

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Members' Council

Draft minutes of the Members' Council meeting held at The White Swan Hotel, Alnwick on Sunday 18 June at 10.am

In attendance:

Voting Members

Elected Councillors

President, and Chair of the meeting (the President)	Andy Syme	AS		
Cymru South Wales	Steve Quinton	SQ		
Lakes	Fiona Sanders	FS	Also a Council Nominated Director (CND)	
Lakes	Mike Parsons	MP		
Midlands	Ian Wyatt	IW	From minute 17.4	
North East	Jonathan White	JWh		
North West	Bill Beveridge	BB		
North West	Andy Say	ASa		
South West	Trevor Smith	TS		
South West	Philip Wilson	PW		
Yorkshire	Martin Christmas	MC		
Yorkshire	Richard Eden	RE		
Nationally Elected Councillor (NEC) for Indoor Climbers	Stuart Holmes	SH	Until the end of minute 20.2	
NEC for Rock Climbers	Steve Clark	SC		
NEC for Hill Walkers	Rose Gare-Simmons	RGS		
Specialist Councillors	Clubs Committee	Peter Salenieks	PS	Also a CND
	Equity Steering Group	Mohammed Dhalech	MD	

Standing Observers

Specialist Committees

Board of Directors

Hill Walking Group	Peter Judd	PJ
Chair of the Board (the Chair)	Roger Murray	RM
Nominated Director	Martyn Hurn	MH
CND	Carl Spencer	CS
Chief Executive	Paul Davies	PD

Ad Hoc Observers

Huts Group	Lynsey McAuley	LM
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Others

Chief Commercial Officer of BMC
Minute taker

Gavin Finch GF
Lucy Valerio LV

Until minute 22b

* denotes supporting paper(s) circulated prior to meeting

Item	Topic and Main Aspects Considered	Decision / Action	Who	When
13	Welcome & apologies for absence			
13.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Abbi Blakey, Sean Milner, Paul Ratcliffe, Peter Neden, Jon Punshon and Tarquin Shipley.			
14	Note Conflicts of Interest			
14.1	None declared.			
15	Urgent issues for AOB			
15.1	SH noted at the AGM held the previous day, which a lot of Councillors had attended, an important conversation had taken place but a lot of the staff team had found it was very negative. Council wanted to work more closely with staff and so he apologised. PS added a vote of thanks to all of those who had helped stage the AGM.			
16	Minutes of previous meetings and Outstanding Actions*			
16.1	Outstanding Actions			
16.1.1	The meeting reviewed the list of outstanding actions managed as Tasks on Teamwork; see Outstanding Actions (link only available to Council members). The President made the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patrons due diligence was stuck as he had been unable to pick this up CNDs recruitment process – he would look at this CS and PS terms as CNDs ended in October and so Council still required from Nominations Committee the skills required on the Board to assist with CND recruitment 	NomCom to provide Council with feedback on skills	RM	ASAP

