

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the 57th National Council meeting held on Saturday 17 February 2018,
The Wilderness Centre, Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire.

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)	
Cymru Wales (South)	Steve Quinton	(SQ)	
Lakes	Peter Sterling	(PSt)	
London & South East	Lisa Payne	(LP)	
London & South East	Rik Payne	(RP)	
Midlands	Claudia Sarner	(CSa)	
Midlands	Roger Fanner	(RF)	
North East	Mark Anstiss	(MA)	
North East	Jon Punshon	(JP)	
North West	Andy Say	(ASa)	
North West	Carl Spencer	(CSp)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Alison Cairns	(AC)	
South West	Helen Wilson	(HW)	
South West	Gareth Palmer	(GP)	
Yorkshire	Mick Green	(MG)	
Yorkshire	Andy Syme	(ASy)	

Observers:

Independent Director	Matthew Bradbury	(MB)	
Independent Director	Simon McCalla	(SM)	
Independent Director	Amanda Parshall	(AP)	
Association of British Climbing Walls	Rich Emerson	(RE)	
Clubs Committee	Fiona Sanders	(FS)	
Competitions Committee	Iain McKenzie	(IM)	
Equity Steering Group	Cressida Allwood	(CA)	
Land Management Group	Martin Wragg	(MW)	
Mountain Training	Guy Jarvis	(GJ)	

Staff:

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

Note: * = supporting paper circulated.

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|------------|--|----------------|
| 1. | Welcome & apologies for absence | Actions |
| 1.1 | Welcome | |
| 1.1.1 | Nick Kurth welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Amanda Parshall, Cressida Allwood, and Iain McKenzie, attending National Council for the first time in their current roles. | |

- 1.1.2 NK advised that the focus of the meeting would be on constitutional issues, and that National Council needed to take ownership of the organisational review.

NK drew attention to additional ORG discussion documents not on the agenda but recently produced by the Yorkshire Area, the North West Area, and by Dave Turnbull. He also advised that there would be an additional agenda item, on succession planning.

1.2 Apologies

- 1.2.1 Apologies received from: Jackie Bryson; Iain Dickinson; Anthony Eccles; Dave Musgrove; Iain McCallum; Ian Parnell; Andy Syme; Phillip Tootill; and Dave Turnbull.

1.3 Conflicts of Interest in relation to agenda items

- 1.3.1 NK declared a conflict of interest regarding the issue of succession planning.

2. Note issues for AOB

- 2.1
- Area Youth Co-ordinator expenses (Andy Say).
 - Honorary Membership nomination: Mark Vallance (David Brown).

3. Minutes of the previous meeting*

3.1 Accuracy of previous minutes

- 3.1.1 At the top of page 2 of the minutes, it says: The Saturday morning session, which began at 14.30pm, and was attended by:"

This should be changed to: "The Saturday morning session, which began at 10.30, was attended by:

- 3.1.2 Under item 2.5.2, following the vote to agree the Finance & Audit Committee's ToR, Membership and Forward Plans, DT had pointed out that National Council had just voted on something that was not in its gift, as the committee is a sub-committee of the Executive Committee and not of the National Council.
- 3.1.3 Under item 2.10.2, in response to question of whether it was wise to take on further acquisitions, it was agreed to add "MW said it would not be."
- 3.1.4 Under item 6.1, "September 2017" should read "September 2018".
- 3.1.5 Under item 9 (Club applications for membership), add 9.5: When a new club application is considered, the application should be circulated to the Clubs Committee before it goes to National Council.

Post meeting note: Clubs officer Jane Thompson to advise Clubs Committee when receive future club applications for membership.

NOTED

- 3.1.6 Under item 10.2 (Improved gender equality), it was recorded that: "LG suggested the BMC should improve the reporting of the gender balance to include transgender where appropriate."

This should be changed to: "LG suggested that gender information collection and reporting should allow self-declared options e.g. male, female, intersex, non-binary, undeclared etc. to cater for all those who may be present."

