

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Approved Minutes of the 54th National Council meeting held on Saturday 17 June 2017,
at the Moorland Hotel, Haytor Vale, Dartmoor.

In attendance

Voting members:

Acting President	Nick Kurth	(NK)	Chair
Vice-President	Lynn Robinson	(LR)	
Honorary Treasurer	Graham Richmond	(GR)	
Cymru Wales (North)	Dan Lane	(DL)	
Cymru Wales (South)	Will Kilner	(WK)	
Lakes	Ted Rogers	(TR)	
Lakes	Peter Sterling	(PSt)	
London & South East	Lisa Payne	(LP)	
London & South East	Rik Payne	(RP)	
Midlands	Roger Fanner	(RF)	
Midlands	Phil Simister	(PSi)	
North East	Jon Punshon	(JP)	
North West	Andy Say	(ASa)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
South West	Gareth Palmer	(GP)	
Yorkshire	Mick Green	(MG)	
Yorkshire	Andy Syme	(ASy)	
CEO	Dave Turnbull	(DT)	

Observers:

ABC	Rich Emerson	(RE)	
Clubs	Fiona Sanders	(FS)	
Equity	Kamala Sen	(KS)	
Plas y Brenin	Mike Raine	(MR)	

Staff:

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

Note: * = supporting paper circulated.

1. Welcome & apologies for absence Actions

1.1 Welcome

1.1.1 Nick Kurth chaired the meeting following his appointment as acting president.

1.1.2 NK welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Andy Say, replacing Tim Greenhalgh, who has stepped down as a North West area rep. It was also noted that Rob Greenwood had stepped down as a Peak area rep; a replacement has yet to be appointed.

NK began by suggesting the main focus of the meeting would be the Organisational Review and he thanked Pete Sterling for helping finalise the review's Terms of Reference following discussions at the April National Council meeting.

1.2 Apologies

- 1.2.1 Apologies were received from: Mark Anstiss; Nick Bond; Matthew Bradbury; Jackie Bryson; Anthony Eccles; Emma Flaherty; Guy Jarvis; Simon McCalla; Dave Musgrove; Andy Newton; Mike Rosser; Carl Spencer; Ian Walton; Helen Wilson, and; Martin Wragg.

1.3 Conflicts of Interest in relation to agenda items

- 1.3.1 No conflicts were declared.

2. Note issues for AOB

- 2.1
- Patrons (NK).
 - Use of volunteers for hut maintenance (David Brown / Fiona Sanders).
 - Hill walking strategy implementation (Roger Fanner).
 - Finance strategy (PSt).
 - Update on Commercial Partnerships (Fiona Sanders).

3. Minutes of the previous meeting*

3.1 Accuracy of previous minutes

- 3.1.1 It was noted that Mike Parsons appeared twice in the list of meeting attendees; under 'Observers' and 'Others in attendance'. His name should be removed from the list of observers.

With the above agreed amendment, the minutes were signed by the Chair.

3.2 Actions from previous minutes

NK began by noting that the action points from the February meeting had not been considered at the April meeting.

- 3.2.1 See list of outstanding actions from previous (February 2017) minutes:

Ref 3.2.2: Discuss fundraising for re-equipping Horseshoe Quarry at next Peak area meeting. Ongoing (no fundraising initiative started; re-equipment plans are still in development).

Ref 3.2.8: Sign and return Conflicts of Interest document. On June meeting agenda.

Ref 4.1.1: Identify and inform bolting activists re. liability insurance cover. Done.

Ref 5.3.1: Add directors' term finish points to skills matrix. Recorded in April minutes as 'Done'.

Ref 5.3.1: Develop proposal to extend length of director appointments. Done (paper sent to Organisational Review for consideration).

Ref 5.4: Produce draft ToR for the Governance Review Group. Recorded in April minutes as 'Done'

Ref 6.3: Develop Strategic Plan document. On June meeting agenda.

