

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the 46th meeting of National Council held at Manchester Climbing Centre on Saturday 5 December 2015.

Voting members present:

President	Rehan Siddiqui	(RS)	Chair
Vice-President	Nick Kurth	(NK)	
Vice-President	Mina Leslie-Wujastyk	(MLW)	
Honorary Treasurer	John Simpson	(JS)	
CEO	Dave Turnbull	(DT)	
Cymru / Wales (North)	Jim Kelly	(JK)	
Lakes	Ted Rogers	(TR)	
Lakes	Peter Sterling	(PS)	
London & SE	Rik Payne	(RP)	
London & SE	Lisa Payne	(LP)	
Midlands	Roger Fanner	(RF)	
Midlands	Phil Simister	(PSim)	
North East	Mark Anstiss	(MA)	
North West	Nick Bond	(NB)	
Peak	Rob Greenwood	(RG)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
South West	Colin Knowles	(CK)	
Yorkshire	Deirdre Collier	(DC)	
Yorkshire	James Rowe	(JR)	

Observers present:

Access	Dave Musgrove	(DMus)
Clubs	Fiona Sanders	(FS)
Competitions	Ian Walton	(IW)
Equity	Kamala Sen	(KS)
Finance	Graham Richmond	(GR)
Guidebooks	Ian Carr	(IC)
Huts	Iain McCallum	(IM)
International	Dave Wilkinson	(DW)
Plas y Brenin	Jackie Bryson	(JB)
Training & Youth	Andy Newton	(AN)
Cymru / Wales	Kate Worthington	(KW)

Staff present:

Deputy CEO	Nick Colton	(NC)
Secretary	Kate Anwyl	(KA)
BMC Access Officer (Policy)	Cath Flitcroft	(CF)
BMC Access Officer (England)	Rob Dyer	(RD)
BMC Access Officer (Wales)	Elfyn Jones	(EJ)
BMC Competitions & Walls Officer	Rob Adie	(RA)
BMC Guidebooks Officer	Niall Grimes	(NG)
BMC Hill Walking Officer / Equity	Carey Davies	(CD)
BMC Regional Development Officer West & Clubs	Jane Thompson	(JT)
BMC / MTE Training Officer	Jon Garside	(JG)
BMC Technical Officer & Huts	Dan Middleton	(DMid)

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

1.1 Welcome

- 1.1.1 Rehan Siddiqui (RS) welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Jackie Bryson and Kate Worthington who were attending for first time.
- 1.1.2 RS gave a special note of thanks to Bill Renshaw who has completed his term as Chair of the Land Management Group (LMG) and Martin Doyle who is retiring from Plas y Brenin after 17 years.

1.2 Apologies

- 1.2.1 Apologies were received from Rupert Davies, Tim Greenhalgh, Will Kilner, Gareth Palmer, Bill Renshaw, Mike Rosser, Brian Smith, Phillip Tootill and Mark Walker.

1.3 Conflicts of Interest

- 1.3.1 No conflicts were declared.

2. Specialist Committee ToR, Membership & Forward Plans for approval

RS requested National Council to read the report submitted by the hill walking working group and confirmed that Carey Davies is available to answer any questions. DT noted that Carey is handing over his Equity Steering Group responsibilities to the new Equity Officer (Joanna Rowbottom) in January 2016 so will have more time to focus on hill walking issues. Rob Greenwood (RG) reported on an excellent bad weather walk organised by BMC Peak Area Hill Walking Reps Peter Judd and Cath Lee the previous weekend.

Voting: RH proposed that voting members should raise their hands only if they were voting against a motion.

Agreed

2.1 Competitions

Chair: Ian Walton

Officer: Rob Adie

- 2.1.1 IW reported on a busy 2015 with excellent podium results from team members; he raised the issue of the 2020 Olympics shortlist and RA noted that the IOC would make its decision in August 2016. Inclusion in the Olympics would be a major development for climbing and it is important that the BMC makes initial preparations for a positive outcome.
- 2.1.2 Nick Kurth (NK) gave a vote of thanks and congratulations to the GB Climbing Team for their excellent achievements over 2015. IW added his thanks to the competition volunteers for their role in making the competitions happen.
- 2.1.3 Pete Sterling (PS) asked about the impact of Olympic status on the BMC's wider work programmes; he expressed concern about the effect on grass roots activities and asked for assurances that there would be no impact on the BMC's current work. DT suggested Olympic status would have a fairly substantial effect on the organisation – at least in the short term (e.g. media work, engagement with UK Sport and establishing appropriate internal structures) – but that there would be little if any impact on core access, conservation and environmental work.

