



**British
Mountaineering
Council**

Future Policy Review 2003-05



Working for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers

March 2006

The Future Policy Review Steering Group

The Steering Group was made up of the following:

Bob Moulton – Chair (15)
Andy Cave (2 out of 5) resigned after the 6th meeting
Nick Colton (5 out of 5)
Miriam Denney (4)
Dave Garnett (2 out of 7)
Anna Gregory (7 out of 11)
John Horscroft (5)
Julian King (6 out of 7)
John Mason (5)
Paddy O'Neill (10 out of 14)
Iain Peter (10)
Kate Phillips (2 out of 11)
Ian Smith (5) resigned after the 7th meeting
Dave Turnbull (14)
Mark Vallance (14)
Ken Wilson (15)

Numbers in brackets show the number of meetings attended up to the end of 2004 (out of a possible 15 unless otherwise stated).



Bob Moulton - Chair of Steering Group



Mark Vallance - BMC President 2003-06

The BMC would like to pass on a special note of thanks to Tony Halliwell, the Specialist Committee Chairs and the many other individuals and organisations who contributed to this Future Policy Review.

Note: copies of the BMC Future Policy Reviews from 1976 and 1986 are available on request from the BMC office and can also be found at www.thebmc.co.uk.

Contents

Foreword	4
1.0 Background	5
2.0 The Review	6
3.0 Findings	7
3.1 The BMC's Core Policies	7
3.2 Area Committees and Volunteers	7
3.3 Management Structure	8
3.3.1 <i>Management Committee</i>	8
3.3.2 <i>Executive Committee</i>	8
3.3.3 <i>Finance Committee</i>	8
3.3.4 <i>General</i>	8
3.4 Voting Structure	9
3.5 Specialist Committees	9
3.5.1 <i>Access & Conservation</i>	9
3.5.2 <i>Competitions, Climbing Walls & High Performance</i>	9
3.5.3 <i>Guidebooks</i>	10
3.5.4 <i>Technical</i>	10
3.5.5 <i>Training & Youth</i>	10
3.5.6 <i>Huts</i>	10
3.5.7 <i>International</i>	10
3.6 Heritage	10
3.7 Equal Opportunities	11
3.8 BMC Membership	11
3.9 Membership Services	11
3.10 Communications	11
3.11 Staffing	12
3.12 The BMC's Position in the United Kingdom	12
3.13 Future Issues and Opportunities	12
4.0 Implementation	13
5.0 Conclusion	14

Appendices

APPENDIX 1	<i>BMC Future Policy Review 2003 - 2005 Scope and Terms of Reference</i>	16
APPENDIX 2	<i>Future Policy Review Steering Group Recommendations as approved by the Management Committee</i>	17
APPENDIX 3	<i>Core Organisational Policies</i>	22



Foreword

At the time of the last policy review in 1986, the BMC was managed by a Committee of elected volunteers assisted by ten paid staff. In the intervening twenty years BMC membership has tripled from 22,350 to 64,000. Perhaps of more significance has been the growth of individual membership from 4,350 (19%) to 36,000 (56%). Today the BMC is a company limited by guarantee, with a turnover of £2m, managed by a CEO and a staff of twenty-four.

This review differs from those of 1976 and 1986 in the degree of involvement and consultation with the membership. Apart from fifteen meetings of the Future Policy Review Steering Group, there have been ten regional consultation meetings, three major open meetings, four meetings with specialist groups, and two membership surveys. Throughout the process, the Steering Group has referred its findings, and provisional recommendations, back to the Management Committee, and in some cases to the Area Meetings, in feedback loops that have provoked reaction and stimulated debate.

It has not been an easy assignment and we owe a debt of gratitude to the Steering Group, and particularly to Bob Moulton, already busy as a volunteer on other fronts, for taking on the chair, staying with it through thick and thin - there has been quite a lot of both - and for driving many thousands of miles in the process. No stone has been left unturned in a process that has, without doubt, been the most wide ranging, involved, difficult and important membership project the BMC has ever undertaken.

Mark Vallance
BMC President



1.0 Background

In June 2003 the BMC Management Committee agreed to initiate a widespread review of the BMC's policies and procedures. In July 2003 the Future Policy Review Steering Group was set up and its Terms of Reference were agreed by the Management Committee in December 2003. The Steering Group met fifteen times between 2003-05.

'Climbing' in its broadest sense is an enormous industry these days - one that has grown substantially since the Future Policy Reviews of the 1970s and 1980s. The 'outdoor industry' is worth some £1.5bn and the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in 2001 gave a graphic demonstration of the value of outdoor recreation to the nation. Participation in climbing and hill walking has increased significantly over the past 20-30 years. There are now over 350 climbing walls nationwide, many hundreds of outdoor activities centres, providers and retailers as well as various trade and associated bodies involved with different aspects of the sport. Given the increasing commercial pressures to develop the sport, and the expectations of a diverse and growing membership, it is essential that 'climbing' retains a strong and adequately resourced national body to ensure that the best interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers continue to be represented at all levels and that their freedoms are defended and promoted.

The BMC's last formal policy review was in 1986. Since then there has been a major growth in BMC activity, much of it over the last decade. This has tended to be a sequence of ad hoc initiatives. It has brought with it many additional responsibilities with a commensurate added workload for both staff and volunteers. The staff numbers have grown accordingly but the main volunteer officials have been steadily overloaded.

The broader national background is that people are working harder and longer and their leisure time is becoming increasingly precious. The result is a potential decline in the numbers of knowledgeable and competent people ready and able to make a sustained commitment to our main representative institution – the paucity of committed activists in the 30-50 age group now being a matter of concern. The erratic performance and interest in the Area Committees reflects this. Members only tend to complain when things go wrong. The matter is further complicated by the potential for tensions between the clubs and the individual members – the former irritated by the steadily rising subscription demands (as a result of civil liability insurance premium increases), the latter equally concerned with high subscription rates, puzzled by the concessions given to the clubs, and irritated by what is perceived as their political impotence (in comparison to the club's block votes).

It was against this background that the Steering Group was operating and a glance at its composition and attendance record (see inside front cover) merely serves to reinforce the previous analysis. Our sport, and probably most others, faces problems created by a rapidly changing world. The contradiction of 'increased expectation without a large number of volunteer workers to bring it about' implies a growing reliance on a salaried bureaucracy.

The Steering Group looked critically at the activities of the BMC with a view to identifying what the BMC should stop doing as well as what additional responsibilities it should take on. We were conscious of the size of the bureaucracy and the danger of volunteers being alienated and everything being done by paid officials. The culture of the organisation should be one of assisting and supporting the volunteers and of being part of the solution for volunteers and not part of their problem.



