

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the 47th National Council meeting held at The Holiday Inn Filton in Bristol
on Saturday 6 February 2016.

In attendance

Voting members:

President	Rehan Siddiqui	(RS)	Chair
Vice-President	Nick Kurth	(NK)	
Honorary Treasurer	John Simpson	(JS)	
CEO	Dave Turnbull	(DT)	
Cymru Wales (North)	Anthony Eccles	(AE)	
Cymru Wales (North)	Jim Kelly	(JK)	
Cymru Wales (South)	Will Kilner	(WK)	
Lakes	Ted Rogers	(TR)	
London & SE	Lisa Payne	(LP)	
London & SE	Rik Payne	(RP)	
Midlands	Roger Fanner	(RF)	
Midlands	Phil Simister	(PS)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Rob Greenwood	(RG)	
South West	Colin Knowles	(CK)	
South West	Gareth Palmer	(GP)	
Yorkshire	Deirdre Collier	(DC)	

Observers:

Clubs	Trevor Smith	(TS)
Plas y Brenin	Jackie Bryson	(JB)

Staff:

Deputy CEO	Nick Colton	(NC)
Secretary	Tony Ryan	(TRY)

Note: * = supporting paper circulated.

Actions

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

1.1 Welcome

1.1.1 Rehan Siddiqui welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mark Anstiss, Nick Bond, Rupert Davies, Tim Greenhalgh, Alan Hinkes, Mina Leslie-Wujastyk, Iain McCallum, Dave Musgrove, Andy Newton, James Rowe, Kamala Sen, Brian Smith, Peter Sterling, Mark Walker, Ian Walton, and Martin Wragg.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest in relation to agenda items

1.2.1 No conflicts were declared.

2. Note issues for AOB

2.1 Quarries – Phil Simister / Roger Fanner
Overuse of chalk – Rob Greenwood
Clubs & young people – Rik Payne

3. Minutes of the previous meeting*

3.1 Format of minutes

3.1.1 Dave Turnbull asked what people thought about the format and length of National Council minutes – did they need to be changed, or were they about right?

3.1.2 No criticisms of current format or suggestions for changes were made.

3.2 Actions from previous minutes

3.2.1 Item 2.5.2 – Convene annual Budget Review Group in July – ongoing.

Action:
JS

3.2.2 Item 2.7.4 – Investigate possible amalgamation of Huts & Clubs committees – emails exchanged; meeting planned for 12 Feb to progress.

Action:
DC

3.2.3 Item 6.1.3 – Liaise with Cath Flitcroft re. memorial ashes. Ref: dealt with in article on www.thebmc.co.uk (published 9 Nov 2015).

3.2.4 Item 6.1.3 – Draft BMC statement of support re. fixed equipment – draft with Perkins Slade.

Action:
DT

3.2.5 Item 8.1.2 – LMG to consider minor wording changes to purchase & leasing policy – AMG not met since previous National Council.

Action:
RD

The minutes of the December 2015 meeting were signed by the President.

Agreed

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

4.1 Will Kilner asked about the risk of volunteers misrepresenting the views or policies of the BMC when conducting business on behalf of the organisation. It was generally felt that volunteers should be properly briefed, and that there was an expectation that they would genuinely represent the views of the organisation, in which case the risk of misrepresentation was low.

5. Reports

5.1 Areas

5.1.1 **Yorkshire***. Deirdre Collier reported a record attendance (c.70 people) at the meeting on 1 Feb, boosted by an excellent local speaker (Ed Poulter, BMC expedition grant recipient and member of local fell rescue team).

The 'no climbing' signage issue at Dovestones has been resolved; the notice had been placed to discourage Tour de France spectators from climbing on the rocks. The sign will be removed.

A positive meeting with Tarmac, to discuss climbing in Threshfield Quarry (near Grassington) has yielded the possibility of starting development of the Central Corridor area later this year.

Discussions with YDNPA about the acquisition of Crookrise are ongoing; the park's valuation of the site is higher than that of the District Valuer.

The YMC has donated a further £350 from the sale of guidebooks to the BMC Access & Conservation Trust.

5.1.2 **Midlands***. Phil Simister reported that 33 people attended the meeting on 27 Jan. 'Life of a Mountain' film-maker Terry Abraham had been booked to speak, but had had to cancel at short notice; Carey Davies gave a presentation instead.

The area feels that guidance is required to help BMC members gain access to climb in disused quarries; this issue is of particular importance in the Midlands due to the number of quarries with climbing potential.

The area also welcomed the BMC's Mend Our Mountains initiative.

- 5.1.3 **Peak***. Rob Greenwood reported that the meeting on 20 Jan was attended by 59 people, and included a brilliant presentation by Bill Gordon, the Stannage warden.

