

## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### Members' Council

Approved minutes of the Members' Council meeting held on Zoom on Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 7.00pm.

#### In attendance:

#### Voting Members

##### Elected Councillors

Cymru South Wales	Steve Quinton	SQ		
London & South East	Robert Dufton	RD	Chris Stone*1	CS
Midlands	David Jones*2	DJ		
Peak	Alison Cairns	AC	Sam Harris	SH
South West	Helen Wilson	HW	Philip Wilson	PW
Yorkshire	Mick Green	MG		

##### Specialist Councillors

Training, Youth & Walls Committee	Abbi Blakey	AB
Nationally Elected Councillor for Mountaineers	Aaron Hodgson	AH
Nationally Elected Councillor for Rock Climbers	Steve Clark	SC

\*1 also Deputy to the President

\*2 also Huts Group Observer

#### Observers

##### Specialist Committees

Hill Walking Group	Peter Judd	PJ
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##### Board of Directors

Nominated Director (Clubs)	Jonathan White	JW
Chief Executive	Paul Davies	PD

#### Others

##### BMC staff

Minute taker	Tony Ryan	TR
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\* denotes supporting paper(s) circulated prior to meeting

Item	Topic and Main Aspects Considered	Decision / Action	Who	When
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; apologies for absence</b>			
1.1	In the absence of the President, the Deputy to the President chaired the meeting, and welcomed everyone, including SH, attending his first meeting as Peak Area Representative.			
1.2	Apologies were received from: Bill Beveridge, Rose Gare-Simmons, Oli Lewis, Roger Murray, Keith Roberts and Andy Syme.			
1.3	CS wanted to record his formal thanks to Roger Murray for organising the Specialist Committee Review meeting held on 15 January and to all the Council members who attended. Council wishes to record its thanks to all the specialist committee chairs and representatives, and staff who had attended the meeting.			
<b>2</b>	<b>Note Conflicts of Interest</b>			
2.1	None declared.			
<b>3</b>	<b>Urgent issues for AOB</b>			
3.1	None requested.			
<b>4</b>	<b>Review of Outstanding Actions</b> <a href="#">See Outstanding Actions</a>			
4.1	The meeting reviewed the list of outstanding actions managed as Tasks on Teamwork, and updated the status of any actions where it had changed.			
<b>5</b>	<b>Council Nominated Director (CND) post</b>			
5.1	CS reported that Fiona Sanders wished to stand for a second three-year term.			
5.1.1	RD advised that the Nominations Committee would be meeting on 8 February, and its views on the election process would be circulated after that meeting.			
5.1.2	If any Council member wishes to stand for the role, they should email Andy Syme to express their interest.	<b>Email Andy Syme if want to stand for the CND role.</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>ASAP</b>

Item	Topic and Main Aspects Considered	Decision / Action	Who	When
<b>6</b>	<b>Area Reports</b>			
<b>6.1</b>	<b>North West</b>			
6.1.1	No report submitted, and no Area Representative in attendance.			
<b>6.2</b>	<b>North East*</b>			
6.2.1	The Area is currently without any Area Representatives, but Simon Litchfield (Area Secretary) had submitted a report, and JW had attended the January meeting.			
6.2.2	JW wished to record his thanks to Oli Lewis for chairing the January meeting, and to CS for supporting the meeting with his attendance.			
6.2.3	JW reported that the meeting had not been well attended (11 members from the Area), and that this reflected apathy towards BMC meetings from some who had previously attended on a regular basis.			
6.2.4	On a positive note, the Area co-opted a new Hill Walking Representative, Liz King.			
6.2.5	A proposal to amalgamate temporarily with another Area was discussed and voted on; after a recount, the Area voted by a majority of one to amalgamate with the Lakes Area, subject to agreement from that Area, until a new North East Area Chair can be elected, and attendance at Area Meetings revived. An official response to the proposal from the Lakes Area has yet to be received, although its meeting was held two days after the North East's.			
6.2.6	Council discussed the pros and cons of joint Area Meetings, noting the focus that some Areas have on local issues, but also some potential positive aspects, including the potential to increase attendance by sharing a guest speaker, and the ability to cover non-local issues with a wider audience.			
6.2.7	JW advised that no more North East Area Meetings are planned, and appealed to Council for continuing assistance. Council discussed how to widen the search for a new Area Chair since the pool of regular meeting attendees has dwindled. CS advised that a recruitment strategy was being discussed by the Volunteer Recommendations Implementation Task & Finish Group.			
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Lakes</b>			
6.3.1	No report submitted, and no Area Representative in attendance.			