With the above amendments, the minutes were signed by the Chair.

3.2 Actions from previous minutes

3.2.1	Ref. 2.1.2: Reinvigorate the APPG-M.	Done
3.2.2	Ref. 2.1.6: Thank you letter to AMG volunteers.	Done
3.2.3	Ref. 3.11: Organisational Review implementation plan.	Done
3.2.4	Ref. 3.1.2: Specialist Committee achievements / objectives article.	Done
3.2.5	Ref. 3.1.2: Produce plan for next six months. (linked to 3.11 above).	Done
3.2.6	Ref. 3.1.2: Draft paper on BMC structure and proposed changes.	Done
3.2.7	Ref. 5.2.4: Investigate lower cost composting toilet test site.	Done
3.2.8	Ref. 5.2.5: Research airline baggage web article.	Done
3.2.9	Ref. 5.2.10: Sound out federations re. IFSC/UIAA MoU.	Ongoing
3.2.10	Ref. 5.2.15: Training session for challenge event organisers.	Ongoing
3.2.11	Ref. 5.2.16: Write to MREW re: cliff anchor guidance.	Ongoing
3.2.12	Ref. 5.2.17: Formulate BMC position on Thirlmere zip wire.	Done
3.2.13	Ref. 5.2.18: Write 'job spec' for outdoor youth co-ordinator.	Ongoing
3.2.14	Ref. 5.2.19: Cost estimate for extending expenses for partners attending National Council weekends.	Done
3.2.15	Ref. 5.2.21: Re-send subs paper and put on February agenda.	Done
3.2.16	Ref. 7.4.3: Publicise Walna Scar car park plan to members.	Done
3.2.17	Ref. 8.2: Re-circulate BMC on MTE papers.	Done
3.2.18	Ref. 9.4: Ongoing criteria for club affiliation ref. participation statement.	Ongoing
3.2.19	Ref. 10.4: Put volunteer strategy on February agenda.	Done

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

4.1 There were three matters arising:

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| 4.1.1 | Ref. 5.2.4: MW reported that the siting of a composting toilet in Horseshoe Quarry was not possible due to excessive cost and additional difficulties caused by the site being a SSSI. It may be possible elsewhere if the circumstances permit and sufficient volunteer assistance could be recruited. | |
| 4.1.2 | Ref. 5.2.19: following further discussion of the proposal to extend expenses to partners attending National Council weekends, a vote was taken:
For – 1; Against – 11: Defer decision until organisational review complete – 9. | NOTED |
| 4.1.3 | Ref. 7.4.3: The meeting wished to thank online communications co-ordinator Pete Burnside for the web article advising members how to comment on the planning application for Walna Scar car park. | |

5. Constitutional issues

5.1 Organisational Review*

5.1a Feedback on ORG update report

- 5.1.1 NK invited FS to summarise the most recent work of the ORG.

FS said that the ORG had decided to provide National Council with an Addendum to the November report, rather than a completely new report. The Addendum would show where changes to the recommendations in the original report were being proposed, and the reasons for these changes.

The questions which the ORG had asked themselves when reviewing the feedback and proposing recommendations were:

- How to ensure that the BMC remains a transparent umbrella organisation balanced across its broad range of activities;
- How to ensure that the organisation's vision comes from the members, and the Board makes that vision happen;
- How to ensure that the Board has primacy, but checks and balances are in place, and members remain at the heart of the organisation.

Following feedback from the consultation process initiated after the ORG report published in November, the group had considered each of the 51 recommendations contained in the November report, and decided that:

- 5 recommendations should be reviewed, and possible significant changes made to the title and details of the recommendation;
- 23 recommendations required further clarity or detail, although the general intent of the recommendation remains; and
- 25 recommendations need no change

The group also identified 10 recommendations which it considered were essential to provide appropriate member and stakeholder checks and balances for board primacy.

The ORG acknowledged that:

- The status of indoor climbing should be clarified; it should be of equal value to other activities, not higher importance;
- The status of sub-groups / subsidiaries needed clarification;
- The non-recommendation of charitable status for the BMC was met with disappointment by some; and that
- The recommendations are a result of a clarification of members' responses, not the ORG's view.

