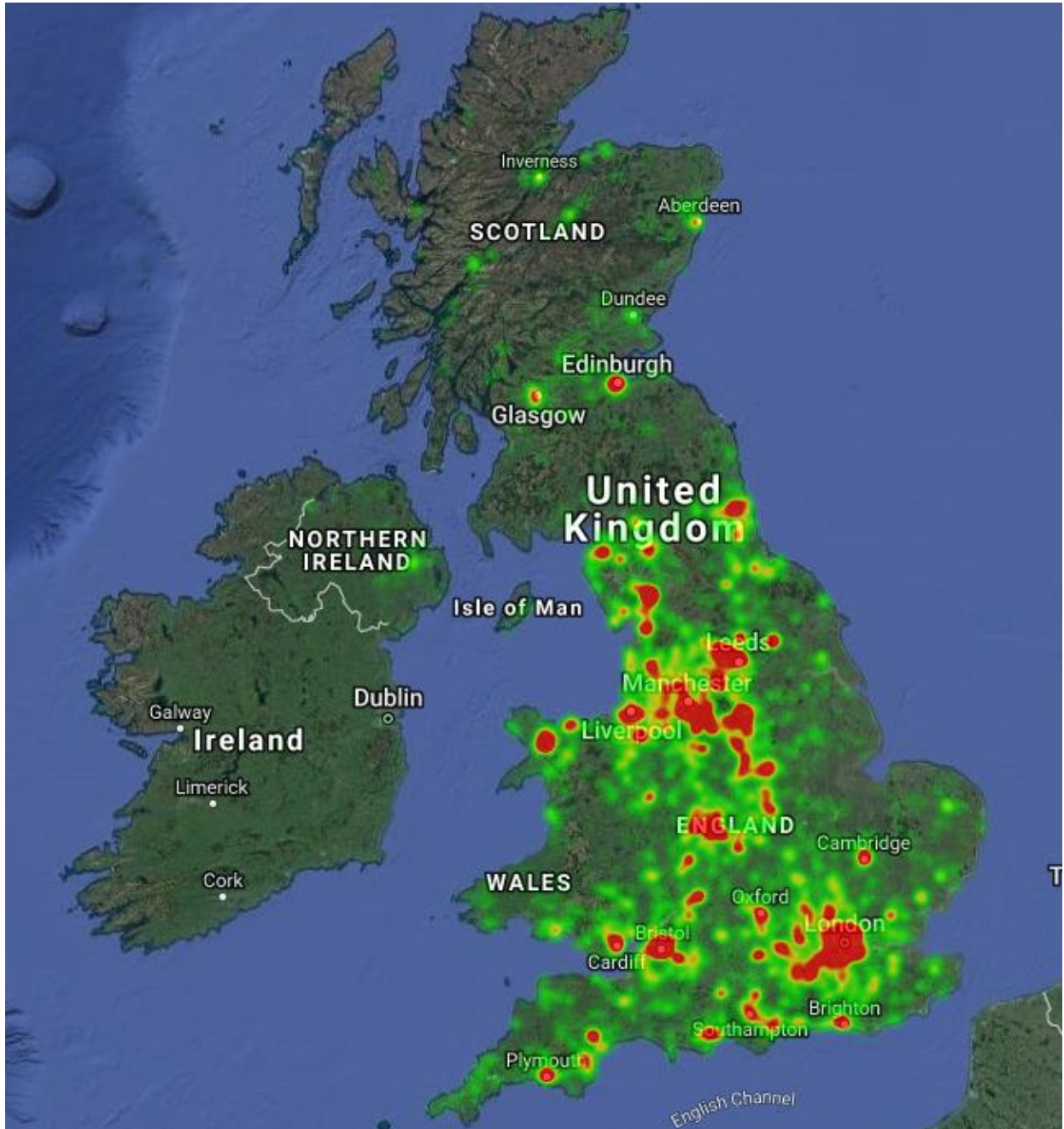
i. South West and Southern

This is a very large geographic area which covers Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Avon. It also encompasses the Wye Valley including Wintour's Leap and Symonds Yat.

j. Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Area covers most of West Yorkshire with the exception of the moorland to the west of Holmfirth and south of the M62, and the moors and valleys of North Yorkshire stretching as far as the east coast but excluding the North York Moors National Park.