2.0 The Review

A strong emphasis was placed on consultation. This started with a series of ten well-publicised Open Meetings held throughout England and Wales in autumn 2003, which were attended by some 450 people. An article on the Open Meetings was published in Summit 33 (March 2004). A BMC Membership Survey was carried out over the summer of 2004 with a targeted questionnaire (drawn up with professional assistance, which ensured that the survey was statistically valid) being sent to both Individual and Club members. All clubs and other agencies were invited to comment. A volunteer involved with a successful Area Committee was contracted for a total period of twenty days to assist and advise the other areas. Four “State Of British Climbing” debates were held in Wales, the Midlands, Yorkshire and London, and this was complimented by a series of articles in Summit. A Clubs seminar was held in September 2004, and this in turn led to the establishment of a Clubs Voting Structure Working Group. Area Committees were also invited to comment at various stages. Chairs of the Specialist Committees and relevant officers were invited to meetings of the Steering Group or to make written submissions.

The 2004 Membership survey showed that members considered the most important services and benefits of BMC membership to be Civil Liability and Personal Accident insurance, access to huts and Summit magazine. The BMC’s national representation role and Access & Conservation work were also an important reason for joining the BMC. In addition the BMC’s work on Safety & Training and Technical Research were also seen as a high priority. Competitions, Performance and Coaching and Heritage were seen as being the least important work areas. The medium priority work areas were: Guidebooks, Youth Development, Club Huts, International Affairs and Climbing Walls.

The recommendations of the Steering Group were submitted to the Management Committee in four stages, with the Chair of the Steering Group presenting all but the first of the four reports. The recommendations approved by the Management Committee are shown in Appendix 2.

The Steering Group were impressed by the commitment and the amount of work put in by members of the BMC’s committees, particularly their Chairs, and by other volunteers. The recommendations made by the Steering Group were in no way a criticism of these volunteers, and they should be seen in the context of making the BMC work more efficiently. Valuable contributions were made to the Review process by Mountain Leader Training England, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, club representatives and many other organisations and individuals.



3.0 Findings

3.1 The BMC's Core Policies

Since the 1986 review there has been major growth and development in both the BMC's activities and in its policies, although many of these were not recorded as such. The BMC's policies should be collected together in a single document. Such a document can never be 100% up to date or accurate, but it will provide a reference point for anyone new to the organisation, and a basis for any future policy changes, which should of course be added to the document. (Note: subsequent to this finding, a policy document was agreed by the Management Committee in October 2005, see Appendix 3).

3.2 Area Committees and Volunteers

The Area Committees are vital to the BMC's democratic structure and the way that members of the BMC can make their views count, both in terms of attendance at meetings and representation at Management Committee. Everything possible should be done to improve attendance at Area meetings and to enable meaningful discussions of important issues. The BMC should encourage the Areas to experiment with new meeting formats and structures, including setting up smaller Area Committees or sub-groups, where there is sufficient support. The meetings should strike a balance between being businesslike and entertaining. Although each area is different, committees can gain from the experience of other areas. In recognition of the fact that the word 'committee' can be off-putting to some, that the Area Committees should be renamed 'Area Meetings'.

The BMC is in the enviable position of having an excellent volunteer structure. The BMC must reinforce a culture of valuing, supporting and encouraging its volunteers and of not creating problems for them. The BMC's aim over the next five years should be to increase the ease with which volunteers can perform their work and improve the flow of new volunteers into the sport by devising a practical and affordable volunteer strategy. In summary the strategy should include:

- Employing a full time Volunteer Officer (appointed in 2005), and looking into the need for establishing a network of paid support mechanisms for Area Committees and local volunteers.
- Ensuring that administrative support is provided.
- Setting up a budget for promoting Area Committees.
- Identifying volunteer roles and implementing specific initiatives for each area of expertise.
- Encouraging new volunteers, particularly young people.
- Improving the interface between the BMC and volunteers. Staff must always be aware of the need to help volunteers.
- Improving the recognition of voluntary effort by circulating good practice and rewarding exceptional effort.

- Improving communications between all levels of the organisation.
- Improving training of volunteers.

3.3 Management Structure

3.3.1 Management Committee

Given the large size of the Management Committee and the fact that it meets only five times a year, it is not properly equipped to deal with management issues and so is not effective. The Management Committee does not, cannot and should not 'manage the BMC'. Day-to-day operational management of the BMC should be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) assisted and advised by the Executive Committee. The role of the Management Committee should be to determine policy; the need for policies may be identified by the Management Committee or elsewhere but decisions about policy should be made by the Management Committee. The Management Committee should be renamed to reflect this change. Given the large size of the Management Committee (the Steering Group accepted, reluctantly, that it could not easily be reduced), disciplines need to be put in place both for agenda preparation and the running of meetings. A recommendation that the meetings be chaired by an independent Chair and not by the President was rejected by the Management Committee.

The Management Committee should be responsible for ratifying policy and a culture should be instilled within the BMC whereby policy changes are reported before they are actioned. When the CEO makes a decision it should always be based on existing policy; it should be very rare that the CEO needs to change policy and this should only be with the approval of the Executive Committee and with ratification by the Management Committee.

3.3.2 Executive Committee

The real management of the BMC has for many years rested with the CEO; this is what he/she is paid for, and this is how it should be. This should be recognised, appointments to the Executive Committee should be made accordingly, and 'checks and balances' to oversee this structure should be strengthened.

3.3.3 Finance Committee

The Steering Group are satisfied that following three years of financial deficits, satisfactory procedures and practices for controlling expenditure have now been put in place following various internal audits and investigations together with an audit by UK Sport. The role of the Finance Committee as a sub-committee of the Executive Committee has now been clarified.

3.3.4 General

Consideration was given to recommending that a 'Standing Advisory Committee' should be set up to give more time to matters that currently do not get considered in depth and to act as a 'second chamber'. Ultimately however, it was felt that this would add another 'management' level to the current structure so instead a number of other recommendations were made to address various shortcomings in the current arrangements i.e.

- that ad-hoc limited life working groups should be set up to deal with specific issues.
- that a whistle-blowing policy be introduced.
- that there should be regular Future Policy Reviews every 4 or 5 years.
- that the need for succession planning and identifying potential officers and chairs for committees be recognised.
- that the BMC should only set up new committees and trusts after very careful consideration. It would seem that this has not always been the case in the past.

3.4 Voting Structure

At the start of the Future Policy Review this was a contentious issue facing the BMC. The outcome of the Voting Structure Working Group's work (which involved a representative cross-section of the clubs, see Section 2.0) was that the clubs themselves recommended moving towards a one-member-one-vote structure and this was approved in principle by the AGM in April 2005, with the necessary changes to the Articles of Association being referred to the 2006 AGM.

