

Sandstone Volunteers Group

January 17th, 2005, 8pm at The Junction pub, Groombridge

Present: Bob Moulton (chair), Martin Brice (secretary), Rob Foster (TWMC), John Galloway, Frank Shannon, Sarah Cullen, Steve Durkin, Tim Skinner, Mike Vetterlein, Rob Mazinke, Graham Adcock, Mike Eden, Brian Mead, Steve Jackson, Anna Gregory (chair of London & South-East area of BMC), Tim Daniels, Oliver Hill, Geoff Pearson, Graham West, Adrian Pasey,

1. Apologies for absence: Guy Keating, Chris Tullis. Tony Boud (East Grinstead chairman), Julian King[B1]. BM thanked AG for coming.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting.** Agreed, no other matters arising.
 - a) Artificial Boulders in Birchden Wood. John Galloway reiterated the proposal he had outlined at the previous meeting. Hartlepool had £130,000 of boulder park built by Rockworks (see the outdoor structures page on www.rockworks.co.uk), which has been a great success. Hindleap Warren had expressed enthusiasm for siting the project. There may be some reservations among local residents about siting it at Birchden Wood – JG to follow up. Frank Shannon agreed to go to a meeting in Brighton to discuss a similar project with a view to reporting back to SVG. BM said the matter had been seen by HRMG as a matter for the SVG and the Forestry Commission. Mike Eden suggested boulderers should be consulted and the project might ease pressure on sandstone. JG agreed to make an attempt to do this.
Action JG
3. **High Rocks**
 - a) Restoration project (Oliver Hill and Graham Adcock) BM said project was going swimmingly. GA mentioned future scrub clearance dates and asked for volunteers. Project had made a lot of progress. OH said felling programme was halfway through. Owner is paying for removal of several damaged large beech trees, and was in fact now funding a significant amount of the total cost and was well disposed towards serious climbers.
 - b) Bolts (TWMC, Rob Foster) RF Progress has been made and a meeting lined up onsite on January 27th with English Nature that could include discussions on the bolts. The original consent had expired and a new one is needed. Chris Tullis has agreed to place the bolts for a modest charge. RF favoured a phased approach. The phased approach was agreed, with phase 2 to include the Isolated Boulder and replacement of the ring above *Advertisement Wall*.
 - c) Entrance charges (Martin Brice) Nothing to report, a watching brief would be kept.
 - d) Situation regarding encroachment of trees on the SSSI would be monitored at High Rocks Continuation. **Action** .OH & BM to check citation
4. **Harrison's Rocks** (Bob Moulton) BMC, Sport England and Forestry Commission are to meet to discuss the question of ownership.
5. **Bulls Hollow** (Graham Adcock) Approval for signs has been obtained, and the BMC would produce the signs – see also 10 below.
6. **Bowles** (Rob Mazinke) Update on discussions, some clearance work has been done by the management, which had invited SVG to conduct some clearance work once it had been agreed. BM had left plans for new BMC sign (see 10 below).
7. **Eridge** (Tim Skinner) Notice was being discussed to go under *Sandstorm*, explaining use of chalk was not allowed on specific routes because it affected the Ph of the rock and the habitat of plants. There could also be one for boulderers, suggestion had been made to drop the numbers of routes from the notices because these will change with a new guidebook.. TD suggested an A4 laminated notice at the top of the climb would be appropriate. GW said something was needed to improve on the existing notices. TS discussed leaflets that might be

produced by the SWT on good practice, long slings, carpet use to protect the rock, reducing use of chalk to a minimum etc. TS said SWT was keen on the leaflet but ideas needed as to what it should say that was specific to Eridge. Meeting agreed to support TS in his initiatives. Brian Mead suggested a total chalk ban at Eridge to see how it worked as it would be easier to enforce on the whole crag rather than on a few routes. This had been discussed at the previous notice when it had been agreed that it would be unrealistic.

8 **Stone Farm**

a) Fence below Inaccessible Pinnacle and replacement of stile below the Rocks. (Bob Moulton/East Grinstead CC). ECCC had been asked and agreed to take it on as a project. A site meeting had been held. Funding was needed, which almost certainly means an application to the Access and Conservation Trust. Meeting noted and applauded EGCC's positive attitude to the project. Various fencing companies to be approached, including Crystala – contact details to be provided to BM to forward to ECGG. **Action various + BM**

b) Woodland Management work (Graham West) ACT would fund the work. GW would be asking for volunteers in February, as Chris Tullis wouldn't be available, for dragging and shifting and watching for walkers on the path nearby. GW said brashing would be used to keep people away from sensitive areas. Adcock's Army to be requested. EGCC to be consulted. SC volunteered Mr Durkin's assistance. GW to give further thought to the numbers required and to fix date. **Action GW**

c) Marking out the Western boundary of land owned by the BMC. (Neil Atkinson). NA not present at meeting but remains committed.

9 **Code of Practice** (Geoff Pearson and Steve Jackson). Final version of the full code was very close. The postcard-sized reminder might take a bit longer – GP said that it was intended to print enough for this to go into the new guide as a bookmark. Distribution was an issue as he wouldn't be able to do much on this: GP to talk to Guy Keating at the BMC and to work out just what would be needed down at this end – a volunteer then to be sought if necessary. **Action GP**

10 **Notices at entrances to the Rocks** (Bob Moulton) Bulls Hollow was sorted, and notices for Bowles, High and Stone Farm were on the way, each adapted for the local crag. English Nature and the relevant owners to be consulted. The BMC would get the notices made up as weatherproof, permanent boards, on lines tried and tested elsewhere by the BMC. **Action BM**

11 **Notices for Boulderers** (Bob Moulton). A small number of permanent A4 notices to be made up using SJ's design for the back of the postcard (see 9 above) to replace the temporary notice that had been put up (and kept falling down) last year in the North Boulder area, and to be used at other bouldering hotspots (inc. Eridge). **Action BM**

12 **Any Other Business.**

a) TD asked about safe access to Isolated at High. BM and others were happy to solo up and down the Ordinary Route – others to do as their (collective) consciences dictated. Meeting agreed to take no action as inserting an approved abseil point would encourage its use.

b) The Sandstone pages on the BMC website were discussed. SJ agreed to take on the role of looking after them from this end (inc. liaising with GK and Alex Messenger) with a view to improving them. BM to brief SJ. **Action BM & SJ**

13 **Date of the Annual Open Meeting.** May 15th. It was agreed that this should take a different form from the SVG meetings, and that climbers would be encouraged to 'have a moan'. It was agreed that we should continue to encourage boulders to attend – **Action TS and RM**, Question of publicity was raised – MB will be away beforehand and will sound out Chris Boylan about helping out.. **Action MB**