FS reiterated that the ORG is listening. The group is making suggestions to National Council (not insisting), and National Council is free to consider counter proposals. Once the ORG publishes its Addendum, it is up to National Council how to proceed.

5.1.2 MB felt that charitable status, though not possible currently, could be kept under review.

5.1.3 There was a discussion about the validity of the second survey; of 1,600 who started the survey, only 666 were able to proceed beyond the first question; the rest were unable to answer 'yes' to any of the options in the first question.

Although there was a suggestion that the second survey should be disregarded, SM said that the results are not meaningless, even if the survey is not statistically significant.

5.1.4 National Council agreed (Proposed: ASa; Seconded: MA: unanimous) that it would like to extend a vote of thanks to the ORG. FS to convey to the group.

FS

5.1b Discussion of proposed revised timescale

5.1.5 Noting the additional papers submitted by the North West and Yorkshire areas and by Dave Turnbull, NK said that National Council needed to take ownership of the review and decide how to take it forward.

NK also reported on a meeting with Sport England (SE) on 15 February, in which SE stated that from its point of view the BMC does not need to complete all the various ORG recommendations. NK said SE is mainly concerned about the Primacy issue, along with meeting terms of office requirements. Moreover, SE reaffirmed that the proposed timeline of a June AGM and November GM was not satisfactory. NK noted that SE suggested that if key issues around Primacy could be resolved by August that would be reasonable. NK noted also that SE does want to continue giving BMC grants but if the Primacy issue can't be resolved grants to BMC would be stopped and applications from partners would be split out and considered separately.

- 5.1.6 There was a broad discussion about the need to resolve the primacy issue, and whether the current M&AA are compliant with the Companies Act 2006. There was some difference of opinion on the issue of compliance.

MW said that a lack of clarity within the M&AA had caused problems for National Council and the Executive, and was causing problems with external organisations. This ambiguity needed to be resolved.

NK said that we needed to accelerate agreement of some of the recommendations while still providing adequate engagement and consultation with members.

There was a general agreement for the desire to address the ambiguity of the M&AA as quickly as possible, whilst at the same time managing the whole review process at the most appropriate speed.

- 5.1.7 The importance of good communications with the membership was acknowledged, to assure members that they retain influence in the process, and that decision makers are accountable to the members.

- 5.1.8 NK said that the meeting needed to decide today what to do about timing of General Meetings at which organisational changes would be voted on.

WK said that members need to be made aware of the implications, including the potential effect on partner organisations, and the effects on the BMC's reputation of being outside of the Government's funding loop, of not approving changes to the organisational structure which would enable Sport England to continue funding.

MB thought that legal advice should be sought on a two-step process for implementing changes.

MW suggested that following the publication of the ORG Addendum in early March, we could ask lawyers to draft new Articles for consideration at an April National Council meeting and ratification at a June AGM.

LP referred to the suggestion by Dave Turnbull in his discussion paper of organising a 'summit meeting' to actively engage members, particularly those resistant to some of the proposed changes; this could be linked to the April National Council meeting.

SM raised the possibility of holding two General Meetings (plus the summit meeting) within the August timeframe set out by Sport England.

Area reps were asked how their areas generally felt about changing the organisational structure to address the primacy issue. Most areas felt that the majority of members would probably support change, but some might be resistant if they felt the process was being rushed.

SM proposed that an implementation group be established to:

- Produce a set of recommendations to take to a June AGM, taking legal advice on what is possible, to enable us to meet Sport England's requirements for continued funding;
- Put in place a communications strategy and set out a direction of travel for addressing the remainder of items highlighted by the OR report and Addendum ; and
- Between now and a June AGM, arrange a summit meeting to facilitate discussion with members and find common ground for the way forward.