Ref 7.1.1: FinCom to provide additional information for future NC meetings. Done.

Ref 7.2.2: Communicate subscription increase proposal to members.

Recorded in April minutes as 'Done' – FS confirmed that clubs had been notified. Note: at this point there was a discussion about the BMC financial strategy with specific reference to subscriptions increases.

Actions from previous (April 2017) minutes:

- 3.2.2 Ref 5.2a: Amend Governance Review ToR. Done.
3.2.3 Ref 5.2b: Invite clubs to suggest candidates for the Review Group. Done.
3.2.4 Ref 5.4: Nominations Group to consider acting president vacancy. Done.

3.2.5 Ref 7.2.5: Add to June agenda National Council attendance by area chairs.

Done.

3.2.6 Ref 9.1: Add IFSC to June agenda. Done

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

4.1 There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5. Constitutional issues

5.1 Agreement of 2018 meeting dates & venues (including AGM)*

5.1.1 The suggested dates were discussed. It was confirmed that the proposed AGM weekend did not fall on either of the weekends immediately before or after Easter weekend (30 Mar – 2 Apr); this would enable members who go away for a fortnight at Easter to attend the AGM.

DT suggested it would be useful to hold the April National Council meeting on the Friday evening of the AGM weekend to discuss the Organisational Review recommendations.

The following dates and locations for 2018 National Council meetings were agreed:

17 February – Wye Valley

27 April – Lake District (preceding the AGM on the 28th)

16 June – North Wales

15 September – Gower

1 December – Manchester

5.2 Conflicts of interest register*

Tony Ryan noted that all National Council voting members and observers are required to complete and return a copy of the register.

5.3 National Council – format, membership & attendance*

5.3.1 It was noted that three members of the Lakes area had attended the April meeting; in addition to the two elected area reps, area chair Mike Parsons had attended as an observer, for the purpose of potential succession planning, although his attendance was not agreed prior to the meeting.

It was noted and agreed that Areas are entitled to send a stand-in rep to meetings when one of their elected reps is unavailable.

The meeting agreed that areas could in future bring in an observer for succession planning purposes only.

NOTED

5.3.2 The meeting considered the gender balance of National Council, which does not currently reflect the split of BMC membership (27% female), and ways to attract and engage more women.

WK felt lack of diversity was an issue, and asked if the Women's Development Group might suggest ways to improve engagement. NK asked if Kamala Sen could provide area chairs with a 'top ten tips for increasing female attendance at area meetings' guide. KS agreed to consider this.

**ACTION:
KS**

Lynn Robinson said increasing female representation on National Council would depend upon increasing female attendance at area meetings. As an example, the June Peak area meeting had about 65 male / 5 female attendees.

The meeting agreed that we need to find out what deters female attendance, and to develop a volunteer strategy.

Rik Payne said the London & SE area has begun to record male / female attendance numbers at area meetings.

Dan Lane thought that an increased focus on young people would naturally attract more females, since more young women are participating in outdoor activities.

5.4 Honorary Membership*

5.4.1 Following the events of the 2017 AGM several National Council members suggested the BMC should consider making Rehan Siddiqui an honorary member.

A vote was taken on whether to recommend to the next AGM/EGM that Rehan be awarded BMC honorary membership.

Proposed: Andy Syme; Seconded: Andy Say
For – 17; Against – 0; Abstentions – 0

AGREED

NK to inform Rehan of the nomination.

**ACTION:
NK**

5.4.2 The suggestion of creating an additional annual award (to go alongside the George Band Award) recognising contribution to equality and diversity within the BMC was also discussed.

It was felt that further consideration was required as to the nature and purpose of the award, its frequency, and who would be eligible to receive it. The meeting agreed that LR should consider the idea as part of a new volunteer strategy.

