



# **BMC Strategic Plan 2015-19**

**Working for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers**

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## **About the BMC**

**Who we are:** The national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales.

**What we do:** Promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities. Through a democratic structure the BMC will:

- Negotiate access improvements and promote cliff and mountain conservation.
- Promote and advise on good practice, facilities, training and equipment.
- Support events and specialist programmes including youth and excellence.
- Provide services and information for members.

**What we want:** To be the organisation that every climber and hill walker wants to join.

*(Note: For the purposes of this document the phrase, '**climbing and hill walking**' is used summarise the wide range of activities undertaken by BMC members).*

## **Contents**

### **1.0 Introduction**

### **2.0 Scope of activities**

### **3.0 Strategic aims & KPIs**

### **4.0 Work Programmes**

- 4.1 Membership, media & communications
- 4.2 Partnerships & national representation
- 4.3 Clubs & areas
- 4.4 Access, conservation & environment
- 4.5 Safety, good practice & personal responsibility
- 4.6 Competitions, talent & the national teams
- 4.7 Diversity, participation & equality
- 4.8 Governance & organisational development
- 4.9 International influence

## **Appendix**

- i. Organisational structure

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the BMC's key strategic work for 2015-19. The BMC was established in 1944 as the National Representative Body for climbers, hill walkers, mountaineers and ski mountaineers in England and Wales. We are also formally recognised by Sport England as the National Governing Body (NGB) for mountaineering activities in England.
- 1.2 On 1 January 2015 BMC had 53250 individual members and 25000 club members in nine defined regions (BMC Areas) across England and Wales; the organisation has 274 affiliated clubs and 31 staff (7 of whom are part-time). The BMC's formal remit, structure and operating procedures are set out in our Memorandum & Articles of Association available at [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk). The BMC is a Company Limited by Guarantee.
- 1.3 The BMC is managed by a combination of the Executive Committee (the Board of Directors), National Council, the Finance Committee and senior staff. The Executive has overall responsibility for the strategic direction and operational management. National Council, which is made up of representatives from the BMC Areas, provides a forum for discussing topical issues and is the BMC's main policy making body. The Finance Committee supports the CEO and Financial Controller and advises the Executive on financial matters. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of the BMC office.
- 1.4 The BMC relies on a well-established structure of voluntary Specialist Committees, supported by staff, to develop and oversee much of our technical work for members. The BMC Areas provide a focus for local activities and are instrumental in driving national policy.
- 1.5 Our work covers a diverse range of activities making us relatively complex for our size. The BMC is an unusual mix of a representative body, a sports NGB, a membership and media organisation, an environmental and campaigning body, and a commercial and trading entity. Membership subscriptions provide 60.6% of the BMC annual income whilst commercial/trading activities and Sport England grants each provide 19.7% of annual income (figures from 1 January 2015).
- 1.6 The BMC Membership Survey gives an indication of the split of members in terms of the activities they participate in; the headline figures are as follows:
  - 74.2% of members go rock climbing (outdoors).
  - 72.3% go indoor climbing.
  - 61.7% listed hill walking as their 'primary' (i.e. most frequent) activity.
  - 49.5% go alpine mountaineering.
  - 16.3% go ski mountaineering.
  - 12.5% go hill walking only.
- 1.7 The delivery of the mountain leader training awards in the UK is the responsibility of the MTUK and the home nation Mountain Training boards. The BMC and MTE jointly employ a Training Officer and the BMC is a Director of both Mountain Training England (MTE) and the Mountain Training Trust (MTT) which is responsible for the operation of Plas y Brenin. The detailed strategic plans for mountain training fall out with the scope of this document.

## 2.0 Scope of activities

Whilst the BMC was originally established as the national organisation for 'mountaineers', today we cover a very wide spectrum of climbing and mountain based activities. Many people participate in multiple activities, but an increasing number are tending to specialise in particular activities such as bouldering or indoor climbing.

