



The BMC in your Area

A Guide to Area Meetings

BMC
177-179 Burton Road
Manchester
M20 2BB

18 November 2010

Contents

1. The BMC in your Area

- 1.1 About this document
- 1.2 Geographical definition of BMC Areas
- 1.3 Role & purpose of the Areas
- 1.4 Attendance & voting at Area Meetings
- 1.5 Planning & running Area Meetings
- 1.6 BMC Staff support & attendance
- 1.7 Practical considerations for meetings

2. Area Officers & post holders

- 2.1 The Area Chair
- 2.2 The Area Secretary
- 2.3 Area Representatives on National Council
- 2.4 Access Representatives
- 2.5 Area Youth Co-ordinators (AYC)
- 2.6 Area Representative on the Clubs Committee
- 2.7 Climbing Walls Representative
- 2.8 Election process for Area Officers & Representatives
- 2.9 Expenses

Appendices

- I Sample Agenda
- II Meeting Minutes Template
- III Volunteer Expense Form
- IV Organisational Structure

1. The BMC in your Area

1.1 About this document

This document defines the roles of BMC Area Officers and post holders and provides guidance on how to run your Area smoothly and efficiently. It defines 'who does what' and explains the role of your Area in the BMC's wider decision-making structure. It also provides practical advice on the organisation of Area Meetings and sets out the 'formal' regulations which apply to the Areas as defined in the BMC Articles & Memorandum of Association (M&AA).

1.2 Geographical definition of BMC Areas

The BMC's work in England and Wales is divided into nine 'Areas' as follows:

a. Cymru / Wales

Cymru / Wales is a single entity in the M&AA but an out-reach group Cymru / Wales (South) was established in 2008. Both Cymru / Wales (North) & (South) send representatives to National Council meetings although officially Cymru / Wales continues to have a total of 2 votes (i.e. equivalent to each other BMC Area).

b. Lake District

The Area covers the whole of Cumbria plus some of the crags listed in the Lancashire Climbing Guidebook e.g. Chapel Head and White Scar.

c. North West

This Area includes the whole of Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire including such venues as Frodsham, Helsby and Frogsmouth Quarry.

d. London & South East

This is a very large geographical area which encompasses the whole of south east England and East Anglia. It contains around almost 30% of the BMC's total membership.

e. North East

The North East Area runs from Northumberland, through Tyne and Wear and Durham then into Cleveland. The North Yorks Moors are overseen by this Area.

f. Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Area covers most of West Yorkshire (with the exception of the moorland to the west of Holmfirth and south of the M62), the moors and valleys of North Yorkshire including the Three Peaks area and land surrounding the rivers Aire, Wharfe and Nidd, and all other parts of North Yorkshire stretching as far as the East Coast but excluding the North Yorks Moors.

g. Peak District

The Peak Area focuses on the Peak District National Park but includes many outlying areas extending to the Churnet Valley in the south, Shooters Nab in the north, Hobson Moor Quarry in the west and various outcrops in the Sheffield area.

h. Midlands

The Midlands covers the area extending from the Leicestershire quarries in the east across to Shropshire and Welsh Border crags such as Llanymynech.

j. South West

This is a very large geographic area which covers Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Avon. It also encompasses the Wye Valley including Wintours Leap and Symonds Yat.

1.3 Role & purpose of the Areas

The role of Area Meetings is to facilitate democratic debate between BMC members and reach consensus and decisions on local (and national) issues. Area Meetings are the main forum for members to contribute to discussions about climbing, hill walking and mountaineering issues in their area. To many people they are the 'public face' of the BMC where members wishing to get more involved can express opinions, influence policy and learn about wider aspects of the BMC's work.

