

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## Members' Council

Draft minutes of the Members' Council meeting held on Saturday 7 October 2023

### In Attendance

#### Voting Members

##### Elected Councillors

President, and Chair of the meeting (the Chair)

Peak, and Deputy Chair

Cymru North Wales

Cymru North Wales

Cymru South Wales

Midlands

North East

North East

North West

Peak

South West

Yorkshire

Nationally Elected Councillor for Rock Climbers

Nationally Elected Councillor for Indoor Climbers

Nationally Elected councillor for Mountaineers

Andy Syme

Sean Milner

Neal Hockley

Tarquin Shipley

Steve Quinton

Ian Wyatt

Jon Punshon

Jonathan White

Andy Say

Sean Milner

Trevor Smith

Martin Christmas

Steve Clark

Stuart Holmes

Aaron Hodgson

##### Specialist Councillors

Clubs Committee Councillor

Training Youth and Walls Committee Councillor

Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Funded Partners

Pete Salenieks

Abbi Blakey

Mohammed Dhalech

Guy Jarvis

##### Standing Observers

Hill Waking Group

Board Chair

Senior Independent Director

Peter Judd

Roger Murray

Caroline Worboys

##### Also attending

Access and Conservation (Officer Policy), SMT member

Head of Sport and Community Development, SMT member

Safeguarding Manager

Catherine Flitcroft

Jon Garside

Helen Murphy

### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Sam Harris, Rose Gare-Simmons, Mike Parsons, Peter Needham.

Peter Needham has informed the Chair of his resignation as Constituency Councillor for BMC Affiliated Club members. The Chair read out his resignation letter which noted Peter's reasons for stepping down. Peter was thanked for his contributions and Council committed to consider the points he raised.

### 2. Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest were noted for Andy Say, Trevor Smith and Peter Salenieks for item 7, Council Nominated Elections

### 3. Urgent Issues for AOB

BMC Finances, Clubs Committee Chair, BMC Participation Statement and the Guinness Book of Records.

### 4. Minutes of the previous meeting and outstanding actions

[Action & Discussions of the July 4 meeting](#) were approved. These to be published in the same style as the 23 May minutes. There were no minutes for 5 September meeting due to Members Council workload and a lack of staff support. Council reviewed [the list of outstanding actions on Teamwork](#).

Helen Wilson has suggested the evening of 2 November as the induction meeting for new councillors.

**ACTION:** Andy Syme to liaise with Helen and relevant councillors about this.

### 5. Agreement of 2024 Council meeting dates and format

[The Chair's paper](#) was discussed.

Option 2 within the paper was agreed: Members' Council to retain twelve meetings a year, with members managing minutes for the pre and post meetings themselves, recording actions and decisions only. A BMC staff member to minute the four main meetings.

The BMC will be appointing a Governance and Compliance Manager to replace Lucy Valerio. That staff member will then recruit someone to provide secretarial support for Board and Members' Council.

The benefit and different purposes of Vision Events and Open Forums was discussed. The former will be kept but not seen as the appropriate forum for wider member engagement on a routine basis.

### 6. Council and Senior Management Team

SMT members Cath Flitcroft and Jon Garside spoke with Council about the impact of behaviours, especially online, on staff morale, and their concerns that more staff might leave. Cath and Jon noted how they saw Councillors as part of the workforce and so in an elevated position compared to other BMC members. Councillors expressed their support for the staff team and discussions concluded with the following conclusions:

- Councillors to reflect on potential impact of their online posts. If a post is required and whether it will benefit the organisation.
- The need for challenge to be made in a positive and respectful manner.
- Jon, Cath or other SMT staff will attend future full Members Council meetings
- The Chair plans to attend the next staff meeting.

**ACTION:** The Chair to communicate Council's support of staff.

**ACTION:** Mohammed Dhalech offered to put together some training for Members' Council which will explore the issues discussed.

The challenge for constituency councillors to communicate with their constituents was noted.

**ACTION:** The Chair to speak with the CCO about communication strategy and engagement with the wider community.

### 7. Council Nominated Directors

Roger Murray spoke to the [skills matrix](#) and his [paper](#).

Peter Salenieks, Andy Say and Trevor Smith made presentations in turn to Council about their nomination. Peter was seeking a year's term to provide continuity during this period. Andy and Trevor were seeking three-year terms. The voting results were:

Andy Say	Trevor Smith	Peter Salenieks
Yes 8	Yes 14	Yes 12
No 5	No 0	No 1
Abstain 1	Abstain 0	Abstain 1

All three Councillors were duly elected as Council Nominated Directors.