Noted

- 2.1.4 Ted Rogers (TR) felt it would be a good opportunity to increase the profile of climbing, should climbing get into the Olympics. This was echoed by Jim Kelly (JK) who felt it would present great sponsorship opportunities.
- 2.1.5 NK added that there is a need to ensure core business is still being delivered but the Olympics should be seen as a good thing overall. RS felt the BMC should embrace it and promote inclusion for all. Roger Fanner (RF) asked if paraclimbing would be included and IW confirmed this to be correct.

Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans unanimously approved.

Agreed

2.2 Access

Chair: Dave Musgrove

Officers: Cath Flitcroft, Elfyn Jones & Rob Dyer

- 2.2.1 DMus explained that he became the chair of the Access Management Group earlier in the year and that the Group has a wealth of specialist knowledge. He reported that a new 'sustainability working group' had been established in 2015.

- 2.2.2 Colin Knowles (CK) asked if the work of the sustainability group had been publicised to members and CF confirmed that there had been an article in Summit, that a climate change debate is planned for March 2016 in Sheffield and that the AMG intends joining the Climate Coalition Group.

- 2.2.3 RF sought an update on the work of quarries working group work since the departure of Neil Hewertson. DMus explained that an internal meeting had taken place in November to review the various research undertaken and documentation that had been produced and confirmed that a publication of some form would be brought out in the second quarter of 2016.

- 2.2.4 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans unanimously approved.**

Agreed

2.3 Clubs

Chair: Fiona Sanders

Officer: Jane Thompson

- 2.3.1 FS reported that the committee has been focussing on the relationship between clubs and the BMC; the committee aims to support clubs and disseminate information via the digital media.

- 2.3.2 JK noted that Cymru Wales is holding one of its 2016 meetings at a university to encourage student clubs to attend; he suggested other areas could try this.

Noted

- 2.3.3 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans unanimously approved.**

Agreed

2.4 Equity Steering Group

Chair: Kamala Sen

Officer: Carey Davies

- 2.4.1 KS reported on busy year in which an equity symposium had been held and various new initiatives for BME groups and women; disability and mental health issues had also risen up the agenda. The appointment of an Equity & Partnerships Officer (Jan 2016) will be a much welcomed addition.

- 2.4.2 Mina (MLW) gave a brief update on the Women's Think Tank session held in Sheffield on 2 December and reported that many new ideas had been discussed and that there was an appetite for a follow-up meeting. NK asked if the event could be moved around the country and suggested the Equity Steering Group might like to consider this.

- 2.4.3 FS asked for an update on the Pinnacle Club International Meet. Nick Colton (NC) confirmed he has had discussions with the Club but that no official funding request has been received as yet. KS said she was happy to make a note of the proposal under the Equity Steering Group's 2016 forward plan.
- 2.4.4 NC clarified the work of the new Equity Officer and Jackie Bryson confirmed that PyB will be conducting some insight work on the issue to advise PyB's future work plans.
- 2.4.5 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans were unanimously approved.** **Agreed**
- 2.5 Finance**
Chair: Graham Richmond
- 2.5.1 GR reported that the finances are in a reasonably healthy state, that FinCom had met quarterly and is well supported by the Treasurer and Financial Controller. The Committee typically takes a cautious approach with members' money and, for example, has restricted investments to bank deposits rather than stocks and shares.
- 2.5.2 DT suggested that a new annual budget setting procedure was needed so that proposed expenditure (e.g. on IT, marketing, web development and Specialist Committee work programmes) could be assessed at an earlier point in the year; he noted that he had asked the Financial Controller to convene a Budget Review Group on 1 July each year for this purpose. **Noted Action: JS**
- 2.5.3 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans were unanimously approved.** **Agreed**
- 2.6 Guidebooks**
Chair: Ian Carr
Officer: Niall Grimes
- 2.6.1 IC reported that Peak Limestone North was published in 2015 and the 'Wired' series was well underway – the first of these, by the FRCC covering the Lake District won the guidebook award at Banff in November 2015 and the next production (Climbers' Club / Pembroke) is nearing print stage. NG explained that the Wired Guides series is a collective of the definitive guidebook producers committed to producing high quality selected guidebooks. CK requested the ToR be updated to include the Wired Guides series and IC agreed to this. National Council agreed that the Lakes Wired Guide and Limestone North were first class products and thanked the FRCC (Steve Scott, Pete Sterling and team) and the BMC guidebook volunteers for their efforts. **Agreed**
- 2.6.2 Progress on the Leicestershire Guidebook was raised by RF and Phil Simister (PSim). NG asked the Area Reps to encourage the local guidebook volunteers into action. PSim agreed to make further enquiries.
- 2.6.3 **Vote: Subject to the inclusion of reference to the Wired Guides the ToR, Membership & Forward Plans unanimously approved.** **Agreed**
- 2.7 Huts**
Chair: Iain McCallum
Officer: Dan Middleton
- 2.7.1 IM reported on a successful huts seminar and noted that all hut guidelines have now been updated and are available on the BMC website. He noted some concerns about the new insurance wording regarding trustees.
- 2.7.2 RS reported on the opening in September of the newly refurbished Glen Brittle Memorial Hut, which is now an excellent facility and well worth a visit.