On the access front the decision, following a number of public inquiries, that quarrying will not resume on Longstone Edge is a big result. It was proposed that a letter of thanks should be sent to Henry Folkard and his team of volunteers for their efforts in ensuring a successful 'Save Longstone Edge' campaign.

Action:
DT

RG reported on the management plan for the Eastern Moors Partnership, which was presented by site manager Danny Udall; this included a change of cattle to a more docile breed, with the aim of reducing incidents with the public, and consideration of reinforcing the fence posts above Millstone Edge, or fixing stakes, to enable more secure belays.

Since the area meeting, the issue of night bouldering, and its potential for disturbance to homeowners, livestock and wildlife, had been raised. It was felt the BMC should raise awareness via a website article which could then go into in the email newsletter.

Action:
TRy

RG reported that Martin Wass had stepped down from his role as area newsletter editor, after eight years of service. The meeting agreed a letter of thanks should be sent to Martin.

Action:
DT

- 5.1.4 **South West***. Gareth Palmer reported that 26 people attended the meeting in Exeter on 9 Jan; discussions included plans for the 2016 Cornish Climbing Festival, the 2017 Lundy Festival and a proposal to develop Trebarwith Quarry in North Cornwall.

The responses by rescue services to recent incidents at the Dewerstone and Bosigran were still causing concern; the lack of co-ordination had the potential to seriously impact on incident response times.

There was a discussion about whether an approach to local rescue services should be made by local area reps or BMC head office. Although this issue wasn't resonating in other areas, it was felt that head office was better placed to contact the relevant bodies.

DT suggested David Hillebrandt (BMC hon. medical advisor and SW based), could help draft a letter, and that Elfyn Jones had the best knowledge within the staff of mountain rescue operations (being a member of Llanberis MRT). DT agreed to put Elfyn in contact with David to progress this.

Action:
DT

DT reported he had received a letter from Hugh Cornwell, director of Cheddar Caves & Gorge advising he is retiring after 25 years in post. Hugh had been supportive of climbing in Cheddar over the years and his retirement could be good or bad, depending on who replaces him.

- 5.1.5 **London & SE***. Rik Payne reported that 41 people (13 female, 28 male) attended the meeting on 3 Feb, which included an excellent film and presentation by Sharin Shabestari, a London-based woman who runs expeditions to Mt Damavand, Iran's highest peak.

Tony Williams has stepped down as the area's Clubs Rep; two people at the meeting expressed interest in taking on the role.

RP noted that a question had been raised about whether the BMC would support climbing in the World Games if it does not succeed in becoming an Olympic sport. Note: agreed to await Olympic decision outcome then re-assess.

- 5.1.6 **Cymru Wales (North)***. Jim Kelly reported the meeting on 28 Jan at Lodge Dinorwig had been attended by c.50 people.

The need /desire for printed meeting publicity to be bi-lingual, to meet legislation requirements and local policies (e.g. Bangor University will only display bi-lingual posters) was discussed.

DT said that it was up to the area to decide whether bi-lingual publicity was required. Jackie Bryson said PyB would be creating bi-lingual publicity for some of its activities, and offered to support.

Upcoming events include the Llanberis Mountain Film Festival (LLAMFF) in March, TremFest (May), and Llanberis Tradfest (June); BMC is supporting and promoting LLAMFF and the Tradfest.

Government funding for the BMC's work in Wales was also discussed and it had been noted that it is difficult to access funding from Sport Wales because our head office is in England. Some Sport England money is used in Wales (on the basis that many climbers and walkers in Wales are visitors from England) e.g. the subsidised BMC courses run by Plas y Brenin.

National Council then discussed some of the pros and cons of organisational restructuring in order to qualify for Sport Wales funding.

It was felt that a Welsh office could have political value in Wales, but that financial and operational implications would need very careful consideration.

It was agreed that DT and Elfyn Jones would investigate funding opportunities and report back at a future meeting.

**Action:
DT / EJ**

- 5.1.7 **Cymru Wales (South)**. Will Kilner reported that the area's next meetings are on 17 Feb in Cardiff and 29 May in Pembroke (Spring bank holiday weekend).

Due to severe weather, the Brecon Beacons hill walk (planned for the afternoon of 6 Feb), has been postponed until later in the year.

The 8th Gower Climbing Festival will be held in September.

- 5.1.8 **Lakes**. Ted Rogers reported that 17 people, mostly hill walkers attended the meeting on 27 Jan.

There were no major access issues to report, although damage caused by the recent floods has made access to the area and travel around it difficult.

Rick Graham is proposing a change to the Cumbria Bolt Fund constitution.

Re-bolting of routes at Humphrey Head will be carried out in spring.