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of dates for 2024 meetings – he would hopefully get to this within the next two weeks Councillor declarations – this had been printed out and he asked all Councillors at the meeting to sign and return them Induction was still to be arranged for the new Councillors 	<p>Schedule of 2024 meetings to be provided</p> <p>Induction to be provided to new Councillors</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>AS</p>	<p>By 8 July</p> <p>By 8 July</p>
16.1.2	The CEO reported back on the sky running action noting that discussions had started, but more would be done now the AGM had been held.			
16.1.3	It was requested that SH be included on emails regarding the new proposal for CCPG. The Chair suggested that the presentation provided to the Board by the CEO and Paul Ratcliffe also be given to Council, for those interested.	Deep dive on new proposal re CCPG to be organised for Council	RM & PD	ASAP
16.1.4	<p>The meeting discussed safeguarding training with the following points made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a cost to the online Ann Craft Trust training There was a video available of the training provided to the Board that could also be made available to Council There was confusion between safeguarding, wellbeing and welfare There should be some training Council could access for free as part of having volunteer positions DBS's 	Ann Craft training session to be made available to Council	LV	ASAP
16.1.5	<p>The CEO said he would provide further details on what is directly funded and what is a 'benefit in kind' funding for Sport England/UK Sport contributions.</p> <p>SC recommended that Council read the blog linked in his report regarding what local wardens have to deal with when there is a moor fire.</p>			
16.2	Minutes of previous meeting – 23 May 2023			
	These were agreed.	Signed minutes to be uploaded to Teamwork and the website	LV	ASAP
17	Membership			
17.1	The CCO introduced himself and ran through his presentation on the proposals for membership. He made the following points:			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BMC was the representative body and the NGB and it also had wider responsibility for the participants of BMC activities, even if they were not a member • The goals for 2024 were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to establish the BMC as a sector though leader and influencer ○ to have a strong foundation of business operations ○ to have a more diverse and inclusive organisation making all BMC activities accessible to all ○ to reach 100,000 engaged members • Insight was a key part, especially into those outside of the core community, the BMC had to work out what it could do for them • The brand purchase funnel – awareness could be short or very long, but it was needed before anyone could move down the funnel • Reach and opportunity, based on an Outdoor Activity Participation Statement Survey, and BMC records at April 2022, the data showed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8.6 million active adventurers ○ 3.6 million strenuous walking/mountaineering/climbing participants ○ 1.04m website users ○ 205,000 BMC database records ○ 79,800 active members ○ Club members 23,100 ○ Loyal core 17,000 members • Loyal core of membership those who had been a member for 10 years – only done with individual members at this point • Awareness of the BMC was low – on an independent panel only 23% were aware of the BMC 			

17.2 He then spoke about 4 key projects to help with awareness/membership:

- Brand and communications; digital and IT roadmap; commercial partnership programme; membership review – which were underpinned by research and insight
- These were not as far along as he would like them to be as there had been a lot of foundation work to do
- Digital audience engagement – InCrowd had been contracted to provide the BMC with the optimum strategy for growing audiences, increasing digital engagement and driving membership and service revenue
- The aim was to create an engaged audience, the work would be done alongside membership development

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17.3	<p>He moved on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 3 key steps to the project visions – audit, customer insight and design and deliver. • Customer insight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Insight work done via InCrowd showed the difference between BMC members and non-BMC members re awareness ○ how the BMC audience segmented e.g. the hiker, the climber, the adventurer - the names were a work in progress but they were being used to work out what those groups wanted and how to target them ○ The hikers from the independent group had no awareness of the BMC – so what needed to be done • The top areas of importance for BMC members and those who were not BMC Member was different, with the most important for members being access and conservation and for non-members it was training and education 	Insight information to be provided to Council	GF	ASAP
17.4	<p>The meeting discussed a number of ideas at this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care was needed as the BMC was the representative body, there should be certain safety messages etc. that should not be behind a pay wall, or that required someone to log in, as this was still a barrier to obtaining important information • the CCO was looking at how content could add value to members and also retaining its role as the representative body • part of what would be looked at what was what could cause reputational damage to BMC activities • the BMC needed to get better at selling itself, it could not do everything so it was about looking at the resources available and equipping people to do what they could • the club rebate scheme should be reviewed, there was about £30,000 in the pot so there was a cost to looking at this 			
17.5	<p>The CCO continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reciprocal memberships were being looked at with DofE, National Trust and YHA, as well as strategic partnerships with these organisations • a restructuring of the membership was suggested which created tiers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BMC premium membership – members pay a fee to access insurance, training and upgraded discounts i.e. current membership ○ BMC supporter – a smaller fee is paid in exchange for exclusive discounts 	CCO to provide slides to Council and to add in branding to the next session	GF	ASAP