A vote was taken on the above proposal:

Proposed: RP; Seconded: WK
For – 21; Against – 0; Abstentions – 0

NK invited volunteers to come forward to be part of the implementation group. ASy volunteered to lead the group, working with ASa and WK. It was also agreed that the group could co-opt advisors.

NOTED

NK to draft ToR for Implementation Group (IG) and circulate to IG, SM & MB for comment.

NK

Sec's Note: ASa stepped down from the group subsequently as he felt that there may be a conflict of interest. Moreover, NK has drafted the ToR and they are with the IG for consideration.

5.2 Succession planning

5.2.1 NK declared a conflict of interest for this item. He asked the meeting what the BMC wanted to do around the interregnum regarding the President's position and a Vice President's position. He then handed over the chairing of this part of the meeting to the Senior Independent Director, SM, and left the room.

5.2.2 SM advised that NK's 3-year term as VP would come to an end at the 2018 AGM; in principle, we would have to elect a new chair and President.

The Executive had considered the matter and proposed that NK should continue as acting president up to the June 2018 AGM, at which a special resolution would propose the creation of a one-year term for president, to see the organisation through to the full election of a chair and president in 2019.

The meeting felt that a special resolution was not necessary under the current Articles, and that NK could stand for president at the 2018 AGM for one year with a new president being elected in 2019; it was also noted that any two members could nominate an alternative candidate.

SM proposed that the Nominations Committee should convene for the purpose of recommending a proposal to bring to the April National Council meeting, recommending candidates for the positions of president and vice-president.

A vote was taken on this proposal:

For – 20; Against – 0; Abstentions – 0.

**Nom
Comm**

The meeting then adjourned for a lunch break (1.30 - 2.10pm).

Sec's Note: ASy, FS, MB and SM were unable to attend the afternoon session, as they had an ORG meeting to attend. GP was also unable to stay after lunch.

6. Policy issues

6.1 BMC representation on Mountain Training England*

6.1.1 All BMC areas had now had an opportunity to discuss the proposal by MTE that BMC reduces its number of voting members from four to one at MTE.

A vote was taken on whether to agree to the proposal:

Proposed: RP; Seconded: WK
For – 18; Against – 0; Abstentions – 0

BMC to formally inform MTE.

DT

NK apologised to MTE for the length of time it took to reach the decision.

6.2 Volunteer Strategy*

6.2.1 LR had produced a paper updating the meeting on progress towards developing a BMC volunteering strategy, which included a SWOT analysis of current support for volunteers, a proposed action plan, and a proposed expansion of the BMC's award and recognition scheme for volunteers. New awards would be made in recognition of voluntary contribution by: a young person (under 25); someone promoting equality and diversity in the BMC; someone with 25 years or more of commitment to BMC volunteering.

It was noted that the Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers (G6 in BMC Management Regulations) needs reviewing.

NC &
BMC
office

CSp felt that development of a strategy for retaining volunteers should be added to the action plan.

DB suggested that we should consider honorary membership for people who were not members of the BMC but had supported the BMC and the broader mountaineering community through related work. He also felt that the current number of honorary members (17) was very low for an organisation with over 80,000 members.

IM asked whether the BMC had a volunteers' register. LR replied that it did not, and thought there might be cost implications for setting one up.

6.2.2 A vote was taken on whether to approve the proposed expanded BMC award and recognition scheme (excluding the proposed award for promoting equality and diversity) for immediate implementation:

Proposed: ASa; Seconded: RF
For – 18; Against – 0; Abstentions – 1

6.2.3 In relation to the award for promoting equality and diversity, RP asked whether Rehan Siddiqui had been consulted about the proposal to establish the award and name it in his honour. NK suggested we should park that proposal until the next meeting, and consult Rehan in the interim. RP suggested that we vote on the proposal to create an award in recognition of promoting equality and diversity and confirm the name of the award later.

A vote was taken on whether to approve the establishment of an award for promoting equality and diversity in the BMC; the name of the award to be confirmed.

Proposed: ASa; Seconded: RF
For – 14; Against – 0; Abstentions – 5

LR to contact Rehan about agreement to name award.