- 2.7.3 PS asked whether a suggestion made at the 2015 AGM about creating a list of 'approved' hut maintenance contractor details (plumbers, carpenters etc.) on the BMC website was being actioned?
- 2.7.4 There was then a discussion about: a.) a possible online booking system for huts; and b.) the possibility of combining the Huts and Clubs Committees in order to streamline the BMC's committee structure. Deirdre Collier (DC) agreed to investigate the possible amalgamation of the two Committees and agreed to report the findings at the next meeting. **Action: DC**
- 2.7.5 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans were unanimously approved. Agreed**
- 2.8 International**
Chair: Dave Wilkinson
Officer: Nick Colton
- 2.8.1 DW explained that allocating expedition grants is the biggest aspect of the committee's work and reported on another successful International Meet (North Wales in May). He noted ongoing efforts to encourage countries (including Ecuador and Nepal) to liberalise their policies on peak permits.
- 2.8.2 DT reported on a BMC / Mountain Club of South Africa exchange which is taking place in Feb and May 2016.
- 2.8.3 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans were unanimously approved. Agreed**
- 2.9 Land Management**
Chair: Bill Renshaw
Officer: Elfyn Jones
- 2.9.1 In the absence of Bill Renshaw (who was standing down) EJ reported and thanked Bill for his great contribution as LMG chair since 2009, former BMC Vice-President, former Chair of AMG, as well as role with the SRA.
- RS reported that Martin Wragg had been approached and had offered to take over as chair of LMG. This was unanimously agreed by National Council. **Agreed**
- 2.9.2 JK noted that Eric Jones is looking to lease the café, bunkhouse and campsite and this could have future implications for climbing at Bwlch y Moch (parking for example).
- 2.9.3 Nick Bond (NB) gave thanks for the well-organised Wilton Festival and asked whether the Chair of the Wilton Management Group has a time-limited term, such as BMC area chairs having a 5-year term. LMG agreed to consider this at its next meeting.
- 2.9.4 **Vote: LMG ToR, Membership & Forward Plans were approved. Agreed**
- 2.10 Technical**
Chair: Phillip Tootill
Officer: Dan Middleton
- 2.10.1 DMid gave a brief report of the work of the committee and noted that a harness guide had recently been published on the BMC website He thanked the TechCom volunteers for their hard work over the last 12 months.
- 2.10.2 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans unanimously approved. Agreed**
- 2.11 Training & Youth (to include Child Safeguarding)**
Chair: Andy Newton
Officer: Jon Garside

- 2.11.1 AN reported on a successful year in which TYC had also taken on responsibility for climbing walls. JG reported on the regional academies, talent development work and noted that a New Rock Climbers booklet has been produced, replacing the popular Climbing Outside booklet.
- 2.11.2 NC gave an overview on the BMC's work on Child Safeguarding and noted this is a Sport England requirement which had recently been audited and received a green light.
- 2.11.3 DT noted that Sport England is looking to reduce its 'starting point' from 14 to 5 years of age and asked how this might affect TYC's work? JG said it was a challenging and exciting time with a need to work with schools, liaise with clubs and produce different resources to connect with younger age groups. NK reminded everyone of Berrymede Junior School in London which has been working closely with a local university and a climbing wall and provides an excellent model that could be replicated elsewhere.
- 2.11.4 **Vote: ToR, Membership & Forward Plans unanimously approved.** **Agreed**
- 2.12 DT ended by expressing a note of thanks to the chairs and their committees for their positive contributions over the last 12 months; he also reminded the meeting that the BMC represents hill walkers as well as climbers and encouraged all committees to consider their relevance to hill walkers in their 2016 work programmes.
- 2.13 CK asked the chairs to consider technological innovation asking them 'how best can IT support your interest in 2016 and beyond'. **Noted**
- 2.14 DT reported that in November Greg Boswell and Nick Bullock had been attacked by a grizzly bear in Canada. GB is covered by BMC insurance and he anticipates a full recovery in 4-6 weeks; he had had a positive experience in terms of medical care and dealings with our insurers.
- 2.15 DMus noted the positive growth of the BMC Access & Conservation Trust (ACT). ACT is developing quickly thanks to a new group of dynamic trustees and it intends to raise its profile in 2016; he asked all chairs and officers to promote ACT's work. **Noted**