2.2 Where BMC members live



The above heat map illustrates where BMC members live. The map is based on a sample of 10,000 postcodes so is not definitive but should offer a reliably representative picture.

2.3 Role & purpose of the Areas

The role of Area Meetings is to facilitate democratic debate between BMC members and reach consensus and decisions on local (and national) issues. Area Meetings are the main forum for members to contribute to discussions about climbing, hill walking and mountaineering issues in their area. To many people they are the 'public face' of the BMC where members wishing to get more involved can express opinions, influence policy and learn about wider aspects of the BMC's work.

The BMC Articles of Association (AoA 28.1) define the purpose of the Areas as follows:

- *to act as the prime forum in which Members may make their views known and to communicate those views to the National Council;*
- *to report to the Members in that Area the views, decisions and activities of the National Council, the Board and the CEO;*
- *to discuss local issues and to liaise with other organisations with an interest in such issues and to represent the policies of the company in connection with such issues; and*
- *to elect representatives to serve on National Council.*

2.4 Best practice suggestions for BMC Areas

As part of the 2019 Organisational Development Group work, a list of best practice advice was produced. The below list incorporates this with the existing advice. Area chairs and secretaries should consider the list, and implement whichever suggestions they feel would best suit their area; not all suggestions will be appropriate for all areas.

- **Meeting venues and locations**

Venues should be accessible (i.e. good public transport and parking, disabled access), big enough, quiet and free of interruptions. Projectors are increasingly used and useful, and can be provided by the BMC office if they are not available at the venue. Provide good quality complimentary food (e.g. chips and sandwiches); the BMC local area meetings budget will cover reasonable food costs. Using locations with good public transport supports members in reducing their carbon footprint; holding meetings in places only accessible by car could disenfranchise younger members.

Examples of locations currently used are pub function rooms, climbing walls, sports club facilities, youth hostels and outdoor shops. Please consider that some people may be put off by a pub environment, and trying an alternative venue may open the meeting up to a wider audience, likewise using a climbing wall may put off people who don't usually frequent them.

Some Areas like to hold their meetings at different locations throughout the year, while others tend to use one venue/location. Moving or rotating location can help if well-advertised, and if it is to a location with large numbers of BMC members and good public transport, but also risks "turning off" existing attendees. Change location with care, on a trial basis, and be prepared to switch back. Please refer to the heatmap (page 4) for an illustration of where members live in your area.

- **Guest speakers**

When choosing speakers for meetings, consider that a more diverse membership will want more diverse sources of inspiration. This refers not just to demographic, but also to

activities. Invite local activists with unusual / extensive experience, national figures from hill walking or climbing, or reps from groups we work with for access (e.g. RSPB, National Trust). Also reach out to our partner organisations for speakers. If no speaker can be arranged it may be possible to hold a BMC TV film screening; contact the BMC office to discuss this.

- **Area newsletter**

Produce and widely distribute (BMC Website, email to area members, local area Facebook page, climbing walls and outdoor shops) an area newsletter in advance of the meeting. This will require identifying volunteers with the necessary skills and abilities (e.g. writing / editing, desktop publishing, printing if required and distribution); the BMC local Areas budget will cover reasonable printing costs.

Encourage meeting attendees to read the area newsletter, so individual sections of the meeting don't over-dominate.

- **Meeting promotion**

It is up to the Area officers with support from the office to arrange the necessary publicity. The BMC office will set up a listing on the BMC Local Areas site, and on the dedicated page on the BMC website (<https://www.thebmc.co.uk/upcoming-bmc-area-meetings>). The office will also use the BMC email newsletter to publicise all upcoming Area meetings, and Summit magazine (as long as the information is available before the copy deadline). In the weeks before the next meeting an email will be sent to all members in the area. It is the responsibility of the Area to advise the office of any specific information to be included.