Despite the change in the membership voting, the role of the clubs (who founded the BMC in 1944, and who still provide the majority of the voluntary officials) is seen as an important part of the BMC for the foreseeable future.

3.5 Specialist Committees

The Specialist Committees are responsible for specific aspects of the BMC's work and are a key part of the BMC. As a result of this Review, the BMC now has a structure of eight committees (Access & Conservation, Climbing Walls, Competitions, Huts, Guidebooks, International, Technical, and Training & Youth).

The Steering Group found that the BMC had committees who did not meet, virtual committees, and sub-groups that may or may not exist and which do not get mentioned in the relevant Terms of Reference. It was also apparent that the Terms of Reference for several committees did not reflect fully what the committees actually do or are required to do. There is also a trend away from calling these bodies committees. The overall result is that the committee structure is very difficult for the membership to understand. The main reason for these problems seemed to be that the Management Committee's annual review process has failed over a number of years.

Recommendations have been made to address these failings and to ensure that the full costs of the activities overseen by Specialist Committees are made clear, and that consideration should be given to finding ways to offset the inevitable Manchester bias in the membership of Specialist Committees. Specific observations and recommendations are given in 3.5.1 to 3.5.7 below.

3.5.1 Access & Conservation

The BMC's Access & Conservation work has been clearly identified as the highest priority for the membership. The committee must have a high profile in covering the full range of access and conservation activities. The committee's high-level work with the Government on the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) legislation and related issues have been extremely important to the BMC and this should continue. However, we felt that the committee's work had become somewhat dominated by CRoW and that more time and effort should be spent on regional issues, BMC owned and managed land, supporting the area Access Representatives and taking a strategic overview of the issues of importance to climbers and walkers. It was also felt that the committee should have policies on important issues such as wind farm development (where they impinge on the interests of climbers and hill walkers), vegetation growth on and around crags (i.e. conservation of the climbing environment, as well as conservation of flora and fauna). It was also felt that the BMC should avoid getting involved in general 'environmental' campaigning, both because of the need to concentrate resources on matters of direct concern to climbers and because there are often two sides to the argument.

3.5.2 Competitions, Climbing Walls & High Performance

It is important that the balance between Competitions and Climbing Walls is kept in check, as there is a danger that the work required in running the former can mean that important work on Climbing Walls is neglected. Mindful of the low priority given to Competitions by the membership and to the relatively high costs involved, the option of the BMC passing its competitions activities over to a new, separate body was considered but was rejected in the present circumstances. However this matter may need to be revisited by the BMC if climbing competitions take on a higher profile, in say the context of future Olympics. The High Performance Steering Group has now ceased to be a specialist committee as such, but its work should continue and be broadened out to develop stronger links with the training world, and to ensure that the lessons learnt from work at the elite level are used for the benefit of the grassroots level and outdoors.

3.5.3 Guidebooks

As the only area-based BMC activity that currently incurs significant costs and hence an element of subsidy from members throughout the country, it is particularly important that the cost of this activity is transparent and carefully monitored. For a number of reasons the guidebook activity has changed over the last five years from an entirely voluntary operation that generated significant profits for the BMC to an operation employing a full time officer and currently incurring a cost to the BMC. The success of the current operation has been demonstrated by the highly-acclaimed Roaches and Burbage/Millstone guidebooks. The options of hiving off or contracting out the whole operation to another organisation were considered but rejected, and it was considered that the new operation should be given the chance to prove itself under a monitored financial regime. The position of the 'BMC Guidebook Account' (accumulated from guidebook profits from the previous, voluntary guidebook operation over the years and currently kept in a separate account) should be regularized.

3.5.4 Technical

In the recent 2004 Membership Survey the work of the Technical Committee and Equipment Investigation Panel was noted as the second highest priority for the membership after Access & Conservation. The emphasis of the committee is changing from identifying failures in the design and manufacture of equipment, to misuse of equipment, and this requires close links with the Training & Youth Committee. The work of the committee should be made relevant to the needs of the wider membership, and the advice given made easily accessible to all.

3.5.5 Training & Youth

Youth was considered a priority issue due to changing child protection requirements and the need for the BMC to satisfy itself that its involvement with young people are in line with outdoor industry best practice. The BMC must remain committed to supporting and encouraging young people who are interested in climbing, hill walking and mountaineering. The BMC should continue to provide advice and guidance to those interested in mountain training in its widest sense (including climbing walls, rock climbing, mountain walking, winter climbing and alpinism). In general, the BMC should work with its partner organisations (MLTE, MLTW, MLTUK and MTT) in all matters relating to formal training and qualifications. Advice and guidance should be consistent throughout the above organisations and should reflect current best practice (ethics, environment etc) and be in line with advice given by other BMC committees. Combining the committees involved in Training and Youth will enable the BMC to make full use of the various Mountain Training organisations' experience with young people. It will be important that the new committee does not lose sight of the importance of volunteer-led youth activities and initiatives (both indoors and outdoors) around England and Wales.

3.5.6 Huts

The current activities of the Huts Committee were endorsed, but with the proviso that a review of the inter-relationship between the Huts Group and the three committees responsible for specific huts (Don Whillans, Glen Brittle and Alex MacIntyre) be reviewed by the Huts Group.

3.5.7 International

The International Committee's work was endorsed with no specific comments or recommendations.

3.6 Heritage

Despite the low priority given by members in the 2004 Survey it should be recognised that mountaineering archives are an important historical aspect of the sport, and the BMC should encourage (but not necessarily finance) the creation of a national archive based at a centrally located organisation (almost certainly a university) with proper facilities. The establishment of a mountain art collection and a hall of fame should also be supported on the same basis.

3.7 Equal Opportunities

The BMC's Equal Opportunities statement is an important policy. Advances have been made as regards women's participation in climbing, but similar advances have not been made in regard to participation amongst ethnic minority groups. There may be reasons why ethnic minorities are under-represented in both the BMC's membership and in climbing, but equally there may be barriers to their participation that we are not aware of. The BMC should proactively support equity initiatives, including the possibility of a domestic Ethnic Minorities Meet. The BMC must ensure that there are no removable barriers to disabled people's involvement in mountaineering activities. This applies to BMC property and land, and to access to mountaineering at an appropriate level. It is important that the BMC and affiliated clubs comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act - the BMC should go beyond it where possible and encourage its member clubs to do likewise. The BMC is working towards achieving the preliminary level of Sport England's Equality Standard.

3.8 BMC Membership

The BMC should seek to increase its membership from those who are already active in climbing, mountaineering and hill walking. In particular more should be done to attract hill walkers to join the BMC and to provide services and products that hill walkers will want to use. There is an intangible dividing line between adventurous hill walking in mountainous areas and pastoral rambling, and it is the participants of the former who the BMC should be targeting for membership.