Sec's Note: LR contacted Rehan shortly after the meeting, and he agreed to the proposal that the award should be named in his honour.

LR to liaise with BMC office about administration of expanded award and recognition scheme.

LR

6.3 Subscriptions*

6.3.1 DB's paper suggested the need to review membership packages and subscription rates for young, senior, club and long-term members.

6.3.2 Young members: There was general agreement to the suggestion that the concessionary rate (which currently applies to under 18s, students, and the unemployed) should be extended to all under 21s.

6.3.3 Senior members: DB proposed the creation of a senior member category, for members above a certain age with longstanding continuous membership who are no longer active, and therefore feel they do not need the combined liability / personal accident insurance cover.

PS said that the Alpine Club has a category of membership which does not pay affiliation to the BMC, and is not just for members who reside outside the UK and are therefore ineligible for combined liability / personal accident insurance cover. PS thought that this type of membership is likely to increase in the big clubs, and that the Climbers' Club was actively exploring the option.

MW said that he was an Alpine Club member and was not aware of this category of membership.

Sec's Note: NC contacted AC president John Porter, who advised that the current AC handbook, which dates from 2015, and states that Long Standing Members (those whose age plus membership totals 120 years or more) are not affiliated, is no longer the case. Additionally, Associate Members are now affiliated, so only Overseas Members are not affiliated.

6.3.4 Club members: Acknowledging the likelihood that most people eligible for a senior membership category would come from clubs, DB felt that the continuing decrease in subscriptions from club members (relative to individual member subscriptions) should be addressed as a strategic policy.

DB also questioned whether the current process for collecting and then refunding multiple club affiliation fees was the best method. AC asked what alternative system would be better, and felt other alternatives were likely to be more onerous for club membership secretaries to administer.

6.3.5 Life membership: DB felt that the introduction of a lifetime membership category would enable some members to show that they support the aims and objectives of the organisation throughout their lives. It could also generate some additional income when first introduced.

NK suggested that perhaps the office could produce a paper on the matter which would include full cost implications.

HW reminded the meeting that ORG recommendation 11 says that the BMC should review its membership packages.

LR to discuss the points in DB's paper with Alex Messenger at the BMC office.

LR

7. Reports

7.1 Finance & Audit Committee*

- 7.1.1 GR presented the latest income and expenditure summary. The 2017 deficit came in at £99k, compared to a budgeted deficit of £120k.

Membership income remains level, and travel insurance sales have slowed, but are still up (1% number of policies, 2% income) on 2016.

There is still a lot of uncertainty in the 2018 budget, with a number of scenarios planned for.

It was also noted that two figures in the 2018 budget had been transposed; In Income, Trading Margin showed £153,602 and Other Income £38,606 – these should be the other way round.

NOTED

MG asked about strategic planning, including potential cost cutting and new initiatives. PS reminded the meeting about previous discussions on financial strategy to reduce reliance on funding and club subscriptions.

7.2 CEO*

- 7.2.1 NC reported that senior staff time has been dominated recently by issues around the organisational review and Sport England funding. Managing the reaction to the Development Squad selection process and other competition-related matters has also consumed a significant amount of time.

NC made reference to Dave Turnbull's report that administrative implications of the ORG recommendations need careful consideration as staff capacity already feels quite stretched, and combined with uncertainties over funding, is affecting morale in some quarters.

RF proposed a note of thanks from National Council to staff for their continued commitment under difficult circumstances.

Sec's Note: Note of thanks emailed by NC to staff on 19 February.

NC advised that the public launch of Mend Our Mountains: Make One Million will be held at the Sheffield Adventure Film Festival (ShAFF) during the weekend of 9-11 March.

7.3 Executive*

- 7.3.1 RF reported that the January Executive Committee meeting had focussed on the organisational review and governance-related issues. Uncertainty over timelines and implementation, coupled with uncertainty over Sport England funding, is holding back some decisions and actions.

The January meeting also considered succession planning issues, as the proposed changes to the ORG timeline had implications for the length of term for current Exec members.

