

## BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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### BMC NATIONAL COUNCIL

Agreed Minutes of the 66th National Council meeting held on Saturday 7 December 2019,  
BMC office, Manchester

#### In attendance

##### Voting members:

President	Lynn Robinson	(LR)	Chair
Cymru North Wales	Anthony Eccles	(AE)	
Cymru North Wales	Dan Lane	(DL)	
Cymru South Wales	Cherida Griffiths	(CG)	
Cymru South Wales	Steve Quinton	(SQ)	
Lakes & Council Nominated Director	Fiona Sanders	(FS)	
Lakes	Mike Parsons	(MP)	
London & South East	Robert Dufton	(RD)	
London & South East	Chris Stone	(CSt)	
Midlands & Huts Group Chair	David Jones	(DJ)	
North East	Jon Punshon	(JP)	
North East	Mark Anstiss	(MA)	
North West	Bill Beveridge	(BB)	
North West	Carl Spencer	(CSp)	
Peak	David Brown	(DB)	
Peak	Alison Cairns	(AC)	
South West	Helen Wilson	(HW)	
South West	Philip Wilson	(PW)	
Yorkshire	Mick Green	(MG)	

##### Observers:

Chair, Board of Directors	Gareth Pierce	(GP)	
Nominated Director	Huw Jones	(HJ)	
Nominated Director	Jonathan White	(JW) (am only)	
Child Safeguarding Group	Christine Scarborough	(CSc) (am only)	
Child Safeguarding Group	John Simpson	(JS) (am only)	
Clubs Committee	Peter Salenieks	(PS)	
Equity Steering Group	Cressida Allwood	(CA)	
Hill Walking Implementation Group	Peter Judd	(PJ) (am only)	
Land Management Group	Martin Wragg	(MW)	
Mountain Training	John Cousins	(JC)	
Technical Committee	Martin Nash	(MN) (am only)	
Training, Youth & Walls Committee	Andy Newton	(AN) (am only)	
National Council reconstitution group	Roger Murray	(RM)	
National Council reconstitution group	Rik Payne	(RP) (pm only)	

##### Others in attendance:

Chief Executive	Dave Turnbull	(DT)	
Deputy CEO	Nick Colton	(NC)	
Access Officer (Policy)	Cath Flitcroft	(CF) (am only)	
Access Officer (England)	Rob Dyer	(RDy) (am only)	
Access Officer (Wales)	Elfyn Jones	(EJ) (am only)	
BMC / MTE Training Officer	Jon Garside	(JG) (am only)	
Clubs, Huts & Volunteers Officer	Jane Thompson	(JT) (am only)	
Competitions Programme Manager	Zoe Spriggins	(ZS) (am only)	
Governance & Compliance Officer	Lucy Valerio	(LV)	

Technical Officer  
Youth & Equity Officer  
Secretary

Dan Middleton  
James McHaffie  
Tony Ryan

(DM) (am only)  
(JM) (am only)  
(TR)

Note: \* = supporting paper circulated.

- |   | <b>Actions</b> |
|---|----------------|
| <b>1. Welcome &amp; apologies for absence</b>   |                |
| <b>1.1 Welcome</b>  |                |
| 1.1.1 Lynn Robinson welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Cherida Griffiths and David Jones, recently elected as National Council representatives for Cymru South Wales and the Midlands respectively. Attending National Council for the first time was Lucy Valerio, BMC Governance & Compliance Officer. Attending the meeting as observers were Roger Murray and Rik Payne, members of the National Council reconstitution working group.   |                |
| 1.1.2 LR mentioned that the BMC celebrated the 75 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation on 2 December. We asked members "What's the best thing that the BMC has done in 75 years?", and received 464 very positive and wide-ranging responses. One member even went so far as to pen an Ode to the BMC, which LR read out.  |                |
| <b>1.2 Apologies for absence</b>  |                |
| 1.2.1 Apologies received from: Ian Carr; Iain Dickinson; Rich Emerson; Niall Grimes; Guy Jarvis; Amanda Parshall; Mike Rosser; Claudia Sarnar; Andy Syme; Andy Tickle.  |                |
| <b>2. Note Conflicts of Interest</b>  |                |
| 2.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.   |                |
| <b>3. Specialist Committee Membership, ToR &amp; Forward Plans for approval</b>   |                |
| LR explained that it was for the Board to approve specialist committee terms of reference and forward plans. The required number and mix of Board members were not present to do this during the meeting; nevertheless, the meeting provided a good opportunity for National Council to hear about the extensive range of work carried out during the year and plans for next year, and ask questions of the committee chairs and BMC officers. They would then be signed off by the Board outside of this meeting. |                |
| <b>3.1 Access Management Group*</b>   |                |
| <i>Chair: Andy Tickle; Officers: Rob Dyer, Cath Flitcroft, Elfyn Jones.</i>   |                |
| 3.1.1 Before presentation of the committee's work and plans, CF presented the revised version of the BMC Climate Emergency Declaration, which had been presented to the September meeting, amended following feedback, and approved by the Board at its meeting on 25 November. CF asked for National Council's approval of the Declaration.  |                |
| 3.1.2 There was some discussion about whether 'encourage and support' in the declaration's commitments was sufficiently strong enough action, or whether there should be a commitment to 'lobby'.   |                |
| 3.1.3 EJ said that the Welsh Government had already declared a climate emergency. BMC policy should be the same for England and Wales, but the way we conduct policy will be different.   |                |