3.9 Membership Services

The various products and services provided by the BMC to its members are an important reason why people join the BMC. The 2004 Survey confirms that members particularly value Civil Liability and Personal Accident Insurance cover, the Information Service, BMC Travel Insurance and access to huts. Surpluses from these services go towards the funding of BMC activities including Access & Conservation work. The Steering Group felt it important that the BMC maintain a professional relationship with its insurers and looked for improvements to the various types of cover wherever possible.

3.10 Communications

The BMC's image, its relationship with the media and the need to develop a publicity strategy will be of increasing importance to the BMC. A part-time Press Officer post was advertised in late 2005. The need to add lobbying skills (which was of key importance to the BMC when the CROW legislation was going through parliament) to such a post were considered, but it was recognised that if necessary this work can be bought in by using consultants.

Efficient communication between the BMC office and the membership was also seen as extremely important. Two useful means for communication with the membership are Summit (currently held in high regard in the general climbing population) and the website. A much needed re-design of the latter is currently in hand, and it is important that sufficient staff time is devoted to developing and maintaining the website. However such media are no substitute for good office practice in acknowledging and answering communications from the membership, and in good presentation and clear referencing of papers issued for meetings. The experience of communications with the office being unanswered can be extremely frustrating and de-motivating for volunteers. Many people find BMC papers to be a barrier to understanding the organisation.

3.11 Staffing

The increasing number of officers employed by the BMC makes it all the more important that staff are seen to deliver a good service to the membership. Otherwise the BMC will be open to accusations of building up a bureaucracy that is there to serve the needs of the staff. Nevertheless, we endorse the following principles:

- the fact that senior officers of the BMC be active mountaineers/climbers who are widely known and accessible (although this should not preclude the appointment of officers with specialist skills).
- that remuneration and conditions of service should be such as to ensure the recruitment and retention of well-motivated and capable staff.
- that the officer team should have an appropriate level of administrative support.

There is a danger that this will create a perception of a highly paid bureaucracy and the way to offset this perception is by ensuring that service delivery is improved and maintained at a high standard. It is important that the organisational structure reflects the increased number of staff, to ensure good management of the staff and clear reporting lines (with the CEO reporting to the President), and that the CEO has sufficient time to devote to strategic matters. In course of the Review, we endorsed the new posts (Volunteers Officer and Press Officer) that were funded by the Sport England Whole Sport Plan 2005-09. This takes the total numbers in the BMC office up to 23 full-time and two part-time. It is also important that consideration be given as to how reductions in grant income should be handled so that the BMC's priorities are observed, rather than just assume that the grant-funded activity should cease or treat each reduction on an ad hoc basis.

3.12 The BMC's Position in the United Kingdom

The BMC has a formal relationship with the Mountaineering Council for Scotland and the Mountaineering Council of Ireland through the Mountaineering Co-ordination Group (MCG), which meets at the three Councils' AGM weekends. The BMC Committee for Wales is also represented on the MCG. The BMC should support the MCG, and in particular should seek to agree Terms of Reference that reflect its role.

The Management Committee should decide upon the BMC's role in Wales, with action being required at Area Committee and political levels. The questions of whether a separate council should be set up for Wales, and if not whether the BMC should be renamed the England & Wales Mountaineering Council have now been addressed by the Management Committee and the current overall structure and name are being retained (for reasons of continuity, brand identity and efficiency, and because of the large numbers of English climbers who are active in Wales). However, this should be a willing partnership with both Welsh climbers and with the appropriate Welsh authorities. To make this work would require a financial commitment from the BMC (possibly up to £50,000, which would include the appointment of a Welsh Development Officer).

In addition to the above, the Steering Group recommended that the BMC:

- should work towards simplifying the number of Mountaineering bodies in the UK.
- should work with the Alpine Club to improve the overall services provided for mountaineers, and to investigate the Alpine Club's offer for the BMC to purchase reciprocal rights cards. The BMC should continue to be the lead organisation in the Union Internationale des Associations de Alpinisme (UIAA) for the whole of the country, and on overseas mountaineering issues.

3.13 Future Issues and Opportunities

Threats and challenges facing the BMC were identified by the Steering Group and were reported to the Management Committee. The most important of these are seen as:

- The expansion of the BMC into the 'adventurous' hill walking fraternity.
- To review the facilities and location of the BMC headquarters, both in terms of making best use of the existing office and of the possibility of a new location. There is also the potential for a joint venture with the

Alpine Club and the possible establishment of a new 'home' for mountaineering, which would house the BMC office, archives and libraries.

- Legal and statutory issues, including claims against the BMC, other bodies and against individuals, and the possibility of new legislation or regulations that could affect the freedom of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers. While it may well be that the threat of a claims culture becoming embedded in this country has been overstated (a number of recent decisions are encouraging in this respect), the BMC must keep a watching brief on all such matters.
- The differential between Individual member and Club member subscriptions. We hope that much of the demand for the BMC to become a member-only organisation will be met by the voting structure changes. However, the disproportionate cost of servicing the two types of members should be recognised. While the clubs' reaction to increases in club member's subscriptions should be taken into account, opportunities to correct this imbalance should be taken as and when they arise (e.g. through efficiency savings, the new IT system, economies of scale, inflation etc).

No recommendations were made as to priorities for spending profits as depending on circumstances this could tie hands of the BMC unnecessarily, and it is important that the BMC should have the flexibility to be responsive to one-off requests for funding. Such funding could come from either mainstream funds, or from the Access & Conservation Trust.

The BMC has also carried out a risk management workshop in May 2005 (run by specialist consultants) where risks to the organisation were identified, discussed and a risk register drafted.



4.0 Implementation

The implementation of recommendations agreed by the Management Committee has been delegated to the CEO with advice from the Executive Committee, and with the CEO submitting regular progress reports to the Management Committee. Implementation of the Future Policy Review will be a standing item on the Management Committee agenda until such time as it has been completed. Inevitably implementation will be phased over a number of months, if not years, with priorities being set by the CEO.



5.0 Conclusion

Clarification of the roles of the Management Committee, the Executive Committee and the CEO, combined with a greater discipline in running the meetings, will improve the efficiency of the organisation of the BMC. This will be supported by an agreed format for and content of the BMC's policies, which in turn will provide a framework for the development of and change to those policies. The reduction in the number of Specialist Committees should also increase the efficiency of the BMC, as will the removal of any confusion surrounding the committee structure.

