

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road
Manchester M20 2BB
www.thebmc.co.uk

Tel: 0161 445 6111
Fax: 0161 445 4500
Email: office@thebmc.co.uk

BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 64th National Council meeting held on Saturday 22 June 2019,
Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig.

In attendance

Voting members:

President	Lynn Robinson	(LR)	Chair
Cymru North Wales	Neal Hockley	(NH)	
Cymru South Wales	Steve Quinton	(SQ)	
Lakes & Council Nominated Director	Fiona Sanders	(FS)	
Lakes	Mike Parsons	(MP)	
London & South East	Robert Dufton	(RD)	
London & South East	Chris Stone	(CSt)	
Midlands & Council Nominated Director	Roger Fanner	(RF)	
North East	Mark Anstiss	(MA)	
North West	Bill Beveridge	(BB)	
North West	Carl Spencer	(CSp)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Alison Cairns	(AC)	
South West	Helen Wilson	(HW)	
South West	Philip Wilson	(PW)	
Yorkshire	Andy Syme	(AS)	
Yorkshire	Mick Green	(MG)	

Observers:

Chair, Board of Directors	Gareth Pierce	(GP)	
Nominated Director	Huw Jones	(HJ)	
Nominated Director	Jonathan White	(JW)	
Access Management Group	Andy Tickle	(AT)	
Association of British Climbing Walls	Ged MacDomhnaill	(GM)	
Clubs Committee	Peter Salenieks	(PS)	
Equity Steering Group	Kamala Sen	(KS)	
Huts Group	David Jones	(DJ)	
Land Management Group	Martin Wragg	(MW)	
Mountain Training	John Cousins	(JC)	

Others in attendance:

Chief Executive	Dave Turnbull	(DT)	
Deputy CEO	Nick Colton	(NC)	
Secretary	Tony Ryan	(TR)	
ODG Project Manager	Dave Stanley	(DS)	
ODG Work Stream 8	Paul Evans	(PE)	

Note: * = supporting paper circulated.

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

1.1 Welcome

1.1.1 Lynn Robinson welcomed everyone to the meeting, including four newly elected members attending their first National Council meeting: Robert Dufton, Huw Jones, Andy Tickle and Jonathan White. Also attending the meeting standing in for regular attendees were Neal Hockley, Ged MacDomhnaill and Kamala Sen.

1.1.2 LR set out the ground rules for conduct during the meeting. She also advised the meeting that a fatal climbing accident had occurred at the BMC-owned Wilton Quarry, and that our thoughts were with the family of the climber, as well as the first responders, one of whom was a former BMC staff member.

1.2 Apologies for absence

1.2.1 Apologies received from: Cressida Allwood, Matthew Bradbury, Jackie Bryson, Iain Dickinson, Jonny Dry, Anthony Eccles, Rich Emerson, Guy Jarvis, Will Kilner, Dan Lane, Simon McCalla, Martin Nash, Ian Parnell, Amanda Parshall, Jon Punshon and Claudia Sarner,

1.3 Memorandum of Understanding

1.3.1 The Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and National Council was signed by Gareth Pierce as Chair of the Board of Directors, and Lynn Robinson as President and Chair of National Council.

1.3.2 CSp asked about changes that had been made to what was supposed to be a locked-down document; he was assured that the only changes made related to the use of capital letters, consistency of terminology and some grammatical corrections. AC thought that it would have been courteous for National Council members to have seen the document before the meeting.

2. Note Conflicts of Interest

2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Note issues for AOB

- 3.1
- Subs increase communications (Mike Parsons)
 - Communications and IT training for Council members (Fiona Sanders)
 - Communications (David Brown)
 - Formal recording of 'actions' between meetings (David Brown)
 - Communication mechanisms between Board and Council (David Brown)
 - ODG Chair (David Brown)
 - Subs increase / Reserved Matter (David Brown)

4. Minutes of the previous meeting*

4.1 Accuracy of previous minutes

4.1.1 DB queried a paragraph in 6.6.1 (Finance – subscriptions for 2020), which said:

DB asked whether the increase should be simply to address the rise in the liability insurance premium, or should also cover the cost of implementing ORG recommendations. JR felt members had already indicated their willingness to support ORG recommendations.

DB said that the meeting had agreed that the cost of implementing ORG recommendations would be included in the subscriptions increase. The meeting agreed to amend the minutes to reflect this decision.

Agreed

With the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting were signed by the Chair.

