BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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Board of Directors

Confidential draft minutes of the Board meeting held as a virtual only meeting on Zoom, on Wednesday 6th December 2023 at 10.00am

Directors Present:	Roger Murray (RM) Caroline Worboys (CW) John Willmott (JW) Flavia Alzetta (FA) Laura Needham (LN) Martyn Hurn (MH) Neal Hockley (NH) Peter Salenieks (PS) Trevor Smith (TS) Andy Say (ASa) Andy Syme (ASy)	Chair Senior Independent Director (SID) Independent Director Independent Director Nominated Director Nominated Director Council Nominated Director (CND) Council Nominated Director (CND) Council Nominated Director (CND) President
In attendance:	Gavin Finch (GF) Catherine Flitcroft Alan Brown (AB) Lorraine Brown (LB) Jo Coates (JC)	Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Campaigns and Policy Manager (minute taker) Financial Controller Head of Performance for GB Climbing Consultant

* denotes supporting paper(s) circulated prior to meeting

Item	Topic and Main Aspects Considered	Decision / Action
1	 Welcome, apologies & declaration of interests The Chair reported that due notice of the meeting had been given and he declared it open. No conflicts of interest were declared 	

	 Focus of meeting was to review the current financial situation, risk management (highlighted in BDO report) and behaviour across the BMC 	
2	 Approval of previous minutes The minutes of the Board Meeting held on the 1st of November were circulated with a short notice period. Board members to make comments by 14th December. 	Action: ALL
3	 Outstanding Actions Review The Actions from the previous minutes (1st November) have been merged with the Action Review. A review of this list by all Board members needs to be made before the next 14th December meeting. 	Action: ALL
4	Progress Review and discussion	
	 Staff Update BMC has recruited a new Governance & Compliance Manager Thom Nixon – he has a background in ESG investment banking and law. Positive news 	
	 RM shared a slide deck highlighting what's been achieved since September 2023 Communications are improving, there is now more detail and clarity on what the BMC is doing (area meetings and website – positive feedback). 	
	<u>Current Challenges</u> Sirhowy Crag, south Wales	
	 The crag went to auction having been assured it would go with a high reserve. External bids were placed and someone else secured the sale. Concerns over liability and due diligence prevented the BMC / LPT from placing a bid (former industrial use at the site increases the risk of contamination). BMC to approach future purchasers to try and ensure access to climbing. Clear communication will be made to members via ACES and Marcomms. 	Action: GF and CF
	Selection process (GB team)	
	 Difficult conversation with community/parents in Q1 of 2024 outlining what is required from elite/ performance athletes during the selection process and beyond, and how this marries with BMC resource capacity. Board agreed to reduce the number of performance athletes. This also needs to be presented to Members Council. Currently looking at what is required to deliver across GB Climbing staff 	Decision: To present to Members' Council

	 Some Clubs are looking to disaffiliate from BMC (e.g. North East Area) and join Mountaineering Scotland Request from Board for BMC to better support and communicate what we are doing for grassroots clubs and look at all competition climbing across the piece (local club level up to GB Climbing/elite) LB to put together a roadmap to 2032 with key milestones along the way giving an overview of the pathway involved. Members need to better understand the GB Climbing vision, strategy and pathway Currently ABC is requesting funding to deliver competitions but no budget for this. Need to partner with them to help us deliver 	Action: LB
	 Little knowledge within the wider community of the detailed financial components of managing athletes and athlete development programs. There needs to be a Climber first philosophy, collaboration with personal coaches, a step change in communication and a much improved athlete management system. JC – BMC is not the only Governing Body with the same set of problems and these are not untypical for a sport moving into high-end competition – part of the process. 	
5	 Strategy Refresh The current BMC Strategy runs from 2020 to end 2024. The time required for fully engaging with BMC Stakeholders and Members around a strategy refresh is a minimum of a year and should include the run up to an AGM, with formal approval of a strategy by the Board later in that year. The outcome from the grant submission covering the Los Angeles Olympic Cycle will not be known until after the Paris Olympic Games and the outcome may have an impact on the refreshed strategy. It is not reasonable to develop a new strategy and / or update an existing strategy with a CEO who only joins the organisation in 1Q 2024 Therefore, recommended that the Board approve extending the existing strategy period until end 2025. 	Decision: To extend current strategy period by 1 year to end 2025
6	 Position Statement on reconciliation of UK Sport Grants AB is working with UK Sport Investment Manager Dan Coleman. Dan was not in post in 2020 and has concerns over some of the figures agreed three years ago 	