- 3.1.4 MA felt that different approaches would be required for members, partners and stakeholders.
- 3.1.5 A vote was taken on whether to approve the BMC Climate Emergency Declaration as presented to the meeting.
- For = 19; Against = 0; Abstentions = 0.
- 3.1.6 In relation to the Group's 2019 report, CF said that uncertainty created by Brexit had impacted on some work.
- 3.1.7 RD reported that consultation with access reps on how to better support them had taken place and would continue next year. BMC volunteer development officer Jane Thompson said that a new 'volunteers' section was being developed on the BMC website to host useful information and advice for all BMC volunteers.
- 3.1.8 EJ talked about ongoing reforms to access laws in Wales which would include relaxation of some restrictions. With regard to efforts to curb climate change, he felt that we would have to make some painful decisions about energy generation.
- 3.1.9 David Brown asked whether the group felt it had sufficient resources to carry out its work. Dave Turnbull responded that the current budget process was considering resource allocation across the organisation.
- 3.1.10 Fiona Sanders asked how the work of the BMC Access & Conservation Trust (ACT) could support BMC objectives. She felt that investment in ACT could generate more income for the BMC.

**Agreed**

### **3.2 Clubs Committee\***

*Chair: Peter Salenieks; Officer: Jane Thompson.*

- 3.2.1 PS reported that it had been a busy year for the committee, and thanked outgoing members of the committee for their support, as well as ODG workstream volunteers, Board members and BMC staff.
- 3.2.2 A number of vacancies on the committee provide the opportunity to bring in people aligned with the ODG objectives. Jonathan White suggested contacting members who had recently been committee members in their clubs.
- 3.2.3 The main work of the committee in the year ahead will be to provide a stronger co-ordinating role with clubs and with members of BMC affiliated clubs. The first live webinar for student club members has been watched by over 700 people.
- 3.2.4 There was some discussion about the risk of disaffiliation by student clubs following the subscriptions increase agreed at the 2019 BMC AGM; this has been limited so far, but the full picture won't be known until January 2020. DT felt that the committee needed to keep a careful eye on student clubs and decisions made by their universities.
- 3.2.5 Chris Stone reported that the London & SE area had struggled with recruitment to the committee. Carl Spencer felt that as long as area meetings were attended by club members, the lack of an elected clubs committee representative shouldn't be an issue.

### **3.3 Competitions Committee\***

*Chair: Iain McKenzie; Officer: Zoe Spriggins.*

- 3.3.1 ZS gave a brief summary of some of the key events organised in 2019, as well as the support for the GB Climbing Team and preparations for climbing's Olympic debut in Tokyo next year, for which Shauna Coxsey has secured a qualifying place. In May, BMC member Colin Knowles was elected as Secretary General of the International Federation of Sport Climbing's (IFSC) European Council Board, and the IFSC plans to hold its 2021 Plenary Assembly in the UK if there is the funding.
- 3.3.2 The committee has three key aims:
1. Athlete health and wellbeing;
  2. Performance success;
  3. Enhanced reputation.
- 3.3.3 CSp asked about the selection process for the GB Development Squad, which he said had generated some dissatisfaction. NC said that some confidentiality applied to the process, and when this can be explained, people will understand.
- 3.3.4 FS asked about Zoe's role in relation to gambling and betting issues. ZS said that it was advisory and proactive, and she was not aware of any issues so far.
- 3.3.5 AE asked about the availability of funding for athletes. ZS said that they were constantly striving to access more funding.
- 3.3.6 DB asked whether there had been any doping issues. ZS said there had not.
- 3.3.7 DT said that competition climbing represented a growing area of BMC work, with high expectations from competitors and their parents. He compared the resources of British Canoeing, where 50 of its 100 staff work in this area, and felt that the BMC does amazingly well given the level of resources available. He acknowledged that the organisation is stretched, but needs to actively demonstrate that it can and will do more. There is scope for more funding from UK Sport and Sport England in the future.