**ACTION:
LR**

6. Policy issues

6.1 Organisational Review*

6.1.1 NK invited Fiona Sanders to provide an update. The composition of the Review Group had been finalised, but it is still without a secretary, and the recruitment of one asap is important. An organisation has been appointed to carry out an independent membership survey. A number of focus group meetings have been arranged and will take place shortly. The group plans to present its initial report by the end of September.

Ray Wigglesworth is providing members with a monthly summary of its activities by email newsletter and on the BMC website, and a monthly update will be sent to National Council members and area chairs & secretaries.

The meeting discussed the timing of the area meeting consultations. The plan is to provide a report for the November meetings, with a follow-up for the January 2018 meetings. The April area meetings are usually optional, but the meeting felt it was important to encourage areas to hold meetings in April 2018, prior to the AGM, to provide further opportunity to discuss the review's findings.

In addition to the above DT encouraged the Review Group to provide an interim report for the September area meetings.

6.1.2 The meeting also discussed a review of BMC financial strategy, and how this might link into the organisational review and the strategic plan.

There was some difference of opinion about the best timing of such a review; some felt that it should start now, others that it should follow on from the organisational review, to avoid any potential circumvention of the organisational review.

A vote was taken on whether to commence the financial strategy review now.

For – 5; Against – 9; Abstentions – 8

It was agreed that FS would take National Council's concerns and views about a financial strategy review to the organisational review group.

ACTION:
FS

ASa asked about the likelihood of the BMC meeting Sport England governance criteria. FS said that it would not be possible to meet the October 2017 timing requirement due to the need for constitutional changes to go to the AGM.

6.2 Strategic Plan 2017-21 (on hold since 11 Feb, for discussion)

6.2.1 The plan was considered in the light of uncertainty over Sport England funding, and potential impact of the organisational review.

RP suggested a small group should pick out from the plan the elements that can be done prior to the completion of the organisational review, get agreement from National Council for this list of activities and report to the organisational review for agreement.

The meeting agreed to the suggestion; WK to set up working group, volunteers welcome.

ACTION:
WK

6.3 Mountain Training (ref. letter to the BMC)*

6.3.1 A joint letter from Mountain Training Cymru, Mountain Training England and MTUK had requested that the BMC review its representation on the MTE board; it was felt that the BMC is over represented. It also suggested the Mountain Training boards could reduce attendance at National Council by sending one person to advise on behalf of mountain training issues, but with each body remaining a paper member.

NK asked how we should respond to the letter, and should we suggest a meeting. Mike Raine felt we could wait to see what comes out of the organisational review in respect of observers on National Council, but Roger Fanner felt there was no need to wait.

NK proposed we should respond positively to the letter about short-term changes and reference the organisational review in respect of long-term relationships.

NK to reply to the boards in writing; BMC/MTE Training Officer Jon Garside to provide briefing note on MT/BMC background and relationships.

ACTION:
NK

6.4 International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC)*

6.4.1 NK asked Nick Colton to follow up the recommendations made in Colin Knowles's report from the March 2017 IFSC Plenary, and to provide a progress report.