The relationship between the paid staff and the volunteers (both officials and those who do the work on the ground) is crucial to the future of the BMC. On the one hand the number of paid staff and the demands of volunteers and members are gradually increasing, and on the other hand there is the danger of the paid staff becoming isolated from the volunteers and the wider membership. Getting this balance right and ensuring good communications both within the BMC and its membership and between the BMC and the outside world will be of vital importance to the organisation. To quote an opinion expressed by one hard-working and long-serving volunteer on hearing of the appointment being made to one of the new posts endorsed by this review: "Is there any point in having any contact with the BMC? They don't answer correspondence; they don't do what they promise; they just expect volunteers to get on and do the work." While we are confident that this statement is a minority view, such views do exist. The BMC must guard against any such deterioration in the relationship between the paid officials and volunteers. The recommendations for a volunteer strategy are aimed at improving this relationship, and it should be the responsibility of us all to ensure that it is implemented.

The other important balance for the BMC to strike is between the Clubs and the Individual Members under the new membership voting structure. The latter now provide the lion's share of the subscription income, but it was the Clubs who founded the BMC and who still provide the majority of the volunteers who make the BMC work. If the Clubs were to respond to the new arrangements by disengaging from the BMC, it would be the BMC's loss.

The consultation undertaken as part of this Review should form the template for regular consultation exercises in the future to ensure that the BMC's priorities reflect those of its membership.

The BMC should strive to be an organisation that climbers want to join, and one which they cannot afford not to join.

Bob Moulton
Chair, Future Policy Review Steering Group

Appendices

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APPENDIX 1

BMC Future Policy Review 2003 - 2005 Scope and Terms of Reference

Background

The BMC Management Committee gave approval for the BMC to undertake a Future Policy Review (FPR) at its meeting of 25 June 2003. The FPR follows similar initiatives undertaken by the BMC in the 1970s and 1980s. Reports of these Reviews were produced in 1976 and 1986. This document was agreed by the FPR Steering Group at its meeting of 31 July 2003 and approved by the BMC Management Committee on 6 December 2003. The Steering Group will report its initial findings on specific issues to the BMC AGM 2004. A timetable for addressing longer term issues will be agreed as the FPR process develops.

Scope of Review

The 2003 FPR will identify the key challenges facing the BMC and British Mountaineers over the next 10 years and advise on how these challenges can be addressed. It will draw on the 1976 and 1986 Reviews and the Organisational Structure Working Group 2001 to identify past policies that are still relevant, policies that need amendment and those that are now redundant. It will draw on the results of the BMC Membership Survey 2000 and identify any gaps in knowledge about membership. It will take an overview of the BMC's activities and priorities and advise on outline solutions rather than getting bogged down in detail. It will primarily focus on England and Wales - the geographical remit of the BMC. It will consult with the BMC Areas, kindred organisations (MLT, MCofS etc), technical specialists and other members of the BMC voluntary management structure. It will distinguish between those activities the BMC undertakes for its members and those it undertakes for the general public. It will address the whole of the BMC's membership and the wide range of mountain activities they pursue. It will engage climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers at all levels to generate interest, feedback and support for the BMC.

Terms of Reference

Future Challenges

Define the main challenges and problems facing the BMC and mountaineers in England and Wales over the next 10 years. Advise in outline terms how the BMC should address these issues.

Activities and Priorities

Review the BMC's specialist activities and sub-committees in terms of their relevant importance, their structure and their operational efficiencies. Recommend restructuring and refocusing as appropriate. Determine whether the BMC should be a 'facilitator' or 'provider' of services and activities.

Volunteers and Staff

Review the relationship between volunteers and paid staff at all levels within the BMC. Advise on how the BMC can better support volunteers throughout the country and also on what is an appropriate level of staffing for the organisation.

Membership Structure

Report on the state of the BMC's membership structure and the relationship between the costs and benefits of club and individual membership. Make outline recommendations for a future membership structure.

Management Structure

Advise on how the BMC's voluntary management structure can be improved.

Dave Turnbull, 0/off/con/ToRFinal, 5 Dec 2003

APPENDIX 2

Future Policy Review Steering Group Recommendations as approved by the Management Committee

The following recommendations were agreed, and in some cases amended, by the BMC's Management Committee at its meetings in June 2004, October 2004, February 2005 and June 2005.

1.0 *The BMC's Policies*

The CEO and the DCEO finalise the Policy document before the end of 2005 (so that it can form part of the final Future Policy Review report). In some cases, where there is no clear policy, conferences (where there is informed public discussion) like the June Volunteer Leaders conference should be a part of the ongoing mechanism by which BMC policy evolves.

2.0 *Volunteer Strategy*

2.1 *Volunteer Co-ordinators*

That a National Volunteer Co-ordinator be appointed. This endorses the decision already made and for which an advertisement has been placed. However the Steering Group felt that the job description needed careful definition, that the personality of the co-ordinator would be critical, and that the BMC should only appoint someone if the 'right' individual is identified.

In the medium term, the feasibility of establishing paid support mechanisms for area committees/local volunteers should be investigated. This could be a question of making payments to those already doing this sort of work, including for one-off initiatives, or it could be the appointment of a development officer in one more areas (as was the case in the South West).

The administrative work needed to provide support to volunteers and ensure be monitored with a view to ensuring that this is provided.

2.2 *Support to Area Committees and Volunteers*

Establish a budget for area committees (already agreed by ManCom), the development of this and related initiatives should be seen as a priority for the new Volunteer Coordinator. This should include looking at how volunteers can be kept fully informed of the BMC's work and the membership status of members of clubs who take on key voluntary roles for the BMC.

2.3 Other recommendations were shown in a separate appendix. To be effective these will depend on the appointment of the Volunteer Coordinator, and the prioritisation of this work be delegated to the CEO.

3.0 *Management Structure*

That the name of the Management Committee should be changed to reflect its national importance in policy making and ratifying, but that it does not manage the BMC.

That there should continue to be two representatives from each Area Committee voting on the Management Committee.

That the Management Committee should have disciplines imposed both on the seating arrangements (so that voting members are clearly identifiable) and on the submission of papers.

That the Executive Committee should continue be chaired by the President.

That the members of the Executive Committee be appointed for their business/organisational skills and knowledge of the BMC, together with their having time to do the job.

That the terms of reference shown in a separate appendix for the Executive Committee be agreed subject to any further comments from that committee, and in particular that:

- The approved minutes of the Executive Committee be made available to Management Committee members (also to Chairs of Area Committees if they are not on the Management Committee) with confidential matters removed in a manner determined by the CEO.
- The Executive Committee should oversee the work of and receive reports from the Finance Sub-Committee.
- That the posts of Hon. Treasurer and Chair of Finance can be combined.
- That the Management Committee be empowered to suspend the Articles of Association relating to Area Committees in special circumstances.

The President should continue to chair the Management Committee.

4.0 *Vice Presidents/Directors*

There be a provision for proposing a VP who would not be a director and at the same time to recommend a non-VP as director to the AGM. The existing arrangement whereby the Executive Committee recommend a 'leadership slate' to the Management Committee should continue, and where appropriate this could include a non-Vice President director.

