

Steve Clark: Candidate for Nationally Elected Councillor for Rock Climbing

Climbing and the BMC are a major part of my life and have become interwoven in my 30+ years involvement, including: club official; guidebook worker (notably BMC Froggatt editor); local area meetings; crag access/maintenance; and competition volunteering. I enjoy most of the 'climbing games' under the BMC remit and hill walk regularly. I climb indoors and compete in veteran competitions. I'm lucky to enjoy climbing (across the UK and overseas) with partners across a range of abilities from well-known high performers, to absolute beginners (and from diverse backgrounds). As my input into the BMC grew I've become increasingly impressed with the organisation, its staff, key volunteers, the vital specialist committee work, and the army of other volunteers. The BMC values of access, conservation and environment are my values and are vital for the future of climbing. The lobbying power of the organisation has never been so important in these times of legislative change.

Having retired I've time to increase my contribution. I'm highly motivated and have the necessary communication, social media and IT skills. I've vast experience as a members' representative: including in BMC work and in my University career (central governance and quality committees) and as a pragmatic academic trade unionist (to National Executive Committee level).

We've just faced 'a year of covid' and the horrible tragedy and ongoing effects on most people's lives. The final BMC impact is large but still unclear: it does include real financial difficulties, larger strains on the environment, and some implications on the way we operate.

The current situation in the BMC has other challenges. Most notably, attacks on the organisation over the last few years have led to what I and many others see as too much membership focus on governance: good governance should facilitate debate on BMC work and values, not dominate discussion itself. Some BMC member's behaviours have been disappointing. More recently there were problems in the BMC Board.

I know the current organisational and political situations in the BMC well, and most people involved, so if elected will waste little time before acting on members' behalf. I will work constructively, to ensure in a period of change that the views of the wider membership are not inadvertently sidelined (under tight finances and other pressures). In particular: that access and conservation work remain the highest priority for climbers; and that volunteer facing BMC staff and specialist committees are vitally important in climbing-related BMC work. Another urgent factor for me is the BMC website is below acceptable usability standards, despite some excellent content. This is unhelpful to members and potential members and one reason I think many remain ignorant of the huge range and import of BMC work, and that they interact organisationally online as little as they do.

I welcome the new Members' Council: it should help better represent the whole membership, and the wider community, including those who struggle to attend or input to area meetings. If elected, I relish the exciting challenge on behalf of BMC rock climbers.