

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the 70.1 National Council meeting
held via Zoom
on Wednesday 18 November 2020.

In attendance

Voting members:

| | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|
| President | Lynn Robinson | (LR) | Chair |
| Cymru South Wales | Steve Quinton | (SQ) | |
| Lakes & Council Nominated Director | Fiona Sanders | (FS) | |
| London & South East | Chris Stone | (CSt) | |
| Midlands | David Jones | (DJ) | |
| Midlands | Claudia Sarner | (CSa) | |
| North East | Mark Anstiss | (MA) | |
| North West | Bill Beveridge | (BB) | |
| North West & Council Nominated Director | Carl Spencer | (CSp) | |
| Peak | David Brown | (DB) | |
| Peak | Alison Cairns | (AC) | |
| Yorkshire | Andy Syme | (AS) | |
| Yorkshire | Mick Green | (MG) | |

Observers:

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|------|--|
| Nominated Director (Clubs) | Jonathan White | (JW) | |
| Clubs Committee & Council Nominated Director | Peter Salenieks | (PS) | |
| Hill Walking Implementation Group | Peter Judd | (PJ) | |

Others in attendance:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|------|--|
| Organisational Development Group | Roger Murray | (RM) | |
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Note: * = supporting paper circulated.

- | | Actions |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Welcome & apologies for absence | |
| 1.1 Welcome | |
| 1.1.1 LR welcomed everyone to the meeting. | |
| 1.2 Apologies for absence | |
| 1.2.1 Apologies were received from: John Cousins, Robert Dufton, Guy Jarvis and Mike Rosser. | |
| 2. Note Conflicts of Interest | |
| 2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared. | |
| 3. Area Reports | |
| 3.1 Cymru South Wales* | |

- 3.1.1 SQ reported that the Area elected a new Chair at its Area AGM, Dorian Thomas, who replaces Ollie Burrows. The Area wished to thank Ollie for his support to the Area.
- 3.1.2 Climbing access to Llandarcy is unlikely, being dependent on the person in charge of development at the site, who appears not to want climbing to take place.
- 3.1.3 A meeting has been arranged for next week to review the South Wales bolting policy.
- 3.1.4 The cliff climbing liaison meeting for Pembroke was held this morning. Only 18 climbers have been briefed this year, so we have requested that online briefings be organised to enable climbers to be briefed whilst travel restrictions are in place.
- 3.1.5 Concerns were raised about the Area Youth Co-ordinator (AYC) position and confusion between different roles with same title relating to some locally elected volunteers and other volunteers recruited by the office primarily to support the Youth Climbing Series (YCS).
- 3.1.6 There was a discussion involving a number of Council members relaying their experience of youth volunteer roles, and it is clear that some confusion and inconsistency has developed and needs to be clarified, particularly given that YCS regions no longer align with BMC Areas.
- 3.1.7 It was agreed that AS and CSt, as part of their Area review work, would request clarity and guidance from Paul Davies and Rab Carrington, and report back at the next full Council meeting. **AS/CSt**
- 3.2 Cymru North Wales**
- 3.2.1 No Area Representative was in attendance, and a report had not been submitted.
- 3.2.2 LR said that she would contact Tarquin Shipley, who was recently elected to the role, and SQ offered to mentor Tarquin in the role.
- 3.3 Lakes***
- 3.3.1 FS reported that access and parking in Borrowdale, which has always been difficult, has been recently exacerbated by the 2-person per car rule plus the closure of the Shepherds Crag car park.
- 3.3.2 The Area needs to recruit a new Chair, and would also like to find a new newsletter editor. FS asked for any suggestions for recruiting methods as they hadn't had any success so far.
- 3.3.3 CSt suggested that the best approach might be to compile a full list of all current Area vacancies and use it to reach groups via various communication channels.
- 3.4 London & SE**
- 3.4.1 CSt reported that a second hill walking rep, Tom Bennett, had been elected at the Area AGM. A socially-distanced hill walking event, organised by Fabrizio Scaglione, was recently held.

3.4.2 With the imposition of lockdown travel restrictions and the closure of indoor walls, there has been a huge influx of climbers on Southern Sandstone. The rock is particularly susceptible to damage when damp or wet, so the BMC took the unprecedented decision to ask climbers not to climb in the area in the short term.