Additional advertising for the meeting should be widespread (clubs, climbing walls, outdoor shops for physical posters, electronic via social media, BMC and other websites such as UKClimbing/UKHillwalking and UKBouldering. If a talk is scheduled, give it prominence. If you provide the office with a suitable image, we can create a digital poster / flyer.

Post about the meeting on your local Area Facebook page and create a Facebook event so people can use the "who's going" facility; it provides members attending with an opportunity for car shares, and gives the chair and secretary advance view of likely numbers. If the main BMC Facebook page is added as a host the event will display there as well. An event or post can also then be shared in other local Facebook groups.

The office will also use the BMC's main Facebook page to promote Area meetings more generally. In the days prior to a meeting, the office will also tweet it on the main BMC Twitter account. The office can support the promotion of Area meetings more effectively if you provide information in good time.

- **Meeting openness and inclusivity**

One of the main motivations for volunteering is the social benefits it brings. Being proactive in creating a friendly and welcoming environment will ensure a positive experience for new attendees. It is easy to inadvertently appear cliquy or aggressive to newcomers. Give a friendly welcome to new faces; if possible try to have someone available to greet newcomers and fill them in on how the meeting will work, as well as to answer any questions and make introductions to other people.

Besides this initial contact the chairing of the meetings can have a positive impact on general mood by discouraging combative arguments in favour of civilized discussion, and by keeping items within a reasonable time limit.

Actively encourage non-BMC members to attend (as they often convert). Give good balance to all interest groups, including hill walkers, and encourage female attendees. For areas which do not have a hill walking rep, contact local hill walking groups to try to get one – in fact, more than one helps to spread the load. Ensure that work done by volunteers in each area is mentioned in area meetings, with specific reports where appropriate.

Try and put some BMC branding up in the meeting room, and encourage key volunteers to wear BMC branded clothing so that they are easily identifiable. If your meeting is not in an obvious location ask if you can put some signage up on the main entrance door, desk or bar making it obvious where it is. An A4 printed sign with a BMC logo and directions should suffice.

- **Engagement with clubs and climbing walls**

Strengthen links between local areas and clubs; identify all your local clubs, and ask local clubs to always send a rep. This should be part of the area clubs rep role. If your area contains club huts which would be convenient for, and are large enough for, an area meeting, consider asking clubs if they wish to host a meeting – a summer barbecue meet, for example. Areas need to consider how to engage with national clubs who have members in their region, perhaps through National Clubs reps on the BMC clubs committee.

University clubs and local walls are a good feeder. Reach out to local university and further education hill walking and climbing clubs. Help to facilitate transition from student club to established club for students staying in the area after graduation; or from student club to individual membership. Student clubs may also be able to provide a venue for area meetings or area events on campus.

- **Digital engagement**

Engagement with the wider (and especially younger) community is a key activity going forward. The BMC membership is skewed towards older members. We need more young people to come to area meetings and engage in area activities. If elected area volunteers do not understand and regularly use social media they should try and get a volunteer who does, and who can help the area be more visible on these channels. Areas should consider designating a social media volunteer for this role, who might also be the area news contact (see News circulation below). Engage with key influencers in the area, as they can often help topics to “go viral”.

All BMC areas have a Facebook page, if you need to give someone admin permissions to your page and can't do it yourself please contact the BMC office. The BMC office can also help you to maintain your page.

- **Data Protection**

Recent changes to UK Data Protection legislation with the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) have meant that area chairs and secretaries can no longer hold lists of email contacts for their area. All communications from area reps to area members via email are routed through the BMC office. Although these changes have caused some frustration at areas, and imposed extra workload in the office, a key benefit of this change is that communications now go to all area members.

In addition to sending regular area-specific emails to all members, the office also manages lists of 'engaged' members who have provided their email contact information via the online sign-up for local area emails, which can be used to send communications on behalf of area reps. To sign up, go to <http://bit.ly/bmc-areas>.