7.4 Area reports

- 7.4.1 **Cymru North***. 39 people (7 women, 32 men) attended the January meeting in Dinorwig.

DL reported on the meeting's discussion about regaining access to Craig y Forwyn (Llandulas) and read out the following statement:

"The BMC Cymru (North) area re-affirmed its strong support for a solution to the issue of unsatisfactory access to Craig y Forwyn, so that the cliff can once again play its role as the major trad crag along the North Wales coast. As there currently appears to be a window of opportunity to purchase the central part of the crag, this could offer a permanent solution. Elfyn Jones, the Access and Conservation Officer for Wales, is discussing the matter with the land owners, supported by local BMC members, and the intention is to bring a firm, costed proposal to the BMC, if this looks like the best option to safeguard access. Access to Craig y Forwyn is obviously important for all BMC members, not just those living in Wales, so we hope we can rely on the support of other areas if there is a realistic prospect of the BMC acquiring the crag in the near future."

AC asked whether the prospect of gaining access without purchasing or acquiring the site had been fully investigated. DL reported that it appears that the new owner has no use for the site, but would like to generate some income from divesting himself of it.

Eric Jones has sold the café at Tremadog. The new owner, Gareth Streatfield is keen to support climbers and has already agreed to host TremFest 2018, over the weekend of 21 April.

National Council agreed that a letter should be written to Eric and his wife Ann, thanking them for almost 40 years of service to climbers visiting Tremadog, and that a letter of welcome should be sent to Gareth Streatfield and his partner Jo.

DT

The meeting also discussed the need for a distinct presence and identity for the BMC in Wales, following a meeting on 19 January of seven key volunteers which produced a paper, *The Way Forward For Wales*, in response to the ORG's recommendations/proposals regarding operation and structure of the BMC in Wales.

7.4.2 **Cymru South***. 11 people attended the February meeting in Swansea.

SQ reported that the meeting was generally supportive of the ORG's new proposed timeline, and the need for a Welsh identity/office within the BMC structure. It also supported the proposed reduction in BMC representation on MTE.

WK expressed concern about the lack of engagement in Wales, particularly with the Welsh Government, since many BMC-related issues (access, conservation, education, environment) are devolved to the Welsh Government.

NK suggested that BMC office should try to make contact with members of the National Assembly for Wales. NC/DT to discuss.

DT & NC

A crag clean-up at Penallta is planned for March – awaiting permissions. The meeting also discussed holding the Gower Climbing Festival again (7-9 Sep) and holding a festival in Pembroke (25-27 May).

The area is keen to make progress on a sustainable bolting policy, and has arranged for BMC technical officer to attend the April area meeting.

- 7.4.3 **Lakes***. 8 people attended the January meeting in Staveley. Attendance was probably affected by the weather giving rise to difficult driving conditions.

PS reported that the meeting had discussed the wide ranging ORG recommendations, and approved of the proposed extended timeline. Concerns were expressed about the possible erosion of grassroots voting power by the replacement of National Council with a Members' Assembly. It was also felt that the role and remit of the president needed clarification, and that the president should sit on the board of directors.

Thanks were extended to those involved in responding to the Thirlmere zip wire proposal, and communicating the BMC's opposition of the proposal to members.

Sec's note: the planning application was withdrawn shortly after the National Council meeting. Treetop Trek cited uncertainty over the MOD's position as the reason for withdrawal.

Cumbria Bolt Fund is considering rewording its constitution to provide clarity, although it is aware that the current policy will always be controversial for some. Focussing on the core business of the fund, awarding training and kit to those with suitable requests, could be the way forward.

- 7.4.4 **London & SE***. 34 people (8 women, 26 men) attended the February meeting.

The meeting was supportive of the ORG's proposed new timeline, but wanted clarity on the way the voting would work on the 51 recommendations, and a better understanding of how the Board would be accountable to the members.