ACTION:
NC

7. Reports

7.1 Finance*

- 7.1.1 Graham Richmond advised that the management summary accounts provided to National Council now included additional information on income and expenditure for the year to date. RP suggested that a key explaining the definitions of certain words (e.g. programmes, trading) would be beneficial. **ACTION: GR**
- The 2017-18 budget will be reworked once the Sport England grant amount is confirmed; this is expected to be announced in the week following the June National Council.
- The balance sheet remains healthy. Without Sport England funding, we would have to dip into reserves, but recent activities by the Commercial Partnerships Manager are looking likely to yield a reasonable contribution to BMC finances.
- 7.2 Area reports***
- 7.2.1 **Lakes.** 24 people attended the meeting at the CC hut in Borrowdale. Unauthorised waymarked routes (some related to challenge events) were discussed. NK reminded the meeting that a BMC advice booklet on challenge events was recently published, a seminar on the subject had been held, and that engagement was ongoing.
- The increasing health risk from ticks by the proliferation of bracken was also discussed. It was suggested the Access Management Group should revisit this to consider what new actions to take, and/or previous actions to repeat. **ACTION: AMG**
- A question was asked about whether the BMC would support the installation of composting toilets at popular crags; it was noted that this had been considered in the past but had not been taken up. Action: DT to ask Rob Dyer to re-visit. **ACTION: DT**
- 7.2.2 **London & SE*** 28 people attended the June meeting, which included a talk by George Cave. Key issues included: club involvement in the organisational review; the Future Landscape Wales report; and actions to increase engagement with members given the relatively low number who vote at BMC AGMs.
- 7.2.3 **Midlands.** 25 people attended the June meeting in Solihull, down on previous meetings, possibly due to a last-minute change of speaker, Phil Leng replacing Emma Flaherty. The meeting reviewed the outcome of the BMC AGM, and also considered succession planning for elected area volunteers.
- 7.2.4 **North East.** Jon Punshon reported that the meeting in Durham had clashed with the general election. The main discussion revolved around preparations for the BMC North York Moors Festival, taking place on the same weekend as National Council (post meeting note: the event was a great success).
- 7.2.5 **North West*** 10 people attended the June meeting in Belmont, moved at short notice from Haslingden due to the venue closing without notice. The area agreed to support the installation of belay anchors (not lower-offs) at Pex Hill and discussed potential tree planting programmes to create belays at sites such as Wilton, Hobson Moor and Hepstonstall.
- The meeting discussed airline hand luggage restrictions, and asked whether the BMC could offer support, perhaps by producing a factsheet, or by lobbying airlines for clarification; BMC office to investigate. **ACTION: NC**
- A question was asked about the location of data held by the BMC. Some UK climbing walls use a USA-located database system, and recent changes in data regulations could be problematical for them; Action: DT to check with Alvin Foy (BMC IT Manager). **ACTION: DT**

7.2.6 **Peak.** About 70 people attended the June meeting, which included a talk by Andy Reeve. The bolts placed at Aldery Cliff have been removed for safety reasons, and the meeting agreed to let Buxton Mountaineering Club decide what action to take in respect of replacement belays. A suggestion of using an area of Horseshoe Quarry to create bolted routes for children was also discussed.

7.2.7 **South West*** 22 people attended the June meeting in Pendeen. Area secretary Mark Kemball reported on the recent BMC International Meet. Gareth Palmer reported on preparations for the Lundy Climbing Festival in late August.

A lengthy discussion on the 'bad step' at Bosigran, also discussed at previous meetings, ended in a vote not to continue with discussions on the issue. National Council proposed that the BMC office should engage with the local access rep and the National Trust on this matter. Action: DT to advise Rob Dyer.

**ACTION:
DT**

7.2.8 **Yorkshire*** 20 people attended the June meeting in Ben Rhydding, which included a talk by Maddy Cope. The area is very pleased with the acquisition of Crookrise. A new outdoor wall has opened in Brighthouse, marketed as the UK's highest man-made climbing wall. The area is supportive of the approach taken by the organisational review, and has no strong views on the BMC's involvement with the IFSC.

7.2.9 **Cymru Mid Wales.** No meeting held in June.

7.2.10 **Cymru North Wales.** DL was unable to attend the June meeting in Llandudno, and no area report has been received.

7.2.11 **Cymru South Wales.** 17 people attended the late-May meeting in Manorbier, held during the weekend of the BMC Pembroke Festival of Climbing; about 60 people attended the festival.

A question was raised about the publishing of photos showing votes being cast at the AGM, and whether this infringed privacy. It was pointed out that any photos published by the BMC did not provide information about what agenda item was being voted on, nor the way (i.e. for or against) the voters were casting their votes.

7.3 CEO report

7.3.1 DT reported that AGM voting procedures were being considered, in an attempt to engage more members in the democratic process.