Social media channels which do not require area volunteers to know individual contact details (local Facebook groups, Twitter etc.) can still be used by area volunteers to promote activities, events and area news.

- **News circulation**

The BMC office needs to ensure that news (whether centrally originated, or fed in from areas) is effectively communicated to local area members; local area reps need to be on the alert for BMC news, monitor committees etc. and make sure relevant news is fed to the centre for onward transmission to members, and effectively communicated at area meetings. Centrally originated news needs to cover core BMC activities including specialist committees, and relevant work by partners. Areas should consider designating a 'news contact' for their area (perhaps combined with social media role from the Digital engagement point above).

- **Live streaming**

Live streaming of area meetings has been mentioned, but at present it is not felt that there is sufficient demand or interest to make this worthwhile for regular meetings. It may be worth considering for particular "hot topic" meetings, where there are more members interested than could fit in the usual venue. Live streaming of the "open forum" was used in the run-up to the 2018 AGM, so the office can provide advice if this is contemplated.

- **Cross-area communications**

As well as communications within an area, chairs, secretaries and other officers should also consider "horizontal" communication between areas where there are topics of common interest, opportunities to share best practice, methodologies, resources, guest speaker recommendations etc. Area National Council reps are well placed to advise here, since reports from all areas are tabled at National Council meetings.

- **Engagement beyond area meetings**

Area meetings are very important, but should be seen as one key route for engaging with the wider area hill walking, climbing and mountaineering community. Areas need to find the most appropriate ways to most effectively engage with all members in their area, not just meeting attendees. Especially we need to engage with the people who are active in areas, but who don't go to meetings. We need all area members to feel informed, valued and consulted.

- **BMC Community / Local Areas site**

The site - <https://community.thebmc.co.uk> - lists area meetings as individual events, and is able to host meeting-related documents such as agendas, minutes and other papers. Please provide meeting information to the BMC office for inclusion on the site; it can then be used to populate other platforms such as social media and email newsletters. The site can also be used to list and promote other BMC events organised by area volunteers such as festivals, hill walks and crag clean-ups.

The BMC office will create an event for your meeting when we have received the date, venue, etc., and upload any documents (agenda, minutes of previous meeting, etc.) when received too. If you want to add content yourself you will need to create a profile for

yourself, and then contact the BMC office in order to obtain the necessary permissions to allow you to do this.

2.5 Attendance & voting

Any BMC members who are resident in a particular Area (or have elected by notice to the BMC CEO to attend the meetings of an Area within which they do not reside – AoA 28.3) can attend and vote at Area Meetings; Areas should actively encourage new activists to get involved in the BMC's work. Many Areas run their meetings as 'open meetings' which may be attended by any climber, hill walker or mountaineer at the discretion of the Chair. There is a provision in the AoA for Areas to hold 'outreach' meetings (e.g. in remote parts of the Area) to discuss local issues. BMC Associate Members may also send a representative to Area Meetings, but are not entitled to vote.

2.6 Suggested timeline for Chair & Secretary

- Once a year: decide on dates and book venue(s). The June National Council meeting sets the dates for the following year's National Council meetings. Your end of year Area AGM is probably the best meeting at which to decide dates for the following year. Set your Area Meeting dates for 1-3 weeks before the National Council meeting dates, to allow for discussion of National Council issues and reporting back to National Council.

Notify the BMC office of your meeting dates for the year ahead, so that they can be added to the [BMC Local Areas site](#).