Breakdown of mountaineering activities undertaken by BMC members:

- **Hill & mountain walking:** all forms of summer and winter upland walking and trekking worldwide.
- **Rock climbing & scrambling:** all forms of roped or solo climbing on natural rock faces, sea cliffs, ridges and quarries (includes dry tooling).
- **Bouldering:** unroped climbing on short, often steep and technical crags and isolated blocks of rock.
- **Climbing walls:** roped climbing, bouldering on artificial walls.
- **Winter climbing & mountaineering:** climbing snow and ice covered faces, ridges and gullies e.g. Scotland, Snowdonia and the Lake District.
- **Ice climbing:** climbing icefalls and waterfall ice in Europe and worldwide.
- **Alpine mountaineering:** climbing snow, ice and rock faces, ridges and summits in an alpine environment e.g. the European Alps.
- **Mountaineering in the Greater Ranges:** e.g. in the Himalaya, Central Asia, South America, Greenland, Alaska and elsewhere.
- **Ski mountaineering:** combination of mountaineering and skiing usually in an alpine setting.
- **Competitions:** bouldering, lead, speed and para climbing, ice climbing and ski mountaineering.

## 3.0 Strategic aims & KPIs

### 3.1 Strategic aims

Our key strategic aims for 2015-19 focus on hill walking, young people and membership development as follows:

- **Aim 1 - Hill walking:** to extend our work for hill walkers, so that the BMC becomes the natural home for new and existing hill walkers. Since 2013 hill walking has been integrated to a much greater extent into the BMC's work, most notably in communications, campaigns and public engagement, but more thoroughgoing changes are needed for these efforts to have long term sustainability. A draft hill walking strategy was produced in 2014 and will be implemented by the Hill Walking Working Group (HWWG) from 2015-17. The overall objectives of the HWWG are to:
  - a. Make the BMC, 'the natural home for hill walkers'.
  - b. Meet the needs of existing hill walking members and reach out to prospective new members by creating an active, supportive and welcoming community atmosphere within the BMC.
  - c. Position the BMC as a leading authority on hill walking issues; to promote the benefits of hill walking and reach out to a range of groups and communities through education, involvement, support and leadership.
- **Aim 2 - Younger people:** to connect with people in the 14-25 age band through social media, BMC TV, local and national activities; to help them develop their interest in climbing and hill walking by providing quality information, advice and opportunities to participate. Specifically we will focus on:
  - a. Media: We will continually improve and extent our media presence. On average one new film per day appears on BMC TV with content ranging from inspirational to educational. Young people like online video and BMC TV provides a very effective communication medium. Facebook and twitter provide the mechanism for directing young people to our online content.
  - b. Clubs & training courses: Our Regional Development Officers (RDOs) will continue to promote indoor to outdoor courses at Plas y Brenin and in partnership with climbing walls. We will also support University Clubs in managing new members and assist 'senior' clubs in attracting younger people.
  - c. Engagement: We will work with County Sports Partnerships (CSPs), to improve the availability of pathways into climbing and hill walking. A recent example is the BMC acting as a broker between Mountain Training, a Sheffield climbing wall and South Yorkshire Sport (a CSP) to provide outdoor training for school teachers with large BME intakes.
  - d. Competitions: BMC competitions grow in popularity year-on-year, and are delivered alongside our talent development initiatives comprising the regional and national academies. Children attending the academies will be coached in skills which are transferable to other (i.e. outdoor) climbing styles.
  - e. Events: We will continue to offer and extend our events series for young people. Events such as our BMC winter & alpine lectures and student

seminar have stood the test of time, the latter entering its 20th year in 2014. Being commonly hosted by university clubs, the lectures also have a high proportion of young people attending.

- **Aim 3 - Membership:** to grow our total membership by at least 2.75% per year with a focus on hill walkers and young people. Club membership to grow by 2% per year, individual membership by 3% per year.

