# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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# **Board of Directors**

Redacted minutes of the Board meeting held by way of Zoom on Monday 13 December 2021 at 7pm

Directors Present: Roger Murray (RM) Chair

Flavia Alzetta (FA) Independent Director

Paul Davies (PDa) CEO

Jonny Dry (JD)\*\* Nominated Director Martyn Hurn (MH) Nominated Director

Peter Salenieks (PS) Council Nominated Director (CND)

Fiona Sanders (FS)\*\*\* CND
Carl Spencer (CS) CND
Andy Syme (AS) President

Jonathan White (JW) Nominated Director (Clubs)

Caroline Worboys (CW)\*\* Senior Independent Director (SID)

In attendance: Paul Drew (PD)\*\*\*

Gavin Finch (GF)\*\*\*\*
Paul McKoen (PM)\*\*\*\*
Lucy Valerio (LV)

Previous chair

Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Company Secretary (CoSec)

# Item Topic and Main Aspects Considered

### Decision / Action

# Welcome, apologies & declaration of interests

The Chair reported that due notice of the meeting had been given. He said Di Hopper (DH) had given her apologies, and CW and JD would be joining slightly late, but that the meeting was quorate, he therefore declared it open.

He noted:

1

- PD was in attendance as part of the agreed handover of the role of chair from PD to RM
- There was a packed agenda and that Item 5 would now be discussed after Item 2 and before Item 3, and Item 7 would be discussed after Item 9

Conflicts of interest were declared by the CEO, CFO, CCO and CoSec as members of staff.

<sup>\*</sup> denotes supporting paper(s) circulated prior to meeting

<sup>\*\*</sup> joined during minute 2.3

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> left at end of minute 4.1.3

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> left at end of minute 4.2.3

Decision / Action

- 2 CEO update, incl risk register\*
- 2.1 The CEO said there were several documents on Teamwork which provided further detail, but he would provide a summary with a focus on the staff survey. He then ran through a presentation the main points noted were:

# Priorities for end of 2021

- He had three priorities for the end of 2021: Sport England submission (SE Bid), hire CCO, 2022 budget
  - The SE Bid had been submitted on 12 November, SE had held its board meeting that day and he
    was hopeful they would provide an indication of a funding figure by the end of the week
  - The CCO had been hired, he welcomed GF and noted it was good he had joined before Christmas so there was some overlap with Alex Messenger (AM) who was leaving
  - The budget would hopefully get signed off at the meeting
- The Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) drove everything and he was keen to encourage more involvement from Specialist Committees in the SAPs in 2022

# Other activity

- Indoor project Dan Middleton was leading on this as to how the BMC makes indoor climbers and the indoor climbing sector feel part of the BMC community
- Potential partnerships there were ongoing discussions with UK Coaching and also Leeds Beckett University about further research projects (see Item 5)

# Challenges

 There had been numerous challenges: staff turnover – loss of AM and PM; illness – covid and other winter illnesses had affected various staff members including himself; covid restrictions – impacted on the return to the office and were often different in England and Wales; sense of overwhelm for some staff

# Non business as usual (BAU) priorities Q1 2022

- These were:
  - New member offers to reach 100,000 engaged members
  - Website audit/discovery, what got, what need etc. member and non-member survey to assist with this, noted CS had offered to help with this
  - Work programmes linked to SAPs and budget and performance management
  - Indoor strategy linked to SE Bid

Decision / Action

- o Funded partners MoU
- Review of Marcomms structure and function
- Review of finance structure and function
- These needed to be viewed with context which included:
  - Covid continuing
  - The ongoing change re ways of working and new senior team
  - The governance issues/ways of working not being fully resolved with various ad hoc requests made of staff/volunteers

# 2.2 Risk register

- The IT underspend was being looked at so that the road map to a new system could be accelerated
- Travel insurance income, still living in uncertain times and this impacts on travel insurance sales
- Loss of staff