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17.6	<p>He then set out the next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital membership – free but requires sign up in exchange for access to higher value digital content ● there would be some people who did not require full membership so they could be brought in at lower tiers ● work was being done to look at branding and how that would help engage people ● using sub identities was not an issue <p>ideally wanted the new tiered membership in place by January 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the consultation group looking at the proposal would need to agree on the new prices by September 2023 ● there was a Board meeting on 2 August at which the pricing structure would be looked at <p>This resulted in the meeting discussing various issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● whether or not the technology required to implement the different tiers should be in place prior to implementation ● the bottom tier of membership was the one most required ● if any projections on the financial implications had been done i.e. if current members decided they wanted to move to a lower tier, as this would result in a decrease in income ● whether the proposals were a reserved matter or not and if they required formal Council approval ● the possibility of a phased launch of the tiers, this would not slow down any ongoing commercial work ● John Willmott (Independent Director) was looking at the insurance offer as there was concern that the big banks offered free travel insurance, they could then also sponsor a climbing team which might result in them taking a closer look at the travel insurance they provided, it was a risk to the BMC's travel insurance offering – the CCO was working with John ● it would be helpful to hold an open forum once the structure and pricing was agreed to explain it to a wider audience ● if a phased introduction was used, with the two bottom tiers being introduced later, then the BMC would be able to get one year of income from the premium level ● the risk of current full members deciding to move down a tier 	<p>AS to check whether the proposal needed formal Council approval</p>	<p>AS</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

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17.7	<p>The President thanked the CCO for all his work on this. The meeting then discussed the selling of BMC membership more generally, noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Gower festival had been very successful and without the BMC staff there it would not have been as successful – formal thanks to all the staff who attended and made it happen SC was there helping to sell membership, but there should be consistency in how this was done a number of things were needed to do soft sell and hard sell it would be good to know where the BMC needed more support on this the resource and time to be at events should not be under estimated – so it was good to look at how volunteers could help in this space 			
17.8	Council thanked the CCO and it was noted that he was happy for the presentation to be shared more widely, so that Councillors could report back at Area meetings.			
18	DP Role election, or next steps			
18.1	<p>The President made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if Councillors felt that a Deputy President (DP) was required, then they needed to persuade a colleague to take the role on he would like a DP as some support would be useful there was an agreed role description and election process in place <p>The meeting noted that one Councillor had expressed an interest – Sean Milner.</p>	SC to speak to Sean about the DP role.	SC	ASAP
19	Update on 'Response to Council request for information as at 21.05.23'			
19.1	<p>The meeting discussed the first request which was for up to date membership numbers, the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was inconsistency between numbers, particularly different numbers being provided to Finance & Audit Committee (FAC) 		PD	ASAP