### **3.4 Equity Steering Group\***

*Chair: Cressida Allwood; Officer: James McHaffie.*

- 3.4.1 CA explained that the ESG is made up of five sub-groups covering: BAME, LGBTQ, mental health, disability, women. This enables better management of the group's work and equitable funding and support.
- 3.4.2 Examples include: support for six Black Dog Outdoors events, which help people with mental health issues reconnect with nature and the outdoors; support for the Women's Trad Fest, an annual trad climbing festival in the Peak District, bridging the gap between indoor and outdoor climbing; and organising an Equity Symposium for BAME potential outdoor leaders.
- 3.4.3 A lot of work has been carried out this year to upgrade of the BMC's Equality Standard for Sport from Preliminary to Intermediate level, and this process is almost complete.

3.4.4 In early 2020, the BMC and Mountain Training will be announced as official partners of Trail magazine's Mountains for the Mind campaign, promoting the benefits of being outside and the power of the mountains to change lives and improve mental health. And in late 2020, a two-day Mental Health Conference will be held in partnership with the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI) and the Mountain Training Association (MTA).

3.4.5 CSt asked about funding sources. JM said that it mostly came from Sport England and the BMC. There are other potential sources of funding, but they were sometimes not easy to access. DT said that the group's work fits well with Sport England's objectives, and we would look to bid for more funding in the next application cycle.

### **3.5 Finance & Audit Committee\***

*Chair: Iain Dickinson; Officer: Alan Brown.*

3.5.1 In the absence of Iain and Alan, Huw Jones presented the report. HJ said that the committee had worked well during the year, but would benefit from more people. Dealing with the subscriptions increase agreed at the 2019 AGM continues. The BMC still has significant reserves. A new zero-based budgeting process is being implemented from 1 January 2020.

3.5.2 The BMC charity accounts (Access & Conservation Trust, Land & Property Trust, Mountain Heritage Trust) are now being reviewed by the committee.

3.5.3 A change to the way the 2019 BMC accounts will be filed will streamline and improve production of the accounts while maintaining quality and transparency.

3.5.4 Work on tendering the audit for the 2021 accounts has begun, with plans for approval at the June 2020 AGM.

3.5.5 JG referred to the decision to put the extension of the office's rear storage area on hold. There is both a financial and time cost to the current use of an off-site storage facility and the financial cost of the extension could be recouped in three years from the savings made by not using off-site storage.

3.5.6 DB asked about club loan schemes. HJ said that there were currently two loans in place. LV explained the Financial Conduct Authority's rules for commercial loans. GP said that any required changes will be made.

### **3.6 Guidebook Committee\***

*Chair: Ian Carr; Officer: Niall Grimes.*

3.6.1 LR reported that Ian and Niall were unable to attend the meeting as it clashed with a meeting of the Wired Guides guidebook publishing co-operative.

3.6.2 FS asked whether the historical records maintained by the BMC were in line with those kept by Wired Guides. MG said that he was aware that two members of the co-operative, the Climbers' Club and the Fell & Rock Climbing Club, had lots of information, but the BMC did not. He asked whether the BMC was committed to those terms of reference of the Guidebook Committee which specifically referenced data creation and maintenance. If so, he felt it would be good to make progress on this area of work.

3.6.3 In response, NC said that the committee's current priority is to publish the Wired Gritstone Select guidebook.

- 3.6.4 MA asked about a target publishing date for the Wired Northern England guidebook. LR replied that this wasn't being produced by the BMC, and was probably being discussed at the Wired meeting that was taking place. She would ask for an update.

LR

### **3.7 Hill Walking Implementation Group\***

*Chair: Peter Judd.*

- 3.7.1 PJ said that the departure of the BMC Hill Walking Development Officer, and the decision not to recruit a replacement, had been a blow. He was pleased that staff support for Mend Our Mountains continues, and felt that there is still a dividend to be obtained from the campaign in future.
- 3.7.2 PJ expressed concern that support of embryo hill walking volunteers will not be progressed, but welcomed the appointment of the partnerships manager and the decision to hold a BMC hill walking symposium in March 2020.
- 3.7.3 Although hill walking representation in Summit magazine has improved, PJ felt that there was still a lack of representation on BMC social media. He would also like to see further development of training opportunities and other support for hill walkers.
- 3.7.4 CJ said that the Brecon Beacons had been championed as a location for the 2020 hill walking symposium, but the Lake District had been chosen. PJ said that it had been difficult to find a suitable venue in the Brecon Beacons, and that the offer from the venue in the Lake District was a good one. The group does want to consider other types of event that will work in other areas.
- 3.7.5 LR said that this year's BMC Gower Climbing Festival had been an excellent and well-attended event, and could be improved with the addition of hill walking activities. HW advised that the area festival planned by the BMC South West area next year would include climbing and walking activities.