### 3.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

	1 Jan 2015	1 Jan 2016: targets
<b>BMC Membership</b>		
Individual	53,225	+3%
Club	24,991	+2%
Total	78,216	+2.75%
<b>BMC Media</b>		
Unique web visitors	175,748	+5%
Facebook	60,200	+20%
Twitter	21,500	+15%
<b>Insurance sales (annual total)</b>	14,496	+10%
<b>Area meetings: Ave. attendance</b>	29.5	+10%

## **4.0 Work programmes**

The BMC's work spans an unusually broad range of issues and activities; this is broken down into nine overall work areas as shown below. In every membership survey conducted over the past 20 years our access, conservation and environmental work is listed by BMC members as our most important function.

### **4.1 Membership, media & communications**

To meet the needs of new, existing and prospective members, we will communicate a wide range of topical information both online and in print, and implement an ongoing programme of administrative improvements to our individual and club membership processes.

We will:

- Work towards single sign-on for all BMC web services and provide enhanced benefits and a personalised web experience for all BMC members; to develop new revenue streams including commercial, partnership, sponsorship and specific appeals to members and interested parties.
- Develop the BMC website as an authoritative and engaging source of online news, for promoting our messages, content marketing, SEO ranking and social sharing; recognise and exploit trends in web browsing and usage, and evolve our web strategy accordingly.
- Increase and extend our use of social media as a mechanism for engaging with the community, communicating our messages and driving traffic to our websites; continue to develop and promote BMC TV.
- Use targeted online advertising to reach specific segments of the community; develop Summit magazine, and promote it as a valuable membership benefit to climbers and hill walkers.
- Undertake regular reviews of the security of our website and database systems to ensure that all data is both safe and secure, and that member confidentiality is maintained.
- Provide the best possible mountaineering insurance and constantly develop our offer using Lloyd's underwriter ProSight; provide personalised membership and insurance confirmation and cards by email.
- Introduce an electronic renewal process via our membership database and improve our contact with expired members; introduce an automatic text message confirmation of BMC membership; replace postal communications with electronic communications at every opportunity.
- Achieve a balance of service, attention, representation and leadership for climbing and hill walking and take positive initiatives to recruit and retain new members, particularly hill walkers.
- Improve the style, format and graphics of BMC email communications with members (e.g. email newsletter and personalised membership letters); expand the range of services offered to members – particularly retail incentives and discounts. Produce and promote definitive guidebooks.



- Improve membership retention rates, reactivate lapsed members, promote direct debit membership and save on administrative costs. Promote Council membership as a pre-requisite for people registering for mountain training awards.

## **4.2 Partnerships & national representation**

A core function of BMC is to actively represent the interests of climbers and hill walkers at a local, national and international level. This is conducted by actively engaging with relevant Government, public and landowning organisations, as well as our partners in mountain training, other mountaineering councils, and trade organisations including the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) and the Outdoor Industries Association (OIA).

We will:

- Work with central Government, relevant government departments and agencies and conservation bodies to promote a better understanding of climbing and hill walking and spell out the social, economic and health benefits of our activities.
- Further our influence and leadership in climbing and hill walking through involvement, partnerships, lobbying, debate leading, publicity, communication and connection to the wider outdoor recreation sector.
- Establish a new relationship understanding with Sport England and explore potential new relationships with other Government bodies and agencies including the Departments of Health and Tourism.
- Campaign against developments, legislation, opinion and perceptions that could have an adverse impact on the freedoms of climbers and hill walkers to enjoy their activities.
- Promote the history and traditional values of British climbing and mountaineering amongst new and existing participants, external organisations and the media.
- Work with our key partners in mountain training and the outdoor trade to promote our interests and the interests of climbers and hill walkers in the media.

## **4.3 Clubs & areas**

Clubs and local activism are the foundation of much of the BMC's work for climbers and hill walkers. Supporting affiliated clubs and the Area Meeting structure is a fundamental aspect of the BMC's work.

We will:

- Review and improve our club membership renewal process in order to minimise the administration burden on club officials; provide reliable and efficient telephone and email support for clubs and volunteers via the BMC Membership Services Team and the Officer staff.
- Provide guidance and support on the technical and legal aspects of running clubs to include: child protection, mountain huts, equality, leadership, liability, legal status of clubs and insurance. Provide staff support to the Clubs Committee and constantly review and improve our services to clubs.