The BMC M&AA define the purpose of the Areas as follows:

- *to act as the prime forum in which Members may make their views known and to communicate those views to the National Council.*
- *to report to the Members in that Area the view,s decisions and activities of the National Council, the Executive Committee and the CEO.*
- *to discuss local issues and to liaise with other organisations with an interest in such issues and to represent the policies of the BMC in connection with such issues.*
- *to elect representatives to serve on the National Council.*

Refer to Appendix IV for structure and links between to National Council, Specialist Committees and the BMC Executive.

1.4 Attendance & voting

Any BMC members who are resident in a particular Area (or have applied to be part of a particular Area) can attend Area Meetings; Areas should actively encourage new activists to get involved in the BMC's work. Many Areas run their meetings as 'open meetings' which may be attended by any climber, hill walker or mountaineer at the discretion of the Chair. There is a provision in the M&AA for Areas to hold 'outreach' meetings (e.g. in remote parts of the Area) to discuss local issues. BMC Associate Members may also send a representative to Area Meetings. Voting at the Area AGM is open to all members over 18 years of age. Associate Members and Affiliated Clubs are not entitled to vote although the official representative of each local affiliated club may vote in the election of the Area representative to the Clubs Committee.

1.5 Planning & running Area Meetings

The timing and business of Area Meetings is closely linked with National Council meetings. National Council meets 5 times a year (Feb, April (at the BMC AGM), June, September & December) and the Area Meetings should take place 2-3 weeks prior to the National Council, to allow Areas to discuss National Council agenda items.

As a rule of thumb the following approach to organising Area Meetings is suggested:

- Find a venue (e.g. pub function/meeting room) with a suitable capacity; agree meeting times / dates through discussion at Area Meetings.
- Venue should be free from interruptions and distractions, and accessible to all members.
- Plan on having 4-5 Area Meetings per year.
- Schedule your meetings for 2-3 weeks before the National Council meeting dates.
- Allow c.3 hours (total) per meeting to include 30 mins setup / arrival time, a 1-2 hr meeting and c.15-30 mins for food.
- Arrange food (chips / simple buffet); the BMC will cover reasonable costs.
- Arrange a speaker / presentation when possible e.g. a local club talking about a recent trip, or a luminary talking about their climbing life.

Suggested timeline for Chair & Secretary:

- Once a year: decide on dates, book venue(s).
- 2 months before meeting: identify speaker and advise office if the presence of a specific member of BMC staff (see 1.6 below) is requested.
- 1 month before: re-confirm room booking and determine facilities required (e.g. projector, extension leads). Determine how / when the venue, food and speaker expenses are to be paid.
- 2-3 weeks before: produce agenda, post on the BMC Community Site and publicise the meeting; see Appendix I for a sample agenda.
- Hold meeting.
- Claim back legitimate meeting expenses from the BMC (note: Areas are free to decide precisely how they allocate their annual meeting budget).
- Before National Council: write up brief note of the main points arising and send to the BMC office (Kate Anwyl).
- Within 2 weeks of Area Meeting: write up meeting minutes (note form) and post on Community Site. Refer to the BMC Community Site for examples of Area minutes; see Appendix II for meeting minutes template.

1.6 BMC Staff support & attendance

Support for the BMC Areas is written into the job description of the Volunteers Officer Martin Kocsis. In the first instance any requests or suggestions (e.g. related to training, publicity or budgetary issues) should be raised with the Volunteers Officer who will endeavour to provide assistance.

There is also a commitment from the BMC Office to send a relevant member of staff to all Area Meetings. If a particular Officer (e.g. one of the A&C Officers) is requested to attend a particular meeting the office will endeavour to facilitate this. It should be noted that despite our best efforts, there may be occasions when it is not possible to identify an Officer to attend an Area Meeting.

1.7 Practical considerations for meetings

>Catering & room preparation

If you are providing food at the meeting advise the venue of your budget and aim for a 50/50 meat and vegetarian split. If you are offering entertainment, make sure your speaker has everything they need (laptop, projector, screen, speakers) well in advance. Do not assume that the venue will provide everything. If you are having difficulties please seek support from the office.