- 3 months before each meeting: identify speaker and advise the office if the presence of a specific member of BMC staff (see 2.7 BMC staff support & attendance) is requested.
- 2 months before meeting: re-confirm room booking and determine facilities required (e.g. projector, extension leads). Determine how / when the venue, food and speaker expenses are to be paid.
- 1 month before meeting: produce agenda, and send to the office, who will post it on the BMC Local Areas site, and publicise the meeting with support from the office.
- Hold meeting: keep a record of meeting attendees, as a minimum the number attending, and if possible gender breakdown. Some Areas like to record the names of meeting attendees and use a signing-in sheet for this purpose.
- Following the meeting: claim back legitimate meeting expenses from the BMC.
- Before National Council: write up brief notes of the main points arising and send to the office. A template is available from the office for this purpose.
- Within 2 weeks of Area Meeting: write up meeting minutes (note form) and send to the office for posting on the BMC Local Areas site; refer to the BMC Local Areas site for examples of Area minutes.

2.7 BMC staff support & attendance

There is a commitment from the BMC office to send a relevant member of staff to all Area Meetings. If a particular BMC officer is requested to attend a particular meeting the office will endeavour to facilitate this. It should be noted that despite our best efforts, there may be occasions when it is not possible to identify an officer to attend an Area Meeting.

The BMC office will also support the promotion of Area Meetings via the BMC website and social media, the monthly email newsletter and area-specific bulk emails in consultation with Area Secretaries as detailed in 2.4 best practice suggestions.

Support for the BMC areas is provided in the office by Tony Ryan (Project Co-ordinator). Tony should be your first point of contact on all matters:

Email: Tony@thebmc.co.uk

Phone: 0161 438 3334

2.8 Practical considerations for meetings

- **Catering & room preparation**

If you are providing food at the meeting advise the venue of your budget and aim for a 50/50 meat and vegetarian split. If you are offering entertainment, make sure your speaker has everything they need (laptop, projector, screen, speakers) well in advance. Do not assume that the venue will provide everything. The BMC office has projectors and speakers that can be booked out for this purpose and brought to the meeting by the attending BMC officer, please ensure you give plenty of notice if you would like to do this.

- **Financial support**

Each Area has an annual budget of £500.00 to support the cost of meeting room bookings, food and speaker costs. For auditing and VAT purposes, it's useful if you can provide receipts with any claims you submit for meeting costs. A volunteer expense form is available to enable you to reclaim out-of-pocket costs. If a meeting location is willing to invoice the BMC directly for room bookings and food costs, please ensure that invoices are made out to the BMC and not to the volunteer responsible for the booking/ordering.

3. Area Officers & Representatives

There are a number of essential defined roles in each area, as well as 'unofficial' roles which help the area and meetings to function.

3.1 Area Chair

The Area Chair is an extremely important position within the BMC. Together with the Area Secretary it is the Chair who makes the Area 'tick'. He or she will need to work closely with other volunteers in the Area and should liaise with BMC office staff to ensure the Area receives suitable support.

What is expected of the Chair?

The main roles of the Area Chair are to:

- be an advocate for the BMC. With regard to this it is helpful to develop some understanding of the BMC's specialist work areas, finances and structure;
- be aware of the BMC procedures and constitutional requirements related to Area Meetings (AoA 28 – Area Meetings);
- be able to represent members' views in a fair and balanced manner at local, regional and national level;
- ideally have some experience in chairing meetings;
- keep well informed about Area activities and meeting agendas;
- be unbiased, impartial and diplomatic; to get the best out of the others; and
- be able to 'keep the peace' during times of disagreement or unrest.

Specific responsibilities of the Chair:

- dealing with Area administration in a timely manner i.e. agreeing agendas, briefing papers, minutes and responding to correspondence;
- welcoming newcomers to Area Meetings and making any necessary introductions;
- listening to different points of view and summarising the key aspects of discussions;
- ensuring that Area Meetings run smoothly; the Chair should be 'fair but firm' – people should be allowed to speak but repetition and time wasting should be minimised;
- developing consensus and determining when votes are required on agenda items;
- taking a lead on difficult or contentious issues; and
- ensuring good time-keeping to enable appropriate discussion on all agenda items.

3.2 Area Secretary

The Secretary is another very important role within the Area. Secretaries should be good communicators who are well organised and reliable.

