

## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### Board of Directors

Redacted minutes of the Board meeting held by way of GoToMeeting on Monday 30 March  
2020 at 7.00pm

Directors Present:	Gareth Pierce (GP)	Chair
	Matthew Bradbury (MB)	Senior Independent Director
	Paul Drew (PD)	Independent Director
	Jonny Dry (JD)	Nominated Director (Fundraising)
	Huw Jones (HJ)	Nominated Director (Finance)
	Amanda Parshall (AP)	Independent Director
	Jon Punshon (JP)	Council Nominated Director (CND)
	Lynn Robinson (LR)	President
	Fiona Sanders (FS)	CND
	Chris Stone (CS)	CND
	Dave Turnbull (DT)	CEO
	Jonathan White (JW)	Nominated Director (Clubs)
In attendance:	Lucy Valerio (LV)	Company Secretary
	Alan Brown (AB)**	Financial Controller
	Kate Anwyl (KA)***	HR & Office Manager

\* denotes supporting paper(s) circulated prior to meeting

\*\* from minute 5.2

\*\*\* from minute 6.1

### Actions

#### 1. Welcome, apologies & declaration of interests

GP welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted there were no apologies.

#### 2. CND Appointments

GP reported that at the National Council (the Council) meeting held on Saturday 28 March by way of GoToWebinar, CS and JP had been appointed CNDs and they were both on the call. He welcomed them and stated that the Board were looking forward to working with them.

#### 3. Conflicts of Interest

MB declared a conflict of interest in respect of matters to do with access and conservation because of his position with the BMC Access & Conservation Trust (ACT).

LV and DT declared a conflict of interest in respect of matters to do with staff.

A general interest was declared in relation to various clubs.

#### 4. Note matters covered at previous meeting (26.03.20)\*

##### 4.1 GP asked FS to say a few words about one of CS's proposed roles moving forward.

FS said that CS had supported her in relation to the videos posted on the website about the ODG work. Video production etc. are very much CS's field and so she felt he would be well placed to take the lead in respect of the membership engagement aspect of the Board's work. This would include how

the BMC engages with its members, Area meetings etc. and she added that he is well placed to liaise with all parties involved now that he's a CND.

GP asked if everyone was happy with this proposal. The Board agreed CS would take the lead re membership engagement.

**Agreed**

- 4.2 GP then turned to the roadmap agenda, which set out the key actions from the meeting of 26 March 2020 at section 4. He had put to Council the two items (in bold) on which support was sought and reported that the Council supported the idea of a virtual AGM, and also that Summit's next edition be produced digitally only, but with the caveat that the possibility of a print edition for those unable to access the technology be looked into.

He noted there was a further note in bold, which was about Mountain Heritage Trust (MHT), as JD had since spoken with GP to confirm that the MHT employee was able to work from home.

JD reported that he was due to speak to Terry Tasker on 31 March, so he would raise points with her then and report back to the Board at their meeting on 1 April.

The Board agreed JD should raise the issue of furloughing in his conversation with Terry.

**Agreed  
Action:  
JD**

- 4.3 GP asked if there were any other questions in respect of matters from the previous meeting. There were no further questions.

## **5 Further consideration of financial situation**

- 5.1 GP referred to the updated figures, which had been added to Teamwork. He said that the membership attrition rate was an unknown at present, but a mitigating factor could be using staff to run a campaign about why BMC membership would be something worth keeping during these unprecedented times. He said that the potential £80k - £250k deficit noted depended on the attrition rate, and on the extent to which savings can be achieved.

PD asked about the travel insurance and if the assumption is that there will be no income, and what the thinking was behind the membership figures. GP confirmed the assumption re travel insurance is that no income will be received, and that it is anticipated those who join the BMC purely for the travel insurance, or for Mountain Training purposes, will be lost.

JW highlighted that there was a chunk missing from the updated figures as he understood that the BMC typically loses 6,000 – 8,000 members per annum, but these are replaced over the course of a year, therefore 6,000 – 8,000 new members are needed each year just to stay still. The fact that these new members may not now happen needs to be added to these figures, especially because if e.g. 7,000 members are lost and not replaced this equates to roughly £200k in lost income, so £250k worse than the income figures currently stated.

- 5.2 *NB AB joined the meeting*

GP noted that the savings that can be made are vital. JD asked if there are further savings to be made from events that are no longer being held.

AB said there are potentially further savings to be made, the figures produced are very much a working document. Some event savings are included in the £66k figure of marketing savings. The figures are at present headline figures only, more detailed figures will be worked on.

The meeting then discussed the churn of members noted by JW above and the figures provided generally, it was noted:

- the potential loss of income re the churn should be added to the figures, at present the figures show an £80k loss, it needs to be a figure of about £320k
- Blue membership is new income, it is not part of the 'usual' income
- the figures show a potential loss of 7% of members by way of a £178k loss of income, this figure should be higher
- a better idea of attrition rates should be available from 1 April as that is when April renewals will start
- income from clubs is possibly relatively secure
- general agreement that as members begin to feel the pinch they will cancel membership fees as they are an easy saving for them to make
- a drop off curve should be modelled using various different scenarios e.g. 5%, 10%, 20% loss of members
- a set of scenarios also needs to be modelled including conservative and worst case
- potential savings need to be quantified in more detail, so that the Board knows which buttons need to be pushed with the tools they have to hand as different scenarios arise
- information that Alex Messenger has in respect of attrition rates needs to be used as part of the modelling
- ideally figures need to be provided for the meeting on 1 April (Wednesday)
- the £ signs should be removed from the loss of membership figures, percentages should be used in the first instance – then monetary value can be attached
- there is more work to do on possible savings.