>Promotion & publicity

There are several ways in which Area Meetings can be advertised. It is up to the Area officers (Secretary & Chair), with support from the office, to arrange the necessary publicity. Generally speaking – the more vocal and visible you are – the more people will turn up for meetings. To advertise your meeting:

- Post meeting details and agenda on the Community Site - <http://community.thebmc.co.uk>; if you have a particularly hot topic for debate ask the office to run this as a news story on the BMC website.
- The office (Martin Kocsis) will send a meeting notification email to every Individual Member and Club Secretary in your Area 1-2 weeks before the meeting date. This will include a link to the agenda*. If you have any specific information you would like to pass on as part of this email – please advise Martin Kocsis as soon as possible.
- Start a thread on the BMC Areas Forum on UKClimbing.com; upload your meeting details to the UKC Events Diary, selecting the BMC Areas category.
- Make a note of the meeting time / date / venue in your Area Newsletter.
- Again – if you have a hot topic up for debate – consider producing a promotional poster to be put up in local climbing walls.

*It is up to the Area Secretary to produce the agenda – the office can only include the link in the email if the agenda has been posted on the Community Site.

>Financial support

Each Area has an **annual budget of £500.00** to support the cost of meeting room bookings, food and speaker costs.

2. Area Officers & post holders

2.1 The Area Chair

The Area Chair has an extremely important role within the BMC. Together with the Area Secretary it is the Chair who makes the Area 'tick'. He or she will need to work closely with other volunteers in the Area and should liaise with BMC office staff to ensure the Area receives suitable support.

What is expected of the Chair?

The main roles of the Area Chair are to:

- Be an advocate for the BMC. With regard to this it is helpful to develop some understanding of the BMC's specialist work areas, finances and structure.
- Be aware of the BMC procedures and constitutional requirements related to Area Meetings (ref: Articles 40-47 – Area Meetings).
- Be able to represent members' views in a fair and balanced manner at local, regional and national level.
- Ideally have some experience in chairing meetings.
- Keep well informed about Area activities and meeting agendas.
- Be unbiased, impartial and diplomatic; to get the best out of others.
- Be able to 'keep the peace' during times of disagreement or unrest.

Specific responsibilities of the Chair:

- Dealing with Area administration in a timely manner i.e. agreeing agendas, briefing papers, minutes and responding to correspondence.
- Welcoming newcomers to Area Meetings and making any necessary introductions.
- Listening to different points of view and summarising the key aspects of discussions.
- Ensuring that Area Meetings run smoothly; the Chair should be 'fair but firm' – people should be allowed to speak but repetition and time wasting should be minimised.
- Developing consensus and determining when votes are required on agenda items.
- Taking a lead on difficult or contentious issues.
- Ensuring good time-keeping to enable appropriate discussion on all agenda items.

2.2 The Area Secretary

The Secretary is another very important role within the Area. Secretaries should be good communicators who are well organised and reliable.

The main roles of the Secretary are to:

- Arrange the meeting venues in accordance with the agreed schedule.
- Work with the BMC office to publicise and promote Area Meetings.
- Produce agendas (in discussion with the Chair) and post them on the Community Site at least 12 days before the meeting date.
- Arrange the circulation of reports / discussion papers to support agenda items.
- Write Meeting minutes (note form – not detailed) and post them on the Community Site within 14 days of the meeting having taken place; help ensure that meeting action points are followed-up.
- Deal with any necessary administration and correspondence between meetings.

2.3 Area Representatives on National Council

Each BMC Area can appoint two people to serve on the National Council, the BMC's main policy making body. National Council meets five times per year and its voting members are the BMC's Elected Officers (i.e. the President, Vice Presidents and the Treasurer), the CEO and the 18 Area representatives. The BMC's Specialist Committee Chairs (Technical Committee, Training & Youth Committee etc) are Observer members, and there are also several Observer organisations including MLTE, Plas y Brenin and Mountain Rescue (England & Wales). Attendance is typically 20-25 people. The BMC covers travel and accommodation costs and efforts are made to ensure that meeting weekends are a combination of business and pleasure; recent venues include Capel Curig, Malham, Swanage, Croyde, Gower, Hayfield and the Duddon Valley.