### **3.8 Huts Group\***

*Chair: David Jones; Officer: Jane Thompson.*

- 3.8.1 DJ reported that the group continued to provide support to clubs with huts by answering queries on a range of topics including fire safety, electronic locks and drinking water regulations. Several of the guidelines for hut managers documents have been reviewed and updated.
- 3.8.2 No huts seminar event was held in 2019 due to a lack of demand, but one is planned for 2020.
- 3.8.3 Liaison with the Clubs Committee is important and ongoing. The group also supports the committees of the national huts and liaises with Mountaineering Scotland's Huts Advisory Group on matters of common interest.
- 3.8.4 The group has also given some consideration to the possible impact of climate change, and the efforts to address it, and implications for club huts.
- 3.8.5 DB asked about installation of electric vehicle charging points at club huts. DB said that the committee had discussed the idea and would need to look further into the viability.

### **3.9 International Committee\***

*Chair: Ian Parnell; Officer: Nick Colton.*

- 3.9.1 NC reported that during 2019 the committee made grants totalling £12,675 to 19 overseas expeditions; in addition, three Julie Tullis Memorial Award grants totalling £1,500 and one Jeremy Willson Charitable Trust grant of £1,000 were made. There has also been close liaison with the Mount Everest Foundation and other grant giving bodies, on the distribution of overseas expedition awards.
- 3.9.2 The Young Alpinists Group, an informal mentoring group of young mountaineers was active during the year, and held alpine meet during the summer. Additionally, group members are beginning to join the Alpine Climbing Group, an affiliated group of the Alpine Club which has historically attracted the most talented young British alpinists.
- 3.9.3 No 2020 BMC international winter meet will be held, because of financial considerations and uncertainty over the likelihood of winter conditions, but Mountaineering Scotland is holding a meet in Aviemore in February in partnership with the Alpine Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the BMC.
- 3.9.4 Internationally we have representation on at the UIAA (the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation) and the more recently established EUMA (European Union of Mountaineering Associations), which acts as a representative and lobbying voice for European mountaineers to the EU. This works with countries from geographical Europe and not just EU members, therefore it is not anticipated that Brexit will impact on the BMCs involvement in this work.
- 3.9.5 AE asked whether the committee had any concerns about the potential impact of Brexit on international mountaineering. NC said that no discussions on the topic had taken place, but he was aware that BAIML (British Association of International Mountain Leaders) had concerns about the potential impact on its members and their employment opportunities.
- 3.9.6 JC added that the fact that there are no British Mountain Guide candidates for next year might be linked to the uncertainty around Brexit.
- 3.9.7 There was a discussion about how funding overseas expeditions could be squared with the BMC's climate action goals. CF said that discussions with specialist committees needed to take place. JM felt that it was a question of providing information so that people could educate themselves and make their own decisions, rather than enforcement.
- 3.9.8 DT said that the annual grant used to total around £30k but has been much reduced in recent years. He questioned how much the awards made a difference to the viability of the expeditions. JW suggested that if we were to discourage overseas expeditions by withdrawing funding, we ought to do the same for international climbing competitions.

### **3.10 Land Management Group\***

*Chair: Martin Wragg; Officers: Elfyn Jones; Rob Dyer.*

- 3.10.1 MW explained that 2019 involved a mix of routine work and unplanned non-routine work responding to incidents. There were two major incidents at Craig Bwlch y Moch; one in which a falling tree fell during a storm and crushed an unoccupied car; the other involving a controlled de-scaling of the huge pinnacle on the route Shadrach.

- 3.10.2 Responding to unauthorised work carried out at Aldery Cliff by a vigilante caretaker was also a significant piece of unplanned work, and consultation over the best method to access the Isolated Buttress at Harrison's Rocks was time consuming.
- 3.10.3 Routine work took place at other BMC owned and managed sites, requiring management and supervision of professionals and volunteers.
- 3.10.4 Looking ahead, the potential impact of Ash Dieback on BMC owned will have to be addressed.
- 3.10.5 MP asked whether consideration had been given to whether climate change was a contributing factor to the rock instability on some crags. EJ felt that there had certainly been an increase in vegetation on some climbs, which might be linked to milder winter weather, or could be the result of fewer climbers.
- 3.10.6 FS asked whether crowdfunding had been considered for raising money to carry out work. EJ said that approach had been used for the rebolting at Horseshoe Quarry and had raised about £15k towards the current cost of around £36k. DT added that a large proportion of a significant bequest to the BMC had been allocated to the BMC Land & Property Trust.
- 3.10.7 SQ asked whether the acquisition of Craig y Forwyn was a possibility, and EJ confirmed that it was.

