

Board summary January – April 2022

This is a report the Chair prepared for the Members' Council Meeting on 14th May 2022, which is also a suitable summary of the issues discussed by the Board January – April 2022.

1. 2022 AGM

The AGM will be held on the evening of Wednesday 18th May starting at 19.00. As explained in January, reluctantly the Board decided that the AGM will be virtual this year ... and we look forward to reinstating a full AGM weekend in 2023.

We want to engage with you, be able to explain what the BMC has delivered in 2021 and provide an insight into the future. So, please ensure that you attend and vote – you will need to register and if not participating in the meeting itself, then you will need to allocate your proxy votes.

2. Addition to Objects within the Articles

We will be proposing the addition of an “*Object*” to the Articles as follows: “*Encourage and promote membership of the BMC to Mountaineers and those interested in mountaineering*”. This will be put forward as a separate resolution.

We are doing this in order to ensure that we can grow membership, and thus become more representative of the millions of people in England and Wales who already enjoy our sports – activities. Our intent is that this will help us engage with under represented groups in within our sports – activities – for instance women and girls and ethnic minorities.

In addition, the lack of clarity around how we grow our membership is eating up large amounts of time within the leadership and staff and is simply getting in the way of running an efficient business.

There is an “*Open Forum*” Meeting planned for 19.00 on Wednesday 20th April at which those who wish to undertake a deep dive into this proposed change of the articles can participate.

3. Other changes to the Articles

There are a range of other changes to the Articles which are covered in a separate resolution. These were discussed at an “*Open Forum*” Meeting which was held on Wednesday 2nd March. These changes cover:

- Required in order to widen our membership and be able to accept new generation clubs
- Required in order to meet the demands of the Code of Sports Governance, which was issued in December 2021
- Some changes to articles associated with Areas

4. 2021 Financial Outcome and progress against budget in 2022

The BMC ended the 2021 year with a deficit of approximately £0.11 million, which was funded out of reserves leaving the organisation at the start of 2022 with reserves of £1.11 million. Given the circumstances, this was a good outcome, albeit at the expense of not making progress on renewing the back and front-end IT systems nor on refreshing our marketing and communications.

Positively, UK Sport granted £0.56 million in support of elite competition climbing and we managed to retain our staff through the pandemic by accessing £0.14 million of funding from the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Clearly the pandemic has negatively impacted membership numbers and sales of travel insurance. Despite this we have seen a steady rebuild of membership through the second half of the year and notably of Club membership.

Looking to 2022 we are planning to again run a deficit as we rebuild the BMC after the pandemic and ensure that we can both represent and support the membership as well as continue to improve our delivery as a Sports Governing Body. Having said that, during the first quarter of the year, the build in membership and insurance sales has been better than expected and this gives the Board and Senior Leadership some choices with respect to how best to use the underspent funds.

5. Sport England (SE) Funding

The Phase Two funding submission was made to Sport England at the end of February and at the end of March Sport England indicated that we have been successful in our submission and have given us an indication of the size of the award.

The funds that will be released cover 5 years and focus on the three areas of Governance, System Development and Talent. Whilst this is a request to “*Sport England*” – the funds will have many benefits across the whole of the BMC irrespective of geography or activity.

We are working with our Partners, Mountain Training England (MTE), Mountain Training UK and Ireland (MTUKI), the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) and the National Indoor Climbing Awards Scheme (NICAS) on exactly what we must deliver by when, along with getting clarity on the resourcing that will be required.

6. Wales

Neal Hockley, the Chair of the Wales Committee was invited into the January 2022 meeting of the Board. An excellent presentation and discussion followed during which we explored how within the existing framework the Wales Committee could both do more and be seen to be better representing the needs of hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers within Wales

7. GB Climbing – The 2022 Competition Climbing Schedule

We are back to having nearly a full year of Competition Climbing complete with a schedule and dates for each competition in place

8. International Mountaineering Committee and Representation

The International Mountaineering Committee, with the Board and the Staff have reviewed how best to both represent the interests of British Mountaineers on the international stage ... for instance through UIAA and the European Mountaineering Association (EUMA) at the same time as delivering on the business of expeditions, grants and awards and working hand in hand with the Mount Everest Foundation.

The conclusion is that we should keep the International Mountaineering Committee focussed on their core work on grants and expeditions whilst formalising a group which considers how best the BMC leverages its expertise strategically on the international stage – this group is to be called the *“International Strategy Group”* and is led by the President, Andy Syme.

9. Development of a Senior Leadership Team

The Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Gavin Finch, was appointed in December 2021 and he has made substantial progress on assessing and developing a refreshed approach to communications and marketing

We have just completed the process of recruiting a full-time CFO, Joellie Chisholm, who starts in May.

The BMC recognises that it needs to increase its presence in Wales and be seen to do so. During 2021 we appointed a Policy & Campaigns Officer and decided that we must maintain the position of an Access & Conservation Officer dedicated to Wales.

10. BMC Development – Progress against ORG Recommendations

During March Fiona Sanders led a review of how the BMC has progressed against the 51 recommendations within the ORG Review, which we agreed to implement at the 2018 AGM. We also rolled into this work a review of progress against the recommendations within the Campbell Tickell Report, which are strongly aligned with the recommendations within the ORG Review.

We need to recognise that the ORG Recommendations always did and continue to drive a major *‘Change Programme’* across the whole of the BMC – and change on this scale takes of the order 5 years+.

The Board agreed that a lot of progress has been made with about 25% of recommendations fully completed, 33% well on their way to completion, 25% where there are challenges and 15% where there has been little progress.

One of the notable successes has been in the transformation from National Council to Member's Council. One of the areas where we have struggled to make progress are the 3 recommendations associated with Volunteers.

The Board agreed that the ORG recommendations remain just as valid as they were in 2018 and in some cases have even greater importance.

There are a further 11 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Board. The intent is to deliver the continuation of the ORG Change Programme through the existing structures within the BMC.

It was agreed that a small steering group of the Chair, CEO, President and Fiona Sanders would oversee progress and delivery of the remaining change.