The 2016 LakesFest event has been cancelled; the plan was for the festival to tie in with the launch of the new FRCC Borrowdale guidebook, but publication of the book has been delayed.

- 5.1.9 **North East**. No representative in attendance, and no report submitted.

5.1.10 **North West.** No representative in attendance, and no report submitted.

5.2 **Finance***

5.2.1 John Simpson gave a verbal summary of the management accounts at 31 Dec 2015. The forecast at the end of Q4 has moved to a £52k surplus against £11k predicted; higher subscriptions and an increase in membership have contributed to this increase.

The slide in travel insurance sales was halted in Dec 2015, with sales £2k up on Dec 2014.

The trading margin is up, with a £9k margin provided by the Peak Limestone North guidebook.

There have been savings in office costs; marketing costs were higher, due in part to more marketing activity; competitions overspent by £20k, due to poor cost control; this aspect to be improved in future.

Bank balance stands at >£2m; overall a good year, and we are in a good position.

5.3 **CEO report***

5.3.1 DT reported that membership is moving in the right direction; at the end of December 2015 it stood at 81,039, up by 2,823 from December 2014.

RF asked whether a breakdown of members (by main interest (climbing, hill walking etc) is available. DT agreed to clarify this with RF.

Action:
DT

Sports marketing agency b-focused has begun a review of our commercial capabilities, which will include membership.

The travel insurance scheme is running well and the relationship with our underwriters (ProSight) is positive; they are satisfied with progress to date.

The Sport England bid deadline for 2017-2021 is yet to be confirmed, but SE will have a greater focus on 5-14 year olds (after school activities only), inactive people and under-represented groups. A new online survey is replacing the Active People Survey.

Former BMC vice-president Michael Hunt has undertaken a 'staff mapping' exercise, which will give us the clearest and most complete picture of how staff resources are utilised.

Colin Knowles reported on IT and database developments. Club renewals can now be processed online. A new online shop module will launch soon, including the facility for online event booking. The Regional Access Database (RAD) upgrade is progressing.

Other developments in the pipeline include utilisation of Teamwork project management software and Blue Jeans video-conferencing service.

5.4 **Executive (meeting date 27 Jan)***

5.4.1 No feedback on the abridged minutes of the previous meeting.

6. **Constitutional issues**

6.1 **Vice-President nomination***

6.1.1 DT explained that Mina Leslie-Wujastyk is standing down as vice-president at the April 2016 AGM, and that the Executive has recommended Emma Flaherty as Mina's replacement (ref: summary biography as circulated).

National Council recorded a note of thanks to Mina for her important contribution to the BMC's work, which will continue through her role on the Women's Think Tank.

Noted

Rob Greenwood reported that he had had very positive experiences of working with Emma during his time as a BMC regional development officer.

A vote was taken on the nomination of Emma Flaherty to the role of vice-president.

Proposed: RG; Seconded: WK
For: 17; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

Agreed

Agreed: Emma's name to go forward to the AGM on 16 April.

6.2 AGM agenda and format*

6.2.1 The draft agenda for the 2016 AGM was agreed, with the addition of Emma Flaherty to be proposed for election as vice-president.

Agreed

6.2.2 The timetable of the AGM weekend was agreed.

Agreed

6.3 George Band Award*

6.3.1 It was reported that the Exec had agreed that Ben Lyon would be awarded the George Band Award in 2016 following nomination by the BMC Technical Committee.

Agreed

6.4 National Council rep on FinCom

6.4.1 There is a provision on FinCom for up to two reps from National Council, but there is no representation at present. With the Blue Jeans video-conferencing service, it may be possible to participate remotely. JS asked anyone interested to let him know.

7. Policy issues

7.1 Health & Safety

7.1.1 NK explained that the policy statement had been signed off by the Exec, but that the issue was about more than just policy, and we are not currently fulfilling our legal obligations. Policy has been too focussed on office procedures, and needs to be more consistent for BMC events and address liability issues. The aim is not to bury the organisation in red tape, but to introduce common sense good practice.

JK felt that volunteer input was necessary, as different events bring different scenarios. RP felt it was important to have assistance with the process, to ensure that nothing important was missed; he also felt that specific software, such as Evolve, could be helpful. NK added that we would be looking at the way the National Trust manages Health & Safety.

7.2 Hill walking update

7.2.1 In Brian Smith's absence, DT reported on developments. Carey Davies now has a 100% focus on hill walking, having handed over his equity role to Joanna Rowbottom.

RS reminded the meeting of our desire to work in partnership with other hill walking organisations.

RG reminded the meeting of the AGM weekend hill walks planned by Peak area hill walking rep Peter Judd, following on from the well-attended walk in November. Anthony Eccles offered to arrange a similar walking event in Wales.