4.2 Actions from previous minutes

4.2.1	Ref. 4.2.10: Contact Guy Jarvis for Mountain Training MoU	Done
4.2.2	Ref. 4.2.13: Confirm mechanism for choosing Director to represent affiliated clubs	Done
4.2.3	Ref. 4.2.14: Strike balance in document in consideration of best practice in sport	Done
4.2.4	Ref. 4.2.15: Take assistance from Cressida Allwood in developing gender diversity target	Done
4.2.5	Ref. 4.2.18: Commission article on work of BMC specialist committees	Ongoing
4.2.6	Ref. 4.2.19: Provide Honister zip wire letter for DT to sign	Done
4.2.7	Ref. 4.2.21: Consider allocation of cash to bolt fund	
4.2.8	Ref. 4.2.23: Compile list of who should be on Slack and Teamwork	Done
4.2.9	Ref. 6.2.2: Review potential access agreement to Llandarcy	Ongoing
4.2.10	Ref. 6.2.3: Consult Cath Flitcroft on improving influence through lobbying & representation	Done
4.2.11	Ref. 6.2.6: Consider how to ensure relevant officer attendance at area meetings	Done
4.2.12	Ref. 6.2.8: Provide briefing note to areas about publishing areas newsletters	Ongoing
4.2.13	Ref. 6.5.1: Circulate update on potential impact of Brexit on travel insurance scheme	Done
4.2.14	Ref. 7.1.1: Email alternative wording for AGM Agenda Item 6 to LR	Done
4.2.15	Ref. 8.2.3: Address reactive nature of interim NC ToR	Done
4.2.16	Ref. 8.2.8: Share Partnerships presentation documents with National Council members	Done
4.2.17	Ref. 9.1: Consider relationship to National Council when reviewing FAC ToR	Ongoing

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

5.1 There were several matters arising:

- 5.1.1 Ref. 6.6 (Finance - subscriptions for 2020): DB said that the National Council meeting on 9 February had agreed that the subscriptions increase should include the cost of implementing the work of the ODG. The Board then met on 11 February, and agreed to raise subscriptions by £6.00 across all categories.

This increase did not cover the ODG costs, and DB asked why there was no further consultation with National Council on this Reserved Matter. Furthermore, the Clubs Committee was notified about the increase before National Council.

GP said that he didn't recall the Board ever discussing a figure higher than £6.00. CSp said that there was still a lot of financial uncertainty at the February Council meeting.

There was a discussion about how best to ensure adequate consultation and communication in future. LR accepted that communication needs to be continually reviewed, and thanked the meeting for feedback on this issue.

- 5.1.2 Ref. 4.2.18 (article on work of Specialist Committees): PS asked what it said to volunteers that we were too busy to celebrate their contributions to the running of the organisation.

DT said that the marketing & communications department had been asked to find someone suitable to write the article. Rather than one article, the meeting suggested a series of articles which could feature on the website and in monthly email newsletters, and possibly in Summit magazine.

RF said that non-members also need to be made aware of all the good work, to encourage them join.

It was agreed that DT would make each officer responsible for producing an article on their work programme over the next three months.

DT

5.1.3 Ref. 8.2.5 (Articles of Association): AS asked about the status of the Procurement Policy written by David Lanceley. DT said that it had not yet gone to the Board. It was agreed that it would be presented to the Board for approval and published as soon as possible.

DT

5.1.4 Ref. 6.2.4 (London & SE area report): CSt asked about the open letter of apology for inappropriately worded questions in the recent equality survey, which LR had offered to write. RD said that an apology might help clubs and individuals who lack confidence and felt hurt by the survey. It was noted though, that as soon as the questions had been highlighted, they were amended immediately.

KS asked whether we had reported the results of the survey, and if not, suggested that we do both simultaneously.

LR

5.1.5 Ref. 7.3 (Volunteer recognition): RF asked to which future Council meeting development of the volunteer awards would be brought, as he felt that this needed to put in place for 2020. LR said that office support from project co-ordinator Suzanne Jones to progress the work had just been agreed.

AC asked whether there was a plan to recognise the work of John Roberts as a member of the ORG and ODG; she added that John's resignation as ODG Chair had not been formally reported to National Council. PS proposed a formal note of thanks from National Council.

LR

6. Reports

6.1 Partners*

6.1.1 Mountain Training*

JC reported that agreement should be reached on 29 June to add 'Ireland' to Mountain Training UK's title in recognition of the all-Ireland membership of the organisation; thereafter it will be known as MTUKI.

At the request of AMI the Mountaineering Instructor qualifications (known by many as MIA and MIC) have incorporated 'climbing' into their titles to become the 'Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor' and the 'Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor'.

6.1.2 Association of British Climbing Walls

GM had nothing to report, but LR advised the meeting that the BMC would be launching a belay safety campaign at the ABC Annual Conference in Sheffield on 27-28 June.

6.1.3 Mountain Training Trust*

Jackie Bryson had submitted a report, but it came in to the BMC office too late to be included in the meeting papers. TR to add to report onto Teamwork.