3.5 Midlands*

3.5.1 DJ expressed some ongoing frustration from the Area that attendance has declined since Area Secretaries could no longer hold member contact information, following the imposition of GDPR, and he felt that this fall-off needed to be investigated, so that attendance could be increased.

3.5.2 There is a vacancy for the role of Area Secretary, John Edwards having completed his term, but no member at the meeting wishing to stand for election.

3.5.3 The Area was the first to run a Clubs forum; attendance was disappointing, only 3 of the 29 clubs based in the Area attending. CSa said that feedback from attendees was positive, and she had also heard from other members that they would have liked to attend but hadn't heard about the event, most probably because the club contact notified by the BMC office hadn't passed on the communication.

3.5.4 One member at the meeting had asked about the competence of the company carrying out the Board evaluation. LR said that she had answered the question during the meeting.

3.6 North East

3.6.1 MA reported that CCPG Chair Rab Carrington's attendance at the meeting was very well received, especially given that competition climbing hasn't always been met with a positive reaction by some meeting attendees.

3.6.2 The meeting covered mostly local issues. Some members felt that it was a good idea to organise the recent Open Forum on governance-related issues, as this enabled Area Meetings to focus on other matters.

3.6.3 The Area AGM failed to fill a vacancy for Clubs Committee Representative, as well as a replacement for Jon Punshon as Area Representative. MA also flagged up that his 6-year term as Area Representative will be complete in June 2021.

3.7 North West*

3.7.1 CSp reported that it had been a good meeting, well chaired by Emily Pitts and with support from Paul Evans in meeting preparation. Useful summaries were provided by Area volunteers including Dominic Oughton (Clubs), Stuart Holmes (Area Youth Co-ordinator) and Roberta Spagnul (Marketing); in the case of the latter, CSp thought that the North West was the only BMC Area which had a volunteer role for marketing / social media, and it had proved very successful.

3.7.2 There was a good discussion on the Mission Statement, with feedback provided to CSp and FS.

3.7.3 CSp also reported on the Wilton Management Group, which he said has not met for more than a year. He had asked if he could join the group as an observer, but was not welcome. He felt that membership of the group needs reviewing so that it does not present any risks that the BMC may not be aware of.

3.7.4 In response in particular to CSp's comment about the success of the volunteer role supporting the Area's social media activities, LR thought that it would be good to share knowledge across all BMC Areas, and a training day might be a good way to achieve that.

3.8 Peak*

3.8.1 AC reported that a new Clubs Committee Representative had been elected at the meeting, Paul Justin; there were no other changes, and the vacancy for an Area Youth Co-ordinator remains.

3.8.2 In response to DJ's comment about poor attendance at the Midlands Clubs Forum, AC also felt that National Clubs should be invited to attend Area Club Forums.

3.8.3 On access, Stange continues to be of concern. The annual Stange Open Fourm didn't happen this year; instead presentations were published on the Peak District National Park Authority website along with a chance to email comments. The options appraisal is on hold while the Authority goes through a re-organisation. The access team is keeping a close eye on developments. More information on this and other Area access news is in the Peak Area newsletter.

3.8.4 There was a lack of clarity on how members could provide feedback on the Mission Statement, but this was eventually resolved. There should always be a method and point of contact for anything where feedback from Areas is requested.

3.8.5 Meeting attendance consistently down during the past year, although it's not known if this is purely related to holding meetings online, or if it would have happened anyway. Members should be consulted about the type of meetings held in the future when face-to-face meetings are once again possible.

3.9 South West

3.9.1 No Area Representative in attendance, and no report submitted.

3.10 Yorkshire

3.10.1 MG reported that the Area had elected a new Chair (Jim Hulbert) and Secretary (Will Points).

3.10.2 Mick Johnson continues to go a great job re: access issues to gritstone crags.

3.10.3 On the limestone, there has been some retrobolting of some overgrown trad routes, which has been dealt with.

3.10.4 Members are generally pleased that governance issues are being addressed, but don't necessarily want to know too much detail.

3.11 Hill Walking Group

3.11.1 PJ said that the group had met last night to prepare its presentation to National Council and the Board meeting on 5th December as part of the annual review of specialist committees.

