

## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the Interim 67.2 National Council meeting held via Zoom on  
Tuesday 16 June 2020  
7:00pm – 9:30pm

#### In attendance

##### Voting members:

President	Lynn Robinson	(LR)	Chair
Cymru South Wales	CJ Griffiths	(CG)	
Cymru South Wales	Steve Quinton	(SQ)	
Lakes & Council Nominated Director	Fiona Sanders	(FS)	
Lakes	Mike Parsons	(MP)	
London & South East	Chris Stone	(CSt)	
London & South East	Robert Dufton	(RD)	
Midlands	Claudia Sarner	(CSa)	
North East	Jon Punshon	(JP)	
North West	Carl Spencer	(CSp)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Alison Cairns	(AC)	
South West	Helen Wilson	(HW)	
South West	Philip Wilson	(PW)	
Yorkshire & Deputy President	Andy Syme	(AS)	
Yorkshire	Mick Green	(MG)	

##### Observers:

Nominated Director	Jonathan White	(JW)	
Clubs Committee	Peter Salenieks	(PS)	
Equity Steering Group	Cressida Allwood	(CA)	
Land Management Group	Martin Wragg	(MW)	
Nominated Director	Jonathan White	(JW)	

##### Others in attendance:

Note Taker	Jane Thompson	(JT)	
Organisational Development Group	Roger Murray	(RM)	

Note: \* = supporting paper circulated.

- |           |  | <b>Actions</b> |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Welcome &amp; apologies for absence</b>   |                |
| 1.1       | <b>Apologies:</b> Dave Turnbull and Neal Hockley.  |                |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Introduction to the meeting</b>   |                |
| 2.1       | LR opened the meeting with congratulations to Jon Punshon and Chris Stone who were formally confirmed as Directors at the recent BMC AGM and thanked all those who attended the AGM. |                |
| 2.1.1     | LR explained that the main meeting would be recorded for minuting purposes; the breakout groups would not be recorded.   |                |

### **3. Voting procedures\***

**3.1** AS introduced the previously circulated paper on voting procedures. He explained that various options had been considered and the two options on the paper are the best fit for the BMC, are as simple as possible for members to understand, and would be deliverable at an AGM. The paper has been considered by the Governance Working Group, and whilst they are supportive of it, the long-term aim is to have it included in a Governance Manual and so some tweaking of the text and style may be required to fit in with the larger document. The procedure is written for use at AGMs and general meetings, and it is not mandatory for Areas, Council, specialist committees or working groups (although they may wish to use it). He noted that the engagement with Council had started earlier in 2020 but has been on hold due to Covid-19.

**3.1.1** Members were asked for comment (in March), the only responses were received that day.

**Q:** Are abstentions included in the total votes? **A:** No.

**Q:** If the quota in option 2 is not a whole number should it be rounded up or down? **A:** To be confirmed.

**Q:** The worked example on page 3 is complex. **A:** It will be reviewed.

**Q:** What happens if there is a tie? **A:** Realistically it is unlikely to happen at an AGM or GM, but is going to be reviewed for clarity, and needs to be a system that can be dealt with on the day with a resolution to the vote completed on the day.

**3.1.2** AS noted that it is possible, mathematically, that if the first person is hugely popular the second place may not make the quota – in that instance you wouldn't use the quota but go to simple majority voting.

**3.1.3** AS clarified that, in reference to the Articles, the voting procedure is only needed for GM & AGM. For other groups, including National Council, they are able to use a system that works best for them.

**3.1.4** DB asked if official organisations, such as Electoral Reform Society, had been approached for advice on voting methods. AS explained that external support had been sought from ICOSA. The two options on the paper are standard systems already in use.

**3.1.5** AC asked if additional guidance will be available for other (non-GM, non-AGM) voting situations to assist, for example, specialist committees and Areas to undertake a more effective and serious system for voting. AS will take the request back to Lucy Valerio (LV) for consideration as separate guidance.

**AS**

**3.1.6** JW & MP both noted that flexibility is needed, i.e. for Areas to do what is required for their Areas. AS responded that there is flexibility in the wording of the document for that reason.

**3.1.7** DB suggested that it should be clear that the voting arrangements are agreed at the meeting prior to the vote taking place i.e. both the candidates and the meeting should agree the arrangements. AS felt that was already stated within the terms of reference, but may need checking.

**3.1.8** MW noted that LV is now in post and should be able to support Areas with voting arrangements.

**LR**

- 3.1.9 There are two recommendations that the Council need to vote on:  
Vote 1 – Approving the formal proposal to go out to members  
100% in favour  
Vote 2 – Recommending the formal proposal to go out to members  
100% in favour **NOTED**

- 3.1.10 FS asked if the document had gone to the Board. JW responded that it hadn't but it should be signed off by both groups. The next Board meeting is on 15th July but it could be dealt with via email. **FS & JW**

- 3.1.11 CS is planning to send the proposal out to members in July. **NOTED**

#### **4. Members' Council Proposed Terms of Reference (ToR)**

##### **4.1 Overview of ToR**

- 4.1.1 LR thanked all of those working on R33.