A brief Guidebook discussion highlighted the BMC not having a clear strategy for this work area and how the BMC's guidebook IP is used and managed. No action was taken forward.

Councillors were informed that the Board has always had good presence of staff at their meetings alongside the CEO. Senior Leadership Team members Gavin Finch and Joelle Chisolm attended Board when Paul Davies was in post. Gavin continues to attend with no voting rights. Most Board meetings have also had other staff members.

## **8. BMC AGM**

The Chair talked to his [paper](#) and the Board decision to hold a virtual only AGM. The money saved in not holding an in-person AGM would be directed to member open forum events. There was disquiet from some members about this decision and the lack of Council involvement. The following motion was tabled: 'The Council would like to express their disappointment at the Board making a decision on the AGM format without consulting Council.'

Agree 9

Disagree 1

Abstain 4

**ACTION:** Chair to communicate vote to Board

Lucy Valerio was thanked for all her work at the BMC.

Jon Punshon talked to the points in his paper on concerns he had about delivery of the 2023 AGM weekend.

## **9. Safeguarding Presentation**

BMC Safeguarding Manager Helen Murphy delivered a presentation outlining how Safeguarding operates within the BMC and how concerns reported to the organisation are managed.

## **10. Senior Leadership Team Reconstitution**

Senior Independent Director Caroline Worboys outlined the Board's thinking of the skills and background for the CEO and the Senior Leadership Team.

The Senior Management Team has created a delegation matrix describing key CEO roles now being overseen by members of the Senior Management Team and the Board member they liaise with. There is a Board quartet of Andy, Roger, Martyn and Caroline taking a leading role since the CEO left.

Caroline noted how the Board has been working well with prior to and during the period of the BMC not having a CEO, though she has not been able to spend time related to her membership organisation expertise, the reason for her joining the Board.

## **11. BMC Finances**

The BMC Finance and Audit committee has completed phase one of its investigation into the BMC's current financial challenges presented by accounting within the GB Climbing department. This work will take some time to complete but the FAC and Board will provide an update to the MC on 24 Oct. Once any impacts of the error are clarified an update on the error and any corrections will be provided to members; until then please allow FAC to undertake their work to provide the Board and MC with the facts which can be then actioned.

Whatever the outcome of this work the headline is that while the BMC finances are under pressure they are fundamentally OK; membership still raising, albeit on same trajectory as last year, and the Board and MC have no concerns that the BMC will 'go bust'.

Council then discussed the ramifications and were assured that there are no concerns about budgeting issues in other BMC departments.

Roger Murray has had very supportive conversations with UK Sport about the current financial situation and help they may be able to provide.

Roger proposed a deep dive finance meeting with Council, Finance & Audit Committee and relevant Board Members on 24 October when there will be better visibility on YE23 numbers.

**ACTION:** Roger to draft a statement about finances for area meetings.

**ACTION:** Jon Garside to let Suzanne Jones know so the Teamwork calendar can be changed

## 12. Any Other Business

**Use of the land at BMC owned crags.** Cath Flitcroft was asked if there is activity the BMC could undertake on its holdings to champion land management. Cath noted that carbon sequestration programs are being considered and thanked Council for raising this.

**Guinness Book of Records.** A letter has been sent questioning the way in which the rationale for recognising the first person to climb all fourteen 8000m peaks has been changed.

**Participation statement.** The way in which the new statement is to be launched was raised. Jon Garside informed Council that he had already taken this forward with the BMC MarComms team to ensure a launch of some kind takes place. Stakeholders and partners would be kept in the loop too.

**Clubs Committee.** A role description for the Chair has been drafted.

**ACTION:** Trevor Smith to circulate the draft to Board and Councillors for their thoughts.

## 13. Date of next meeting

October 24, 7pm, Zoom

The next full meeting vision events will be Hill Walking, followed by Mountaineering and then Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Item	Action	Involving	Target date
4	Liaise with Helen Wilson and relevant councillors about induction for new Councillors.	Council Chair	Done
6	Communicate Council's support of staff.	Council Chair	Done
6	Training for Members' Council explore issues discussed.	Mohammed Dhalech	Next meeting opportunity
6	Speak with the CCO about communication strategy and engagement with the wider community.	Council Chair	ASAP
7	Communicate AGM vote to Board	Council Chair	Done
11	Statement about finances drafted for area meetings.	Board Chair	ASAP
11	Suzanne Jones informed of Members' Council meeting date change to 24 October.	Jon Garside	Done
12	Draft role description for Clubs Committee Chair shared with Board and Members' Council.	Trevor Smith	Done

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



25/10/23

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Andy Syme, Chair