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<b>6.4</b>	<b>Yorkshire*</b>			
6.4.1	MG reported that the meeting had co-opted two new volunteers as Climbing Wall Representatives, one for lead climbing (Sam Kett) and one for bouldering (Chris Dennis), as well as a Deputy Gritstone Access Representative, Jessica Grzybowski, to learn the ropes from Mick Johnson before hopefully taking over. It also appointed an Event Co-ordinator to get more local events organised including a 2023 area festival.			
6.4.2	The Area is considering an autumn meeting with a focus on indoor climbing, and MG suggested this could be in conjunction with the North East Area, if a venue in North Yorkshire was chosen for the meeting.			
6.4.3	The Area Representative position vacated by Andy Syme when he became President is still vacant, but TR reported that he had been contacted by a member interested in the role.			
6.4.4	A clean-up at Baildon Bank is being organised for Sunday 6 February.			
<b>6.5</b>	<b>Peak*</b>			
6.5.1	AC reported that January Area Meeting included the 2021 Area AGM, and that in addition to electing SH as Area Representative, a new Area Secretary, Sam Rigby, had been elected. The Area is still looking for someone to take over producing the Area Newsletter.			
6.5.2	On the subject of joining with other Areas, some hill walking days are planned for this year with neighbouring Areas.			
6.5.3	An access issue at Wildcat has arisen following purchase of the land to operate an outdoor activity centre. Negotiations are currently under way, but a solution will be difficult to find due to health & safety/safeguarding issues, and are very delicate. Climbers are asked to stay away in the meantime.			
6.5.4	The Hope Valley Travelling Light project is looking at options for sustainable transport in rural areas. One proposal is for one or more car-free days in the Stanage area in the summer, using shuttle buses from local transport hubs. BMC Access Representatives and the Stanage Forum are pointing out various potential problems with this.			
<b>6.6</b>	<b>Cymru North Wales</b>			
6.6.1	No report submitted, and no Area Representative in attendance.			
<b>6.7</b>	<b>Cymru South Wales*</b>			
6.7.1	SQ reported that the Area had approved two area festival events, in Gower and Pembroke.			

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6.7.2	Two Hill Walking Representatives, Alan Gibbs and James Bowen, were co-opted.			
6.7.3	In 2021, there were several infringements of the agreed climbing restrictions at Range West in Pembroke, and as a consequence, the MoD has decided not to continue with online safety briefings, so anyone wishing to climb on Range West in 2022 will have to attend an in-person safety briefing; dates have been published on the BMC website.			
6.7.4	SQ also mentioned that a climbing segment to be filmed in the Area is likely to feature in an episode of Countryfile in spring.			
<b>6.8</b>	<b>Midlands</b>			
6.8.1	DJ reported that the meeting had been held jointly with the London & South East Area, partly because the Midlands is currently without a Chair, and thanks to the offer of a joint meeting by CS. The meeting had not been particularly well attended by Midlands-based members, and DJ re-iterated his observation that attendance used to be significantly higher when Area Secretaries held their own email contact lists of meeting attendees, prior to the introduction of GDPR and the centralisation of Area communications from BMC office.			
6.8.2	In response to discussion at the meeting of footpath-related access issues, Dave Turnbull (Head of Access) encouraged Area Hill Walking Representatives to engage with the BMC access staff team.			
<b>6.9</b>	<b>London &amp; South East*</b>			
6.9.1	RD commented that the joint meeting with Midlands felt positive, particularly in discussion of shared issues.			
6.9.2	An Area Club Co-ordinator, Will Green, was co-opted.			
6.9.3	Members were informed that a decision was made in consultation with members of Harrison's Rocks Management Group, following feedback given at the last Southern Sandstone Open, that funding would not be applied for to run a Southern Sandstone Festival due to the risk of increasing the traffic to the crag.			
6.9.4	Percy Bishton, Managing Director of The Climbing Works in Sheffield and chief route setter in bouldering at the Tokyo Olympic Games gave a fascinating presentation on his experiences in Tokyo.			
<b>6.10</b>	<b>South West*</b>			

