

Les Ainsworth: Personal Statement

I am standing for BMC President because of my concern that the polarising affects of the organisational change process could lead to the loss of many good, long-standing members, whichever way the vote goes. Although many members may see these organisational changes as peripheral to their personal climbing and mountaineering interests, the organisational structure that we adopt will impact the full range of the BMC's activities. Whilst I fully accept that members hold passionate views on both sides of this issue, I am saddened that debate has become to some extent characterised by claims of '*steam rolling*', '*misinformation*', '*withheld information*', '*overinterpretation of subjective data*' and '*deliberate bias*'. This has all led to a degree of mistrust and so a lot of bridge building will be needed to unify the BMC whatever the outcome of the vote.



Comici Route: Tre Cime

If I am elected President it will be after the vote on the new Articles. I would then have two main aims, first to implement the position agreed at the vote in a way that will bring together all members behind new arrangements and second, to ensure that the programme for dealing with any further organisational changes, including up to 41 other ORG recommendations, will not be as disrupting. All members must be able to give their views on the remaining organisational issues based upon comprehensive and unbiased information, with the future health of the BMC as our primary goal. As a professional psychologist, I fully recognize the risks of decision-making based upon biased surveys with leading questions and so we must not shortcut this process. This change process will also require some changes to the National Council's discussion and decision-making to ensure that the members' voices are properly heard. Thus, if elected, my overarching goal up to the 2019 AGM will be to develop an organisational structure for the BMC centred on its role as a representative body that gives members an effective voice in the development of climbing policy, even if this involves responding to the members' demands by proposing some further, limited amendments to the Articles.

One of the recommendations of the ORG was to consider the establishment of a subsidiary body for governing, managing and supporting elite competition climbers at a national and international level. I also believe that as the BMC is already the *de facto* governing body for competition climbing in the UK we should, in collaboration with representatives from the other home nations, propose a separate governance structure for such a body.

Recent discussions with members and ex-members who are still climbing, suggest to me that many of them consider that issues such as the rebranding/renaming and the subsequent organisational review have diverted the BMC too far from its core concerns. Whilst I accept that these issues have of necessity used vast proportions of the BMC's resources, I feel that it is now necessary to devote more effort to those issues that are of primary importance to our members. Therefore, I propose developing policies to:

- ❑ Reduce reliance on grant funding, by making the BMC more attractive to ex-members and also to other climbers who have never joined the BMC. We must also engage more with indoor climbers, they are the next generation of outdoor climbers.

- Encourage all climbers and hill walkers to actively improve the crags and high places that we visit by developing local programmes of path renewal and crag cleaning. Also by supporting the rural communities that we visit.
- Investigate the potential for developing a scheme to make it easier for climbers to visit other climbing walls.
- Undertake a ground-up review of the management and coordination of competition activities at both local and national level, including the training and management of potential talent for elite competition climbing. Then take action to resolve any issues identified.
- Support the implementation of improved personnel management and career development practices for our permanent staff, very much in line with proposals on this made by the ORG.

CV

Professionally:

- Degrees in industrial psychology.
- Consultant in human factors and human reliability in high risk industries.
- Founder and MD of Synergy Consultants Ltd since 1992.

General BMC:

- 1977: First Secretary of Lancs Area of BMC.
- 2006: Honorary member.
- 2010: National Torch Award for voluntary service to British climbing.
- 2018: Co-opted onto Implementation Group for Phase 2 of organisational review.

Guidebooks/Publications:

- 1966: Persuaded BMC to publish first guidebook to rock climbing in Lancs.
- 1967: Co-editor of Rocksport, the first wholly rock-climbing magazine for Britain.
- 1969: Co-editor of first Lancashire guidebook (published by Rocksport).
- 1975: Produced software to convert word processor files into typeset output for guidebooks, used in CC, FRCC and BMC Guidebooks eight years before desktop publishing started.
- Involved with all but one of the Lancs guidebooks and supplements, including the latest, published in 2017.
- Currently contributing to a Wired guidebook.
- Previously on the Guidebook Committees of the CC, FRCC and now the BMC.

Access and Land Management:

- Access rep for the North West for approximately 25 years.
- On Wilton Management Group.

Climbing/Mountain Interests:

- Active rock-climber, wall climber, alpine climber, mountain walker, ferrata climber and skier. Given up on fell running (or it has given up on me!).
- No direct involvement with competition climbing, bouldering or big mountain expeditions. However, I feel that we are a broad church and so I try to support all aspects of '*climbing*' that affect UK climbers.

Les Ainsworth