The main roles of the Secretary are to:

- arrange the meeting venues in accordance with the agreed schedule;
- work with the BMC office to publicise and promote Area Meetings;
- produce agendas (in discussion with the Chair) and send them to the BMC office for posting on the BMC Local Areas site at least 2 weeks before the meeting date;
- arrange the circulation of reports / discussion papers to support agenda items;
- record attendance at the meetings.
- write meeting minutes (note form – not detailed) and send them to the BMC office for posting on the BMC Local Areas site within 14 days of the meeting having taken place;
- help ensure that meeting action points are followed up; and
- deal with any necessary administration and correspondence between meetings.

3.3 Area Representatives on National Council

Each BMC Area can appoint two people to serve on the BMC's main policy making body – National Council. National Council holds weekend meetings four or five times a year and its voting members are the BMC President, and the Area Representatives. The BMC's Board of Directors and Specialist Committee Chairs are Observer members, and there are also several Observer organisations including Mountain Training, Plas y Brenin and the Association of British Climbing Walls. Meetings usually take place in upland and coastal areas, to ensure that meeting weekends are a combination of business and pleasure, with the exception of the December meeting, which is usually held at the BMC office in Manchester. The BMC covers travel and accommodation costs.

Guidance for Areas Representatives on National Council:

- The role of the Area Representative is to represent the views of their Area at National Council and to report back to their Area on any relevant decisions or debates at National Council. At times it will be necessary for National Council to make quick decisions on issues, so Area Representatives must be prepared to 'think on their feet' and act (including voting) on behalf of their Area.
- Areas Representatives should aim to attend as many National Council meetings as possible. Since there are two reps in each area, meeting attendance can be split if necessary. It is important that Areas send at least one rep to National Council.
- After an Area Meeting and prior to the following National Council meeting, one of the Areas Representatives should provide a summary report of the area meeting; a template for the report is available from the BMC office.

- If an Area is unable to field a representative to attend National Council a suitable 'stand-in' may be sent to the meeting instead. This should be discussed and agreed with the Area Chair and BMC office.
- If having attended a National Council meeting a representative is unable to attend their next Area Meeting, the Area Chair or Secretary should be briefed on any important matters arising.
- Area Representatives on National Council can serve for no longer than five consecutive years.

3.4 Access Representatives

Voluntary Access Representatives are well established within the BMC and they play a vital role in our work with landowners and conservation bodies.

Guidance for Areas:

- It is up to each BMC Area to decide upon how many Access Representatives are required and which geographical areas they cover.
- Access Representatives are appointed and re-appointed at Area AGMs; there is no time limit for how long an Access Representative may serve. Experience has shown that continuity in this role can be a good thing.
- It is important that Access Representatives attend Area Meetings whenever possible; local access issues are the main point of debate at many Area Meetings.

The role of the Access Representative is to:

- Liaise with landowners, conservation bodies, national park authorities and others to maintain and improve access for climbers and walkers.
- Work closely with the BMC Access & Conservation staff and members of the Access Management Group.
- Negotiation and review of any seasonal restrictions (e.g. nesting birds).
- Provide information for Summit magazine, the Regional Access Database (RAD) and the wider outdoor media.
- Attend site meetings as appropriate and identify any site information needs, e.g. signage.

3.5 Area Youth Co-ordinators

Area Youth Co-ordinators (AYCs) support and / or co-ordinate the BMC's work with young people across England and Wales.

The role of the AYC is to:

- organise and support BMC local events for young people, e.g. regional rounds of the BMC Youth Climbing Series and BMC Youth Meets;

- consult with the BMC Office on child protection issues and pass on any specific concerns to the BMC Safeguarding Officer (Deputy CEO Nick Colton; nick@thebmc.co.uk); be familiar with the BMC Child Protection Policy and attend necessary training courses as specified by the BMC; and
- report to the Area Meeting on youth-related activities and events; if an AYC is unable to attend a meeting, a report of activities should be submitted and a template is available from the BMC office.

The AYC should be an experienced climber, hill walker or mountaineer with experience of working with young people. AYC's are invited to participate in the BMC Training, Youth and Walls Committee and are required to complete a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check, which will be facilitated by the BMC office.