	 Two components being considered – what's happened over past 2.5 years (UK Sport looking at invoices). Within the UK Sport grant of 2020 there was a calculation of spending allocated to overheads but there has been no change in this calculation up to 2023. This has now been re-visited as staffing (GB Climbing) has increased and therefore the proportion of overheads has also increased. £577,000 over the grant period has now been revised to £726,000 The total grant money from UK sport is £1.5 million of which £260,000 is podium money. BMC contribution to the grant was made up £577,000 of overheads and £109k of cash. This is being discussed as UK Sport believe there should be BMC cash spent on the programme. A paper will be produced once all is agreed. How we calculate overheads and how much we need to contribute (cash) to programme still needs to be confirmed UK Sport is now happy with accounting as ledger lines up with all reporting A BMC accounting error was identified and UK Sport were notified - they were concerned about whether the BMC can manage public funds. Sport England were also made aware and raised concerns – this has had an impact across the BMC funding landscape and on us as a Governing Body. The BMC is starting to re- establish some confidence with them. The UK Sport grant (currently) runs until the end of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. Every quarter BMC will need to submit a financial report to UK Sport 	
7 E	 AB presented a paper. The October 2023 results show a result of a £253k deficit. This is against an original budgeted deficit of £73k and the mid summer reforecast and planned deficit of £125k. This is because of the loss of travel insurance income in July and less membership growth. Many of the financial issues stemmed from the original UK Sport grant submission made in October 2020 when overheads were miscalculated At the end of December, the deficit is expected to be £338k. A big adjustment was made in November (£260,000) because there was income from UK Sport that was taken in error Travel insurance dipped in July but the Nov figure is £3000 better than budget predictions; membership is on track; staffing decisions (redundancies) will also be happening in December which will affect the final figure Some costs have been deferred to 2024 (e.g. winter Summit magazine) The outturn would have been as predicted in mid summer if it hadn't been for the UK Sport accounting error. BMC Departments are looking at cost savings across the Board In 2023 we opened with reserves of £842k and a reserve policy of £500k - we will be close to the lower limit at the end of the year. 	

	 ASy- Tab 3 of spreadsheet shows actuals in column L is £-206k and reforecast is at £-131k. How are we recovering the £75,000 to bring the end of year down – AB to get back on this. JC - not many sports are covering a performance agenda alongside a participation, sustainability and EDI agenda. BMC is in a great position to deliver for UK Sport and SE as we are relevant. BMC shouldn't underestimate how much it costs to win a medal – staff intensive / athlete intensive / contact time but winning will impact across the sport. GB Climbing should not be seen as a separate entity but part of the BMC as it will have a wide-reaching impact. 	Action: AB
8	 2024 Budget - Review of current position and required actions Budget Principles A balanced budget that can be approved on Dec 14. This is ambitious and requires tough decisions Can't do everything we have done in the past. Sticking with core work areas and need to stop or postpone some areas of work- each department has considered this BMC needs to be seen to support mountaineering and this requires more reflection. Clubs such as the Alpine Club look to us to support this and reputationally, we must continue Need a steer on BMC funded activity within GB Climbing Need to operate within BMC means and reserves should not be used – therefore have set a realistic revenue and income budget Need to look at increasing revenue / income sources (grants, commercial etc.) Separation within budget of BMC funded activities from those that are funded by UK Sport, SE (ring fenced) In achieving a balance budget several compromises will need to be made – all meetings should be virtual; expedition grants have been suspended; Jonathan Conville Memorial Trust will be suspended along with support for ice climbing / YAG and Skimo (these alone will save £182,000). To approve a detailed budget on 14th Dec for Q1 of 2024 – still need more time to discuss some of the embedded decisions, new approaches and due diligence. Approval of annual budget (Q1-Q4) in early 2024. 	Action: ALL
	 UK Sport / Sport England – see spreadsheet ASy noted there were no figures under international influencing or national events. No further funding opportunities for this from UK Sport but Sport England may be able to support domestic comps – potential 	