- Run an annual clubs seminar and a 2 day safety seminar for student clubs; provide training for club officials on issues such as dealing with novices in clubs, young people, pooled equipment and legal matters.
- Produce technical guidance on hut management issues and promote the use of club huts; provide access to BMC huts for members (Glenbrittle, Alex MacIntyre and the Whillans Hut). To support and assist clubs with the acquisition and maintenance of huts'
- Support affiliated clubs in the production and promotion of definitive climbing guidebooks.
- Promote club membership and area based activities in Summit magazine, the BMC website and social media; actively encourage climbers and hill walkers to join clubs; support clubs in recruiting new members.
- Provide administrative and management support for area based initiatives and events; actively support and publicise voluntary activities and recognise exceptional effort.
- Provide administrative support local volunteers and use BMC media to promote Area Meetings; send a relevant staff member to Area Meetings. Offer training courses for volunteers on 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, Health & Safety, the handling and use of equipment, child protection and other topical issues.
- Provide administrative, promotional and financial support to BMC-approved local climbing and walking festivals.

#### **4.4 Access, conservation & environment**

We will build on our long term work negotiating access improvements and promoting good environmental practice in climbing and hill walking and will raise the BMC's profile as a responsible and well-informed body amongst Government departments and national organisations. The work will be carried out by regional volunteers, staff and technical experts on our Access Management Group (AMG), Land Management Group (LMG) and specialist working groups.

We will:

- Campaign within the legislative frameworks of England and Wales for the delivery and management of access under the CROW Act, the MCAA Act and other relevant legislation. Work with the Mountaineering APPG, Defra, Natural England, the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to ensure recreational access is reflected in legislation, policy and its implementation.
- Campaign against policies, legislation and developments that could negatively impact the upland landscape, or threaten our rights to visit and enjoy the cliff and mountain environment.
- Run specialist working groups on: nature conservation and climbing, climate change & sustainability, group use and challenge events. Establish a policy group to contribute to our responses to public consultation documents, draft policy guidance and legislation.
- Maintain and develop the Regional Access Database (RAD) on the BMC website as the definitive source of climbing access information.

- Develop and promote the BMC Access & Conservation Trust in order to fund environmental and landscape projects promoting sustainable access to cliffs, mountains and open countryside across the UK.
- Promote the landscape and amenity value of our crags and mountains and work with landowners to manage habitats in a way that benefits both climbers and wildlife. Promote respect amongst climbers for agreed restrictions to protect conservation interests, in particular nesting birds.
- Raise awareness among new climbers and hill walkers about the special qualities and conservation value of our cliffs and mountains. Produce publications and online resources to inform people about sensitive habitats and species and broader environmental considerations.
- Actively manage BMC owned crags\* and make them freely accessible to climbers, hill walkers and the general public; manage our sites in an environmentally responsible manner and share good practice with landowners, conservation bodies and quarry companies.

\*Aldery Cliff, Horseshoe Quarry, Harrison's and Stone Farm Rocks, Wilton 1, Craig y Longridge and Craig Bwlch y Moch (Tremadog).

#### **4.5 Safety, good practice & personal responsibility**

An important aspect of the BMC's work is to promote good practice and the acceptance of risk amongst climbers and hill walkers. The BMC participation statement reads:

*'The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.'*

Encouraging participants to accept these risks carries a responsibility for us to provide appropriate technical advice, education and training to enable people to improve their skills and make informed judgements about their chosen activities.

We will:

- Promote our participation statement and the acceptance of risk to new and existing members in outdoor media, indoor climbing walls and other relevant outlets.
- Expand our package of educational and inspirational training events (lecture series, courses and seminars) and publications under the guidance of the Training & Youth Committee.
- Provide opportunities to young people and hill walkers to encourage the development of skills. Promote training in rock, and hill skills at Plas y Brenin and other strategic locations across England and Wales.
- Provide direct training and practical support for clubs, mountain training organisations, BMC regional groups and individuals on technical and equipment issues.