# Staff Survey

- Satisfaction level had decreased, it was not terrible but it was not where the CEO wanted it to be
- There were four focus areas:
  - A feeling of belonging to the BMC needed to be increased as there had been a 10.8% decrease on previous years
  - Line management improvements had been made but there needed to be greater consistency across the BMC, there was some work to do
  - Acknowledgement, reward and progression there are limitations within the BMC, but not everything
    is linked to money there needed to be more looking for free courses, networking opportunities etc.
    so a new approach to this was needed
  - o Communications all levels could improve
- The survey should be viewed in the context of: ongoing uncertainty around covid, the furloughing of staff from February to October 2021, recruitment of senior roles while other areas were struggling with volume and capacity issues
- The concerns were that disquiet often finds company and a number of resignations of key staff may result in a domino effect
- Actions to be taken/being taken were:
  - Results and findings had been reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT), presented to the Board and would be expanded on in Staff Engagement forum and team meetings
  - All information gained would be reviewed by SMT on 10 January 2022 and an action plan formulated and rolled out
  - 2022 focus on developing a performance management system and reviewing reward and recognition for staff

- Improving communication between Board, Council, SMT and staff
- 2.3 Feedback the meeting discussed the presentation, the main points raised were:
  - The SE Bid monies would not be available until 1 April 2022, so the CEO should bring a draft MoU to the Board in January 2022
  - Recognition should include staff and volunteers being thanked when they do a good job, this often goes a long way
  - The plan for change should be accelerated so that the BMC reaches a period of stability, as the survey showed there are a minority of disaffected staff and reaching stability should help with this
- 5 Partners' Assembly Your Movement Matters\*
- 5.1 The Chair noted as set out at the start of the meeting, the next item to be discussed was item 5 and he handed over to FS who was leading on this as chair of the Partners' Assembly (PA).

FS gave a presentation to the meeting; the main points were:

- This was a look at the results of an online survey completed by over 4,500 individuals as part of SE's Your Movement Matters initiative, which was led by the Partners' Assembly and the work involved driven by Mountain Training
- The results provided:
  - o an evidence base as to what participation looks like and means for those individuals
  - some philosophies to be considered by the BMC
  - an understanding which could inform practice and drive policy change to develop equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategies
  - data to inform membership growth strategies and review membership packages and commercial links
- The individuals who took part included 544 who lived with a disability or long-term health condition; 82 people who identified as gender fluid, non-binary, trans-female, trans-male or other genders other than 'male' or 'female'; 953 people who had a walking or climbing qualification, 3,335 hill walkers, 832 trad climbers and 1,018 scramblers so a breadth of experience
- Some initial findings included:
  - o Indoor climbing is the most ethnically diverse activity
  - Pathways to participation Scouts and Guides was a strong theme, together with participation at school or because of family and friends
  - There is a drop off of rock climbers over the age of 65

### Decision / Action

MoU with funded partners to be linked to SE Bid.

CEO to bring a draft MoU to the Board in January 2022.

Decision / Action

- Many participants, particularly women, wanted to experience the key activities the BMC engages with e.g. scrambling, winter hill walking etc.
- 5.2 FS then looked at how some of the results could help with membership growth and what the BMC should do:
  - act as the pathway from walking/hill walking to wider mountain activities like scrambling, winter hill walking, winter and overseas mountaineering, potentially brining a package together of AMI guides, MT skills courses
  - target females to help them test out more elements of the sport indoors and outdoors in supportive environments
  - for LGBTQIA+ communities, act as the pathway from indoor climbing
     help them with their concerns re
    needing a safe environment not in terms of preventing accidents (which was important) but in terms of the
    space the activity is being done in as some of the concerns they have include if they will be able to take their
    meds when they need to, or if they are going to be embarrassed.
  - work with organisations like the Duke of Edinburgh in order to engage youngsters early in a person's mountaineering journey and make them aware of the BMC
  - look at future campaigns and research into maintaining participation as climbers and mountaineers as they
    get older and less able, which typically is as a person reaches 60 years old. In particular, how the BMC can
    ensure that they do not lose these people as members
  - look at ways to assist its members to move from doing the sport, to showing and supporting others to do it

