

Area Hill Walking Representative Role and Responsibilities

Hill Walking 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 as a Hill Walking Rep. for one of the 10 BMC areas. Thank you for your interest in volunteering for this role on behalf of the organisation and the climbing and walking community.

What does an Area Hill Walking Rep. do?

The BMC represents over 80,000 members as well as many other climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales, split into 10 geographical areas. Recent surveys have suggested that as many as two thirds of members participate in hill walking to some degree, with around a third doing so as their dominant activity [source: Organisational Review Group Membership Survey 2017]. Each area has two elected officers, a chair and a secretary and numerous elected representatives including one (or more) hill walking rep. Each area holds 4 to 5 area meetings a year which act as a hub and a forum for local members to come together to discuss matters of local and national importance and have their say on the running and governance of the BMC.

Hill Walking Rep.s in particular usually do some of the following:-

- Work with the area chair and secretary (and other relevant volunteers) to widen the appeal of area meetings to hill walkers by:
 - ensuring hill walking appears on the agenda and that hill walking issues are discussed,
 - sourcing hill walking related speakers (talking about an interesting journey or a landscape or conservation issue perhaps) from time to time.
- Relay relevant news from BMC centrally to members and feedback members' concerns/views to relevant officers and to/from the national hill walking group (committee).
- Source and provide hill walking materials to appear in area communications and social media.
- Help with area Hill Walking issues that arise such as:
 - queries or requests for advice from members (direct to staff when necessary),
 - assist with local walking related access issues (from rights-of-way to broader landscape issues), working in tandem with area climbing access volunteers where appropriate and (when necessary) seeking advice from BMC access and conservation officers,
 - take part in campaigning about walking related local area access or conservation issues (perhaps in tandem with other local conservation or recreation bodies) while remaining aligned to any relevant BMC policy positions (for example the BMC Landscape Charter, see appendix 1).
- Organise member walks or similar engagement activities (following BMC event approval procedures, see appendix 1). Walk leaders must be competent, either holding an appropriate Mountain Training walk leadership qualification or by dint of significant previous walk leadership experience and also hold a suitable first aid qualification. Some existing area hill walking rep.s, including those in Peak, have considerable experience in this area and are willing to share knowledge and advice.
- Organise upland conservation activities with local conservation / land management organisations such as clean-ups, path repair working parties, sphagnum moss planting, tree planting etc. (following BMC event approval procedures, see appendix 1).

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- Seek to add a hill walking element to area events, festivals, clean-ups and look for opportunities for new events and activities (following BMC event approval procedures, see appendix 1).
- Forge links with those who manage local upland areas including:
 - responding to consultations (from National Trust, National Parks, AONBs etc.),
 - consider joining land-manager consultative user groups to speak up for hill walkers' interests,
 - forge links with other relevant local recreational representative bodies, where interests align, such as mountain biker advocacy groups / Ramblers etc.
- Consider offering to serve on Local Access Forums.
- Assist officers with national BMC responses to relevant Government (and other national bodies') consultations.
- Assist officers and other volunteers with nationally organised hill walker relevant events such as seminars, conferences and online activities.

The position of Area hill walking rep. – an area may choose to have more than one, if the Area feels this to be appropriate - is voted on annually by members during the elections at the Area AGM. Where a vacancy arises outside of the AGM a hill walking rep. may be co-opted in accordance with Article 28 in the Articles of Association.

What can you expect from the BMC?

- Officer support to help you fulfil your role as well as advice on complex or difficult issues which can range from advice by phone/email to attendance at meetings. The most relevant officers will include the Partnerships Manager, Access and Conservation Officers, Youth and Equity Officer and the Training Officer.
- The BMC is committed to ensuring that all people have an equal opportunity to participate in climbing, hill walking and/or mountaineering at all levels and in all roles. Our full Equity Statement can be found [here](#).
- Travel expenses – the BMC will reimburse travel expenses for any meetings.
- You will be added to the BMC collaboration platform enabling you to communicate with other area officers and representatives.
- The hill walking group (committee) will endeavour to communicate with area rep.s from time to time, encouraging a two-way dialogue and is available to offer advice.
- Further opportunities to get involved with the BMC's work.
- An opportunity to develop your skills and learn new skills.

What does the BMC expect from you?

As an Area Hill Walking Rep., you will be representing the BMC to members, walkers and external organisations. This means that it is important that you:

- Are a member of the BMC with your designated area the one in which you are standing to be rep.
- Are passionate about hill walking.
- Behave in a respectful manner at all times, remembering that you are representing the BMC membership as well as the wider walking community (rather than just yourself as an individual) in the public domain. This includes posting on social media and internet forums in a BMC capacity.
- Keep well informed about area activities.

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- Be an advocate for the BMC. With regard to this it is helpful to develop some understanding of the BMC's specialist work for walkers including in areas such as access and conservation (communication with the national hill walking group (committee) may help with this).
- Be able to represent members' views in a fair and balanced manner at local, regional and national level.
- Ability to work collaboratively with other volunteers (of whom the most relevant are likely to be area access rep.s).
- If you have a conflict of interest whilst representing the BMC in any aspect of your voluntary role, declare it to a BMC staff members ASAP.

Appendix 1: useful resources for BMC Area Hill Walking Rep.s

- [Volunteering Handbook](#)
- [Guidance on Volunteer Responsibilities](#)
- [Volunteer Expense Claim Form](#)
- [BMC's Organisational Structure](#)
- [Organising BMC Events guidance and approval process](#)
- [Natural England CRoW & Coastal Access maps](#) – search facility to show if an area of land is designated as Open Access under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (CRoW) or Marine & Coastal Access Act (MCAA).
- [BMC Landscape Charter](#) – advice for BMC members/local areas about how to voice their concerns about local landscape issues.
- [BMC Access Manifesto](#) – principles and proposals for government action on access to the countryside for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers
- [BMC Access & Conservation Trust](#) – the BMC's charitable arm which funds landscape scale projects to protect our cliffs, hills and mountains.

Appendix 2: Expenses claims

- Area hill walking rep.s 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.