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6.10.1	PW reported that the meeting had approved an Area festival event which will be held on Dartmoor in June.			
6.10.2	Negotiations with National Trust over access to Tintagel are ongoing, and Iain Peters updated the meeting.			
6.10.3	The annual Avon Gorge scrub clearance day will take place on Sunday 20 February, having been cancelled last year due to the COVID pandemic.			
<b>6.11</b>	CS requested that Area Representatives inform Andy Syme of any newly elected or co-opted Area volunteers, so that he can write to them to thank them for volunteering. Additionally, PJ would like to be informed about any new Hill Walking Representatives.			
<b>6.12</b>	CS added that an agenda item about Area support might be a good idea for the next Council meeting.			
<b>7</b>	<b>Constituency Reports</b>			
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Nationally Elected Councillor for Hill Walkers: Rose Gare-Simmons</b>			
7.1.1	Councillor not in attendance (apology noted); no report submitted.			
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Nationally Elected Councillor for Indoor Climbers: Stuart Holmes</b>			
7.2.1	Councillor not in attendance; no report submitted.			
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Nationally Elected Councillor for Mountaineers: Aaron Hodgson</b>			
7.3.1	AH advised that an overview of the Vision Event scheduled for the 12 February Council meeting will go up on Teamwork soon.			
7.3.2	AH also advised that he has now joined the International Committee.			
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Nationally Elected Councillor for Rock Climbers: Steve Clark</b>			
7.4.1	SC reported that there is still more work to do in finalising the Vision Event.			
7.4.2	Council discussed how Areas might be involved in or contribute to Vision Events, including the possibility of open meetings.			
7.4.3	AB advised that the Rock Climbing Vision Event is on the agenda for the 9 February Training, Youth & Walls Committee meeting.			

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<b>7.5</b>	<b>Constituency Councillor for Mountain Training Candidates: Oli Lewis</b>			
7.5.1	Councillor not in attendance (apology noted); no report submitted.			
<b>7.6</b>	<b>Constituency Councillor for Members of Affiliated Clubs</b>			
7.6.1	Role is still vacant.			
<b>8</b>	<b>Board Report*</b>			
<b>8.1</b>	PD advised that he was happy to answer questions on the report submitted to the meeting.			
8.1.1	RD asked how the lifting of COVID restrictions (including working from home guidance) announced by the government on 20 January had affected staff and plans. RD referred to the hybrid working policy which has been developed; this will come into effect on 1 March for an initial trial period of six months, and will be reviewed in August. Plans are also in place to regularly survey staff wellbeing and productivity.			
8.1.2	SC asked about the ambition to grow to 100,000 engaged members stated in the report. PD replied that the target had come out of Board strategy days, and that the goal was to reach this target by the end of 2024. PJ welcomed the focus to connect better with hill walkers.			
8.1.3	In respect of the ambition to attract more indoor climbers as members, MG asked how we might connect with BMC Areas to accelerate this growth. PD replied that it involves a combination of explanation, consultation and funding, ensuring alignment with our clubs, training and safeguarding work, and it is hoped that a draft indoor plan for consultation will be available by the end of March.			
8.1.4	AC observed that there is no particular focus on indoor climbing in the Peak Area, and wondered if other Areas were like the Peak or more like Yorkshire. PD acknowledged that the BMC is relatively invisible to many indoor climbers, but that there is a focus on increasing awareness and engagement.			
8.1.5	RD welcomed the desire for engagement, but expressed the need for the BMC to retain a broad view of its membership, including indoor climbers, hill walkers, club members, etc, and ensure that members' relationship to the BMC is not simply transactional.			
8.1.6	CS mentioned the offer by PD to run a deep dive session on Sport England funding; some Council members have already expressed interest to TR in attending; if anyone else is interested, please email TR or comment on the <a href="#">Teamwork Message</a> on the project set up for the 15 January committee review meeting.			