3. Note issues for AOB

- 3.1 NK – Infographic.
- 3.2 Mark Anstiss (MA) – lack of a hill walking report in Specialist Committee reports (i.e. previous session). MA felt this was an oversight considering the strategic importance of hill walking, this was echoed by the Peak and Midlands Areas.
- 3.3 RS – Honorary Membership for Gwen Moffat.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting*

- 4.1 The minutes were agreed and signed off by the President. **Agreed**

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

5.1 Action points from previous meeting

- 3.1.1 - Advise Guidebook Committee to review advertising policy (DT) – completed.

3.2.5 - AGM 2017 options paper (DT) – for June 2016.

3.2.8 - Quarries: LMG paper for December National Council – to be discussed under Item 8.1. RF commented that he did not feel this was the same issue but agreed to wait to see what was produced by LMG in Jan 2016.

3.2.9 - Area support meeting follow-up actions (TRy) – ongoing.

4.1 - Produce BMC heritage policy discussion paper (CK) – ongoing. CK

5.1.2 - Investigate why area mailings are blocked by spam filters (TRy) – DT confirmed that Alvin Foy (IT Co-ordinator) has investigated this and reported back but RP confirmed that he has not received the email. AF to re-send. DT

6.2.4 - Produce Management Regulation (DT) – on agenda.

7.2.1 - Publish NC minutes on BMC website (TRy) – September minutes on the website. Ongoing.

6. Reports

6.1 Areas (*report submitted)

6.1.1 **Yorkshire***. James Rowe (JR) thanked NC for standing as guest speaker at the last minute. He asked if other areas had climbing wall reps as they had a vacancy which was proving difficult to fill. L&SE, NE, Midlands and Wales all confirmed they had wall reps, although Rik Payne (RP) (L&SE) had heard through the BMC office that these roles were no longer required, which had deflated the enthusiasm of the L&SE area rep. DT stressed that there had been no formal change in the office's position on wall reps. JK felt the role was important especially given the 2020 Olympics prospect. RP felt it was relevant in L&SE due to the sheer number of walls in the area.

Lisa Payne (LP) referred to the Area meeting guidance document and reminded the meeting that under Item 3.7 Climbing Walls Representative it states, *'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'*.

DT agreed that BMC officers must be constructive when dealing with volunteers and emphasised that up to individual Areas to decide if they wanted to have a climbing wall rep.

Agreed

6.1.2 **Midlands***. PSim reported on a good turnout at the recent meeting and that their venue was working well.

6.1.3 **Lakes***. PS raised an issue concerning the scattering of memorial ashes on mountain tops and asked if the BMC should have a position on this, on ecological and aesthetic grounds?

JK suggested a collaborative approach with the National Parks and National Trust as this can be a very sensitive issue. FS suggested initial research on ecology effects in order to understand how big an issue this really is. Action: PS to liaise with Cath Flitcroft initially.

**Action:
PS**

PS also asked for written words from the BMC to reassure people placing bolts that they will be supported and covered for liability by the BMC. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that DT would draft a form of words to reassure people that they would be supported by the BMC in the event of a bolt failure or insurance claim.