### **3.11 Technical Committee\***

*Chair: Martin Nash; Officer: Dan Middleton.*

- 3.11.1 MN thanked the committee's outgoing chair, Phillip Tootill for his support.
- 3.11.2 DM explained that the bolt installers' guide planned for 2019 had increased in scope to become a bolting manual, to be published in 2020. CG said that the Cymru South Wales Area was keen to organise a bolting meeting in March next year and asked whether the booklet would be ready by then? DM said that a draft would certainly be ready, if not the finished publication, and that he would be available to attend the meeting.
- 3.11.3 The research findings on abseil knots and belay devices will also be published in 2020.
- 3.11.4 Representation on UIAA and CEN will continue whatever the outcome of Brexit: committee member Nick Galpin is the BMC rep. DT asked whether it was felt that there was sufficient manufacturer representation on the committee. DM replied that there is communication with manufacturers, often via the UIAA/CEN and the work involving Nick Galpin.
- 3.11.5 JP asked whether auto belay use was on the committee's radar, following reports of incidents of failure to clip in. DM replied that 'mindfulness' is a theme across many types of incident. There may be a technical solution to the issue with auto belays, but the user being in the right frame of mind is important.

### **3.12 Training, Youth & Walls Committee (inc. Child Safeguarding Group)\***

*TYWC Chair: Andy Newton; Officers: Nick Colton, Dan Middleton, Jon Garside, James McHaffie.*

*CSG Chair: Christine Scarborough; Officer: Nick Colton.*

- 3.12.1 LR introduced CSc, who is stepping down as chair of CSG after more than ten years working to ensure that the BMC meets the necessary safeguarding standards, and also leading on case management, which is often complex and highly sensitive work. CSc will remain on the group.
- 3.12.2 CSc introduced JS, chair elect of the Safeguarding Group.
- 3.12.3 DT said that in many sports safeguarding is the single biggest issue, and can seriously affect an organisation when an incident arises.
- 3.12.4 MA asked whether the BMC was comfortable with the level of risk it was exposed to. CSc said that the BMC operates on the same level as an NHS Trust. There are areas of concern where the BMC doesn't have direct control, such as a climbing walls where competitions take place, but we have worked hard to ensure that appropriate controls are in place.
- 3.12.5 AN asked about the likelihood that historical cases of abuse could emerge (as have done in football). GP said that a former instructor at an outdoor centre in the Brecon Beacons had just been found guilty of indecently assaulting three boys during the 1980s and 90s.
- 3.12.6 AN described how the work of TYWC was covered by four BMC officers working in the areas of training, youth and climbing walls.
- 3.12.7 A core activity of the committee is the running of events including skills lectures, coach education workshops, youth meets, safety seminars and climbing courses.
- 3.12.8 An accident and near miss database was established this year, and committee members are active in the BMC belay working group, which is looking at the 'low friction environment' of belaying at indoor walls.
- 3.12.9 A key project for 2020 is the publication of a 'New Indoor Climbers' booklet in a similar format to the already published New Climbers, New Hill Walkers, New Alpinists booklets. This new booklet will form an important element for the digital membership package for young people which will be introduced next year in anticipation of a surge in interest in climbing following its debut at the Tokyo Olympic Games in August.
- 3.12.10 JG said that in 2004, the Youth Advisory Panel merged with the Training Advisory Group to become the Training & Youth Committee, and since then the Child Safeguarding Group has been established as a sub-group and the Climbing Walls Committee has been merged into the committee. He hoped that the specialist committee review being undertaken by the Organisational Development Group would consider why these amalgamations have taken place, and whether it was the most appropriate structure for delivery of the work.
- 3.12.13 Upon completion of reports by the specialist committees, JT reminded the meeting that nominations for the 2020 BMC Volunteer Awards are now open.
- LR thanked all who had contributed to the morning session, and noted the desire for more office assistance with volunteer recruitment and support.
- 3.12.14 Following a lunch break, the meeting reconvened. Some observers and BMC staff left the meeting at this point, and Rik Payne joined as an observer for the National Council reconstitution working group.

#### **4. Note issues for AOB**

- 4.1 • BMC Trusts (David Brown)
- IT training for National Council members (Fiona Sanders)

## 5. Minutes of the previous meeting\*

### 5.1 Accuracy of previous minutes

5.1.1 JW had requested by email an addition to the minutes relating to 6.1.1 (BMC Strategic Plan 2020-2024), which record that:

*The question of whether the BMC should actively promote climbing, hill walking and mountaineering was also discussed. GJ felt that getting the organisation's approach to participation was very important, and he would like to see the BMC's values aligned with Mountain Training and other partners of the BMC. RF agreed that this was an important issue which the BMC needed to address.*

JW requested the following be added to the minutes in response to the comment made by GJ:

*JW stated that the BMC has a long-held policy of supporting those who wish to take up mountaineering, but also of not encouraging people to take it up in the first place - based on environmental, safety and legal principles. He felt that any policy could be changed, provided there was a full and informed review. There was however no conflict with MTE and other entities (e.g. walls, clubs) from encouraging participation if their own policies permitted it.*

**Agreed**

With the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting were signed by the Chair.