5.0 General

Implementation of the agreed Future Policy Review recommendations should be a standing item on the Management Committee agenda until completion.

The Management Committee should agree a whistle-blowing policy, which should be open to all members as well as paid staff. (Model policies/procedures are known to be available).

There should be regular future policy reviews every 4 or 5 years.

The need for succession planning, and identifying potential officers and chairs for committees be recognised, and that this responsibility be vested in the Executive Committee, and that this should be taken into account in appointing members to that committee.

The Management Committee should consider the list of items in a separate appendix to identify urgent items that need to be addressed, and that where appropriate limited-life working groups should be set up to look at specific items on this list, and possibly others matters.

The Executive Committee should be strengthened to ensure that it has the full range of skills required to carry out its functions. We suggest that it should comprise: the President, Treasurer, up to 3 Vice Presidents, 2 Management Committee members and up to 2 co-opted members (with specialist skills) identified by the Executive Committee and agreed by the Management Committee.

Applications for club membership should be submitted to the Management Committee (once agreed and vetted by the BMC office) by name only as recommendations of the CEO for endorsement..

6.0 Voting Structure

Changes in the Articles of Association - Voting Structure etc.

The Management Committee recommends that:

"This AGM instructs it (the Management Committee), to undertake a comprehensive review of the Articles of Association for ratification at the 2006 AGM with the specific intention of introducing a 'one member - one vote' system and a more flexible structure of Area Meetings".

Establish a small working group to discuss the voting structure and the Articles of Association

7.0 Specialist Committees

A structure of 8 committees (Access & Conservation, Climbing Walls, Competitions, Huts, Guidebooks, International, Technical, and Training/Youth) to replace the existing 11 committees.

All committees be asked to review their terms of reference rigorously.

The current practice whereby specialist committees decide what they want to be called be continued, although in the formal sense they will all be sub-committees, but they should always be referred to by all concerned by the 'informal' name.

Committee secretaries should be proactive in assisting their chairs in setting agendas to ensure that committees address their full remit.

Each committee's annual report should state how often the committee has met in the past year and that details of attendance by committee members should also be given.

The Management Committee (advised by the Executive Committee as necessary) should be more proactive in appointing members to specialist committees. The chairs should continue to recommend who should be on the committees (and in some cases these would just be rubber-stamped). This to allow for people with appropriate skills to be appointed, (from either inside or outside the management/executive committees). It would also be appropriate for nominations to come from elsewhere for some committees.

The terms of office of committee chairs should be limited to 6 years, with the Management Committee having the power to extend this on a year-by-year basis in exceptional circumstances, and that this should apply to existing chairs.

All committees should be provided with financial information as to the full cost of their committee activities (inc. staff costs and office overheads, and a breakdown of any grant or other income – to give a net cost) and that be clearly specified as to which elements of their budgets each committee had control of), with the Management Committee being given this information for all committees. To avoid any misunderstanding in addition to being provided with details of what their activities cost, it should be clearly specified as to which elements of their budgets each committee had control of.

Consideration should also be given as to how reductions in grant income should be handled. Firstly, in terms of contingency planning (difficult, but worth attempting). Secondly in terms of what happens when the decision comes through. We recommend that decisions should be made by the Executive Committee with recommendations passed to the Management Committee for ratifying where Policy is affected.

Consideration should be given to finding ways to offset the inevitable Manchester bias in the membership of/attendance at specialist committees.

7.1 Access & Conservation

The committee should find ways of effectively co-ordinating the activities of a number of specialist areas of work (including land management, legislation, local economies/rural development, upland footpaths etc). The committee should review its forward plan as soon as possible, broaden its scope of work and address areas of work that have been neglected over recent years. This may necessitate the restructuring of the committee and the formation of sub-groups to cover the activities listed above.

Land Management Group (LMG)

A new group should be set up reporting to the Access & Conservation Committee. The Harrison's Rocks Management Group and any other management groups that are established should report to the LMG.

Access & Conservation Trust (ACT)

The BMC should work towards this becoming a BMC Trust under the direct management of the Access and Conservation Committee. It was also felt that the Access Fund should be merged with the resultant ACT to help avoid confusion in the future.

British Upland Footpath Trust (BUFT)

The BMC should seek ways of developing BUFT through volunteer support and consultancy expertise.

7.2 Competitions, Climbing Walls & High Performance Steering Group (HPSG)

The Climbing Walls Committee should formally include the role of the Climbing Walls Advisory Group in its remit, with appropriate procedural safeguards to ensure this covers conflicts of interest where they might arise. HPSG should cease to be a specialist committee as such, but that its work should continue and be broadened to develop stronger links with the training world, and it should be ensured that the lessons learnt from work at the elite level be used for the benefit of the grassroots level and outdoors. The CEO should direct a greater proportion of the relevant officer's work at Climbing Walls as opposed to Competitions. (Currently this works out at approx 40% and 60% respectively.)

7.3 Guidebook Committee

The committee should meet regularly and be suitably serviced by BMC officers, with properly minuted meetings.

The committee should be given two years to get into a breakeven situation (from 1.1.05 to 1.1.07) on the basis of all costs including staffing and overheads being taken into account, with the details being determined by the Hon Treasurer designate.

The existing policy of producing good quality definitive and selected climbs guidebooks be confirmed.

The Lancashire guidebook operation should be fully integrated into the BMC guidebook operation under a single Guidebook Committee.

A Guidebook Business Manager should be appointed to the committee. This would enable the committee to have a business plan and a strategy for the future development of guidebooks.

Arrangements should be established by the committee to require guidebook volunteers to formally assign their work to the BMC.

The Guidebook Committee, in consultation with the Chief Executive Office and legal advisers, should advise the Management Committee on current copyright issues and on approaches to be taken as and when potential disputes arise.

The BMC should continue to lend money to voluntary guidebook producers subject to availability of funds, merit, appropriate financial assurances and consultation with the chair of the Guidebook Committee, and that the Executive Committee should approve any requests for funding and report to the Management Committee before the monies are released.

The 'BMC Guidebook Account' (accumulated from guidebook profits from the guidebook operation over the years and currently kept in a separate account) should be ring-fenced and kept separate from the current operation, which should be integrated into mainstream BMC finances, and a review should be undertaken of the recent income to and expenditure from this account to ensure that it is maintained at the correct level. This arrangement to be reviewed after 1.1.07 in the light of the above. In the meantime arrangements should be set up for approving any disbursements out of the Guidebook Account to in keeping with previous practice (the most obvious example being a significant contribution towards the purchase of the BMC office building). Such arrangements should include a general definition of suitable expenditure and establishing a group of 'trustees'.