**Action:
DT**

- 6.1.4 **North East***. MA reported on a positive meeting and noted that the Area had agreed to split the meetings between the north and south. The plan is to hold the next NE Climbing & Walking festival in 2017 in the south of the region.
- 6.1.5 **Cymru / Wales (North)***. JK reported on a good meeting (and AGM) and introduced Kate Worthington – who had become the first female chair of Cymru / Wales. Kate gave an overview of her background, noted that she is also on the Women's Think Tank and said how much she was looking forward to taking on the role.
- JK gave a note of thanks to the outgoing chair Tom Hutton for his dedicated work in the role.
- 6.1.6 **Peak***. RG thanked Neil Foster and Lynn Robinson who had just completed their terms as chair and secretary and also noted that David Brown is taking over as National Council rep from Simon Lee. Rob Greenwood (RG) is the new chair and Becky Hammond is secretary. Six new 'camping pods' have recently been installed at North Lees (Stanage) and the Stanage Sticker would benefit from more promotion by the office.
- 6.1.7 **London & SE***. RP reported on a great turnout at their recent meeting with over 50 people in attendance. RP highlighted more support is needed for clubs, particularly supporting club chairs with how best to cope with high numbers of new climbers and the capacity of clubs to support new climbers with their development climbing outdoors. RP also noted how successful the Youth Climbing Series (YCS) is in London and the need for continued volunteer support, adding that numbers have increased from 94 in 2010 to 213 in 2015. RP commented that losing the regional development officer in the London area was a big loss.
- 6.1.8 **South West**. CK reported on plans for a Lundy Climbing Festival in 2017, access issues on Unknown Wall and an Avon Gorge clean-up. He also noted that climbers must have BMC insurance at Cheddar Gorge.
- 6.1.9 **North West**. NB reported on the excellent Wilton Festival which had been attended by over 200 people. However he added that there had been no Area meetings since July and asked for assistance with getting things back on track.
- 6.1.10 **Cymru Wales /South**: no representative present and no report received.
- 6.2 Finance Report***
- 6.2.1 John Simpson (JS) - the budget had been set with an expected surplus of £11k but due to variances (as detailed in the report) the forecast for the end of Q3 stood at a £54k surplus. JS added that the forecast for 2016 is for an expected surplus of £8k.
- 6.2.2 FS asked if it was BMC policy to break-even or make a profit. JS confirmed that FinCom's general aim is to set a break-even budget and to make a small profit if possible.
- 6.2.3 CK asked about the financial implications of purchasing more crags and the annual management cost to the BMC. JS felt that should the BMC begin to acquire crags it might lead to price inflation. DT estimated annual cost (including staff time, travel etc.) to be in the region of £25k - £35k.
- 6.3 CEO Report***

6.3.1 DT gave a presentation, 'A time of change - modernising the BMC to connect with new generations of climbers & hill walkers' in which he explained the following:

- The need to modernise and refresh the BMC – including the office, the committee structure, area activities.
- The three Sport England-funded consultations currently underway – Portas (management & operations), b-focused (commercial development) and Thinkfarm (branding) – which will report back by 16 April.
- The BMC's newly established Women's Think Tank.
- The DCMS Sport Strategy and 2017-21 funding bid.

6.4 Executive Committee*

6.4.1 No questions raised.

7. Constitutional issues

7.1 National Council / Exec roles – Management Regulation

7.1.1 DT pointed out that the wording in the document presented had already been agreed at the September meeting and that it was now being presented as a properly formatted Management Regulation for formal approval.

There being no objections, the document was approved.

Agreed

8. Policy issues

8.1 Review of BMC Land Acquisition & Leasing Policy

8.1.1 DT referred to the discussion paper prepared by EJ in which it was suggested the BMC should review:

- a. Our position on purchasing crags; i.e. should we be more proactive in acquiring sites?
- b. Whether we should consider purchasing hill and mountain land as well as crags.

8.1.2 A range of views were then expressed but ultimately it was concluded that our current policy remains appropriate for the BMC and that potential purchases should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Agreed

DT noted that some minor wording changes may still be required as Rupert Davies (LMG) had pointed out that technically the existing wording would not have allowed for the acquisition of Crookrise. Action: RD / LMG to consider appropriate minor amendments.

**Action:
RD / LMG**

9. Club applications for membership*

9.1 No club applications had been received.

10. AOB

10.1 **Infographic:** NK distributed the 2015 infographic for information.

10.2 Hill walking report: MA felt that while the hill walking working group is not a formal specialist committee, hill walking is one of the BMC's key strategic aims, therefore it should report to National Council; DC and others agreed. CK suggested hill walking becomes a standing item on National Council agendas. **Agreed**

10.3 Honorary Membership : It was noted that the BMC has never had a female honorary member. RS proposed giving Gwen Moffat this award and DMus suggested Angela Soper as another very worthy recipient.
RF and RP proposed and seconded Gwen and Angela as honorary members. With 1 against and 3 abstentions this was agreed. **Agreed**

10.4 Area Chair contact details (PSim): PSim requested names and contact details of area chairs to enable group email discussion. **Noted**

11. Date of next meeting

11.1 Saturday 6 February 2016 in Bristol

The meeting finished at 16.15 hours.

Summary of action points from the 46th meeting

Ref	Action	Involving	Target date
2.5.2	Convene annual Budget Review Group in July	JS	ongoing
2.7.4	Investigate possible amalgamation of Huts & Clubs Committees.	DC	Feb 2016
6.1.3	Liaise with Cath Flitcroft re: memorial ashes.	PS	Feb 2016
6.1.3	Draft BMC statement of support re: fixed equipment.	DT	Feb 2016
8.1.2	LMG to consider minor wording changes to purchase & leasing policy.	RD / LMG	Feb/April 2016

The above accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:

Signed _____ Date _____
Rehan Siddiqui