She added that in particular the results showed three groups should be targeted: those where there would be substantial benefits in mental health, those with disability and long-term health problems and those within the LGBTQIA+ community. The concepts to be developed were:

- · adventure and aspirational activities from hill walking to mountaineering
- role models across the range of activities to reflect a range of groups

This leads to a range of possible membership benefits which include:

- access to different types of activities within the BMC
- · access to transportation (already in progress) and kit etc.
- · easy access to clubs to help match and share skills
- links to discounts etc. with a range of specialist organisations for training
- providing support and information to undertake the activities in a 'safe' manner
- 5.3 FS finished her presentation by setting out what this meant at a strategic level for the BMC:
  - to recognise its systemic role as sector leader in improving the route to its activities for those in ethnic, agerelated and other diverse groups

- to look at membership packages that encouraged hill walkers to progress into or experience other activities that the BMC represents
- to commit to support partnership with a range of organisations in mental health and long-term health to enable participation and BMC membership
- to support the role of clubs in their various forms in mentoring and supporting engagement in BMC activities
- 5.4 The meeting discussed the results and the presentation and the following queries/points were raised:
  - If there was any way of pulling out the information of the demographics participating in each activity
  - Leeds Beckett University were keen to continue their research into this, so if the Board had any specific
    questions they would be delighted to assist
  - How the results would inform the member survey to be sent out in 2022 further work was needed to analyse the results, but they would be built on by the member survey
  - Consideration needed to be given to how the BMC would respond to these findings.

The Chair thanked FS and said if any Board members had any further points to raise they should email them to FS.

# 3 Membership Strategy

- 3.1 The Chair then moved on to Item 3 and handed over to the CEO. The CEO referred to the paper 'Item 3.1\_Membership strategy' which had been uploaded to Teamwork. He stated:
  - The Board had tasked the SMT to produce a roadmap to reach the 100,00 engaged members by the end of 2024
  - The paper was an overview of preliminary thoughts and it was being presented in order to be 'sense checked'
  - . A mandate to explore the proposed areas in the paper in more detail was being sought from the Board
  - A fully formed growth strategy would be presented to the Board and Council for approval by the end of Q1 2022

### He noted:

- Four routes to the target had been identified by SMT:
  - Targeted growth in indoor climbing membership
  - Targeted growth in hill walking membership
  - Continued organic growth across all membership categories
  - Maintaining high levels of member retention

### Decision / Action

If any director has any points on the results of the Your Movement Matters survey, to email these directly to FS.

- SMT were very motivated by this and they want to be mandated to look at creative ways to achieve the target
- The BMC needed to claim its space as the NGB and NRB, this might cause some noise but this was necessary due to the threat other organisations posed

He then asked the Board if the paper was in the right direction and for their comments.

- 3.2 The meeting discussed the paper and the main points raised were:
  - The language used was important re mountain training as need to be careful it does not come across that
    the BMC expects that if someone wants to retain their qualifications they must be a BMC member agreed it
    was to be more about persuading that person to remain a BMC member
  - The recruitment target figures suggested for indoor climbers and hill walkers needed reviewing to ensure they are realistic and challenging
  - Further work by the SMT should take into account whether proposed actions were financially viable, environmentally sustainable and whether they have an appropriate risk profile.
  - Once proposals are further developed then the appropriate specialist committees would be consulted with
  - . The strategy should factor in EDI and mental health and some targets should be set
  - Action should not be delayed by waiting for member survey results, there are already some easy wins the BMC is aware of such as access and conversation
  - . The further work would not require spending, but staff time to review the data and develop the ideas
  - The BMC was marketing a product to an audience and it had assets that it was not making the most of ... for
    instance both the peatland restoration programme and the "Mend Our Mountains" campaign.
  - The CCO had reached out to CW and a meeting had been set up

The Chair summarised that the discussion showed:

- . the SMT had a mandate to develop the ideas in the paper further
- they should not get analysis paralysis
- prior to a final report being prepared at the end of Q1 they should come back to the Board with a pen portrait piece

He added if any Board members had any further comments they should email them to the CEO.

### Decision / Action

SMT mandated to explore membership strategy further.