In response to the decision made at the HRMG meeting in December to install a bridge at the Isolated Buttress (Harrison's Rocks), some members expressed concern about the type of bridge, public access to it and possible planning permission issues.

NK wanted to record his thanks to hill walking rep Chris Stone for organising the January walk in the Chilterns, which was a great success despite the wet weather. Another area hill walk (on the South Downs) is planned for 17 March.

- 7.4.5 **Midlands***. 47 people attended the February meeting in Solihull.

Some concern was expressed that the revised ORG timeline would result in further withholding of Sport England funding.

There was a suggestion that should public funding be withheld, we might consider encouraging members to write to their MPs. NK advised that we had engaged with the Mountaineering APPG on the matter about 18 months ago, and it was generally felt that we had not been treated unfairly.

It was noted that the search facility on BMC website is not working. NC to investigate.

Sec's note: the search function on the website is working again (as of 1 March).

- 7.4.6 **North East**. 18 people (1 woman, 17 men) attended the February meeting held in Newcastle.

JP reported that there was quite a lot of enthusiasm for ORG recommendation 24, that The BMC should consider a clearly defined subgroup, or creation of a separate governing body subsidiary within the BMC, for the purposes of managing competitive activities and to support elite level competitive activities such as Team GB.

Access to Kyloe-in-the-woods has been resolved by agreement that climbers will approach the crag via the usual track described in the guide and not deviate from it.

At Bowden Doors, many climbs are showing signs of wear and tear, and the meeting discussed whether it would be worthwhile discouraging climbers from going there and encouraging them to climb at other crags in the area.

RP suggested that BMC access officer Rob Dyer might be able to advise on erosion control and rock repair methods, as this is an issue which is common on Southern Sandstone.

At South Yardhope, which is in the MOD Otterburn Ranges, inductions can only be done on weekdays, necessitating a special trip for climbers who want to climb there on a weekend.

7.4.7 **North West***. 20 people attended the February meeting in Belmont.

ASa reported that there was no universal acceptance of current ORG proposals, but agreed that sufficient time and discussion was needed to try to reach a consensus package to be put to the membership.

It was suggested that workshops on specific issues could be used to inform and debate at an April AGM, an EGM later in the year could consider those proposals deemed non-contentious, and major structural reforms should be held over to the 2019 AGM. A clear majority voted on a proposal upon these lines put to the meeting.

Some concern was expressed about a lack of costing, business plan and risks associated with the ORG proposals.

The area wished to draw the attention of National Council members to the organisation review discussion site set up by former vice-president Crag Jones as a 'neutral' space where interested people can gain information and enable more informed debate and decision making.

WK noted that there is a lack of visibility of ORG material on the BMC website. NC to investigate.

Sec's note: there is now a banner on the homepage that links to the most recent ORG article.

7.4.8 **Peak***. Approximately 55 people attended the February meeting in Grindelford; attendance was probably affected by poor weather (snow).

Some concern was expressed over a perceived 'democratic deficit' of the new structure proposed by the ORG, and there was some criticism of the format of the second online survey, but the meeting approved of the proposal to extend the timeline.

To celebrate the publication of the Peak Limestone South, and the completion of the new series of BMC definitive guides to the Peak, the area is planning to hold a festival (7-9 September) at Birchover. AC pointed out that the Gower Climbing Festival is planned for that weekend too.

Post meeting note: Spenser Gray, who is organising the Peak Festival, has agreed to move it to the weekend of 14-16 September.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of organising a 'torchlight' event (similar to the Festival of Light events held in the Lakes) on Mam Tor's Great Ridge, to celebrate the launch of Mend Our Mountains II.

Dissatisfaction with the management of the Stanage North Lees Estate by the Peak District National Park Authority continues. Area chair to write a strong letter to the Authority's CEO, requesting an update on commitments given at the November 2017 area meeting.

7.4.9 **South West.** 22 people total (4 women, 18 men) attended the January meeting in Exeter.

The meeting overwhelmingly supported the proposed changes to the organisational review timetable, and voted in favour of the proposed change to BMC representation on MTE.