Guidance for Areas Reps on National Council:

- The role of the Area Rep is to represent the views of their Area at National Council and to report back to their Area on any relevant decisions or debates at National Council. At times it will be necessary for National Council to make quick decisions on issues, so Area Reps must be prepared to 'think on their feet' and act (including voting) on behalf of their Area.
- Areas Reps should aim to attend as many National Council meetings as possible. Since there are two reps in each area, meeting attendance can be split if necessary. It is important that Areas send at least one rep to National Council.
- If an Area is unable to field a Rep to attend National Council a suitable 'stand-in' may be sent to the meeting instead. This should be discussed and agreed with the Area Chair.
- If having attended a National Council meeting an Area Rep is unable to attend their next Area Meeting, the Area Chair or Secretary should be briefed on any important matters arising.
- Area reps on National Council can serve for no longer than five consecutive years.

2.4 Access Representatives

Voluntary Access Reps are well established within the BMC and they play a vital role in our work with landowners and conservation bodies.

Guidance for Areas:

- It is up to each BMC Area to decide upon how many Access Reps are required and which geographical areas they cover.
- Access Reps are appointed and re-appointed at Area AGMs; there is no time limit for how long an Access Rep may serve. Experience has shown that continuity in this role can be a good thing.
- It is important that Access Reps attend Area Meetings whenever possible; local access issues are the main point of debate at many Area Meetings.

The role of the Access Rep is to:

- Liaise with landowners, conservation bodies, National Park Authorities and others to maintain and improve access for climbers and walkers.
- Work closely with the BMC Access & Conservation staff and members of the Access, Conservation & Environment Group (ACEG).
- Negotiate and review of any seasonal restrictions (e.g. nesting birds).
- Provide information for Summit magazine, the Regional Access Database (RAD) and the wider outdoor media.
- Attend site meetings as appropriate and identify any site information needs (e.g. signage).

2.5 Area Youth Co-ordinators (AYC)

AYCs support and / or co-ordinate the BMC's work with young people across England and Wales.

The role of the AYC is to:

- Organise and support BMC local events for young people (e.g. regional rounds of the Youth Climbing Series).
- Consult with the BMC office on child protection issues and pass on any specific concerns to the responsible BMC officer; be familiar with the BMC Child Protection Policy and attend necessary training courses as specified by the BMC.
- Report to the BMC Area Meeting on youth related activities and events.

The AYC should be an experienced climber, hill walker or mountaineer with experience of working with young people. AYC's are invited to participate in the BMC Training & Youth Committee and are required to complete a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

2.6 Area Representative on the Clubs Committee

The BMC Clubs Committee provides a forum for the discussion of all matters of concern to Affiliated Clubs. Each Area can appoint a representative to Clubs Committee and details of the election process can be found on the BMC website. Area Reps on the Clubs Committee are appointed annually at Area AGMs and all candidates must be a member of and formally proposed by a local club based in that Area.

No person may hold office for more than five consecutive years; in that event a period of at least one year should elapse before they are eligible for re-election.

2.7 Climbing Walls Representative

BMC Areas may choose to appoint a Climbing Wall Rep to liaise with climbing walls and wall users and to refer any relevant issues to the Area. Amongst other things the Walls Rep can take responsibility for ensuring the display of BMC literature at climbing walls.

2.8 Election process for Area Officers & Representatives

Area Chairs, Secretaries and National Council Reps are elected annually at the Area AGM. No person may hold office for more than five consecutive years; in that event a period of at least one year should elapse before they are eligible for re-election. Only BMC members who are resident in that Area (or have chosen to attend a particular Area Meeting) are eligible to stand for official posts.