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The numbers were different as there was a set that was where the cash was in the bank because of direct debit runs, and the other number was the number of people who had committed to be a member but they were being processed It was vital that the right set of numbers was provided as this would inspire confidence and trust It would be useful for Council to have a quarterly update – these were provided as part of the CEO's report As long as the numbers were consistent, and used the same metric 	CEO to check membership numbers and update Council accordingly		
19.2	<p>The meeting then discussed the second point, which was the proposals on the future direction of CCPG and the wider approach to grassroots climbing (the Proposal):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposal, which included reference to new commissions particularly for skimo, ice climbing and paraclimbing was still being consulted on There would need to be an element of funding from the BMC, particularly for skimo, ice climbing and paraclimbing if commission were established Commissions as a structure worked well for these disciplines The President and CEO would look at timings involved in the decision-making process so that Council would know when their feedback on the Proposal was to be given by The CCPG Report should be provided to Council prior to them giving feedback on the Proposal 	President and CEO to discuss timeline for Council feedback	AS & PD	ASAP
19.3	<p>The last point led to a discussion about the CCPG Report and the President made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CCPG Report had been sent to those on CCPG to comment on He was going to send the comments received to Paul Dewhurst on Monday 19 June, and ask Paul to review them and provided an updated report within 2 weeks This would then go to the Board and they would decide how much of the report would be made public <p>A discussion ensued with the following points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CS had received concerns from Freddie Naish (FN) that the Proposal had been drafted by people who had no understanding of competition climbing CS had agreed to the Proposal at a recent Board meeting under duress, he was in full agreement with the comments he had been sent by FN 			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposal only seemed to deal with part of the pyramid of competition climbing – this was incorrect the Proposal address both of the points raised by the CCPG Report The BMC recognised it needed to provide for the full pyramid of competition climbing, from grassroots through to elite, to veterans and those who just wanted to compete for fun The CEO was happy to do a presentation for Council about the Proposal – it was agreed this would be held on 22 June at 7.30pm If Council had any feedback on the Proposal following this, it would be helpful if they could feed that back to the CNDs who could then feed it to the CEO 	<p>CEO to set up presentation on the Proposal for Council on 22.06.23 @ 7.30pm</p>	<p>PD</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
19.4	<p>The President moved on to the third item which was the CCPG Report. ASa noted it was very difficult to comment on the solutions being proposed, without knowing what the problem was.</p> <p>The President had set out the next steps with the CCPG Report at minute 19.3 above.</p>			
19.5	<p>The meeting then discussed the fourth item which was an update on course correction. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on this had been covered at the AGM There was a proposal for a volunteer task force to help support membership growth e.g. getting volunteers to Stanage Edge to tell those who were there all about the work of the BMC It would be good for volunteers to be provided with a consistent message to use to help with membership growth 			
20	National Area			
20.1	<p>The President noted this agenda item was being dealt with now as SH had to leave prior to the end of the meeting.</p> <p>SH referred to the paper provided to Council and made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposal was to establish a national area to sit alongside the current geographical areas 			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a trial of one year was suggested with up to three meetings a year, which would be online only online polling could be used at such meetings to get member approval or views on particular topics breakout rooms could be used on zoom e.g. one for indoor climbers, one for hill walkers etc. it would be helpful for the NECs so that they could get membership views at a national level and it could create a feeder for local areas if some staff had time to attend that would be great e.g. if Niall wanted to do a quiz, but they could be run with minimal staff input he was seeking a vote from Council as to whether they wanted to trial it or not 			
20.2	<p>The meeting discussed the proposal and made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there was the possibility to hold one big national meeting and then use the breakout rooms for the Areas it would help those members who did not have a geographical home e.g. the Chair lived in Scotland was it time to look at replacing areas with something more modern particularly as now there were other methods available to engage with members, not just meetings they should not be seen as meetings but as forums or something else it would need to be ensured that they did not become a place where people went to complain about the BMC whether setting this up would lead those who currently attended Area meetings to stop attending those if it would create a risk to the volunteer funnel by placing an extra burden on Area chairs and secretaries as they might feel they would have to attend the national meetings too the proposal should be co-created from the start (i.e. between staff and volunteers) <p><i>Not sure if there was a defined outcome from this so have just put action</i></p>	<p>Conversation to take place around resources required for this proposal</p>	<p>SH & PD</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
21	10th MC Meeting			
21.1	Agreed to separate meeting and run on 7 Oct, and need to adjust Follow-up meeting	<p>Reschedule Teamwork Calendar</p>	<p>LV</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

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22 22b	AOB Kilnsey			
22b.1	<p>The meeting discussed the fact that the land at Kilnsey was up for sale, the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Land Management Group had said that Kilnsey did not meet the criteria for the BMC to purchase it, but it was a good cause other options were being looked at such as supporting a crowdfunding as the BMC did not have the money to buy it Savills were dealing with the sale, the deadline for bids was 6 July and there was a lot of interest Any crowdfunding would need to take into account the costs to manage the site in the first year, which was about £20k After the first year it would cost between £2k-£5k to manage the site Thanks were given to the staff involved in this as they had made a difference 			
22a	Co-option – Clubs Constituency Councillor			
22a.1	<p>The President noted that Peter Neden (PN) had been unable to submit his nomination for the role at the AGM. He added PN had queried whether the role was needed as the Clubs Committee did seem to cover a lot of the work the role was required to do.</p> <p>PN was happy to be co-opted into the role for another year so that he could continue the work he was doing on club memberships and to allow time for Council to review the need for such a Councillor.</p> <p>The President asked the Councillors if they were happy to co-opt PN for a further year.</p> <p>Councillors unanimously agreed PN be co-opted for another year.</p>			
			PN co-opted as Clubs Constituency Councillor for another year	
22c	Council Support			
22c.1	<p>The meeting discussed this with the following points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suzanne Jones (SJ) was now assisting the Areas in getting the details of meetings out to the wider membership etc. 			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be helpful if Councillors as Area Reps could impress on the Area Chairs and Secretaries the importance of sticking to deadlines, as SJ had other roles within the BMC and if she set a deadline it was because she was able to deal with Areas by that time The office was unable to provide support for the pre and post meetings There was the possibility of Councillors taking it in turns to take the minutes The President had looked at an app called Fathom which was used by UIAA, it turned transcripts into minutes, he could trial it at the next Council meeting There was a question about who in the office should be sent information to go on the Area community website and whether Mariella could assist with this The President would be requesting a Tony replacement in the budget for 2024 	CEO to check who in the office is the point of contact for the Area community website	PD	ASAP
22d.1	<p>JW raised the point that he felt Owen Burgess had been harshly treated. This led to a discussion with the following points raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The President had been very clear that in order to co-opt it would need to be unanimous, and no one had commented on that The President was clear in his email that it only required one veto for the co-option to be blocked, people understood the difference between a veto and a vote against If Council wanted to set up a task and finish group to create a new process for the co-option of Area Reps that was fine Area Reps should be elected JW felt the use of a veto was the questionable element of the process It should be easier for Area Reps to be co-opted to fill a casual vacancy <p>It was agreed the President would prepare a paper setting out a process which could then be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	President to prepare a paper on the process to be followed to co-opt a Councillor	AS	By DATE
22e.2	<p>The President informed Council that Emma Hope had now gone on maternity leave and Greg Cropper was providing cover.</p> <p>Council welcomed Greg and would like to pass on their congratulations to Emma at the appropriate time.</p>			
22f.3	<p>CS then said that he had a lot of concerns regarding competition climbing, and what had been said at the AGM was only the tip of the iceberg. The CCPG Report had highlighted risks, and these had come to fruition.</p>			