- 4.1.2 HW explained that MG (who has done a fantastic job) has been leading on this area. She explained that the breakout groups will give councillors the chance to review and discuss the bigger points with other councillors, and that this will not be the only chance to discuss the ToR.

- 4.1.3 Each breakout room will have a facilitator and will need a scribe for feedback. A feedback session with 5 minutes per room will then take place, particularly focusing on things that they like and anything that is being challenged or they have a query about.

- 4.1.4 MG explained that much of the text in page 2 is similar to the current ToR and to the BMC Articles. Page 3 contains the primary objectives; of particular note is 2g showing the annual review and the setting of priorities for the coming year – a key point to get right.

- 4.1.5 Section 3 looks at ways that the Members' Council (MC) can best utilise the resources available to it.

- 4.1.6 Section 4 contains the changes to meetings, with a clearer structure for everyone to understand.

- 4.1.7 Section 5 provides clarity on the different types of councillors.

##### **4.2 Explanation of breakout rooms**

- 4.2.1 CS explained the process for the breakout groups.

##### **4.3 Group discussions**

- 4.3.1 The meeting split out in to breakout groups.

##### **4.4 Feedback from discussion groups**

###### **4.4.1 Aims and ambitions**

There was a suggestion in the group that the document was too reactive and not proactive enough, with too much of a focus on holding the Board to account and the ToR should have more focus on representing members interests; much time was spent discussing whether this was a fair concern.

- 4.4.1.1 Ethos and ethics should sit very firmly in MC and should be given a high profile. The priority of the Board is to run the business and, although there is some overlap, the core of ethos and ethics should be very central within MC work.

- 4.4.1.2 A practical suggestion for proactivity is for MC to systematically review BMC policies, possibly 2-3 per cycle, with comments to feed back in to the core documentation of the organisation. It is important to get the strategic plan in place which would help MC to be more proactive. The ToR should include support for the wider mountaineering community and being a voice for them too, not just for our members and volunteers. The technical process for holding the Board to account was queried.
- 4.4.2 **Membership Engagement**  
Agreement that it is a fair list of objectives. A general consensus that the recent virtual area meetings have been good in bringing in new people but provided challenges in getting to know people particularly those new to area meetings. The Facebook live events have gone well and brought the BMC to those who wouldn't usually engage and may become future members.
- 4.4.2.1 Discussion about how members' voices can be heard – sharing cultures, engaging with clubs and informal groups, reaching out to diverse groups and people from different backgrounds. Discussion about commitment and workload, and ensure that it remains realistic and achievable. Need to work on the induction of new councillors to get them up-to-speed and be effective quicker.
- 4.4.3 **Working with and scrutinising the Board**  
MC needs to know enough to be a critical friend but not to micro-manage the Board. Only items that are 'red', with whichever reporting system is used, need to be highlighted so that members input can be provided. For anything that is not routine, appropriate background information needs to be provided in advance - MC needs to know what's coming so there are no, or few, surprises.
- 4.4.3.1 The Board needs to recognise that MC, and in particular the Area Reps have a good understanding of the mood 'on the ground' with member contact, and also make better use of the specialist committees.
- 4.4.3.2 The group liked the drive and overall ethos in the Board, and aspirations within bullet 4, and noted how successful the Council can be, when given the right information, to come up with a solution.
- 4.4.3.3 The Board should take advantage of feedback from the Council. The disconnect between Board and Council needs to be changed as the Board tends to tell Council what has been done rather than working with it to come up with a solution. Board seems to be overly secretive on some topics, or is that just not communicating enough.
- 4.4.4 **Management of Council and Resources**  
Agreed that a Council operating manual is a positive recommendation, and that Council is an intelligent client in the communication needs between Council members and the communities that they represent.
- 4.4.4.1 Most of the discussion took place on structures and resourcing. It was agreed that the specialist knowledge is really important for Council and important for the organisation (including working parties and specialist committees).
- 4.4.4.2 Questioned the differences in structures for volunteers and resource management – if recommendation A includes Council input in to how staff time is used then concern that staff would be getting direction from two areas.