opportunity later in the year. Not yet profiled but will also need to bid for supporting work with IFSC (attending events)

- Membership (see associated spreadsheet)– price increase (RPI- 7.5%) and assumed a small increase in growth of membership.
- Insurance sales migrated to new underwriter and applied a price increase of 9%.
- Some income from events (entry fees and contribution to talent pathway).
- The Finance and Audit committee will be considering this further in the coming week.

Expenditure

- Each BMC Department has considered this see spreadsheet
- Potential for insurance premiums associated with 3rd Party Liability and Personal Accident to increase by 30-40% from what they are now.

GB Climbing

- Need to be clear in labelling funds (restricted / unrestricted or performance / participation)
- Column H looking at a minimum budget to still be able to deliver but we are the NGB for sport climbing and ski mountaineering IFFF/ IFSC / UIAA links with these orgs.
- **2024 events** focus on delivering British boulder, lead and speed comps; para national comps (pool of successful athletes) as well as YCS, National trials for bouldering (114 athletes sent invites) and the European Ice Climbing Cup with UIAA. The BMC has already paid for the English bouldering championships.
- **2024 funded activity** support for the GB junior team travelling overseas as well as coaches (not supported by UK sport or SE)
- Removed BMC contribution (50%) towards junior team manager as well as the Winters Coordinator (look for volunteers to lead on this)
- Opportunity to look at how some of these costs are offset by passing onto the athletes themselves but reputational risk of pulling out junior athletes oversees. Opportunity to look at sponsorship
- Able to make a profit on regional YCS events as there are high numbers of competitors per round, each one paying a fee for each round (£35). 4 rounds of YCS in 7 regions. Other competitions don't have as many competitors. However, the venues have capacity limitations and climbing walls no longer host competitions for free because the walls loose money on them (the wall has to close to public, change route setting etc)

	Request for LB to collect more detail on comps - number of attendees / spectators at each event, as well	Action: LB
	 as the cost per head. CCPG are concerned about taking money out of ice climbing etc. – they will input on 21st December at their meeting. Request that LN help facilitate this conversation and deliver to CCPG within context of overall financial situation and staff capacity to deliver Confirmation of UK Sport money to support elite athletes is yet to come through Announcement in January about Para Comps – conversation to be had with Sport England about sponsorship. Need to be part of Paralympic programme to get UK Sport money. 	Action: LN
	 Agreed Board agreed to removal of Winters Co-ordinator ASy reported that both Ice and Skimo were actively looking to set up a new national governing body because of lack of support from BMC. £15 k was part of getting them on side but still a fragile relationship. Currently within GBC we spend 70% of BMC money on indoor competitions but we neglect ice and ski mo. The BMC must look harder at adjusting revenue and costs within competition climbing so we can appropriately fund our other 2 sports for which the BMC is the NGB. Could money from the Juniors be used to support this area? LB and ASy to discuss further, ahead of the Dec 14th meeting if possible. Board agreed to approve LB's main event schedule for 2024 at Dec 14th meeting in order to ensure timely planning and delivery 	Decision: To removal of Winter Coordinator position Action: LB, ASy Decision: Agreed main competition event plan
9	 Los Angeles Cycle Grant Application See presentation LB worked with CCPG to provide UK Sport with 2 sets of documents – final submission will be made middle of January Need to align competitions with athletes and develop pathways for those with considerable potential Currently the squad is too big and the BMC has limited resources. Need to focus on true athletes with potential. 2 UK sport funding streams are available – a development programme and a world class programme. GB Climbing sits in the middle of these 2 streams, therefore re-profiling is required in terms of what we might be able to support – the BMC can bid for additional money if we opt for the world class programme. Large difference between academy talented vs podium (world class) athletes 	

