

Members' Council Area Representative

Are you passionate about climbing or walking in your local area? Are you interested in how you access the countryside and open spaces around you? Do you want to volunteer for the BMC to share your knowledge and experience whilst working with some great people?

The BMC is looking for a volunteer with energy, commitment and great communication skills to be the new Representative in your area. This is an exciting time for the BMC as it seeks to expand the voice of its members throughout the organisation and this role offers the chance to give something back and be at the forefront of improving grassroots representation.

You would sit on the Members' Council (the Council) and help the Council to deliver its objectives. You would have specific responsibility to provide a local focus to the BMC's activities, to complement the broader focus of the National Councillors.

This is a non-executive, voluntary role. Travel, accommodation and food will be reimbursed as per the BMC Volunteer Expenses Policy. In line with our Equality & Diversity Policy, the BMC is keen to achieve a more diverse Council and encourages applications from under-represented groups. The BMC cannot function without volunteers and the commitment from Council members is recognised with 20% discount at Cotswold, other beneficial deals, and invitations to social events.

- **Start Date:** Usually November following an Area AGM however appointments may begin at other times when vacancies arise.
- **Tenure:** 3 years, with the possibility of a further three years.
- **Volunteer Commitment:** The full extent of the commitment is up to the individual volunteer and will vary according to their personal circumstances. As with many volunteer roles, volunteers often find that the more they put in, the more they get out, and there is always the opportunity to get further involved.
 - **Minimum voluntary requirement to:**
 - Attend Council meetings: There are 4 main meetings per year which last all day. Two of these meetings are virtual and two are in person. Each main meeting has two additional virtual sub-meetings attended by relevant councillors: A pre-meeting to get area feedback and plan agenda items and a post meeting to discuss actions. In exceptional circumstances there may be additional virtual meetings for agenda item that needs in-depth discussion.
 - Attend local area evening meetings (4 to 5 per year, a mix of virtual and in person)
 - Keep abreast of regular electronic communications and paperwork in order to: act as a representative and intermediary; follow and contribute to both local area and Council meetings.
 - **Additional voluntary options:** Attend a wider variety of events, participate in extra committee work
- **Requirements:** Must be a voting member of the BMC of at least 12 months' standing at the time of appointment
- **Appointment:** This is an elected position, voted for by the BMC membership in your local area.

<p>To apply or to find out more, please email Tony Ryan (Publications & Local Areas Coordinator) tony@thebmc.co.uk.</p>

Members' Council Area Representative

Members' Council Area Representative Role Description

Welcome to the BMC's network of area volunteers. The BMC has been built by and depends on volunteers like you. Members, staff and other volunteers hugely appreciate your contribution of time, knowledge and enthusiasm. Thank you for your interest in volunteering for this role on behalf of the organisation and the climbing and walking community.

Council has four primary ambitions:

1. Engagement with the members
2. Engagement with all parts of the BMC
3. Role of Critical friend to the board
4. Outreach beyond the BMC core business

MC is the primary interface between the BMC's Board of Directors (and senior operational staff) and the Membership. It provides the main conduit by which information is passed between the Board and Members and provides the mechanism by which this information can be discussed and debated, allowing the Members' views to be taken into account in the running of the BMC. It also has an important role in providing checks and balances over the activities of the Board as required for a Membership organisation. The Council supports the BMC Strategy & Vision which is to ensure 'a better future for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers'.

Members' Council

For details on the aims, objectives and structure of the Council please refer to the [Members' Council Terms of Reference](#).

The Role of Area Representative on Council

Area Representatives are specifically tasked with representing their Local Area Members at a national level, via the MC. This works in two directions, to pass local issues and the views of Area Members to MC and thereby the Board, and to communicate information from the Board to Area Members.

Currently virtually all Local Area business is conducted at regular meetings held within the Area, typically 4-5 times per year. However, these are only attended by a small number of the Area's Members (albeit often the most 'engaged' and active of them), and work is ongoing to explore ways in which a greater proportion of the Membership can be reached and their views taken into account particularly by the National Elected Councillors and Constituency Councillors. Area Representatives should be aware of this and be prepared to develop and take on new ways of communicating with Members within their Area.

Each Area may (and is encouraged to) elect 2 Councillors to sit as their Area Representatives on the MC. This means that some of the duties can be shared between them, however this will require them to work closely together to decide who is doing what at any given time. Different Areas have different ways of working, but in general Area Representatives are expected to:

- Attend as many of the regular Area meetings as possible (typically 4-5 per year) and Members' Council Meetings (4-5 per year plus shorter virtual meetings)
- Engage with local Members at Area meetings to encourage representation of their views

Members' Council Area Representative

- Consult with their Area on local issues to report to the MC. These could include:
 - Local issues which could have wider interest/impact e.g. access problems at a nationally significant crag; problems with a locally run youth competition which could be affecting other Areas
 - Local issues which aren't of national interest but with which the Area needs assistance from the MC or one of the Specialist Committees
- Report to Area Members on all relevant MC/Board activities - this may be as a verbal or written report as requested by the Area
- In advance of the meetings liaise with the Area Chair & Secretary about any information or papers from the MC or Board that need to be communicated to the Area Members, so that these can be added to the meeting agenda, and they can familiarise themselves with the material
- When required present such information/papers to Members at the meeting, answer questions (or undertake to find out the answers) and gather any feedback as necessary
- After each Area meeting provide a written report to MC summarising relevant issues and feedback.