TR

6.2 Areas

6.2.1 **Cymru North Wales.** NH reported that Mike Raine had raised the issue of an explosion of pseudo-temporary waymarking relating to organised events; FS said that this was happening in the Lakes too.

There was strong support from the meeting for the establishment of a Wales-specific structure within the BMC, primarily to increase influence rather than funding, and taking a pragmatic approach to what can realistically be achieved. PS asked about the status of BMC members in Wales under a new structure, and RF reminded the meeting that many English climbers and walkers like to come to Wales. NH said that the new structure would represent Welsh members, and that English members shared those interests primarily.

- 6.2.2 **Cymru South Wales.** SQ reported that the meeting was scheduled to coincide with the Pembroke festival event, which meant that there was little time prior to the meeting to consider the paper published about options for a new structure in Wales. FS asked why the Wales options paper just went to the meetings in Wales. GP replied that the purpose of the paper was to inject some impetus into the ODG work, and that it will now come into the ODG framework for further development.

SQ reported that a climbing access restriction on Trevalen Cliff had been ignored even when the perpetrators had been challenged by another climber; he wondered what advice we could give to climbers who also witness similar behaviour.

- 6.2.3 **Lakes*.** MP reported that the meeting had been well attended (33), and that they were trying to adopt a more proactive approach to local issues, which included recruiting two volunteers with experience in countryside management and town planning, with an aim to get representation on local decision-making bodies. MP thanked DT for inviting Richard Leafe, the national park authority's chief executive to attend the meeting.

The area meeting agreed unanimously with a motion proposed by Nigel Jenkins that the BMC Sustainable Working Group should produce a Climate Crisis Motion, in line with Nigel's paper, and that motion should go forward to the National Council meeting on 22June. Access & conservation officer Cath Flitcroft is preparing a paper on this issue.

Noted

FS mentioned a proposal to retrobolt some routes at Tilberthwaite Quarry, which would be coming to the September area meeting for a final decision; a consultation paper by Steve Scott is available on the BMC Local Areas site. MW advised that the proposal would need to consider land ownership, and PW said that agreement of the first ascensionist was often sought when retrobolting was proposed.

FS felt that support was lacking for young climbers (7-12 years old) who want to make the transition to climbing outdoors. GM said that outdoor climbing experiences provided an incredible opportunity for synergy between the BMC and the ABC, which already runs introductory courses.

FS asked about allocation of cash to local bolt funds. DT said that the Better Bolts fund had distributed £30-40k over the past 10 years, but none in the past 3-4 years; the current financial circumstances would make it difficult to allocate further cash.

- 6.2.4 **London & SE*.** CSt reported that the issue of climbers transitioning from indoors to outdoors was raised, as there have been issues of abseiling, excessive use of chalk and tick marks on Southern Sandstone. The area is keen that any wider BMC campaign to support the transition to climbing outdoors includes advice specific to climbing on Southern Sandstone.

The meeting also discussed development of the BMC's core values following the online survey, as well as ways to improve member engagement.

6.2.5 **Midlands.** RF reported that, due to an IT failure, the record of the meeting had been lost, but approximately 25 members attended the meeting, which included a litter pick on the Wrekin in support of the H2O campaign, and that there were no major issues to report.

6.2.6 **North East.** MA thanked the President for attending the meeting, and apologised for the low attendance (7). One member had enquired about a rumour that re-organisation of the regions in the Youth Climbing Series would see Sheffield moved from the Midlands & Peak to the North East & Yorkshire region, raising concern about the number of competitors in the latter region. NC said that a review was under way, which would include consultation on proposals before any decision was made by the Competitions Committee.

The meeting also discussed the prospect of increasing the BMC's profile to hill walkers by getting hill walking magazines, such as Trail and TGO, to feature BMC columns, like the one in Climber magazine.

6.2.7 **North West*.** CSp reported a mix of regular and new faces at the meeting, which included a presentation by Dominic Oughton on climbing El Capitan's North America Wall. Dave Robinson had provided an update on Mend Our Mountains, and the new Hills 2 Oceans campaign; a litterpick on Pendle Hill is being considered. Tim Greenhalgh updated the meeting on plans for WiltonFest, which will be held on 31 August, and the latest developments in the work of the ODG were discussed. The new Lancashire first ascents booklet will be published soon, and a launch event in Belmont is planned.

6.2.8 **Peak*.** AC reported ongoing debate with differing opinions about what to do about the lack of adequate belays on some routes following unauthorised removal of trees at the BMC-owned Alderey Cliff. MW advised that a paper is being produced for the Land Management Group detailing the options so that LMG can make a recommendation.

DT referred to the BMC's position statement on drilled equipment and thought that a working group might wish to consider developing a policy proposal for lower-offs. NH cautioned about the justification for installing lower-offs, as some climbers would see it as an attempt to make climbing safe or simply more convenient.