3.6 Area Club Co-ordinators

This is a role that will be evolving throughout 2020 during the implementation of ODG work.

The ACC's role is to help support BMC-affiliated clubs and facilitate club development within their BMC Local Area by

- Building relationships with local clubs in their area
- Advising clubs on meeting their development goals and links them with the support they need
- Facilitating links and information sharing between clubs
- Connecting clubs with opportunities to involve themselves with local and national initiatives
- Gathering club thoughts & opinions, and identifies club needs to influence BMC strategy
- Acting as a visible point of contact and representative for clubs in their area

3.7 Climbing Walls Representative

BMC Areas may choose to appoint a Climbing Wall Representative to liaise with climbing walls and wall users and to refer any relevant issues to the Area. Amongst other things the Climbing Walls Representative can take responsibility for ensuring the display of BMC literature at climbing walls.

3.8 Hill Walking Representative

Hill Walking Representatives work to widen the scope of issues covered at Area Meetings and increase the appeal of meetings to hill walkers.

The role of the Hill Walking Representative is to:

- Ensure hill walking appears on Area Meeting agendas regularly and to suggest ways the area can develop its hill walking work.
- Act as a focus for hill walking members in the area, helping them to find the right BMC staff or volunteers to assist them with their concerns or requests.
- Assist the area in addressing hill walking-related access issues.

- Communicate developments coming from the BMC Hill Walking Implementation Group back to the area and relay opinions on priorities from the area back to the HWIG.
- Be on the lookout for opportunities to include hill walking in existing area events and, if feasible, suggest ideas and opportunities for new local hill walking events, helping where possible. Hill walking reps have recently organised a number of hill walks in some BMC Areas.

3.9 Recruitment and Promotion of Voluntary Roles

Research has found that women tend to apply for roles only when they meet all the essential criteria, whereas men are more likely to be happy meeting only the most essential criteria. This should be borne in mind when looking for people to fill vacant positions. Women may be less likely to put themselves forward as they feel they aren't suitable for the role, but we can take positive steps in encouraging more women to apply.

New and vacant roles should be promoted and information shared with diverse groups, such as local clubs or social media groups. Specific and clear role descriptions can help to attract applicants, as can conversations and opportunities for potential volunteers to ask questions.

Area meetings should also be a good forum to advertise opportunities to learn new skills and to inform people of specific projects and how they can get involved. Reminding people of the importance and impact of their getting involved in the local area may help give them reasons to keep coming back.

3.10 Election process for Area Officers & Representatives

Area Chairs, Area Secretaries and National Council Representatives are elected annually at the Area AGM, where members have an opportunity to put nominations forward and volunteer for the different positions. Nominees / volunteers are required to have a proposer and seconder, and voting is usually by a show of hands at the meeting.

No person may hold office for more than five consecutive years; in that event a period of at least one year should elapse before they are eligible for re-election. Only BMC members who are resident in that Area (or have elected by notice to the BMC CEO to attend the meetings of an Area within which they do not reside – see AoA 28.3 – are eligible to stand for official posts.

Area representatives on the Clubs Committee may hold office for a term of three years from their respective dates of appointment but shall be eligible for reappointment and may serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms and shall not be eligible for reappointment thereafter until the expiry of at least one year.

All other Area representatives (as shown in 3.4 to 3.8 above) are elected annually at the Area AGM; there is no fixed term of office for these positions.

Where it is felt appropriate, other representatives may be co-opted and where this occurs, their co-option should be reviewed annually.

3.11 Expenses

The Area Chair, Area Secretary and National Council Representatives may claim travel expenses to/from Area Meetings. Area Officers may also claim travel expenses to/from formal meetings with external organisations and individuals. A volunteer expense claim form is available from the BMC office. A new Volunteer Expense Policy will be produced in 2020.