7.4 Technical Committee

The BMC's technical publications 'Care & Maintenance' etc should be made more widely available to climbers and walkers; the possibility of issuing these booklets free to members should be explored. There should be more co-ordination between the committee's work and that of the new Training and Youth committee (e.g. on the use of gear, accident avoidance and safety), and the Climbing Walls Committee (on investigating and avoiding accidents at climbing walls). The committee needs help with getting the message over to climbers using all forms of media (including via climbing walls). Technical articles (in Summit etc) should be written in a high impact and readable way.

7.5 Training & Youth

That the Training Advisory Group and Youth Advisory Panel be combined into a new committee/group. Until the clear best practice guidelines have been agreed and issued no BMC outdoor youth activities or events should take place under the name of the BMC (other than those in the pipeline), and that the CEO should review the arrangements for these meets. The BMC should invest in staff and volunteer training in child protection and off-site safety. BRYCS should remain with the Training and Youth Committee.

7.6 International Committee

The current initiatives to develop joint working with the Alpine Club should continue and be strengthened.

8.0 BMC Communications

The BMC should employ publicity expertise, and that if the Sport England Whole Sport funding that is currently being sought is not forthcoming, it is further recommended that the BMC should give a high priority to finding the resources to fund it. The need to add lobbying skills to such a post were recognised, but it was also recognised if necessary this work can be bought in by using consultants.

A limited-life publicity group should be set up to determine the BMC's publicity strategy.

The steering group noted that Summit is currently held in high regard in the general climbing population.

Summit should publish articles that promote the work of local volunteers as a form of encouragement and recognition.

In principle Summit should go out to all club members, subject to financial and political considerations being taken into account.

It was noted that the BMC's website needs a full overhaul, but that at present insufficient time is devoted to this. The resources available to work on the website should be kept under review in the context of current developments with Summit.

Consideration be given to producing email newsletters (both national and area/regional) once the IT project is online.

Communications within the BMC

A wide range of aspects of this were considered arising from a membership and staff survey. It is thought that BMC staff need to tighten-up on communications from the office. It was noted that many people find BMC papers, and in particular the numerous acronyms used, to be a barrier to understanding the organisation (the CEO has now prepared a list of acronyms to be made available to the membership and to be put on the website). Detailed recommendations were given in an appendix. It is recognised that although good practice, these recommendations have certain workload implications, and that their implementation be prioritised by the Executive Committee.

9.0 Staffing

The policy of ensuring that senior officers of the BMC should be active mountaineers/climbers, "widely known and accessible to mountaineers and climbers" be confirmed, although this should not preclude the appointment of officers with specialist skills.

Remuneration and conditions of service should be such as to ensure the recruitment and retention of well-motivated and capable staff.

The re-introduction of fixed term contracts was considered but is not recommended. However, the appraisal and disciplinary procedures should be used properly, and the President should appraise the CEO annually, ideally with assistance of someone experienced in such matters.

The CEO should review the organisation structure so as to have staff reporting to line management, thereby avoiding having the majority of staff reporting direct to him. The DCEO to undertake a share of the direct management of staff and staff appraisals.

In setting the staff establishment it should be a general principle that the officer team should have the appropriate level of administrative support.

The Executive Committee: based on information and advice from the CEO – should be responsible for making staffing decisions and appointments, and that consideration be given in making appointments to the Executive Committee to ensure that there is someone with suitable experience/skills to look after Staffing (we acknowledge that both the past and the present Vice President with this responsibility did have these skills).

The BMC should examine methods of managing emails to ensure that work is properly prioritised, with guidelines aimed at restricting and where possible reducing the proliferation of emails. This should not, however, conflict with the recommendation approved by the Management Committee on 12.5.05 that "All communications received by the BMC office should be acknowledged proactively, and that emails of staff who are away for whatever reason should be checked and acknowledged."

Chairs of BMC Committees should be asked to review the way their meetings are minuted. Administrative workloads should be reduced where possible by recording action points, agreements and significant points only. Advice to this effect has already been issued by the CEO.

10.0 BMC's membership policy & support for hill walkers

The BMC should seek to increase its membership from those who are already active in climbing, mountaineering and hill walking. In particular more should be done to attract 'adventurous' hill-walkers to join the BMC and to provide services that hill-walkers will want to use

The current initiatives (e.g. promotions in Trail magazine and the potential for developing a series of BMC waterproof maps) were welcomed.

Outdoor Sports shops can be used for promoting the BMC, and for selling BMC membership (this could possibly be extended to selling insurance). A pilot exercise should be carried out, and that the actual take-up (membership and insurance) should be monitored carefully.

11.0 The BMC's relationship with other bodies

The BMC should support the MCG, that the BMC should make a clear statement on how it sees the role of the MCG, and that the BMC should seek to agree terms of reference for the MCG.

BMC / UIAA / Alpine Club. The BMC should continue to work with the AC to improve the work and services for mountaineers, and to recommend that the AC's offer for the BMC to purchase reciprocal rights cards. It is also our view that the BMC must continue to be the lead organisation in the UIAA and on overseas mountaineering issues. etc.

The BMC adopt policies of:

- Only setting up new committees and trusts after very careful consideration. It was felt that this had not always been the case in the past,
- Aiming to simplify the number of Mountaineering bodies in the UK.

12.0 Welsh Issues

The Management Committee should decide upon the BMC's role in Wales, with action being required at area committee and political levels:

- At the area committee level. The President has spoken to the chair of the Committee for Wales about the future of that committee, and it is understood that he is agreeable to the sort of initiatives that have been used with the Peak Area Committee for rekindling interest in the committee and to make it more relevant to local climbers/hill-walkers.
- It was noted that the last Committee for Wales AGM had been inquorate, and this matter should be addressed in accordance with the Articles of Association.
- At a political level involving establishing a relationship with the National Assembly - it was noted that to make the former work would require a financial commitment (possibly up to £50,000, which would include the appointment of a Welsh Development Officer).
- The establishment of a Mountaineering Council of Wales is not considered desirable at present but the BMC do not rule out the possibility of having a M C of W in the future.

13.0 Equity

We welcome the fact that the CEO is investigating running an Ethnic Minorities International Meet at Plas y Brenin in May 2006. The BMC should proactively support equity initiatives, including the possibility of a domestic Ethnic Minorities Meet.

The BMC must ensure that there are no removable barriers to disabled people's involvement in mountaineering activities. This applies to BMC property and land, and to access to mountaineering/climbing/hill-walking at an appropriate level. It is important that the BMC and affiliated clubs comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, and we recommend that the BMC should have a policy of going beyond it where possible and of encouraging its member clubs to do likewise.

14.0 Heritage

It be recognised that mountaineering archives are an important historical aspect of the sport, and that the BMC should encourage (but not necessarily finance) the creation of a national archive based at a central located organisation (almost certainly a university) with proper facilities. The BMC also supports the establishment of a mountain art collection and a hall of fame on the same basis.