Other issues raised at the meeting included parking at Stanage, which will be raised at the Stanage Forum in October, and strong support for continued commitment by the BMC to hill walking following the departure of hill walking development officer Carey Davies. Proxy voting at BMC AGMs was also discussed, following concerns raised by a member in the area about the use of discretionary proxy votes at the 2019 AGM.

6.2.9 **South West*.** HW reported that Pete Callaghan gave an update on the incident reporting system, which was launched recently. Pete emphasised the importance of ongoing publicity of the system, so that incidents continue to be reported. As the number of reports submitted grows, development of categories will need to be considered to assist in identifying trends.

MA asked whether incidents recorded in climbing wall accident books could be incorporated into the system. GM said that data is key to focussing efforts where improvements in safety can be made.

LR suggested that incident reporting could be an agenda item for a future National Council meeting, and wished to formally thank Pete Callaghan on behalf of National Council for his work in making the project a reality. DT said that he would ask Jon Garside and Dan Middleton to provide an update on the incident reporting system.

DT

In addition, local coaches reported positively on the running of the Youth Climbing Series grand final, and HW gave an update on the work of the ODG, particularly the progress made by the National Council reconstitution working group.

6.2.10 **Yorkshire.** AS advised that there were no major issues to report.

6.3 Board of Directors*

6.3.1 The Board has met twice (11 February and 8 May) since the last National Council meeting.

GP reported that four new directors had joined the Board following the AGM: Fiona Sanders as a Council Nominated Director, and Jonny Dry, Huw Jones and Jonathan White as Nominated Directors. This has enabled the Board to update the listing of Directors in relation to the roles to be fulfilled. CSt asked whether the listing would be made public.

FS said that the number of responsibilities highlighted the breadth of work overseen by the Board. JW said that the Board needed to work through the big issues as a priority in order to have adequate management of the organisation, and MA said that the Board must delegate some responsibilities.

CSp expressed some concern that two directors, Amanda Parshall and Will Kilner, had been unable to attend recent meetings. LR assured him that they were both in regular communication.

The calendar of Board meetings for the remainder of this year has been adjusted to dovetail with the requirements of developing the strategic plan and approving the budget for 2020: the dates of the next three meetings are 22 July, 25 September and 25 November.

PS asked how the Board would like the Specialist Committees to feed into the work of the Board. GP said that the specialist committee work must link to the strategy work.

AS asked about the minuting/recording of actions/decisions made by the Board outside of meetings (by teleconference, etc.). MA said that the timing and communication of decisions needs to be able to permit National Council to hold the Board to account.

The main emphasis within the Board's forward programme of work is the development of a five-year strategic plan for the period 2020-24. As the strategic plan becomes more fully defined, the Board will also need to ensure that deployment of the BMC's resources (finance and people) is fully aligned with the strategic intent.

The Board has identified a number of governance issues that need to be addressed ahead of the next AGM cycle and a Governance Working Group is being set up with a brief to provide recommendations on the issues. Lucy Valerio, recently appointed BMC governance & compliance officer will support this work.

MG asked if there was a programme planned for mapping Board member skills into roles. GP agreed there was a need to update the Board skills matrix and he was proposing to convene a meeting of the Nominations Committee soon. In respect on NomCom's constitution, MA said that National Council would like a rep on NomCom (other than the President or someone else on the Board). MG is the current National Council rep on NomCom and will continue to be a member.

6.4 Finance*

6.4.1 HJ presented the finance report as at 31 March 2019. MW asked if the report took account of £250k in legacy donations made to the Land & Property Trust. HJ said that there is a separate set of accounts for LPT. DB asked about the other two trusts, ACT and MHT. HJ said that they are independent, but there is agreement that the Finance & Audit Committee can view accounts.

MW asked when statutory accounts will be available. HJ said that the deadline was end of September, but there was no reason that they couldn't be made available well before that deadline.

FS asked whether a potential drop in student club affiliation had been factored into forecasts; she had heard that some clubs won't be able to re-affiliate in September. HJ said that forecasts on subscription income were only in totality, not specifically on student clubs.

MG asked about future planning, looking at risks and uncertainties, not just reporting. HJ said that the forecast is for 12 months (and changes frequently) but that the committee is looking at longer term forecasting, including variance analysis.

MA asked about the figure of 8,113 representing members categorised as 'National' in the regional membership pie chart on page 7 of the report. TR thought that this figure represented members of clubs which had chosen to be classified by the BMC as a National club. Clarification is required from the membership team as to what this figure relates to.

DT

CSp thanked HJ for providing clear explanations to the questions raised.

6.5 President*

6.5.1 LR said that It had been agreed that the performance of both the President and Chair of the Board of Directors will be evaluated on an annual basis and summaries published to inform the membership. LR asked the meeting to review the document showing an overview of work that has been achieved over the past year or is ongoing before it is published on the BMC website.