Trevor Smith raised the issue of the on/off nature of membership by some student clubs. RG felt that we need to do more activities, such as clean-ups and festivals, to attract and retain younger members.

RS asked for suggestions of ways we can engage young people with hill walking.

PS mentioned the satellite clubs programme, which aims to facilitate the transition from organisations such as schools, colleges, youth organisations, climbing walls and community sports clubs to mainstream clubs.

TS added that there are two student club reps on the Clubs Committee, and it was currently trying to form a student advisory group.

7.3 Mountain Heritage*

7.3.1 CK had produced a discussion paper entitled: *What is heritage, how do we value it, what is its relevance to the BMC, and should we have a strategy for it?*

There was a discussion about how to raise awareness of the work of the Mountain Heritage Trust (MHT), make heritage more accessible, and raise funds for its work.

DT floated the idea of re-naming the trust as 'BMC Mountain Heritage Trust, (or BMC Heritage Trust)' in the same way we re-named the Access & Conservation Trust, in order to strengthen the ties with the BMC, raise the profile and support fundraising activities; the BMC is the sole 'member' of MHT but ultimately it would be up to MHT to agree a name change.

RS suggested that National Council recommend a change of name for MHT.

Proposed: JK; Seconded: TR
For: 17; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

Agreed

A proposal was made that National Council, the Exec and members of MHT should hold a one-off consultation meeting to agree a future strategy for mountain heritage within the BMC.

Agreed

Proposed: RF; Seconded: JK
For: 17; Against: 0; Abstentions: 0.

**Action:
CK**

The meeting thanked CK for preparing the discussion paper.

8. Club applications for membership*

8.1 & 8.2 Application had been received from East Cheshire Outdoor Group and Sussex Climbing Community.

8.3 It was noted that both clubs are open to over 18s only. No objections were received to the applications.

Agreed

9. AOB

9.1 Quarries

9.1.1 RF felt that advice was needed to enable climbers to develop newly discovered or recently disused quarries for climbing; a 'roadmap' or simple list of considerations would be very useful.

DC said the Access Management Group is hoping that Threshfield Quarry could be a template / model for new quarry development.

NK advised that a paper went to the Land Management Group, but has not yet been signed off. LMG to report back on paper submitted to it.

Action:
RD

9.2 Overuse of Chalk

9.2.1 RG reported an example of seeing some severe overuse of chalk on a recent visit to Stanton Moor, and felt that there is perhaps a need to remind climbers about the etiquette of chalk use.

It was suggested that this might be possible through an awareness campaign at walls (posters etc.) and online. Action: DT to advise Rob Dyer and build into future literature and good practice campaigns.

Action:
DT

9.3 Clubs and young people

9.3.1 RP felt there is a need to address our advice to clubs in order to encourage u18 membership.

Nick Colton said the BMC child protection policy is very straightforward to follow, but that clubs must be motivated to embrace young members.

There was a discussion about what young people want from clubs, insurance issues and other perceived or actual hurdles for clubs to overcome.

DT reminded the meeting that there will be a Clubs & Huts Seminar as part of the AGM weekend in April, which would provide an opportunity for discussion.

RS advised that this issue should be added to the agenda for the next (full) National Council meeting in June.

Action:
KA

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 4.30 – 6.30pm, Friday 15 April 2016, at YHA Castleton, Peak District

Agreed

Summary of action points from the 47th meeting:

Ref	Action	Involving	Target date
3.2.1	Convene annual budget review meeting (ongoing)	JS	June / July
3.2.2	Clubs / Huts discussion	DC	April 2016
3.2.4	Statement re: fixed equipment	DT	April 2016
3.2.5	Wording changes to purchase & leasing policy	RD	April 2016
5.1.3	Letter of thanks to Henry Folkard and team	DT	Immediate
5.1.3	Night climbing website article	TRy	February 2016
5.1.3	Letter of thanks to Martin Wass	DT	Immediate
5.1.4	Discuss approach to SW rescues with David Hillebrandt	DT / EJ	Immediate
5.1.6	Investigate Wales funding opportunities	DT / EJ	April 2016
5.3.1	Investigate breakdown of data on new members	DT / RF	Immediate
6.4	FinCom reps: interested persons to approach JS directly	All	Immediate
7.3.1	Arrange BMC/MHT discussion and advise MHT of name change option (DT)	DT / CK	Immediate
9.1.1	Report back from LMG on quarries paper	RD	April 2016
9.2.1	Report chalk overuse issue to Rob Dyer for follow-up	DT	Immediate
9.3.1	Add 'Clubs and young people' to June meeting agenda	KA	June 2016

The above accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:

Signed _____ Date _____
Rehan Siddiqui, President & Chair