Mend Our Mountains II will launch later this year, with an ambitious target of raising £1 million to support 15 footpath projects.

A review of BMC membership packages is underway, with particular emphasis on engaging and recruiting more members in the 18-30 age range.

It is looking hopeful that Sport England will agree funding on a month-by-month basis to the end of 2017.

Commercial Partnerships Manager Simon Lee is currently in negotiations to secure a partnership agreement which will contribute substantially to the £100k target which was set at the beginning of his one-year contract.

7.4 Executive Committee (17 May)

7.4.1 Abridged minutes noted.

8. Club applications for membership*

8.1 No applications received since previous meeting.

9. AOB

9.1 Patrons

NK reported that several letters had been prepared, to go out to BMC Patrons. NK explained the letters in outline terms; they set out the BMC's expectations of patrons in respect of support for the organisation. A 3-year term is proposed; this would be renewable subject to mutual agreement.

RP asked whether there would be a provision to remove a person from the role of patron; NK confirmed this provision would be made. It was agreed that NK could proceed and issue the letters.

**Action:
NK**

9.2 Use of volunteers for hut maintenance

David Brown reported that there is a problem providing insurance cover for club members undertaking repairs of club huts, and asked for a clarification on insurance cover for such purposes.

**Action:
NC**

9.3 Hill walking strategy implementation

It was agreed that RF would circulate an email update on implementation of the strategy.

**ACTION:
RF**

9.4 Financial implementation

Not discussed.

9.5 Update on Commercial Partnerships

Not discussed.

9.6 Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC)

Rich Emerson advised the meeting that the ABC is developing a 'membership package for individual climbers'. He was aware of the potential for conflict with the BMC, and was involved in ongoing dialogue with DT and Alex Messenger. Several National Council members noted that this was potentially a major issue and that it needed higher level consideration.

9.7 Length of meetings

RP commented that once again the meeting had not fully covered all issues on the agenda, and proposed that future meetings should be scheduled for a full day, and if they finished earlier than scheduled, that would be a bonus.

A vote was taken on the above proposal.

Proposed: RP; Seconded: DB

For – 12; Against – 0; Abstentions – 6

AGREED

9.8 Liverpool John Moores University research project to encourage female leaders within the BMC

DT reminded the meeting of his earlier email thanked Andy Syme for offering to participate; he also suggested it might be useful for the chair or secretary of the North West Area to get involved.

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 Saturday 16 September 2017, Pembrokeshire (venue to be confirmed)

The meeting finished at 14.40

Summary of action points from the 54th meeting:

Ref	Action	Involving	Target date
5.3.2	Produce 'Top Ten' points for Area Chairs	KS	asap
5.4.1	Advise Rehan Siddiqui of honorary membership nomination	NK	asap
5.4.2	Consider wider equity award as part of volunteer strategy	LR	September
6.1.2	Report financial strategy request to Organisational Review (OR)	FS	asap
6.2.1	Review Strategic Plan draft to identify items not reliant on the OR	WK	Immediate
6.3.1	Write to MT regarding the letter to Ray Wigglesworth	NK	asap
6.4.1	Advise Colin Knowles and take forward plans to engage with IFSC	NC	asap
7.1.1	Produce key to assist NC members to interpret BMC accounts	GR	September
7.2.1	AMG to consider additional advice on bracken / ticks	Dave Musgrove	September
7.2.1	Prompt Rob Dyer to re-visit composting toilet idea	DT	September
7.2.5	Investigate airline baggage query	NC	asap
7.2.5	Investigate data query with Alvin Foy	DT	asap
7.2.7	Advise Rob Dyer to engage with West Penwith authorities	DT	Immediate
9.1	Circulate letters to patrons	NK	Immediate
9.2	Investigate club hut volunteer insurance query	NC	asap
9.3	Update email to NC members on Hill Walking Implementation Group	RF	Immediate

The above was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:

Signed _____ Date _____
 Nick Kurth, Acting President & Chair