

## 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

#### Notes of the Interim (70.5) National Council meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021. 7.00pm to 9.30pm

#### In attendance

##### Voting members:

President	Lynn Robinson	(LR)	Chair
Cymru North Wales	Tarqiu Shipley	(TS)	
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)	
North West	Bill Beveridge	(BB)	
North West	Carl Spencer	(CSp)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Alison Cairns	(AC)	
South West – and minute taker	Helen Wilson	(HW)	
South West	Philip Wilson	(PW)	
Yorkshire & Deputy President	Andy Syme	(AS)	
Yorkshire	Mick Green	(MG)	

##### Observers:

CEO	Paul Davies	(PD)	
Chair President T&F Group	Roger Fanner	(RF)	
Nominated Director	Jonathan White	(JW)	
Clubs Committee	Peter Salenieks	(PS)	
Hill walking Committee	Peter Judd	(PJ)	

##### Others in attendance:

Organisational Development Group	Roger Murray	(RM)	
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Helen Wilson took the notes of the meeting.

Note: \* = supporting paper circulated:

1. Review of the role of the President working group Terms of reference
2. Review of the role of President T&F Group – report to Council
3. The issues for the 18<sup>th</sup> February Council Meeting

The role of the President Task and Finish Group:

Members; Chair: Roger Fanner

Andy Syme, Fiona Sanders, Mick Green, Robert Dufton.

#### 1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jon Cousins; CJ Griffiths; David Jones; Cressida Allwood

#### 2. Note Conflicts of Interest

AS declared a conflict of interest as he has been canvassed by some Councillors to stand for election as President at the 2021 AGM. Council agreed that Andy Syme could stay and participate in the discussion.

### 3. Notes from previous meetings

LR explained that due to a delay in production of NC minutes caused by staff furlough, there weren't any previous minutes to approve. No date was given for when these would appear. LR and Tony Ryan have discussed the format of the meetings going forward and agreed that future minutes will summaries of discussion and notes of votes, decisions and actions, rather than full details. It was agreed that the notes for this interim meeting would be in the new style.

### 4. Terms of Reference (ToR)\* – Task and Finish Group, Role of the President:

LR introduced RF as Chair of the President's T&F group and formally handed over the role of Chair of the meeting to RF.

- a. RF stated that the timescales given in the President T&F ToR v0.5 were no longer achievable and asked the Council to release the T&F group from these deadlines and agree to a deadline of the 2022 AGM, or longer if needed.
- b. During the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:
  - i. Council was in broad agreement on the aims of the ToR but asked that the timescales and planning were reworked.
  - ii. Question 4 of the "Review of the Role of the President T&F Group - Report to Council", asked Council to, "Support proposal that the resolution includes an option of a second Special Resolution at the 2022 AGM is included for a further year in case the nature of the new role cannot be agreed by then". Council did not support the proposal and decided that any decision on the future of the President's role MUST be made by the 2022 AGM with no extension. No formal vote / show of hands was taken.
  - iii. As it was unclear whether or not previous versions of the ToR had been formally agreed by Council, Council agreed a vote was needed to accept the ToR, but this could only be done after the ToR have been rewritten.
  - iv. After a discussion of the potential implications of the T&F group on roles other than the President's e.g. CEO and DP, it was agreed to add in a section to the ToR to cover this point. **Action: FS to draft an amendment that recognised there may be follow-on work for other roles e.g. CNDs**
  - v. Council agreed that the outcome of the T&F group should NOT include an option to remove the role of the President.
- c. **Action: Council to feedback to RF by Sunday 21 February with comments. RF to make new version available for approval by Google poll in week commencing Monday 22 February 2021. RF to send the new version to the Board for information.**
- d. CSp suggested sharing the ToR at the Open Forum on 25/2/21. AC pointed out that as the President's role was discussed at the previous Open Forum, it would be good to feedback progress to members. RD wanted it made clear that the T&F group was a Council and not a Board initiative. Council agreed to the suggestion to include a short item on the T&F group at the Forum. The actual ToR won't be shared as they will not be approved until after the Forum. **Action: T&F group to agree who is speaking about this work at the Open Forum.**

5. Council discussed question 2 of the, "Review of the Role of the President T&F Group - Report to Council", which asked Council to, "Support withdrawing the proposed changes to the articles that decouple the President from automatically chairing the Council; pending the outcome of the T&F Group". This was carried by a show of hands from Councillors.