### 5.2 Actions from previous minutes

- |       |  |                  |
|-------|--|------------------|
| 5.2.1 | Ref. 4.2.1: Review potential access agreement to Llandarcy.  | <b>Ongoing</b>   |
| 5.2.2 | Ref. 4.2.5: Publish procurement policy once approved by Board.   | <b>With BoD</b>  |
| 5.2.3 | Ref. 4.2.6: Publish equality survey results once analysed. It was agreed that TR would check status with James McHaffie. | <b>Ongoing</b>   |
| 5.2.4 | Ref. 4.2.12: Email briefing to clubs on subscriptions increase (see 6.1.1).  | <b>Not done</b>  |
| 5.2.5 | Ref. 6.4.1: Present risk assessment of digital membership trial at December meeting.                                     | <b>On agenda</b> |
| 5.2.6 | Ref. 7.4.1: Update skills matrix and circulate to National Council voting members.                                       | <b>Done</b>      |
| 5.2.7 | Ref. 9.2: Discuss GDPR integration with MP. It was agreed that MP should talk to Jane Thompson.                          | <b>Ongoing</b>   |
| 5.2.8 | Ref. 9.4: Voluntary donation to MHT – Board to assess viability.   | <b>Ongoing</b>   |

## 6. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

6.1 There were three matters arising:

6.1.1 Ref. 5.1.3 (Subs increase communications): JW advised that the Clubs Committee had concluded that it was no longer relevant to send the letter to clubs. He also advised that Howdens had confirmed that our 'UK' geographic cover for combined liability insurance includes the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and Gibraltar.

**Noted**

6.1.2 Ref. 6.3 (2020 meeting dates): CSP asked about the meeting dates and distribution throughout the year. This had been discussed at length by the R33 group, and interdependencies with the FAC and Board considered. The distribution of meetings will be monitored and reviewed during 2020.

6.1.3 Ref. 9.5 (Formal recording of 'actions' between meetings): Although there was insufficient time at the September meeting to discuss this AOB item, LR agreed to create a log to maintain a record of decisions and actions agreed between formal Council meetings.

**LR**

## 7. Organisational Development

### 7.1 Election of two Council Nominated Directors\*

7.1.1 LR advised that the papers for this agenda item had not been put on Teamwork, as they contained personal information, but had been emailed to voting members.

7.1.2 MA read out an email sent by Andy Syme, proposing that only one CND be elected at the meeting, with a second CND being elected by the Members Council as soon as possible after the Council is reconstituted, and asking that the meeting vote on this proposal.

This proposal was discussed, following which a vote on whether to proceed as planned with the election of two CNDs was held:

For = 14; Against = 0; Abstentions = 6.

The meeting agreed to elect two Council Nominated Directors

**Agreed**

7.1.3 Three candidates had submitted applications: JP, CSp and CSt. LR invited the candidates to speak for five minutes (in alphabetical order by surname), and after each presentation, two questions to the candidate would be permitted.

7.1.4 LR thanked all three candidates for their presentations. In response to a question about what particular skills the Board was looking for, it was noted that Paul Drew had just joined the Board as an Independent Director and brings with him IT/digital experience including supporting start-ups. He is also an active climber (indoor and outdoor), mountaineer and ski-mountaineer.

GP added that following the departure of Roger Fanner and Will Kilner, some of the Board's skills gaps relate to mountain training, hill walking and indoor climbing.

7.1.5 LR asked LV to explain the voting procedure. Each voting member had 4 points to allocate to the candidates in any combination whatsoever (whole numbers only). The two candidates receiving the highest number of points would be elected.

7.1.6 RP wished to point out the high turnover of BMC Board members compared to the average board term length, which is 6.6 years (3.3 years for non-execs). In the last five years, the BMC average has been 26 months, and none of the last five Council Nominated Directors has completed their term. He felt that the new CNDs needed to be in place for full terms.

7.1.7 The meeting continued while the vote count took place, following which LR announced that JP and CSt were the two candidates who had received the highest scores.

7.1.8 Post-meeting note: A procedural matter relating to the election procedure for the CNDs was raised after the meeting. It was decided that the election results (and the filing of paperwork with Companies House) should be put on hold while this matter is considered.

### 7.2 Organisational Development Group

FS gave a brief update on progress made by the group. Three working groups have been established, covering:

1. Article changes, which will go to the March round of area meetings. LV to chair group, which also needs someone else from National Council.
2. Digital Strategy, which will be chaired by new Independent Director Paul Drew, and includes Paul Evans and Alex Messenger.
3. Specialist Committee review, which needs lead / contributor.

PS asked when the review of BMC areas, which had been specifically excluded so far, would take place. FS said she would need to consult with the Board.