- 4.4.4.3 Concern that too many things go to Council for decision and work needs to be prioritised and focused on what matters to members.
- 4.4.5 **Timetable for the development and finalisation of the document**  
HW presented the timetable for the development and finalisation of the document. Consultation will continue for a further week. MG will pull together a further draft that will be shared with Council, ODG and the Board, and the plan is that this will then go to members on 4<sup>th</sup> July. A member's webinar will be offered to discuss the draft and it will be on the agenda at Q3 Area Meetings. There will be further opportunities for councillors to comment on the document before the final version goes to Q4 Area Meetings. RD questioned whether the same document needs to go to two rounds of Area Meetings, particularly when it is often the same limited number of members who attend, and LR noted that Q4 Area Meetings have limited time for meaningful discussion as the AGMs also take place.
- 4.4.5.1 AS & JW argued that Area Meetings are the forum for discussion with members and it needs to be clear that when feedback is taken it is acted on by the Board / Council / office.
- 4.4.5.2 AC raised the issue that further discussion on what Area Meetings are for and what members want from Area Meetings needs to be agreed. When asked, most members attending the Peak meetings don't want to discuss 'business' issues.
- 4.4.5.3 FS responded that Areas have two reps on Council to represent the views of members from their Area, and therefore discussion and consultation needs to take place at Area Meetings to inform the Area Reps. Until there is an alternative route(s) for Council to consult directly with members the Area Meetings are the only option.
- 4.4.5.4 CJG stated that there seems to be a link missing to allow consultation directly with members and facilitating feedback to Area Reps which would streamline the process and take the pressure off Area Meetings.
- 4.4.5.5 AS stated that it is understood some members only want to talk about local issues, but the BMC is putting money in to providing the Area Meeting structure and therefore needs to get the feedback from members. Area Chairs and Secretaries need to accept the 'boring' stuff too. RD stated that London & SE has put a lot of time and effort in to developing its online presence, such as through Facebook, to get messages out to the mountaineering community. The members who then attend the meetings don't always wish to discuss what the BMC is asking them to consider and it is difficult for the Area Officers to engage with those members to encourage discussion.
- 4.4.5.6 DB agreed with what AC stated – members are more interested in what has been done, rather than being asked for their feedback on everything.
- 4.4.5.7 FS responded that if something is out for consultation people need to be directed to Area Meetings for discussion and feedback, but that the Areas need to be savvy in what they present as presenting the whole document/topic is too much for most people to read, digest and understand.

- 4.4.5.8 JP considered whether reps are delegates or representatives – ideally they should be both at different times. He agreed with FS that Area Officers need to be able to read the meetings better to gauge whether topics need to be discussed or just be informed about, and not spend long on topics that members attending the meeting don't want to discuss.
- 4.4.5.9 CSt confirmed that a report will be circulated later that evening on feedback from the last round of Area meetings (the first round of virtual meetings) and will be discussed more at the Council meeting on Saturday. He has informed Gareth Pierce that a review of Area Meetings must take place, and the sentiments raised this evening will be included within that review. There are plans to hold more webinars to take some discussion points and consultations out of Area Meetings to provide members with an alternative option for engagement. DB pointed out that 'Areas' is a Council responsibility not the Board. The response from CSt, FS and JW was that the review CSt referred to is wider than just the Council responsibility to Areas as, at times, the Board requires support from the Areas; GP needs to be aware that CSt will be spending time on the review and that would take him away from other projects, plus Directors are ultimately responsible for the whole organisation.
- 4.4.5.10 MP asked if there is any significance in the changed terminology from 'representative' organisation to 'membership' organisation, and noted that 'governing' was not used even though that function exists. He also queried whether the structure provides the Council with right position in the organisation going forward.
- 4.4.5.11 RM raised the point of 'tone' and questioned whether it was at the right level yet (it had been discussed in their breakout group). Is it about being held to account such as a dual governance roll with everything having to go through both Board and Council, or is it more strategic and associated with working alongside the Board to be more forward looking? HW responded it's essential, for a new Council, that tone is correct from the start.
- 4.4.5.12 HW reminded the meeting that the ToR survey would be sent out the following day and encouraged responses via that. She will review all the comments made and thanked everyone for their input in to the debate.

**All**

**4.5 Plenary**

- 4.5.1 LR echoed the sentiments of HW and thanked everyone for their contribution into the debate.

**5. Close of meeting**

- 5.1 LR wished everyone well, hoped everyone stayed safe and closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

Summary of action points from the 67.1 meeting:

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By</b>
3.1.5	Company Secretary to be asked to provide voting guidance for area meetings	AS	ASAP
3.1.8	Company Secretary to support Areas / specialist committees with voting arrangements.	LR to feedback to LV	ASAP
3.1.10	Voting Procedures paper to be presented to the Board	FS & JW	15 <sup>th</sup> July
4.4.5.12	To feedback on the MC ToR via the on-line survey	All	ASAP

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



Signed:

Lynn Robinson, President

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2020