	 GB Climbing has submitted a strategy to UK Sport outlining the BMC Vision and has received good feedback. It contains 7 strategic areas and has been updated more recently to include governance. LB to send to Board members. What do Board need from GB Climbing for better alignment and understanding / how can Board support the team and get closer to what's happening LN - established Olympic Sports have also been through this change piece and acknowledge the fact that the Board need to better understand performance. – need to understand the journey so we can react in the right way Difficult process as will need to manage expectations of stakeholders / parents, and create more support for performance team / those who will win medals. Pathways also need to allow for those athletes to end their journey. 	Action: LB
	 LB to put together a roadmap to 2032 with key milestones along the way giving an overview of the pathway involved. Members need to better understand the GB Climbing vision, strategy and pathway 	Action: LB
	 JC recommended setting some clear objectives (KPI's) demonstrating what it takes to win with a few stats to share with Board 	Action: LB
	 Board recognise that going from a big squad to a small team will receive negative press but agreed it was the right approach. LB and JC to present to Members Council to seek their approval LB to share performance briefing ahead of Feb Board meeting. 	Action: JC, LB Action: LB
12	Behaviour	
	 JW presented – There is currently a task and finish group looking at relationship between SMT, Board and Members Council. JW will share presentation that has already been shared with Members Council Recent survey of members of these groups - wide reaching views The next stage will be a follow up with one to one interviews and then recommendations. Also looking into individual comments. Outcome of employee complaint against a volunteer JW wished to remind the organisation via the Chairman and Board at the Board meeting on 6-Dec-23, the behaviours that are expected of all employees, members and volunteers To remind the chairs of all committees and groups via e-mail of their responsibility to uphold the Code of Conduct and ensure "zero-tolerance" for inappropriate language (or behaviour) in meetings To ensure employees and volunteers are made fully aware of the BMC Values during their induction. In particular; "Respect: We celebrate the rich variety of British climbing, hill walking and mountaineering; we build inclusive relationships and respect each other." And should they encounter an issue, there is a formal complaints procedure for them to raise their concerns. 	

10	Risk Management Training	
	 Training and presentation received by the Board from Sharon Constancon 	
	 BMC don't have a formal risk committee – but instead share understanding of risks across the Senior 	
	Leadership, Health and Safety Group and Finance and Accounts Committee	
	Board members to identify top 5 risks to discuss further at Dec 14 th meeting – what concerns them	Action: ALL
	 BMC does have a risk register, GF to share with Board members (operational risks). 	Action: GF
	 The Board needs to correlate Board view of risk with risks as seen by the other groups W/ to oberg paper and load on Bick Management for the Board 	
	 JW to share paper and lead on Risk Management for the Board 	Action: JW
11	Major Events Strategy	
	 GF presented / see additional paper and presentation 	
	 UK Sport funded the development of this strategy 	
	 Project group and consultant led strategy – vision and mission are clear 	
	• It's aims are to clarify the role of major events within the BMC from 2024-2033; coordinated and consistent	
	central approach to major event bidding and hosting; set clear expectations of delivery standards, support	
	with resource requirements; delivery capacity and with a governance plan which protects BMC BAU	
	activities, ensuring strategy remains relevant and integrated through its lifespan	
	 Objectives are directly based on the previously approved scoring mechanism so already approved by CCPG 	
	 Two phases (2025-2028) – approved by CCPG. Following application of the event scoring process and 	
	reviewing the outcomes (considering factors such as funding capacity and funders aspirations, delivery	
	capacity and bid winnability). Need to demonstrate we can host events to build up to a 'mega' event. The	
	hosting targets for the first phase of the strategy period are shown.	
	 2025 – All international events have been awarded so focus on pulling together and delivering a new 	
	Urban British Championships with Breaking, BMX Freestyle and Skateboarding.	
	 2026 – European Cup to build influence, experience and capacity. 2027 – IFSC World Cup to build qualification points and act as the springboard into the hosting of the 	
	 2027 – IFSC world Cup to build qualification points and act as the springboard into the nosting of the Mega Event in 2028. 	
	 2028 – Olympic Qualifier Series - Discussions with UK Sport have been positive and likely that they will 	
	wish to pursue this event centrally (unsure of Breaking replacement though).	
	• The hosting targets for the second phase (2029-2031)	
	 2029 – No international target but possible move of Urban British Championship location to build towards 	
	2031.	
	 2030 – World Cup (outside of qualification window could support a bid package for 2031) 	