4. Area Festivals

Area Festivals are typically run by local volunteers with administrative and financial support from the BMC office; they are a great way of bringing climbers and walkers together, recruiting new members and providing a focus for Area activities.

4.1 Common considerations

Whilst there is no fixed model for festivals the following common themes can be identified:

- Choice of venue and festival base (e.g. specific campsite, pub, etc) is critical.
- Forward planning, publicity and promotion are essential for a successful festival.
- Festivals need leadership and strong central figures to give them cohesion.
- Organisers must obtain relevant approvals and consents (e.g. from landowners, conservation bodies, local authorities or National Park Authorities).
- Festivals do not need to cost very much in order to be successful.
- Festivals should ideally include a hill walking dimension.
- Raffles, freebie gear giveaways, quizzes and competitions all help attract people.
- People like participating in crag clean-ups as part of the overall festival event.
- Wet weather options are useful.
- A wide range of practical issues need to be considered, to include: car parking, toilet facilities, overnight accommodation and litter collection/disposal.

4.2 Event planning, administration and promotion

- All BMC festivals require approval by the relevant Area Meeting. As a general rule no more than one festival per Area per year should be held.
- Limited BMC funding is available to support basic running costs, and to be considered for a share of this funding, the Area must complete an [online application](#).
- Area festivals must be also approved by the BMC; this system enables us to protect volunteers involved in organising events – see [Organising BMC Events](#)
- Organisers may form partnerships with third party organisations (e.g. local climbing club) but festivals should not be ‘sponsored’ by a sole commercial body (retailers, manufacturers, distributors) without checking with the BMC office for potential conflicts with other sponsorship arrangements.
- Festivals involving crag clean-up activities require a risk assessment to be carried out; all attendees at such events must sign an individual risk assessment form.
- Any participation by under-18s must be fully considered and arrangements put in place to ensure child safety and enhanced risk assessment measures as required.
- The BMC marketing & communications team can support you with event promotion.
- BMC staff support may be available on the day / weekend of the festival but it should be noted that this does not fall within the specific remit of any staff members; festivals rely heavily on local volunteer effort.

5. Supporting volunteers

Without volunteers the breadth of work undertaken by the BMC would be vastly diminished. It is therefore important that all volunteers at all levels and in all roles across the BMC understand how important and valued their contribution is.

Throughout 2020 more opportunities and support will be made available to Areas and to specialist committees to help them to thank volunteers.

5.1 Thank you

There are some quick and easy ways to thank volunteers - a simple 'Thank you' at the end of an event, or an email to all those who helped out, is an easy way to help people understand that they are valued; or consider posting your thanks on to the Area Facebook page or in the Area Newsletter, if you have one; or make a public announcement at an Area meeting. You don't always need to name the volunteers – many people don't want that type of publicity – but either a personal contact or a broad public announcement can make a massive difference.

There are a number of days / weeks throughout the year that you can take the opportunity to thank volunteers as part of a larger campaign. For example, Volunteers Week takes place in early June and is the ideal time to post some 'Thank You's' on to the Area Facebook page.

For those volunteers who have given significant services, such as being an area representative or area officer for a number of years then it is worthy or more recognition. In this instance please get in touch with the BMC Volunteers Officer or the BMC President for more support.

5.2 Volunteer Awards

These awards are presented every year during the President's Dinner at the BMC AGM. There are three categories available

- **George Band Award** - for Exceptional Voluntary Contribution to Mountaineering recognises people who have played a significant role in the BMC's work over an extended period of time
- **Rehan Siddiqui Award** - for Exceptional Voluntary Contribution towards promoting Equality and Diversity in the BMC recognises those who have made a significant voluntary contribution to the BMC's commitment to increasing opportunities for under-represented groups to participate in climbing, hill walking or mountaineering and the work of the BMC.
- **Young Volunteer of the Year Award** - recognises those young people who have made a significant voluntary contribution to the BMC and its commitment to supporting participation in climbing, hill walking and mountaineering.

More details about the awards are at www.thebmc.co.uk/nominate-a-volunteer-for-a-bmc-award