AS asked whether the Chair of the Board of Directors would provide a similar report. GP said that it should be considered but the mechanism would be different, as any report would go to the Board first.

FS felt that a list of outcomes would be more interesting than a list of activities; this could be achieved by the addition of an extra column in the table. She also thought it might be useful for National Council to provide feedback on the performance of Council Nominated Directors.

6.6 CEO & Office*

6.6.1 DT gave an overview of the broad range of work being carried out by the relatively small number of staff, with some changes to the make-up and roles of the staff.

Lucy Valerio started as governance & compliance officer in March, and became Company Secretary in June following completion of a successful probationary period. Carey Davies will leave the BMC on 28 June; ongoing admin support for Mend Our Mountains will be provided by Tony Ryan, and some freelance media support has been agreed. Cath Flitcroft has been charged with promoting environmental sustainability in the workplace; Pete Burnside is now the editor of Summit magazine.

In the run-up to the AGM, staff provided input to the work on developing BMC core values through two workshop sessions, and they have also been encouraged to feed into BMC strategic planning process.

Integration of hill walkers into the access reps role is planned.

A zero-based budget has been discussed and is likely to be introduced from January 2021.

A digital membership package is in development, and a business case for it will go to the Board.

7. Strategic Planning

Dave Stanley, ODG project manager joined the meeting.

7.1 BMC Strategic Plan 2020-2024*

7.1.1 RF outlined the process to date of developing the plan, and hoped that today's meeting would provide agreement that the process is going in the right direction, as well as early feedback on the content. Following the Board meeting on 22 July, a paper would be prepared in advance of the September round of area meetings, following which the Board would look at the plan again before taking it to the December Council meeting.

The aim is to implement the plan from the beginning of next year. The plan is important for setting the direction of the organisation, which all staff, volunteers, members, partners and stakeholders need to know, for efficient integrated working and effective use of finite resources.

MP asked if discussion of things we are not going to do was also covered. RF said that this is part of the process of deciding how resources will be used.

RF explained the 'roman temple' model used to develop the plan. The strategic themes are the pillars of the organisation, which support the vision, mission and values; enablers form the base upon which the strategic theme 'pillars' sit.

Specific issues on which feedback would be helpful included the choice and naming of the strategic themes, and ways to reduce the number of enablers from ten, which is too many.

The six proposed strategic themes were discussed:

Engage the membership – it was felt that the proposed action points are quite broad and not BMC-specific, and it was acknowledged that ultimately specific aims will need to be decided and key performance indicators applied. GM cautioned against being too specific, which risked getting lost in the detail.

Lead the sector – there was some discussion about the definition of the sector, and whether the BMC was not the de facto leader of it. MA felt that the BMC's Objects, as defined in the Articles, defined the sector.

Govern competitions – changing ‘govern’ to ‘facilitate’ was suggested; the former was considered narrow and didn’t include talent development, but CSp said that we want to clearly show our governing body status. GM had low confidence in the BMC to deliver on this strategic theme, given the demands on the organisation’s resources by its wide ranging work. He felt that indoor walls will be essential to delivering this strategy, and the BMC needs the right vehicle and resources, i.e. a subsidiary with financial autonomy.

Educated and develop skills – more people want to receive formal training, and the BMC must consider how it works with the various mountain training bodies. This theme should include ethics and heritage in consistent messaging across all sources of training (formal, clubs, peer-to-peer).

Protect the environment – the phrase implies restrictive behaviour; a statement based on sustainable participation might be more appropriate.

Develop the business – this should probably be an enabler rather than a strategic theme.

RF thanked the meeting for the feedback provided, which would be taken to the Board meeting on 22 July. He advised Council members to send any additional thoughts to the Board at least one week before the meeting.

AC expressed concern at using the September area meetings for consultation, due to the risk of overloading meeting attendees with papers and dominating the meetings with organisational issues. RD suggested focussing meeting discussions on overall strategy not on detail; broader consultation with the membership could be conducted after the area meetings.

GP emphasised the importance of meeting the deadlines for the July Board meeting, and the September area meetings and National Council meeting.

7.2 **BMC Core Values***

7.2.1 An initial draft of six core values had been developed in consultation with staff and members. These were: Community; Sustainability; Adventure; Respect; Performance or Excellence or Aspiration; Safety or Skills. Each value was supported by a defining statement.

A question was raised about who received the survey email. A link to the survey had been included in the May email newsletter, which goes out to all members.

Post-meeting note: some, but not all members had received an additional email about the survey so that we could get a statistically significant number of responses.

GM felt that the fewer values the better, and GP said that it was unusual for organisations to have as many as six core values.

Under Sustainability AS recommended using ‘access and conservation’ as these are two keywords he thought might resonate with most members.