All other Area post holders and representatives (as shown in 2.4 to 2.7 above) are elected annually at the Area AGM; there is no fixed term of office for these positions.

Where felt appropriate other representatives may be co-opted and where this occurs their co-option should be reviewed annually.

2.9 Expenses

The Area Chair and Area Secretary may claim travel expenses to/from Area Meetings. Area Officers may also claim travel expenses to/from formal meetings with external organisations and individuals. Only the Chair and Secretary may claim expenses to/from Area Meetings. A volunteer expense form is included in Appendix III.

Appendix I Sample Agenda

BMC MIDLANDS AREA MEETING

The Midlands Area Meeting will take place at
7.00pm, Monday 17 November 2011 at the New Inn, Coventry

AGENDA

*If anything to be discussed on this agenda gives rise to a
conflict of interest for anyone, please declare it at the start of the meeting.*

1. Welcome & apologies
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on (date xxx)
3. Matters arising not on the Agenda
4. Discussion of topical item(s)
5. Reports from Area Representatives
 - Access
 - Climbing Walls etc
6. National Council
 - Report from last meeting
 - Matters for the next meeting
7. Any Other Business
8. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

Note:

> Areas may wish to produce agendas using a 'personalised' format in order to increase their appeal.

> Examples of both agendas and minutes can be found on the BMC Community Site.

**Appendix II
Meeting Minutes Template**

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road
Manchester M20 2BB
www.thebmc.co.uk

Tel: 0161 445 6111
Fax: 0161 445 4500
office@thebmc.co.uk

Minutes of Area Meeting

**Date
Venue**

Present:

Name

Position

1. Welcome & Apologies:

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were/were not (amendments noted) accepted as an accurate record.

3. Actions from the previous meeting:

Agenda Item	Actions	Progress
	<i>Completed action log</i>	

4. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

5. Access Updates

6. Updates from other Area Officers

7. National Council Report

8. Any Other Business

9. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

**Appendix III
Volunteer Expense Form**

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

177-179 Burton Road
Manchester M20 2BB

Tel: 0161 445 6111
Fax: 0161 445 4500

BMC VOLUNTEER EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

The BMC relies on the efforts of a large number of volunteers who are willing to put something back into their sport. The BMC is funded by a combination of income from services, grants, and members' subscriptions. Area Officers may claim travel expenses for attendance at certain agreed meetings and events as set out in relevant guidance documents. Where practicable the BMC encourages meetings to be held at accessible and convenient locations where the use of public transport is possible. The BMC also encourages shared use of private vehicles. Where travel to BMC meetings is part of another journey only a relevant percentage should be claimed.

Meeting/Event: _____ **Date:** _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITHIN 1 MONTH OF THE DATE OF THE MEETING / EVENT.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Journey details From: _____ To: _____

Where possible please attach tickets or receipts

- Total Mileage claimed _____
- Fuel allowance @ 15p per mile _____
- Wear allowance @ 7p per mile _____
- Fares _____

Other expenses – These should be as detailed as possible

• **TOTAL CLAIM** £ _____

Name of account to which cheque should be made payable: _____

Signature of claimant: _____ Date: _____

Note: If any expenses include vat, please provide the vat receipts, as this will enable us to claim money back.

Appendix IV Organisational Structure

Committee Structure
Exec: BMC President, 3 x Vice President, Honorary Treasurer, 2 x National Council Reps
National Council: Exec members, 19 x Area Reps, Specialist Committee Chairs & BMC Staff
Finance: President, Honorary Treasurer, CEO, Financial Controller & Accounting Professionals
Specialist Committees: Technical Experts & Professionals
Areas: 8 x English, 2 x Wales; 4-5 meetings per year
Clubs: 238 clubs, totalling 21,702 club members