Further paper to go to Board during Q1

Final report to go to Board and Council end of Q1 2022.

Board to email any further comments to the CEO.

#### Topic and Main Aspects Considered ltem

Decision / Action

- Finance Update
- 4.1 Budget
- The Chair referred to the documents 'Item 4.1 BMC 2022 Budget Request for approval', 'Item 4.1 BMC 2022 budget - Board report revised for 1312 v3 071221' and 'Item 4.1 BMC Budget Fwd years 091221' all of which had been uploaded to Teamwork. He set out the background, which was:
  - bulk of the work done at 24 November meeting
  - CFO had updated the budget following the 24 November meeting
  - A working group had been established to review the revised budget and it spoke with several directors
  - lain Dickinson, chair of the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) had been consulted in his role representing the FAC and he is satisfied with the deficit set out in the revised budget

The CFO noted the above process had led to a revised budget with a suggested deficit of £290,000, which when taken together with the forecasted figures for 2021 and the underspend in 2021, would result in a deficit of £250,000.

- 4.1.2 The meeting discussed the budget, the following points were made:
  - Find Your Adventure was showing as a cost and not income the recent campaign had shown a return within 6 months, so on a conditional basis further funds should be released for this in 2022- additional club members had not been factored in at present
  - The budget was prepared prior to the new covid variant and so travel insurance figures may need to be revised downwards - although it was noted in December 2019 xxx travel insurance packages were sold, and as at now in December 2021 xxx travel insurance packages had been sold
  - Sponsorship figure for area festivals was a budget assumption
  - International Committee spend was too low it needed to be at least £10,000 with the money either being sourced from elsewhere or the deficit increased
- 4.1.3 The Chair stated the discussion showed that two changes were required:
  - Find Your Adventure to be added as cost neutral
  - International Committee to have at least £10,000 for grants

He then asked the Board to vote on the budget, with the provisions noted above included as board conditions:

For: 10 Against: 0 Abstain: 1

The 2022 budget with the two Board conditions attached as noted opposite was approved.

Decision / Action

- 4.2 Insurance Paper
- 4.2.1 The CFO referred to the paper 'Item 4.2\_Insurance review No Board update 171121' which had been uploaded to Teamwork and he provided a summary of the origin of the paper:
  - .
  - Paper presented to the Board in June 2021 as a discussion option which looked at insurance cover options
  - A working group was established to look at other options
  - This working group was now proposing a recommendation that a formal structured training scheme should be developed to be introduced into all Student Clubs ahead of the September 2022 academic year.
  - A further recommendation was that this training scheme should then be rolled out to all clubs using a 'pull'
    approach to encourage them to use the best practice from Student Clubs. There was no deadline set on this
    recommendation.

He added the recommendation was to control the cost increases, not to get a cost reduction. The claim had led to a large increase in the BMC's insurance premiums, which in turn led to a one-off large increase in subscriptions in 2019. At present insurers viewed this as a one-off event, something that happens once in every 50 years, so if a similar accident occurs in the next 2-4 years then insurers would view it differently and seek changes to risk management. The working group therefore looked at how to build the capability which insurance companies might require the BMC to take.

- 4.2.2 The meeting discussed the paper and the issue of insurance and the following points were noted:
  - Worst case scenario is the BMC does not get insurance at all for its members
  - This is about reducing risk to the BMC and its members and thus reducing costs
  - The BMC is trying to identify best practice that is already out there and show that to other clubs, to nudge them to behave in that way
  - A gold standard should be created by the BMC and it should champion it, the BMC should be confident with this
  - The five possibilities set out on p.3 of the paper should not be dismissed and further work should be undertaken on them
  - The highest risk group identified was Student Clubs, so this was a good place to target the BMC's energies
  - Student Clubs were charged less, and often had discounts at walls which other members did not get, so
    would it be worthwhile looking at setting a cap on their liability limit, although it was noted the discount was in
    place to give students equivalent value for money as non-student club members
  - If accreditation was the way forward, the BMC would need to do the accreditation, this would be a massive
    operation and the relationship with other organisations in the sector was not strong enough at this time to do
    this

