



## News Release

1 September 2011 - for immediate release

### **MPs and Mountaineers take to the fells to climb their own Everest**

MPs will be donning their hiking boots tomorrow (Friday 2 September) to join eminent mountaineer and Everest summiteer Sir Chris Bonington on his favourite walk up Blencathra and Sharp Edge in the Lake District. The walk has been organised by the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) – the representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales – which helped to formally establish the new All Party Parliamentary Group on Mountaineering (Mountaineering APPG) earlier this year.

The Parliamentarians who are all members of the new APPG will take to the fells alongside Sir Chris, BMC CEO Dave Turnbull and others from the mountaineering community including members of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club (FRCC). The walk will follow a classic ridge walk up Blencathra and along Sharp Edge. The Parliamentarians who have signed up for the walk are: David Davis, Lord Greaves, Lilian Greenwood, Nia Griffith, Lord Haworth, Denis MacShane, John Mann, Jamie Reed, David Rutley, Derek Twigg and local MP Rory Stewart.

Sport England has identified climbing and mountaineering as one of the fastest growing sports in the UK; the purpose of the event is to raise awareness of the benefits that mountain-related activities bring to the well-being of the nation; the importance of our mountain landscapes and heritage; and also the contribution that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering make to local economies, especially the positive impact tourism has on rural economies including the Lake District.

BMC CEO Dave Turnbull said *“This is the first event of this type. We are delighted with the positive response from Parliamentarians who will be able to hear from the climbing community about the importance of mountain-related pursuits to the community as a whole. Thank you to APPG Chairs John Mann and David Rutley for formally establishing the group. We look forward to continued dialogue with Parliamentarians through the APPG.”*

The BMC will also be taking the opportunity to discuss key issues with the MPs. Two of the major issues the BMC is seeking assurances on are the continuation of the coastal access scheme and also how environmental regulations may be affected by the Red Tape Challenge.

The BMC has campaigned long and hard for the coastal access improvements around the English coast, as promised by the Marine & Coastal Access Bill, but so far Government has only started work on six 30 km stretches and the BMC is keen to hear how this will be rolled out around the country. The BMC is actively engaged in the Government’s red tape review and seek assurances that regulations which are of importance to the climbing and hill walking community are not unduly removed without discussion with the BMC. The BMC will also be voicing the views of its membership over protecting the future of public forests, calling for public access and conservation to go hand in hand.

**-Ends-**

#### **Notes to editors**

- The 5-6 hour walk will start at The Mill Inn, Mungrisdale, CX11 0XR. Interviews and photo / filming opportunities with Sir Chris Bonington and others will be possible at 9.30am before the walk gets underway. The group is planning to get back to The Mill Inn at approx 4.30pm (subject to weather etc) where there may be further opportunities.
- The BMC is the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales. It has 74,000 members with an office base in Manchester. [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

177-179 Burton Road  
Manchester M20 2BB  
[www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

Tel: 0161 445 6111  
Fax: 0161 445 4500  
e-mail: [office@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:office@thebmc.co.uk)

- The purpose of the Mountaineering APPG is, *'to promote the sporting and recreational interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers; to raise awareness of the physical and social benefits of mountaineering; and to campaign for sustainable access to mountains, cliffs and open countryside'*. The APPG is jointly chaired by David Rutley (Conservative MP for Macclesfield) and John Mann (Labour MP for Bassetlaw).
- For further information contact Tina Gardner (BMC Press & PR Officer) on 0161 438 3337 or email [tina@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:tina@thebmc.co.uk) .