Under Adventure CSt suggested removing ‘taking personal responsibility for the risks involved’, but JW thought that it should not be removed, and he would be uncomfortable acting as a director of an organisation which removed the recognition of personal responsibility for risk.

Under 'Respect' there was a discussion about including respect for other people in the defining statement, which focusses on ethics and heritage. GM suggested the defining statement referred to culture more than respect. GP felt that Respect and Community could be merged into one value.

Skills was generally preferred to Safety; Knowledge was suggested as an alternative. GP felt that Skills and Aspiration could merge into the latter, as there is significant overlap.

AS felt that we should resist the desire to finalise the values early, and that it was more important to get them right than to get them out.

8. Governance

Paul Evans, who leads ODG Work Stream 8 (Membership Engagement) joined the meeting.

8.1 Organisational Development Group*

8.1.1 ODG Update

DS gave a brief update on the work of the ODG, and the relationship of the eight work streams to the 51 ORG recommendations.

HR professional Amanda Nicholson has agreed to work with Kate Anwyl in relation to the work of WS3 (Culture, Leadership & Management), and Ray Wigglesworth has agreed to offer advice in relation to WS4 (Corporate Structure).

MA questioned the amber RAG rating for R36 (review of specialist committees and working groups) – he thought it should be red.

HW asked if it was possible to do a similar RAG analysis with the work streams.

LR wished to record a note of thanks to all who had contributed to progressing the work of the ODG.

LR asked GP if he could update the meeting on the appointment of a new ODG chair, following the resignation of John Roberts. GP said that the Board had decided that a new chair was required, and some names had been suggested. A role description, based on the remainder of the ODG work, needs to be compiled, and the Board was looking to appoint someone by the time of the Board meeting on 22 July.

8.1.2 Membership Engagement*

PE gave a presentation on WS8 recommendations for improving membership engagement, followed by a Q&A session.

There was a discussion about the recommendation not to create a BMC online discussion platform. MP suggested that debate on particular topics, with for and against positions set out, could be useful (this format is used by the Swiss Alpine Club).

PE said that it was relatively simple to set up a discussion forum, but moderation required significant commitment. He thought that a redesign of the BMC website, with personalised content enabled by developments in Membership Services Online, would enhance member engagement.

RD asked if we had any experience of other organisations, and whether any benchmarking had been undertaken. PE said that we hadn't benchmarked against similar organisations.

MA asked whether there were any lessons that could be learned from the perceived failure of the BMC Community site to achieve its original aim of becoming a useful resource for member and volunteer engagement. CSp said that social syndication, enabling people to log in with their social media log-ins could address the resistance to using multiple log-ins.

AC said that the volunteer strategy had not been approved by National Council, contrary to PE's paper, and asked if it could be re-published and reviewed. LR said that she would be meeting with BMC project co-ordinator Suzanne Jones next week to progress work on the strategy.

PE had categorised his recommendations into those which could be implemented now, and those for future implementation. CSt thought that it would be useful to also rate them for their potential impact on membership engagement.

PE said that he would be happy to receive comments on the recommendations by email up to the end of Sunday 7 July.

Noted

8.1.3 **Partnerships***

FS gave a presentation on WS7 recommendations for strengthening relationships with partners and stakeholders, followed by a Q&A session.

The recommendations related to: definition of partners and stakeholders; Mountain Training membership of National Council; appointment of a partnership officer; creation of a partners' assembly; formalisation of partners and stakeholders in access, conservation and environment; the establishment of a home nations representative bodies forum; and development of relations with commercial partners and other key partners.

GP felt that it was important to have a distinctive purpose for these new relationships and not duplicate what is already done.

JC felt that Climb Group was not a particularly good name as the Sport England funding also goes to hill walking.

There was some discussion about the potential impact of the new partners' assembly on the current BMC structure supporting training, and discussion on the make-up of the home nations representative forum and the status of the organisations on it.

AT said that the Access Management Group was broadly supportive of the proposals to strengthen the role of the AMG, but had some reservations about the proposed changes to the relationship between AMG and ACT, and about potential impact of additional burden on volunteer and office staff support.

FS said that she would be happy to receive comments on the recommendations by email up to the end of Sunday 7 July, and thanked MP, SQ and Roger Murray for contributing to the development of the proposals.

Noted

8.1.4 **Clubs***

FS gave a brief history of the relationship between clubs and the BMC, from the establishment of the BMC by clubs in 1944, through the replacement of the club block vote with a one member one vote system in 2005, to the setting up of a Clubs Committee in 2010.

Research and consultation had identified that clubs have a desire for more collaborative working, to assist and be involved in the delivery of BMC objectives, not just be a user of BMC services.