- The BMC needed to get clubs to work with it and show them the best practice as opposed to the BMC telling clubs what to do
- If a gold standard was introduced, surely underwriters of walls would ask why walls were not operating to the gold standard
- Maybe this would lead to a situation where if a wall is accredited by the BMC it would receive a higher level
  of insurance cover than a wall which is not accredited

The Chair then held a vote on recommendation 1 set out on p.6 of the paper - that a formal structured training scheme should be developed to be introduced into all Student Clubs ahead of the September 2022 academic year:

For: 9 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

4.2.3 The Chair then moved to the second recommendation - that the formal structured training scheme be rolled out to all clubs using a 'pull' approach to encourage clubs to use the best practice adopted by Student Clubs. He said this needed more work and it should be taken back to the working group, who should also look at previous ideas, as set out on p.3 of the paper.

The CFO noted that the Board should be looking at a series of actions, as the status quo was unsatisfactory. The CEO added that there were too many ifs and buts and there was a need to pin the insurers down by setting them a list of agreed written questions, as at times they had appeared to say different things to different people.

Two further points were raised:

- · The working group should stress test any assumptions robustly
- If Clubs Committee was to take the lead with recommendation one then more BMC staff resources would be needed

It was agreed the working group would be asked to look further at the second recommendation and the previous ideas as set out on p.3 of the paper.

## 6 Governance Matters

# 6.1 Anti-doping update and adoption of UKAD rules

The CEO noted that under the UKAD Assurance Framework evidence requires that anti-doping issues are discussed at Board level. It was noted that the point of discussion for this meeting is adoption of the UKAD Anti-Doping Rules. It was reported that those with the necessary experience in the BMC were recommending the adoption of these rules.

The CoSec noted that these had been uploaded to Teamwork for the Board to approve their adoption. A deadline of 12 December had been provided and if directors had not indicated a vote against the adoption, their silence was to

### Decision / Action

Board unanimously approved that a formal structured training scheme should be developed to be introduced into all Student Clubs ahead of the September 2022 academic year

Insurance working group be tasked with looking at recommendation 2 and the previous ideas set out in p.3 of the paper further.

be taken as approval. She stated 5 directors had actively voted for, 6 had remained silent – therefore approved the adoption and 1 had asked to record an abstention.

Adoption of the UKAD Anti-Doping Rules was therefore approved by the Board.

# 6.2 Safeguarding\*

The CoSec noted the paper was to inform the Board that safeguarding would discussed at Board level twice a year the Board agreed this was necessary and welcomed this. She added the safeguarding lead at Board level may need to be tied in to the Welfare and Safety lead to be appointed under the revised Code for Sports Governance (the Code)— but she required to give this further thought as the commentary to the revised Code had only just been published.

# 6.3 Health & Safety\*

The CoSec noted the paper was to inform the Board that health and safety would discussed at Board level twice a year the Board agreed this was necessary and welcomed this. She added that the Health & Safety Staff Handbook and Policy had been approved by the Board via Teamwork.

The President requested it be minuted, that he understood why silence was taken as approval when documents were uploaded to Teamwork, but the fact that only 3 or 4 directors actively voted for approval and 8 or 9 remained silent felt wrong.

The Chair stated this was an item to be discussed at the January 2022 Board meeting.

### 8 Gala dinner and AGM discussion\*

8.1 The CoSec/Chair referred to the paper 'Item 8\_AGM 2022' which had been uploaded to Teamwork and noted it was recommending that a virtual only AGM be held in 2022. She noted this was because of budgetary constraints and also uncertainty surrounding covid – the AGM needed organising now and so a decision had to be taken based on the information available now. It was not the venue hire or cost that was the problem, but the cost of the voting provider.

The meeting discussed this with various views being exchanged including:

- A desire to hold a physical AGM
- If the AGM is to be virtual only then there should be open forums or Q&A sessions with the Board held in the lead up, so there are opportunities for interaction with the Board.

### Decision / Action

Adoption of the UKAD Anti-Doping Rules approved.