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	<p>He therefore said he had been left with no option but to resign as a director and Councillor particularly as he was the director with responsibility for competition climbing and so he was at greater risk than other Board members. It was impossible for him to continue due to the potential reputational damage and other risks.</p> <p>He said he was happy to still provide input, but he could no longer be a director</p> <p>The CoSec noted that under the articles of association one month's notice was required, and she asked CS to provide her with a written resignation, she would then file his resignation at Companies House a month from the date of the written resignation.</p> <p>The President thanked CS for all of his support, and input over the years.</p> <p>The CEO noted that where issues had been identified, they had been explored and that nothing had been buried, with specialists being consulted on safeguarding issues over the years. He therefore did not hold the same opinion as CS.</p> <p>Council gave a formal vote of thanks to CS for his tenacity and perseverance. It was noted it would be good to retain CS's skillset somehow.</p>			

23 Date of next Meetings

- Tuesday 4 July 2023 – post-meeting – on Zoom

Zoom links for above meetings are on the [Teamwork Calendar](#).

Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the President closed the meeting at 2.30pm.

Summary of actions: See INSERT LINK ONCE ACTIONS ADDED TO TEAMWORK (link only available to Council members)

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
16.1.1	NomCom to provide Council with feedback on skills	RM	ASAP
16.1.1	Schedule of 2024 meetings to be provided	AS	By 08.07.23

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
16.1.1	Induction to be provided to new Councillors	AS	By 08.07.23
16.1.3	Deep dive on new proposal re CCPG to be organised for Council	RM & PD	ASAP
16.1.4	Ann Craft training session to be made available to Council	LV	ASAP
16.2	Signed minutes to be uploaded to Teamwork and the website	LV	ASAP
17.3	Insight information to be provided to Council	AS	ASAP
17.5	CCO to provide slides to Council and to add in branding to the next session	GF	ASAP
17.6	AS to check whether the proposal (re diff memberships) needed formal Council approval	AS	ASAP
20.2	Conversation to take place around resources required for National area proposal	SH & PD	ASAP
18.1	SC to speak to Sean about the DP role	SC	ASAP
19.1	CEO to check membership numbers and update Council accordingly	PD	ASAP
19.2	President and CEO to discuss timeline for Council feedback	AS & PD	ASAP
19.3	CEO to set up presentation on the Proposal for Council on 22.06.23 @ 7.30pm	PD	ASAP
22a.1	CEO to check who in the office is the point of contact for the Area community website	PD	ASAP
22.1	President to prepare a paper on the process to be followed to co-opt a Councillor	AS	???

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

Signed  _____ Date 5/7/23 _____
Andy Syme, President