15.0 Issues facing the BMC over the next 5 to 10 years

The Management Committee should identify those matters in the appendix submitted that require early action, and call for further reports or set up limited-life working groups as thought appropriate. These items (which can be added to) should be monitored and taken into account in any future reorganisations.

Two possible ideas that the BMC might want to explore at some future date:

- Lobbying for cliffs and mountains to have a statutory status as 'Sites of Special Landscape and/or Recreational Interest', possibly with some form of division into International/National/Regional importance status.
- Obtaining another property, for example a hut in either the UK or the Alps.

16.0 Implementation of the FPR recommendations

Delegated to the CEO with advice from the Executive Committee, and with his submitting regular progress reports to the Management Committee for information, and that implementation of the future policy review should be a standing item on the Management Committee agenda until such time as it has been completed.

APPENDIX 3

Core Organisational Policies

Scope of Document

It is recognised that there is considerable scope for debate about precisely what constitutes a 'policy'. The BMC carries out a very wide range of work for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, and amongst other things it has a role as an advisory body, an organiser of events, a provider of information and services and as a link between members and external organisations. This document attempts to distinguish between overarching, national 'policies' and the many and varied regional, issue-specific and operational matters with which the BMC is involved. Some policies have been updated or reworded, others (e.g. the 'long walk-in' policy) have been omitted on the basis that they are no longer relevant. The Mission Statement and Participation Statement have been included to help establish the overall context of the BMC's work.

Mission Statement

The BMC is the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales. The role of the organisation is to promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and the freedom to enjoy their activities. The BMC's mission statement is as follows:

- *To negotiate access improvements and promote cliff and mountain conservation.*
- *To promote and advise on good practice, facilities, training and equipment.*
- *To support events and specialist programmes including youth and excellence.*
- *To provide services and information for members.*

Participation Statement

The BMC recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Core Policies

1. Membership & Participation

The BMC aims to increase its membership by encouraging existing climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers to join the organisation. It is recognised that there is particular scope for encouraging more hill walkers to join the BMC. Whilst it is inappropriate for the BMC to actively seek increased participation because of environmental and safety reasons, it is however acknowledged that some of the activities of the organisation and affiliated clubs will have the effect of attracting new people to the sport.

2. Access, Conservation & Environment

a. Freedom to Climb and Walk

Cliffs and mountains are part of our natural heritage. The BMC believes that access to cliffs and mountains in a responsible, sustainable manner, is a basic human right. As a general principle, access should be free of charge and with as little restriction as possible.

b. Cliff & Mountain Conservation

Climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers have a responsibility to minimise their impact on the natural environment, to follow the Countryside Code and to leave as little trace as possible in their visits to the cliffs and mountains. The BMC acknowledges that restrictions to protect species and habitats are warranted from time to time and we are committed to working with conservation bodies and land managers to reduce the impact of our activities.

c. Supporting Mountain Economies

The BMC encourages climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers to support the economies of upland regions as much as possible e.g. by purchasing food and other provisions locally, and patronising local establishments such as B&Bs, huts, bunk houses, restaurants and hostleries.

d. Land Ownership, Acquisition & Management.

The BMC's policy is as follows:

The first option will always be to secure access through other means such as informal or statutory agreements. Where this is not possible, access should be secured by encouraging an appropriate 3rd party (e.g. a local authority) to purchase or lease the site. As a final option the BMC will consider purchasing land itself to secure access. In such circumstances the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- purchase cost

- management implications e.g. staff/volunteer time, liability, ongoing costs, long term management problems such as erosion or vandalism etc
- significance of the site, including its popularity and the availability of alternative venues, and
- scope for access problems being resolved in the future

The BMC also recognises that there are many schemes under which landowners and occupiers may receive payments for the providing and managing access. Where it is not possible for a banned site to be included in such a scheme and the above options have been explored, unsuccessfully, the BMC may consider a final option of paying for the management of the site (including the provision of access), either indirectly through a 3rd party or directly as an occupier. This should only be considered in the case of intractable problems at nationally significant sites. Any such agreement must not compromise the provision of free access to other sites.

The BMC has a policy of dedicating its own land as access land under the CRoW Act 2000 wherever possible.

3. Safety

The BMC encourages and promotes safety and good practice in all aspects of climbing, hill walking and mountaineering.

4. Ethics, Style & Fixed Equipment

The BMC acknowledges that many forms of climbing, hill walking and mountaineering activities take place in the British Isles including traditional climbing using leader placed protection, sport climbing, scrambling and bouldering. The BMC believes that in any discussion or debate involving climbing style and ethics, the well-being of the crag and mountain environment must always be of paramount importance. Local or regional fixed equipment policies should be debated and agreed by climbers at meetings arranged by the BMC. The BMC Area Committee structure provides the forum for such discussions. Policies should be agreed on a consensus basis and it is the responsibility of all climbers to help promote and respect any such policies.

5. Mountain Training

Mountain Leader Training England (MLTE) is the BMC's formal training division in England. The BMC and the Mountain Leader Training bodies will ensure that mountain training activities are undertaken with due regard for the best interests and traditions of mountaineering, the mountain environment and the people who live or work in mountain regions.

6. Volunteer Leaders & Qualifications

The BMC does not require volunteer leaders in affiliated clubs, or other informal situations to hold leadership or instructional qualifications. Whilst the BMC recognises the value of mountain training courses and qualifications, we also recognise that genuine experience in climbing and mountaineering and mountain leadership gained over time through interaction with others of similar or greater experience, can be equally as valuable or relevant.

7. Young People

The BMC is committed to supporting and encouraging young people who are interested in climbing, hill walking and mountaineering. The BMC's role is to act in an advisory capacity and to facilitate youth activities such as indoor competitions and appropriate outdoor activities. The BMC encourages the provision of outdoor youth training by competent agencies.

8. Competition Climbing

The BMC's role in competition climbing is to oversee and control the running of competitions in England and Wales. The BMC is opposed to climbing competitions taking place on natural or quarried cliffs in England and Wales.

9. Equal Opportunities

The BMC encourages its members to adopt a positive approach to equal opportunities and the elimination of discrimination. The BMC values the support of all sections of the mountaineering community and welcomes the opportunity to assist all groups in its work to promote the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers. All BMC representatives and staff, individual members, affiliated clubs and other mountaineering bodies take a positive approach to equal opportunities and strive to eliminate discrimination. Whenever possible in BMC publications images are used to reflect a wide and diverse membership.

Dave Turnbull
 22 Sept 05
 S/ManCom/2005/FPRCorePolicies.doc
 Approved by the Management Committee - October 2005



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