Three key recommendations being proposed are:

- Improve club representation and influence;
- Review products and services;
- Explore conversion of external clubs and groups to the BMC.

FS presented a proposed representation and governance structure, which included refocussing the Clubs Committee into a Clubs Strategy Group, and setting up a National Clubs Forum to enable clubs to support and communicate with each other more effectively.

CSp referred to a 2002 'adopt a crag scheme' which had met with some resistance from clubs over fears about liability. FS felt that the new structure would enable matters like that to be debated.

There was a discussion on the complexity of the proposed structure, and whether it would create an additional burden for those responsible for managing it. FS felt that there would be a relatively minor increase in resource effort.

There was also some discussion about the election process for the constituency councillor and the chair of the Clubs Strategy Group, representation on National Council, the work of the National Clubs Forum, and the definition of a National Club. FS thought that people often identified more with a club than with a BMC Area, but AC and DB said that wasn't the case in their experience of the Peak Area.

DB expressed some reluctance in supporting a radically different structure from the current one, which has proved difficult to operate effectively, but others felt that this was why changes needed to be made.

JW said that decisions needed to be made about primary reporting lines; democratic structures generally sit under National Council, appointed structures under the Board.

FS said that she would be happy to receive comments on the recommendations by email up to the end of Sunday 7 July.

Noted

8.1.5 **National Council Reconstitution***

MA gave a presentation on the working group's proposals for the reconstitution of National Council. He explained that the timeline going forward was compressed because reconstitution proposals will impact on the area AGM elections in November.

MA wanted the members of National Council to confirm that they understand the proposals being made, that they are happy for the proposals to go out to the wider membership for consultation, and that those involved with area meetings are happy to present the proposals at the September round of meetings.

The new composition of National Council would be:

- Each Area to have a single vote (but can elect two reps)
- An additional 2 Constituency Councillors with voting rights
- 4 Nationally Elected Councillors aligned with strategic objectives
- 4 Specialist Councillors
- Approximately 20 Observers

The group also recommended a change of name to the Members' Council.

The working group also recommended that consideration be given to the number of Deputy Presidents permitted by the Articles.

There was a discussion about the need for the CEO to attend the Council. It was generally agreed that the CEO's attendance was beneficial from a reporting, gathering and input perspective.

DB felt that the proposals loaded a lot of voting activity onto AGMs. JW said that the move from annual elections to three-year terms would reduce the voting activity, especially if terms can be staggered so that they don't all expire simultaneously.

In response to a question by AC about papers to be published for member consultation in advance of the September round of area meetings, MA confirmed that there would be a single paper covering partnerships, clubs and National Council reconstitution.

LR thanked everyone who had been involved in producing the ODG reports for the meeting.

8.2 2019 AGM Review

8.2.1 Board Forward Plan for Accounts*

GP summarised the timeline for preparation of accounts for the 2019 AGM, which had been challenging due to the early date of the AGM.

There was a discussion about some of the issues this had presented in terms of approving the accounts and revision of them (but not significant material change to them) due to errors in the initial accounts. The process was explained by HJ, who also explained the difference between management and statutory accounts.

In order to ensure that it is able to work effectively on strategy and financial management (including audit), the Board has reviewed its schedule of meetings, and concluded that it needed to meet four times a year: late March/early April; early summer; mid to late September; late November. The Board also agreed it needed to split the four-month gap between the November and March meetings by holding a meeting in late January/early February, giving five meetings a year.

The implications for the timing of Finance & Audit committee meetings had also been considered.

In planning dates for 2020, it would also be helpful to for dates of National Council meetings and the two-week window for area meetings to be planned at the same time, to maintain the essential inter-relationship between Board and National Council.

8.2.2 **Governance Working Group***

GP explained the background to the decision by the Board to set up a Governance Working Group (GWG) in the context of feedback following the 2019 AGM.

The group would provide recommendations on future direction in relation to a number of matters, and a draft ToR for the GWG had been produced, as well as observations on the scope of the work covered by the group.

To permit time for implementation of actions well ahead of the 2020 AGM, the GWG is asked to report by 18 November, so that its recommendations can be considered by the Board at its meeting on 25 November and by National Council at its meeting on 7 December.

The proposed membership of the group would be: one Independent Director (Matthew Bradbury); one Nominated Director (Jonathan White); one Council Nominated Director (Fiona Sanders); one other member of Council and; at least two BMC members not on the Board or Council. Professional support would be provided by governance & compliance officer Lucy Valerio.

AS volunteered to join the group as the other Council member.

Agreed

Some names were suggested for the other members of the group. JW felt that the chair of the group should not be on the Board or Council ideally. It was agreed that GP could prepare an 'advert' for the vacant roles.

GP

There was a discussion about the discretionary votes cast at the 2019 AGM, and the extent of information that should be provided about the outcome of voting, balancing transparency against confidentiality.