CoSec to give further thought to any link between safeguarding and Welfare & Safety Lead required under the revised Code.

- If the announcement is worded correctly and sympathetically and it is made clear that decisions had to be made on information available now that members would accept the decision to hold a virtual only AGM
- It was too uncertain at present to organise a hybrid meeting
- It was agreed that the volunteer gala dinner should be scheduled for later in the year and not be tied to the AGM

That the 2022 AGM be virtual only

AS to provide new date for volunteer

The Chair took a vote and asked who supported a virtual only AGM:

For: 6 Against: 3 Abstain: 0

8.2 The Chair agreed that a carefully worded announcement was needed to inform the members of this decision. The meeting then discussed moving the date of the volunteer gala as they did not want to cancel this either.

It was agreed that the President would look at alternative dates in either late June/early July or early September and provide that date to the CEO.

It was noted that FA had some contacts who would be able to assist with organising such an event, payment would be required for their assistance.

- 9 Date, time and framing of next meeting and 2022 meetings\*
- 9.1 The Chair referred to the document 'Item 9\_meeting dates 2022' which had been uploaded to Teamwork. He said he had been appalled to discover that Board meetings were organised meeting to meeting, and that this was not sustainable.

He set out the background to the paper, the following points were made:

- the date of 26 January should be moved to either 25 or 27 CoSec to check if this clashed with any Area meetings
- at the last meeting it had been discussed that two of the full day face to face meetings should be held on a weekend – Chair and CoSec to revisit this
- the shape of the proposed meeting framework was good

The paper was agreed with the dates noted above to be revisited and invites sent to the Board accordingly.

CW left the meeting at this point.

Dates for 2022 Board meetings to be revisited as noted, but otherwise approved.

Chair and CoSec to review new dates for 26 Jan and two weekends.

# 7 Review of outstanding actions

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Decision / Action

gala.

### Decision / Action

The Chair noted he had reviewed the outstanding actions with the CoSec earlier and updated them as necessary. The Board then did a full review of the outstanding actions as set out in the Teamwork project. It was agreed that the CoSec would update Teamwork as necessary following the review.

CoSec to update Teamwork project as per the review.

### 10 AOB

10.1 The President asked for confirmation of who on the staff was going to take the volunteer gala forward. The CEO agreed to speak to the CoSec and JT about this and to let him know.

CEO to speak to CoSec and JT to identify staff lead for the volunteer gala.

The CoSec asked for clarification as to who should be making the final decisions regarding the volunteer gala venue etc. – it was agreed that AS would do this.

CEO to provide Board with an updated organisation chart.

PS asked for an updated organisation chart to be provided to the Board.

## 11 Close of meeting

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their time.

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
2.3	CEO to bring a draft MoU with funded partners to the Board in January 2022.	PDa	20.01.22
3.2	Further paper to go to Board during Q1 on the proposed membership strategy	PDa	Feb 2022
3.2	Final report on membership strategy and what is proposed to go to Board and Council end of Q1 2022.	PDa	31.03.21
3.2	Board to email any further comments to the CEO on the membership strategy paper.	All	31.12.21
4.1.3	Budget be amended to include the two board conditions re Find Your Adventure and International Committee.	PM	20.12.21
4.2.3	Insurance working group be tasked with looking at recommendation 2 as set out on p.6 of PM's paper and the previous ideas set out in p.3 of the paper further.	JW	Ongoing
6.2	CoSec to give further thought to any link between safeguarding and Welfare & Safety Lead required under the revised Code.	LV	22.02.22
8.2	AS to provide new date for volunteer gala	AS	20.12.21

## Redacted minutes, BMC Board of Directors, 13 December 2021

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
9.1	Chair and CoSec to review new dates for 26 Jan 2022 meeting and two of the face to face ones to be on a weekend.	RM & LV	17.12.21
7	CoSec to update Teamwork as per the review.	LV	17.12.21
10.1	CEO to speak to CoSec and JT to identify staff lead for the volunteer gala.	PDa & LV	17.12.21
10.1	CEO to provide Board with an updated organisation chart.	PDa	20.12.21