For the Article changes, it was agreed that Andy Syme should join the group with Amanda Parshall, Independent Director.

For Digital Strategy, CSt expressed his interest.

For Specialist Committee review, DT suggested that RM would be a good addition; someone from National Council would still be required, and DB offered to take up this role.

Post meeting note: Roger Murray has agreed to lead on the Specialist Committee review.

#### 7.2.1 **Competitions\***

7.2.1.1 The Board reached a decision at its 25 November meeting on its preferred option from those presented by the ODG Competitions Working Group, which is to take forward a strengthened approach to 'Option 1', which will involve setting up a new department for competition climbing, which will be overseen by a newly established sub-committee of the BMC Board.

7.2.1.2 AC asked if the decision could be shared with members. DT said that the decision would be communicated later in the week. The aim is to have the new structure established by mid/late April 2020.

7.2.1.3 National Council was asked to vote to approve the Board's decision regarding the Competition Working Groups option:

**Agreed**

For = 17; Against = 0; Abstentions = 2.

#### 7.2.2 **National Council – election processes\***

7.2.2.1 HW outlined the work of the R33 (National Council reconstitution) group in the run-up to the 2020 AGM, which included consideration of election processes for three types of councillor:

1. Constituency Councillor – Clubs
2. Constituency Councillor – Mountain Training
3. Nationally Elected Councillor (NEC)

7.2.2.2 LR asked for clarification of the election of Deputy President. HW said that work was ongoing, and further papers would be circulated.

7.2.2.3 HW requested a vote on approving the process for electing the Clubs Constituency Councillor:

For = 17; Against = 0; Abstentions = 2.

**Agreed**

- 7.2.2.4 A vote was then taken on approving the process for electing the Mountain Training Constituency Councillor:  
For = 17; Against = 0; Abstentions = 2. **Agreed**
- 7.2.2.5 There was a discussion about the pros and cons of asking candidates to submit a video presentation along with a personal statement against the role description as recommended by the paper submitted for this item, but no vote was taken on this recommendation. It was decided that the process should be developed in conjunction with the Governance Working Group. **Noted**
- 7.2.2.6 A vote was taken on the recommendation that NECs are elected by the members at the AGM with no pre-selection procedure by a Council sub-committee:  
For = 16; Against = 1; Abstentions = 2. **Agreed**
- 7.2.2.7 On the recommendation that the appointments be staggered, with Council seeking to fill 2 NEC vacancies in 2020 and the other two roles in 2021 and 2022, a show of hands was equally split between the staggering of appointments and appointing four NECs in 2020.
- 7.2.2.8 There was also a discussion about how role descriptions could be developed before the next National Council meeting on 28 March. AC said that a generic role description for the Members' Council is almost ready to be circulated. FS recommended that MG work with AC on the role descriptions.
- 7.2.2.9 It was agreed that HW would contact National Council voting members to arrange a January 2020 date for a webinar to discuss areas of strategy NECs will represent, the selection process for NECs and the number of NECs to be selected in 2020. **HW**
- 7.2.3 National Council – Code of Practice\***
- 7.2.3.1 PS said the proposed Code of Practice for National Council would sit between the Councillor role descriptions and the Code of Conduct for all BMC members.
- 7.2.3.2 AE asked about the wording in 4.a. (act solely in terms of the interests of mountaineers). PS explained that the use of the word 'mountaineers' and not 'climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers' came from the Objects contained in the Articles of Association (Article 4.1.1), which uses 'mountaineers' to describe individuals participating in climbing, mountaineering and hill walking (including indoor climbers, ski-mountaineers and ice climbers).
- 7.2.3.3 A vote to approve the Code of Practice was taken:  
For = 18; Against = 0; Abstentions = 0.  
(1 voting member not in room at time of vote) **Agreed**
- 7.2.4 Governance (W5) – request for sitting member**
- 7.2.4.1 This agenda item was covered under 7.2 (Organisational Development Update).
- 7.2.5 Digital Strategy sub-group – request for sitting member**
- 7.2.5.1 This agenda item was covered under 7.2 (Organisational Development Update).
- 7.3 Strategic Plan 2020-2024\***

- 7.3.1 A revised version of the plan had been uploaded to Teamwork following the 25 November Board meeting, which included some additional options for new BMC Vision and Purpose statements.

With reference to the bullet point on under-represented groups in 4b. (Strategic Themes – Membership engagement, services and support), CA suggested that the other Equity Steering Group sub-groups (Disability and LGBTQ) should be added to Young People, Women and BAME.

There was a discussion about Diversity being missing from the list of Values; it was suggested that it could be included in the Respect value.

MG asked whether the marketing plan integrated with the business and strategic plans. GP replied that the marketing plan must address deliverables, and added that the next strategic plan will cover 2021-2025.

PJ asked whether our resource allocation should reflect the balance of our members' interests.