Item	Topic and Main Aspects Considered	Decision / Action	Who	When
8.1.7	AC asked whether separate CEO / Chair / CND reports would be provided to Council, as indicated by this meeting's agenda, or whether a joint report would be produced for future meetings. PD responded that both methods have their advantages and disadvantages. This report is a combined effort, and takes time, such that it can be out of date when presented. Going forward, a decision needs to be made about single or multiple reports, and the format/content of such report(s) agreed by Board and Council.	<b>Format and content of Board report to be agreed by Board and Council.</b>	<b>CNDs, Paul Davies, Roger Murray</b>	7 April
<b>9</b>	<b>Votes / Agreements</b>			
9.1	No votes or agreements conducted.			
<b>10</b>	<b>AOB</b>			
<b>10.1</b>	<b>Support for Areas</b>			
10.1.1	It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the 12 February meeting.	<b>Add 'Support for Areas' to 12 Feb Council agenda</b>	<b>Andy Syme</b>	<b>ASAP</b>
10.1.2	Issues to be covered will include support for Areas missing key volunteer positions, and joint events with other Areas.			
10.1.3	AC felt that there are two separate issues to discuss: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joint meetings and events, which are excellent for engagement and feeding off other Areas' ideas.</li> <li>2. Support for struggling Areas, which could backfire if it was felt that an attempt was being made to parachute a struggling Area into another. In this case, joint chairing and a shared agenda would be vital elements.</li> </ol>			
10.1.4	The meeting discussed how Areas might share good practice, and how combining Area Meetings might make them more attractive to guest speakers, which in turn could make the meetings more attractive to members.			
10.1.5	PD suggested that the concept of a combined meeting for all Areas, using Zoom, might build a sense of community across Areas and therefore might be worth investigating. He went on to say that (using Zoom) it would be possible to have parts of the meeting for all members together (i.e. for a guest speaker or for information/discussion relevant to all), and then use breakout rooms for Area Meetings or specific issues/topics.			




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10.1.6	RD thought that a broader view needed to be taken about engagement with Areas beyond just Area Meetings. CS advised that the Volunteer Recommendations & Implementation T&F Group is looking at social media training for Area volunteers.			
<b>11</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>			
11.1	Saturday 12 February (9.30am start) – full meeting – on Zoom Tuesday 1 March (7.00pm start) – post-meeting – on Zoom			
11.1.1	Zoom links for above meetings are on the Teamwork Calendar.			

There being no further business, CS closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

**Summary of actions:** See [4<sup>th</sup> Members' Council Outstanding Actions](#) (link only available to Council members)

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
5.1.2	Email Andy Syme if want to stand for the CND role.	All	ASAP
8.1.7	Format and content of Board report to be agreed by Board and Council.	CNDs, Paul Davies, Roger Murray	7 April
10.1.1	Add 'Support for Areas' to 12 Feb Council agenda.	Andy Syme	ASAP

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

Signed  \_\_\_\_\_ Date 17/2/22 \_\_\_\_\_

**Andy Syme, Chair**