3.11.2 In response to comment in some Area Reports about Area volunteer vacancies, PJ felt that we needed to reach out to members who aren't regular meeting attendees to reach potential new volunteers. We also need to consider creating short videos for social media to engage with an audience that may not traditionally attends meetings or read lots of emails.

- 3.11.3 PJ requested that he be informed if any Areas had elected a new Hill Walking Representative or if they had lost a rep, so that he could keep his list of reps up to date.

3.12 Clubs Committee

- 3.12.1 PS reported that behind the scenes work on strategy and alignment with the specialist committees review had been taking place.
- 3.12.2 The committee has also been reaching out to engage with different kinds of clubs this year, and also reaching out to the national clubs, so that a more inclusive dialogue can take place.
- 3.12.3 The work the BMC has been doing during the pandemic has confirmed to many clubs the benefit of being part of an umbrella organisation.

3.13 Nominations Committee

- 3.13.1 LR gave a brief update on the work of NomCom, which also comprises MG, Robert Dufton and Paul Drew, and the ongoing selection process for Independent Director roles.

4. Planning future activities of Council*

- 4.1 LR handed over to MG to present the paper for this item. MG said that now was a good time for Council to consider its future activities following the governance work which had been undertaken, so that it can plan ahead and work more effectively and creatively with other BMC committees and Partner organisations.
- 4.1.1 At this stage, he would like to seek Council agreement to begin the process of creating an agenda looking ahead over the next two years which would enable this, but not to agree any specific detail at this point.
- 4.1.2 The meeting discussed how agendas would be guided by strategic themes, integrating the work of R33 (reconstitution of National Council) and the Specialist Committee review, so that engagement with Specialist Committees can be improved.
- 4.1.3 The meeting was asked to agree by a show of hands that a continuous process of creating a formal and stimulating Council agenda whilst leaving space for innovation and creativity could begin – agreement was unanimous. **Noted**
- 4.1.4 Ideas would be drafted in consultation with other relevant groups, and then interrogated in detail by Council.
- 4.1.5 LR thanked MG for his proposal, and said that this topic linked nicely into the next agenda item on meeting dates and forward plans.

5. 2021 Meeting Dates & Forward Plan*

- 5.1 LR thought that once the ODG work is completed, Council meetings could be planned so that the first half of each meeting focussed on relevant business in the annual planning cycle (e.g. strategy, reserved matters), and the second half of each meeting could be dedicated to aspects such as those discussed in the previous agenda item.
- 5.1.1 The paper proposed Council dates up to the 2021 AGM in May, but not beyond; the Council meeting on 16 May would be the first Members' Council meeting changes to the Articles are approved at the AGM on 15 May.

- 5.1.2 The Specialist Committee review meetings will take place on 5 December (for member-focussed committees) and 23 January (for corporate-focussed committees).
- 5.1.3 It was agreed that the next full Council meeting will take place on 13 March. An earlier date was considered, but rejected on the basis of difficulty in scheduling a round of Area Meetings prior to it, and production of papers which might need to be presented at that round.
- 5.1.4 An issue-specific Interim Council meeting will certainly be needed to discuss the proposed Members' Council Terms of Reference, and other interim meetings will probably happen.
- 5.1.5 It was acknowledged that more frequent, shorter meetings can be beneficial, particularly if the meetings are held online, but when face-to-face meetings are once again possible, less frequent, longer meetings are more cost-effective.

6. Close of meeting, date of next meetings

6.1 23 November 2020

6.1.1 JW advised that a short meeting might be held on 23 November, depending on the outcome of decisions to be taken at the Board meeting tomorrow (19 November).

6.2 5 December 2020

6.2.1 As noted in 5.1.2, the meeting on 5 December will be the first part of the annual Specialist Committee review.

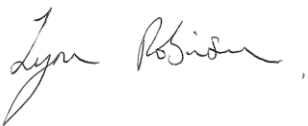
6.3 LR thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting finished at 21:00.

Summary of action points from the 70.1 meeting:

| Ref | Action | Who | By |
|------------|--|------------|-------------|
| 3.1.7 | Request clarity and guidance from Paul Davies and Rab Carrington about the Area Youth Co-ordinator role, and report back at the next full Council meeting. | AS/CSt | 13 Mar 2021 |

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



28 March 2021

Signed _____ Date _____
Lynn Robinson, President