In addition, Area Representatives along with all councillors are required to:

1. Adhere at all times to the principles described in the Council Code of Practice. In reality, this means councillors should:
 - a. Behave in ways that earn the trust of others & respects all parties, act with integrity, and value diversity of people and thought
 - b. Make a positive and enthusiastic contribution to the development and delivery of the Objects of the BMC and its Values, Vision, Mission and Strategy
 - c. Represent the interests of Mountaineering and all Mountaineers within the UK, as well as the Members of the BMC
 - d. Be ambitious for the BMC and act in its best interests; act as a critical friend and advocate of the BMC
 - e. Participate in all Council discussions in a positive, proactive & constructive manner, to enable it to work as a cohesive group with collective responsibilities
 - f. Build good working relations with other Councillors and BMC volunteers generally to share knowledge, issues and best practices
2. Understand that this is a non-executive role; recognise the balance and interaction between this and the executive (i.e. the Board, CEO & Staff)
3. Be prepared to analyse complex issues and apply strategic & analytical approaches to the collective decision-making process
4. Assist the Council in its role of monitoring and reviewing the BMC's financial and strategic performance, ensuring that the BMC delivers for its Members
5. Use judgement as to how best to represent both BMC Members and Mountaineering as a whole where issues are discussed and decisions made by the Council without any prior consultation with the Members
6. Become familiar with the technologies & working practices used by the Council, and be prepared to undertake such training as may be necessary. Keep abreast of BMC communications generally and be aware of what is going on within the organisation (e.g. Board updates, ODG reports, newsletters, Facebook posts etc) and mountaineering generally

Members' Council Area Representative

Sharing a Vote at the Members' Council

In order to provide continuity and to stay abreast of all the issues it is expected that whenever possible both Area Representatives should attend all MC meetings, however they share a single vote for their Area between them.

There are various ways in which this can be approached, and Area Representatives will need to decide between themselves, possibly in consultation with their Area, how they wish to do this.

The most likely voting scenarios are:

1. Where the vote concerns an issue that has been discussed with the Area Members and a clear direction has been given there will be no conflict and the Area Representatives will vote as directed, provided that no further information has come to light during MC discussions that might change this direction
2. The MC aims to move towards increased inter-meeting discussion of issues leading to a more directed agenda at the meetings. This should provide an opportunity for Area Representatives to discuss and agree how they will vote on those issues in advance of the meeting
3. Where neither of the above applies and a vote is required at a Council meeting then the Representatives may choose to agree between themselves how to vote on a case by case basis (which may require a brief period of consultation prior to voting), or they may decide that the decision on how to vote will be the responsibility of one of them (for example if one has much more knowledge or experience of the issue, or feels more strongly about it).
4. If despite the above the Representatives still cannot come to an agreement on how to vote they would need to abstain.

However they choose to vote, as stated previously in this document Area Representatives must be prepared to use their judgment and work together to analyse issues as they arise, with or without prior discussion with the Membership, whilst always considering the best interests of the BMC and Mountaineering as a whole.

Required Commitment

Councillors are volunteers and have limited free time. However, as a minimum they should make every effort to:

- Attend as many of the regular Area meetings as possible (typically 4-5 per year)
- Attend MC meetings – 4-5 per year (held around the country, Saturdays 9.30am till late afternoon)
- Read all emails & paperwork in order to discuss them at subsequent meetings, teleconference calls etc
- Participate in online meetings (i.e Zoom) as required to discuss MC business (potentially up to 1-2 per month)
- Engage with any other form of inter-meeting discussions/polls etc as may occur
- Communicate with and act as a representative and intermediary for the constituency or BMC group that they represent (as detailed in the specific Role Description for each Councillor type described below)

Members' Council Area Representative

- Periodically Councillors will be asked to volunteer to take on additional responsibilities including the roles of DP, CND & Nomcom rep referred to above, and also to participate in various *ad hoc* working groups.

Confidentiality & Impartiality

These issues are covered in the MC Code of Practice but their importance is emphasised here. Whilst working to be as open and transparent as possible, as well as honouring their primary responsibility to the Members, Councillors will at times be privy to information that must be kept confidential. This is typically for the following reasons:

- commercial sensitivity – redacted documents should be released where possible
- timing – information should only be released in its final form after approval
- context – interlinked pieces of information often need to be released together to prevent misunderstanding
- people – where the information pertains to one or more named individuals for example staff appointments, HR issues, or involvement in a sensitive investigation.

Councillors should always aim to remain impartial irrespective of their own views, both when reflecting the views of the Members they represent to Council/Board, or communicating information from the BMC to the Membership.

Benefits of volunteering for the BMC

- Contributing to the BMC's work representing climbers, walkers and mountaineers in the UK
- Becoming part of a community of committed volunteers, giving back to the mountaineering community
- Further opportunities to get involved with the BMC's work
- An opportunity to develop your skills and learn new skills.

Appendix 1: Useful resources for Members' Council Area Representative

- [Members' Council Terms of Reference](#)
- [Members' Council Webpage](#)
- [Meeting minutes and summaries](#)
- [Members' Council Code of Practice](#)
- [Articles of Association](#)

Appendix 2: Expenses claims

- Members' Council Area Representatives can claim for travel expenses (mileage/public transport costs/parking fees etc) incurred whilst carrying out their role using the BMC's standard volunteer expenses claim form.
- Claims can also be made for venue hire and food provided at the meeting within the area budget provided.

Staff Contact

The main staff contact for this role is Tony Ryan (Publications & Local Areas Coordinator) tony@thebmc.co.uk.