JW asked whether the GWG might have confidential information (with appropriate redactions) on proxy voting, to enable it to understand how it had worked in the past and make recommendations for the future. MW noted that the introduction of electronic proxy voting in 2018 had been a significant change to the process in terms of the number of proxy votes cast.

AC reported that the June Peak Area Meeting had voted on whether information on discretionary proxy voting at the 2019 AGM should be published; 9 voted for publishing, 25 against, with 20 abstentions.

AS felt that Council needed to vote on its position. MW counselled against a vote, as it would put the Board in a difficult position if Council voted for disclosure.

LR, GP, DT, JW and HJ were asked to leave the meeting whilst further discussion and a vote was taken, proposed by AS, seconded by CSp:

National Council recommend to the Board the full disclosure of the number of discretionary proxy votes cast at the 2019 AGM.

For – 4; Against – 9; Abstentions – 3. The proposal was not carried.

Noted

LR, GP, DT, JW and HJ returned to the meeting.

8.3 **Interim Deputy President***

8.3.1 LR provided some background to the decision to elect an Interim Deputy President, to work with the President in leading the Council in the delivery of its functions up to the 2020 AGM. National Council voting members had been asked to express an interest in the role.

Two expressions of interest had been received, from CSp and AS, who had been asked to provide a one-page summary outlining their reasons for wanting to be considered for the role and their aims for the year, and to prepare a five-minute verbal presentation for the meeting. Following each presentation, Council would be permitted to ask the candidate two questions, and then a secret ballot would be held.

CSp talked about his professional background, his outdoor experience and his involvement with the BMC as a volunteer over the years. He had observed the increasing complexity of running the organisation. He had also seen that some members had been uncomfortable with the pace of change in BMC governance, and felt that he could be a focal point for engaging with those members.

CSp also suggested that Council might want to consider appointing two Deputy Presidents. However, Article 16.7 says that National Council can elect one of the voting members to be a deputy to the President.

AS said that it was up to National Council to decide the role. He felt that he had a forward looking vision for the BMC, and had also shown that he could engage with those members who had been resistant to recent changes. He would also be a critical friend to the Board, asking difficult questions.

Voting members were then asked to indicate their preference on the ballot paper, and could select one of the candidates, or neither candidate, or could abstain. The majority vote was for AS.

Noted

LR thanked both candidates.

9. AOB

9.1 ODG Chair (David Brown)

Covered in 8.1.1 (ODG update)

9.2 Communication mechanisms between Board and Council (David Brown)

GP proposed that there should be swift communications in both directions immediately after each and every Board and National Council meeting. AC felt there was an issue with Council often receiving communications at the same time as all members, and sometimes after members; she felt that Council should have prior knowledge of some issues and decisions.

HW said that she would like to use Slack for communications but needed training in its use, so it was probably best to continue using email for now. The matter was also being considered by the R33 (National Council reconstitution) working group.

9.3 Subs increase communications (Mike Parsons)

MP proposed that an email briefing (with legal advice from MW about third party liability insurance) be sent to clubs, and the meeting agreed to this proposal. DT to liaise with clubs officer Jane Thompson.

DT

9.4 The other AOBs requested at the start of the meeting were not covered due to a lack of time. It was agreed that TR would ask for AOB items in advance of the next meeting.

TR

10. Date and venue of next meeting

10.1 Saturday 21 September 2019, Blencathra Field Centre, Threlkeld.

- 10.2 DB asked whether we could invite the Mountain Heritage Trust, which is based at the Field Centre, to give a presentation to the meeting.

The meeting finished at 18:35.

Summary of action points from the 64th meeting:

Ref	Action	Who	By
4.2.9	Review potential access agreement to Llandarcy	MW	ASAP
4.2.12	Provide briefing note to areas about publishing areas newsletters	LR	ASAP
4.2.17	Consider relationship to National Council when reviewing FAC ToR	GP	ASAP
5.1.2	Co-ordinate series of web articles on work of specialist committees	DT	Mid-Sept
5.1.3	Publish procurement policy once approved by Board	DT	August
5.1.4	Publish equality survey results and apology for inappropriately worded questions	LR	ASAP
5.1.5	Write formal note of thanks to John Roberts for ORG and ODG work	LR	ASAP
6.1.3	Put MTT report on Teamwork	TR	Immediate
6.2.9	Provide update on the incident reporting system	DT	ASAP
6.4.1	Clarification of the 'National' figure in Regional Membership pie chart	DT	Immediate
8.2.2	Advertise vacant roles on Governance Working Group	GP	Immediate
9.3	Email briefing to clubs on subscriptions increase	DT	Immediate
9.4	Request AOB items for September meeting agenda	TR	Early Sept

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

Signed _____ Date _____
 Lynn Robinson, President