6. Council discussed question 3 of the, “Review of the Role of the President T&F Group - Report to Council”, (question 4 in, “The issues for the 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021 Council Meeting”) which asked Council to, “*Support proposal that special resolution is raised at the next AGM to appoint a President for a term of a single year, with a Candidate proposed by the Board and Council who understands the changes required to members council and the wider area, will ensure stability for the period and work with the Group in shaping the role*”. The discussion was split into two parts: The first was on the length of term, and the second was on election versus appointment for the candidate.

a. On the length of term:

- i. A number of councillors felt that whilst it is not ideal to have a term of just a year, it's also not ideal to have a President elected for a three-year term when they won't know exactly how that role will change after a year. In the interests of fairness, one year seems appropriate.
- ii. A number of other councillors countered with the view that there was insufficient time to inform members about the need for a special resolution on the President's term at the 2021 AGM, and that it was not in members' best interests to have such a short presidential term.
- iii. Some felt that a one-year term did not allow a President to achieve anything substantial. RD pointed out that a one-year term at this particular time would still allow a president to focus on the important task of getting the new Members' Council up and running.
- iv. DB questioned the likelihood of the President's role changing so dramatically as a result of the T&F group's work that it would become “unsuitable” for an incumbent.
- v. JW raised the issue of Sport England's requirement for all directors to have either two or three year terms. AS responded that as the President is ex-officio, this is almost certainly not the case. **Action: PD to investigate with the Company secretary to get a definite answer and if necessary to initiate conversation with Sport England.**
- vi. Council took a vote on the following question: “Should a special resolution be put to Council to change the term of the president from three years to one?”. The outcome was: 10/15 voting members in favour, 3/15 voting members against, 2/15 voting members abstained, 5 non-voting members. The motion was carried although concern was expressed by some councillors that the outcome was less than unanimous.

b. On whether the President should be elected or appointed for the one-year term:

**(Note: At this point RF had technical issues and was no longer able attend via Zoom, so LR took over to chair the rest of the meeting).**

- i. LR stated that the BMC is a membership-led organisation and as such a president must be elected, not appointed. Other councillors supported this view stating that members have to be able to vote on a candidate. PJ and RM, as non-voting councillors, wanted Council to note their view that the President should be elected.
- ii. Council took a vote on the following question: Should the President [for the 12 month period from AGM 2021] be appointed or elected? The result was: 1/15 voting members for “appointed”; 13/15 voting members for “elected”; 1/15 voting members for, “abstained”, 4 non-voting members. The motion that the President must be elected was carried.
- iii. Council noted that the role of the President in the twelve months from the AGM 2021 will be extremely busy with a number of key initiatives, including

setting up the new Members' Council, and will need someone with existing experience of the BMC to be most effective. The Council therefore considered the option of putting forward a "preferred candidate". RD pointed out that this system is used by the National Trust. On balance, Council felt that an preferred candidate would result in being seen as attempting to manage democracy to such an extent that it would lead to a "fake" election and was not a route that the BMC should take. The option of providing candidates and the members with a "strong steer" as to what was required for the President during the 12 months was felt to be acceptable by many councillors.

- iv. Council took a vote on the following question: The election should be open to all members to stand, with a strong steer as to what the role will be. The results were: 13/15 voting members agreed; 1/15 voting members disagreed; 1/15 voting members abstained; 4 non-voting members. The motion was carried.
- v. As a result of the vote in 6 b iv, LR asked MG to provide the "steering" text.  
**Action: MG to provide text to President T&F Group.**

- c. In summary, Council agreed that at the 2021 AGM, the next President should be elected for a term of 1 year only, with the election being open to any member of the BMC. All members will be given a strong steer by the President's T&F group on what the role for that 12 months entails. **Action: JW to take these recommendations to the Board in the week commencing Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February. If the Board agrees to these recommendations, they will be taken to the Open Forum on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February, but only if there is a clear position that will not divert from other issues that need discussion. The new role advertised in the week commencing Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**
- d. As a result of the outcome of the meeting, AS noted that he would continue to consider whether he would stand for election as President or not at the 2021 AGM. The meeting finished at 9.30pm. Summary of action points from the 70.5 meeting:

Ref	Action	Who	By
4(b) iv	Draft section in ToR to cover impact of review on other roles.	FS	ASAP
4(c)	Council to feedback to RF by Sunday 21 February with comments.	All	21/2/21
4(c)	RF to make new version available for approval by Doodle poll in week commencing Monday 22 February 2021.	RF	26/2/21
4(d)	Agree who is speaking about this work at the Open Forum.	RF	24/2/21
6(a) v	Investigate with the Company secretary to get a definite answer on the acceptable term for a director.	PD	ASAP
6(a) v	Initiate conversation with Sport England re term requirements for a director.	PD	ASAP
6(b) v	Write steering text for election.	MG	08.03.21
6c	Recommendations to the Board on the 24 <sup>th</sup> February.	JW	22/2/21
6c	President's role to be added to the slide of roles being elected at the 2021 AGM that is being presented to the Open Forum.	FS	24/2/21

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

Signed:   
Lynn Robinson, President

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