

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE BMC MEMBERS' COUNCIL: Issue 1 (December 2021)

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Purpose

1. This Code of Practice provides Councillors with a set of ethical standards, basic guidelines & general expectations concerning their work. It should be read in conjunction with:
 - i. the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the [Board of Directors](#) and the [Members' Council](#) of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC); and
 - ii. relevant BMC policies and management regulations, which cover normal working practices at the BMC and apply to all staff & volunteers [Ref. 1]

Guiding Principles

2. The purpose of the Members' Council ("the Council") is to act as a representative body of the BMC Members and to consult with the Board, constructively challenge the Board, and to hold the Board to account on the BMC Members' behalf as applicable [Articles 18 & 19 of Ref. 2].
3. The Council recognises the commitment made by its Councillors. It seeks to build a relationship founded on the values (Community, Sustainability, Adventure, Aspiration, Respect) of the BMC, creating opportunities for Councillors to apply and develop their diverse knowledge, skills & experience. In return, Councillors should uphold and be an exemplar for BMC values and the standards in this Code, and conduct themselves in a manner that is above reproach.
4. The BMC is a member-led organisation, requiring a high level of engagement between the 'organisation' and its members, staff and volunteers. Accordingly, Councillors need to conduct themselves in a manner that includes corresponding consideration of staff, Directors and the Members.

Standards

5. The ethical standards expected of Councillors are based on the Nolan principles:
 - a. Act solely in terms of the interests of mountaineers [BMC Article 4.1.1 in Ref. 2].
 - b. Act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. This should be done in an open and transparent manner.
 - i. Information should not be withheld from BMC Members unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing, whilst respecting the need for confidentiality when given access to privileged information (which includes but is not limited to Board papers and matters of a personal nature).
 - ii. Provide information to other Councillors in a timely manner thereby enabling consultation and reflection in order to contribute effectively at meetings of Members' Council.
 - c. Act with integrity by behaving in an honourable and truthful manner. This includes:
 - i. acting with personal honesty, and recognising the same in other Councillors,
 - ii. recognising and admitting to errors, and
 - iii. having the strength to contradict other Councillors in a positive manner.
 - d. Disclose conflicts of interest in the *Register of Interests Form* and at the start of each meeting, in accordance with the Conflicts of Interest Policy [Ref. 3].
 - i. A conflict of interest may occur when your interests or activities affect your ability to make objective decisions for the BMC. For example: financial gain or benefit (including accepting gifts & hospitality), whether direct or indirect, that might influence or appear to influence your judgement; conflicting loyalties, such as affiliations with competitors, customers or suppliers; working with close relatives; having an intimate relationship with another member of the BMC who can influence your decisions; serving as a board member of another organisation.

- ii. Personal interests do not necessarily preclude anyone from volunteering, but it is important that such interests are declared to and understood by the BMC.
 - e. Be held accountable to BMC members for their decisions and actions.
 - f. Demonstrate, actively promote and robustly support these principles and be willing to challenge poor examples wherever they occur.
6. Each Councillor should accept personal responsibility for the success of the Council through: team work and collaborative decision making, regular attendance at meetings, discharge of duties in-between meetings, acting in accordance with standards to promote effective & productive meetings [Ref. 4], and the Councillors' role description [Ref. 5].
7. Councillors should be cognisant that when communicating in public, including on social media, personal statements may be perceived as representing the BMC. Communications must be conducted with due care, preferably consulting with other Councillors and relevant specialist staff members where practicable. Discussions with the press should be limited to those Councillors who have appropriate media training.

References

1. BMC Management Regulations (see: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-management-regulations>).
2. [Articles of Association](#) of the British Mountaineering Council, dated 15 May 2021.
3. Conflicts of Interest Policy (C19) as set down in the [BMC Management Regulations](#).
4. Standards for Meetings (C2, updated June 2006) as set down in the [BMC Management Regulations](#).
5. [Role descriptions](#) for Councillors.