- Improve the quality and manufacture of mountaineering equipment, and equipment standards by investigating equipment failures and contributing to the development of UIAA / EN standards.
- When possible, support the replacement of obsolete fixed equipment across England and Wales via the BMC Better Bolts Campaign; monitor fixed equipment, provide technical guidance and run training events for volunteers.

#### **4.6 Competitions, talent & the national teams**

The BMC administers an annual programme of national and international climbing competitions and manages the day-to-day operation of the GB climbing, para climbing and ski mountaineering teams.

We will:

- Run an annual calendar of national competitions including the British Lead & Speed Climbing Championships (BLCC & BSCC), the British Bouldering Championships (BBC), the BMC Youth Climbing Series (YCS) and National Final and the Junior Lead & Boulder Cups (BJLC & BJLC).
- Support the administration and organisation of IFSC international competitions such as the European Youth Championships and the Para Climbing Cup.
- Promote competition climbing in the media and work with the IFSC, politicians, Sport England and UK Sport to promote the case for competition climbing as an Olympic sport.
- Provide administrative and financial support for the GB Climbing Teams (bouldering and lead climbing), the GB Ice Climbing Team (lead and speed) and UK representatives at international speed climbing events.
- Deliver regional and national talent development academies for talented young climbers and bespoke training days for the coaches working with these young people; develop and deliver a program of coach education workshops for coaches.

#### **4.7 Diversity, participation & equal opportunities**

The BMC actively promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of our work and services. The BMC Equity Steering Group oversees this work and ensures we achieve relevant national equality standards as required by Sport England. This area of work seeks to remove the barriers to participation and actively promote participation amongst BME communities and women.

We will:

- Investigate barriers to participation amongst under-represented groups and put in place measures to help breakdown any barriers. Run BME engagement events to promote greater participation.
- Reach black and minority ethnic people, women and girls, the young and the old, and those with disabilities with information about climbing and hill walking, using positive imagery and role models.
- Organise an annual BME Symposium and a biennial Disability Symposium; ensure all BMC staff receive appropriate training in equity issues.

- Actively support improved participation amongst women, initially by promoting the Sport England This Girl Can media campaign.

#### **4.8 International influence**

British mountaineers are highly respected in world mountaineering circles and our representatives play an active role in many UIAA and IFSC Commissions and Working Groups. The BMC International Committee supports this work and is also responsible for allocating expedition grants.

We will:

- Promote the overseas interests of British mountaineers by working with UIAA and IFSC on youth development, mountain medicine, major events, mountaineering ethics and the development of appropriate mountain training and equipment standards.
- Run an annual International Meet to showcase British climbing and mountaineering amongst overseas federations; take part in and / or promote exchange visits with other countries.
- Provide grant support for international climbing and mountaineering expeditions with a focus on younger people.
- Promote the UK as a climbing and hill walking destination amongst overseas participants; promote the UK's unique climbing ethics.

#### **4.9 Organisational development & improvement**

The BMC Executive Committee and the CEO will oversee a process of ongoing development and improvement within the organisation.

We will:

- Work with the Sport & Recreation Alliance to fulfil the voluntary code of good governance, and with Sport England to improve and strengthen the BMC's governance.
- Support BMC volunteers and actively recruit new volunteers (with a focus on women and younger people) for BMC specialist committees and work programmes as necessary.
- Undertake an ongoing review of our internal management regulations and our administrative policies and procedures related to finance, legal compliance (travel insurance), personnel and other relevant matters.
- Develop a new marketing & communications strategy to improve our work and services for existing members and encourage new and younger people to join the organisation.
- Undertake regular reviews of the security of our website and database systems to ensure that all data is both safe and secure, and that member confidentiality is maintained.

- Work to increase the numbers of women and other groups who are currently under-represented within the BMC's voluntary structure and Specialist Committees.
- Offer professional and technical training to staff in order to improve their performance, capability and motivation to carry out their jobs.

## Appendix i – BMC organisational structure (Jan 2015)