 Next steps also include building relationships with hosting Cities / local authorities / explore commercial relationships / working with federations to bid for events Ice Climbing and dry tooling are not part of the ambition; Indoor Competition climbing scores more highly. ASy – how does this align with budget / lack of staff resource – need to make use of other resources e.g. Willis. Disconnect with strategy and what is happening currently with ice and Skimo. These are more grassroots / domestic competitions (not major events). Two are linked but needs good planning. Will availability of venues be a limiting factor ? One Off short-term build of walls in large arenas is more likely to host a large number of spectators and provide high quality international level routes. PS - Risk associated with this / what happens if we miss one of the events whilst trying to reach a pinnacle? Long list of events we could bid for and there are other options if we miss out on one Proposed governance structure would see the CCPG playing the role of reviewing and recommending matters arising from discussions at the Major Events Working Group prior to recommendations for approval and quarterly updates being provided to the Boards of the BMC (and MS where appropriate). No expectation that BMC would need to invest more then £10-30k per event. Looking at models to cover this (e.g. sponsorship). Profit is rarely delivered but currently we don't know the appetite for hosting international sport climbing competitions. Ticketing, sponsorship etc would be part of the model we will use. It is unlikely that an event will make money but the reason to host is because of what it will do for the BMC and the sport. UK Sport funding would contribute to staff time / additional senior role – would need more capacity. Need to explore opportunities further. Board agreed in principle to support major events and the proposed roadmap presented in the strategy. Tie <th>Decision: To support major events</th>	Decision: To support major events
	strategy
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14

Boa	rd Assessment Internal	
•		Action: RM
•	Good Governance – how Board believe they are functioning / identify areas to improve.	
Anti	- Bullying Policy	
	Introduced at Sept 2023 meeting and comments have been received, on teamwork document.	
•	NH - questions about harassment and how this is defined / last paragraph on harassment is unclear	
•	 Policy that applies to all members of the BMC but no membership engagement beyond athletes and their parents. Recommend it goes to Members Council and Clubs Committee 	
•	How much is statutory / good practise (and therefore need to comply) and how much is general advice	
•	 Currently feels unenforceable (particularly around harassment) – feedback to Helen Murphy and then consult with ASa, PS, ASy and TS 	
•	 Trying to be prescriptive about every situation is hard and it applies to whole of the BMC. Do have a responsibility to staff and members. 	
•	Do other NGBs / organisations use a similar policy? Have we taken information form these?	
•	The Board did not approve the Policy	
•	The next step is for the group of ASa, PS, ASy and TS to meet with Helen Murphy and update the draft policy	Action: ASa, PS, ASy, TS & Helen Murphy
Acc	ess Management Group Terms of Reference	
•	No comments. Board happy to approve.	Decision: Approved Access Management Group Terms of Reference
EDI	Group Terms of Reference	
•	Earlier feedback has been considered and document returned to Board. New comments have been made.	
•	EDI needs to be defined / paras 2.5; 2.6 and 4 need further clarity.	
•	 Alex West to re-consider new feedback. TS to pick this up. 	
•		
•	The next step is for TS to meet with Alex West and update the draft policy	Action:
	Post Meeting Note – Meeting with Alex West has been challenging and with his departure finalisation of the Terms of Reference is outstanding	TS & Alex West