**Action:**  
**AB, DT, HJ**

- 5.3 AB noted that the largest saving that could be made was furloughing of staff. JD asked about Sport England funding. DT said he felt they will be very supportive, and they are currently working on a support plan, but there are no details available yet. He added that Sport England staff cannot be furloughed, although they can be redeployed to other areas within the BMC.

The meeting then discussed the issue of furloughing staff, the main points being:

- JW said that staff can always be unfurloughed if needed; HJ added that only if there is sufficient income to pay them.
- staff that are likely to have no work to do because of the lockdown need to be identified
- greater details and understanding of the furloughing scheme is needed as the BMC needs to take care that the use made of the scheme is appropriate within the government guidelines.

*NB See minute 6 below in which furloughing is discussed in greater detail*

- 5.4 GP then asked about possible mitigating factors in the context of seeking to reduce membership attritions and whether it was worth pursuing the message of loyalty to the BMC. PD said yes, one of the other companies he is a director of has convinced some members to keep paying their direct debits. LR said that CS could help with this as part of his work re membership engagement. FS agreed it was something to be looked at – but using internal resources only so that there is no financial outlay.

JW added that this idea of sticking with the BMC is already underway in respect of clubs - on the basis 'stick by us and we'll stick by you'. DT added that feedback from Arun was that there had been no negativity from clubs in respect of renewing membership. JW said that there had however, been four requests from clubs to pay reduced fees. The clubs involved were not offered reduced

fees.

- 5.5 GP said there were two other points on his roadmap in relation to finances: partial refunds of membership fees; and consideration of financial assistance for clubs. He suggested that these should be parked as further information was needed in respect of both points.

JW noted that there is other support the BMC can give to clubs, not just financial support e.g. directing them where to go for financial support etc. He added that JD was also helping with this aspect of work.

PD said that clubs with huts should be eligible for grants under the system being put in place by the Government if he had understood it correctly. The grants were for up to £10k or £25k, which would make a big difference to them.

## **6 Further consideration of human resource matters**

### **6.1 *NB KA joined the call***

GP asked if any staff had requested reduced hours or suggested any other measures. KA noted two members of staff had suggested reduced hours, but they were Sport England funded staff and so could not be furloughed. She added that the Senior Management Team (SMT) had been asking staff for details of their current workload, and anticipated workload in a month's time. There will be staff with smaller workloads in the coming days.

DT asked if Sport England funding for salaries could be redirected to other areas of the BMC. KA replied that Sport England had been asked, she was waiting for the answer. She said there needs to be a greater understanding of the impact of furloughing the staff before the decision can be made, in particular the impact on work that needs to be undertaken by the BMC.

DT noted that the number of staff that could be furloughed was lower than he had originally thought. He felt at present there were potentially up to 8 members of staff that could be furloughed.

- 6.2 GP asked whether staff have any awareness of the potential of furloughing and if any feedback had been given. He added that if reducing hours, pay cuts etc. are not in employment contracts then staff will need to voluntarily agree to any changes.

DT said that a number of staff had been spoken to about it directly by him. He said that Mountain Training have furloughed most of their staff, but they have requested that Jon Garside is kept on.

- 6.3 MB made the following points, as he had just gone through the second round of furloughing staff as part of his day job:

- follow the Government advice
- look at the survival of the organisation as a whole
- public facing roles had been furloughed, but administration, and marketing and communications had been retained
- he understood that the Government is reviewing the 80% figure, as they had not anticipated how many would be applying for the scheme e.g. Easyjet placed 26,000 employees on the scheme: it's possible that Government support could reduce to 50%.
- the scheme started from 1 March, it would be good to act as soon as possible as the scheme cannot be backdated and the Government are realising that some companies are using the scheme inappropriately.

DT said that over the next few days the position will become much clearer in

**Action:**

respect of staff that can be furloughed. GP noted that a firm approach was needed.

**DT & KA**

- 6.4 PD returned to finance and asked if there is any feel as to how much of the reserves the Board is prepared to spend, as knowing this would assist with the financial planning. HJ noted that there is a reserves policy that needs to be adhered to. JW said that the Charities Commission had released advice to charities, stating that current circumstances were exactly the kind of situation that reserves were to be used for.

FS asked if this is something the Finance & Audit Committee (FAC) should take a view on and report back to the Board. GP said that it was a Board decision to take, but to then be scrutinised by the FAC.

## **7. Initial work for Competition Climbing Performance Group (CCPG)**

- 7.1 GP reported that all members of the CCPG had been identified and appointed, with the exception of the athletes' representative. He had spoken to Rab Carrington who was very keen to start work and has asked that the Board provide a list of priorities for the CCPG to work on. This was particularly important as the CCPG would need to look at how best to utilise staff capacity whilst no competitions were being held.

PD added that Rab was inducting Paul Davies (vice-chair) into the world of climbing and the CCPG hoped to have its first meeting in about 2 weeks time.

## **8. Any other urgent matters**

FS asked the Board to think who should sit on the Wales sub-committee. GP thanked everyone for attending.

## **9. Date and time of next meeting – 1 April at 10am**

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
4.2	JD to raise issue of furloughing MHT employee with Terry Tasker.	JD	Immediate
5.2	Further work to be done on the financial figures, in particular modelling of drop off curves, worst case scenarios and where further savings can be made.	AB, HJ, DT	Immediate
6.3	Further work to be undertaken to identify staff that can be furloughed/redeployed	DT & KA	Immediate

**The above is accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:**

Signed  
Gareth Pierce, Chair

Date