

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

### Notes of the Interim National Council (70.4) meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 19:00 – 20:00

#### In attendance

#### Voting members:

President	Lynn Robinson	(LR)
Cymru North Wales	Tarquin Shipley	(TS)
Cymru South Wales	Steve Quinton	(SQ)
Lakes & Council Nominated Director (CND)	Fiona Sanders	(FS)
London & South East	Chris Stone	(CSt)
London & South East	Robert Dufton	(RD)
Midlands	David Jones	(DJ)
North West (CND)	Carl Spencer	(CS)
North West	Bill Beveridge	(BB)
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 (CND)	Peter Salenieks	(PS)
Hill Walking Group	Peter Judd	(PJ)
Mountain Training	John Cousins	(JC)
Organisational Development Group	Roger Murray	(RM)

Notes taken by Helen Wilson.

#### Discussion

HW gave a ten-minute presentation summarising R33's recommendations to Council for Nationally Elected Councillor (NECs). The following points were made in the debate:

1. CS: Urged caution when electing an NEC for Indoor climbing. CS would prefer to exclude candidates who are employed in the industry, as their successful election could cause a conflict of interest. The NEC roles should not be viewed as a lobbying position for the industry. Similar caution must be exercised for the other NEC positions.
2. PS: Agreed via chat that conflicts of interest should be declared and managed and pointed out that it's important that the role descriptions are clear that the role is to represent members.
3. AS: NECs are nationally elected and there should not be restrictions to application based on a candidate's employment. The key point to remember is that the NEC's

role is to champion members in the area of participation that they represent, and so the issue of conflict of interest shouldn't arise.

4. RD was broadly supportive of the recommendations but had two key questions:
  - a. How will the NECs actually represent a group of members who aren't constituency based?
  - b. How do the NECs fit in and work with the various area representatives e.g. the area hill walking reps?
5. AS in response: R33 is aware of that getting members engaged with the NECs needs considerable thought and this is one of the reasons why the plan was to only elect two NECs in 2020, with a further two elected in 2021 once engagement processes were working well. Whilst good engagement is still dependent on the digital strategy and best use of new / existing platforms, R33 is aware of what needs to be done.
6. HW: Added that everyone is now more used to virtual methods of communication, in particular zoom calls and use of platforms like the open forum, which will make the work of the NECs easier when engaging with members. Everyone on Council will need to be supportive of the NECs to make the role successful, in particular in the first year.
7. SQ: Added via chat that website redevelopment should include 'landing pages' for each of the main participation activities to make it easier for NECs to communicate with their communities.
8. AC: R33 has not properly considered the links between the NECs and the various area representatives but agreed good communication and liaison between the two actually strengthens the NECs' work. RD agreed.
9. HW: Agreed that R33 should take this point forward for further consideration.
10. PS: Two points:
  - a. It is important to remember that NECs, like all councillors, will also be taking on a variety of roles on Council and that they won't spend their entire time on the NEC role.
  - b. The annual meeting cycle (summary of which was shown in the presentation) will allow NECs to see similarities and differences in the way that they work and represent members in their different areas.
11. JW: Reminded all on the call that whilst focus has been on recruiting hill walkers and indoor climbers, nothing is being halted and retention of members focused on the core activities of rock climbing and mountaineering is very important to the strategy. He is therefore supportive of NECs representing members in these four areas on an equal footing.
12. CS: Presentations from the Walls committee and the competitions committee revealed that volunteers in these areas are overworked, which could mean that an NEC for indoor climbers would be overloaded from day one.
13. AS: In response, AS pointed out that NECs are champions and whilst they are the voice of indoor climbers on Council, they aren't there to do all the work. As said before, all of Council is there to support the NECs and ensure that they aren't overloaded.
14. In response to a question from FS about the specialist councillors, HW talked through two slides giving the structure of the proposed Members' Council.
15. MG: Pointed out that R33 is fully aware of the need to integrate the work of Specialist Committees into Council. The NECs will need to draw from a variety of NECs to do their jobs well, in particular when arranging the quarterly events at Council meetings, which will ensure that specialist committees are regularly engaged in meetings.

16. PS: Via chat, PS added that Council should act as the integrating forum to bring together the representative and functional aspects of NECs and Specialist Councillors.
17. JW: Asked whether *all* Specialist committee chairs, including those from committees which aren't getting a vote, would still be actively involved in the new Members' Council in some way.
18. RM and HW: Clarified to JW that Council will be inclusive for the specialist committees and not exclusive and that specialist committee chairs from committees without a vote would still attend as observers. A Council meeting is planned for February to discuss R33's recommendations on the Specialist Committee and observer situation for Members' Council.
19. AS: Confirmed that ways to make more use of "free votes" for observers is being explored. Whilst certain matters e.g. reserved matters could only be voted on by voting members, it should be possible for observers to be able to vote on other broader issues. By giving observers more "responsibility", they are more likely to attend and actively participate in Council meetings.
20. Following the discussion, three polls were taken, one for each of the NEC roles:
- 1) *The R33 Group recommends that Council approves the choice of a Nationally Elected Councillor role to represent all types of indoor climbers*
  - 2) *The R33 Group recommends that Council approves the choice of an NEC to represent rock climbers*
  - 3) *The R33 Group recommends that Council approves the choice of a Nationally Elected Councillor role to represent all types of mountaineers*
21. Councillors voted to accept R33's recommendations meaning that in total four NECs will be elected at the 2021 AGM: one for hill walkers and one each for indoor climbers, rock climbers and mountaineers. The poll numbers are shown below:

Category	Agree	Disagree	Abstain	Not a voting member
1) Indoor Climbers	68%	0	5%	26%
2) Rock Climbers	68%	0	5%	26%
3) Mountaineers	68%	0	5%	26%

22. HW agreed to present the recommendations to the Board at their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup>.

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

**Signed:** 

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021

Lynn Robison, President