	 Huts Group Terms of Reference Earlier feedback has been considered Para 2.1 – could be made clearer. Para 2.2 – needs re-considering. TS to pick up with Lynsey McAuley. Board happy to approve subject to TS being happy. Post Meeting Note – Terms of Reference Changes agreed with Chair of Huts Group – Lynsey McAuley. Now waiting on next meeting of Huts Group for their agreement to the new Terms of Reference 	Action: TS & Lynsey McAuley
15	 AOB & Feedback of meeting Review of Club offers –partnership with climbing walls to create clubs to encourage competitions – this initiative has created a new category of membership but has not been presented to Board or for wider consultation. TS and ASa to look into this and report back at a later date. ASy – Following loss of CEO, Roger is working closely with UK Sport and Sport England, and with GF potentially making executive decisions. There are 4 Directors working with SMT to provide extra support and RM is working with GF on important issues such as LA piece and UK Sport finances. RM committed to report back in a timely manner 	Action: TS, ASa Action: RM
	 Too big an agenda / time exclusively spent on competition climbing (but are at a critical point in terms of bidding) / poor timekeeping / attending a meeting virtually all day is very difficult / Board operating at a higher tempo then should be expected / late papers. 	
16	Date and time of next meetings: 14 th Dec / 8 th Feb	
17	Close of meeting There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their time	

Summary of Decisions and Actions

ltem	Action	Involving	Target date
2	Comments on minutes of Board Meeting held on 1 st November	All	14.12.2023
3	Review and Update Action List – Review	All	14.12.2023
4	Communication on bid for Sirhowy Crag to Members	GF and Comms Team	31.12.2023
	Presentation to Members' Council on Athlete Selection and numbers of athletes within GB Team	LB	31.03.2024
	GB Climbing Vision, Strategy and Climber Pathway to be presented to Board, Members' Council and wider membership	LB	31.03.2024
5	Decision to extend current strategy period to end 2025		
7	More clarity required on the 2023 financial outcome figures – see main text of minutes	AB	14.12.2023
8	Plan to approve a budget to end 1Q 2024 at Board Meeting to be held on 14 th December 2023	All	14.12.2023
	GB Climbing budget planning for 2024 – Cost per Head for Climbers and Spectators at Competitions	LB	14.12.2023
	CCPG to consider funding of Ice Climbing Competition in UK	LN	31.12.2023
	Decision to remove position of "Winter Coordinator"		
	Funding of both competitive Ice Climbing and Ski Mountaineering to be considered and whether funds could be reallocated from other types of competition – eg: Juniors	LB and ASy	14.12.2023
	Decision to approve main competition event plan for 2024		
9	GB Climbing Strategy provided to UK Sport to be sent to Directors	LB	14.12.2023
	GB Climbing Roadmap until 2032 to be developed along with associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and shared with Board	LB	31.01.2024
10	Directors to identify their top 5 risks to the BMC	All	14.12.2023

ltem	Action	Involving	Target date
	Operational Risk Register to be shared with the Board	GF	14.12.2023
	Paper on Risk Management to be shared	JW	14.12.2023
11	Decision to support and approve Major Events Strategy		
14	Board Internal Assessment – Question set to be issued	RM	30.04.2024
	Anti – Bullying Policy to be updated	Asa, PS, TS, ASy and Helen Murphy	31.03.2024
	Access Management Group Terms of Reference Approved		
	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group Terms of Reference to be updated	TS and Alex West	31.03.2024
	Huts Group Terms of Reference approved subject to TS working with Chair of Huts Group on clarifying the Terms of Reference	TS and Lynsey McAuley	31.03.2024
15	A new Membership Offer to Clubs, especially those associated with Climbing walls to be developed and brought to both Members' Council and the Board	TS and Asa with Jane Thompson and Lucinda Whittaker	30.06.2024
	Chair maintains communication with Board on his work with UK Sport	RM	31.03.2024

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