David Hillebrandt's report on recent coastguard callouts for climbing incidents in the area was discussed, noting particular concern about apparent communication problems between agencies and the need for sea cliff climbers to be as self-reliant as possible. The meeting agreed to establish a working party to monitor incidents and plan a suitable strategy.

Sec's note: Area Chair James Mann is discussing with Alex Messenger the possibility of producing educational videos for sea cliff climbers.

The Avon Suspension Bridge Buttress clean-up is taking place on Sunday 18 February – National Council members attending the meeting welcome to join in.

7.4.10 **Yorkshire***. 21 people attended the February meeting in Leeds.

Various access issues have been reported, including a 'do not climb' sign attached to the crag at Whitehouses and starting holds smashed off problems.

A clean-up day is planned for Crookrise – date to be advised.

There is no desire to slow down the ORG process, but some clarity on structure, roles and responsibilities, and implementation costs is requested.

The meeting voted in favour of the proposed change to BMC representation on MTE.

8. Club applications for membership*

8.1 No new applications received since the previous National Council meeting.

9. AOB

9.1 **Area Youth Co-ordinator (AYC) Expenses (Andy Say)**

ASa referred to a report from an AYC in the North West area which expressed concerns about the new expenses policy, and a resignation from another AYC.

There was a discussion about the previous / new arrangements. IM said that the new policy was put in place to avoid excessive claims but cover reasonable costs.

WK asked whether the policy applied to AYC's was different from that applied to belayers and other competition volunteer roles.

9.2 Honorary Membership for Mark Vallance (David Brown)

Following up on a suggestion by Geoff Birtles to Dave Turnbull that the BMC should make Mark Vallance an honorary member, DB had consulted widely, contacting 21 members from the Peak Area who had held a range of elected volunteer roles including presidents, vice-presidents, National Council reps, and area chairs and secretaries.

DB received 18 responses: 12 in support of a nomination; 2 against; 4 unable or unwilling to comment. On the basis of the support received, DB wished to nominate Mark for honorary membership.

PS added his personal knowledge of Mark, noting his contributions to the BMC including the introduction of one member one vote during his presidency, and to the climbing world through his business, Wild Country. He had no hesitation in supporting the nomination.

A vote was taken on whether to make Mark Vallance an honorary member:

Proposed: DB; Seconded: PS
For – 16; Against – 0; Abstentions – 3

DT & office

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 To be confirmed following recommendation from implementation group considering proposed organisational review timescale.

The meeting finished at 16.52.

Summary of action points from the 57th meeting:

Ref	Action	Who	By
3.2.9	Sound out federations re. IFSC/UIAA Memorandum of Understanding.	NC	ongoing
3.2.10	Training session for challenge event organisers.	Rob Dyer	Spring 18
3.2.11	Write to MREW re: cliff anchor guidance.	Rob Dyer	asap
3.2.13	Write 'job spec' for outdoor youth co-ordinator.	NC	ongoing
3.2.18	Ongoing criteria for club affiliation ref. participation statement.	TR	End Feb
5.1.4	Convey vote of thanks from National Council to ORG members.	FS	Immediate
5.1.8	Draft ToR for Implementation Group.	NK	Immediate
5.2.2	Convene Nominations Committee to recommend candidates for president and vice-president.		asap
6.1.1	Inform MTE of agreement on BMC representation	DT	Immediate
6.2.1	Review Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers	NC	End Apr
6.2.2	Liaise with office re. administration of expanded award & recognition scheme.	LR	Immediate
6.3.5	Discuss subscriptions proposals with Alex Messenger.	LR	End Apr
7.4.1	Write letter of thanks to Eric Jones and letter of welcome to Gareth Streatfield.	DT	Immediate
7.4.2	Discuss how best to make contact with Welsh Assembly members.	DT & NC	End Apr

9.2	Notify Mark Vallance and carry out administrative procedures for honorary membership	DT & office	Immediate
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The above was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:

Signed _____ Date _____
Nick Kurth, Acting President & Chair