#### 7.4 **Blue / digital membership\***

- 7.4.1 At its September meeting, National Council agreed that the Blue Membership scheme should be progressed on a trial basis, subject to the Board being able to provide assurances that it was satisfied in relation to all aspects of risk. The paper provided for this meeting sets out the position in relation to identified aspects of risk as reviewed by the Board at its meeting of 25 November, for the Council's information.

The table on page 4 of the paper listed Blacks and Go Outdoors as retailers not offering discount, but CSt said that they do give discount to BMC members but don't advertise it.

PS noted that life membership was outside the scheme's proposal. GP replied a life membership category had been parked pending evaluation.

In the table on page 3 showing additional detail on financials, DB queried the loss of income forecast for 2020, and was advised that the net loss of £2.8k represented a possible year 1 adverse scenario.

#### 7.5 **Council nominated Finance & Audit Committee member**

- 7.5.1 It was explained that the committee is not quorate if DB does not attend a meeting, so an additional National Council member on the committee would reduce the reliance on DB's attendance.

LR asked the meeting if any voting member was interested in joining the committee or would like to talk to DB about the role. BB expressed an interest.

There was a brief discussion about the role and the balance of skills, experience and common sense required. HJ added that there was no limit on the number of National Council members on the committee.

A vote was taken on the appointment of BB to FAC:

For = 17; Against = 0; Abstentions = 2.

**Agreed**

#### 7.6 **Climate Emergency Declaration\***

- 7.6.1 This agenda item was covered earlier in the meeting at the start of the Access Management Group presentation (see item 3.1).

#### 7.7 **Governance Working Group Interim Report\***

- 7.7.1 LR provided some background information on the group and its work.

General feedback from the meeting was that the interim report contained many good points and its recommendations and considerations were very useful.

LR suggested that feedback on the report could be emailed to Lucy Valerio.

**Noted**

## **8. Reports**

### **8.1 Partners**

#### **8.1.1 Mountain Training\***

JC felt that the partnership between the BMC and Mountain Training was much improved, thanks to the ongoing organisational development work, and welcomed the inclusion of the Constituency Councillor for Mountain Training on the proposed Members' Council, and the appointment of the BMC Partnerships Manager, which will further solidify the working relationship between the two organisations.

#### **8.1.2 Association of British Climbing Walls**

No report submitted and no representative in attendance.

#### **8.1.3 Plas y Brenin**

No report submitted and no representative in attendance.

### **8.2 Areas**

LR thanked those areas which had submitted a report for the meeting, and due to the limited amount of time available, asked all areas to talk about one thing from their area of national significance.

**8.2.1 Cymru North Wales.** AE reported that there would be some elected volunteer roles to fill during the coming year as some volunteers choose to step down or reach the end of their terms, including area chair and National Council reps.

**8.2.2 Cymru South Wales\*.** SQ reported that recent issues relating to climbing development creating access and conservation problems continue, and together with trad climbing and bolting ethics, will be tabled as the main agenda item at the next area meeting in March. The area thanked Will Kilner for completing his term as a National Council rep. In addition to being elected to replace Will, CG has agreed to take on the area newsletter publishing role.

**8.2.3 Lakes.** MP said that the area had decided to extend its influence with the park authority and other bodies, and had elected two park planning representatives, Richard Outhwaite and Ken Taylor, to help achieve this aim.

**8.2.4 London & SE\*.** RD reported that the area is trying to diversify and theme next year's meetings, including holding one as part of a Southern Sandstone festival. The speaker at November's meeting, blind climber Jesse Dufton, gave an excellent presentation about climbing the Old Man of Hoy and competing for the GB Paraclimbing Team, followed by a Q&A.

**8.2.5 Midlands\*.** DJ reported that attendance at the November meeting was low, and members felt that meetings were not being publicised as effectively in the past when volunteers could send emails to meeting attendees.

There followed a discussion about area emails and receipt by members in general and meeting attendees in particular. CSp said that he had procured a security audit of the BMC database, which revealed that it featured highly on many spam lists.

- 8.2.6 **North East.** JP reported access issues at three venues recently developed for sport climbing without landowner consultation, which had resulted in access to the venues being banned. The area is trying to work with the climber responsible. The area's youth rep stood down with some criticism of the BMC, which has been communicated to the office.
- 8.2.7 **North West\*** CSp reported that the November meeting had been relatively low key; it included an update on recent access work and plans for a number of clean-ups in 2020. In addition to the regular area meetings, a couple of meetings focussing on access and guidebooks have been held at the Black Dog in Belmont, and more meetings of this type are planned.
- 8.2.8 **Peak\*.** AC reported that the meeting had covered mostly local topics. There had been some recruitment difficulties for the roles of area youth co-ordinator and clubs committee representative. After four years as chair and secretary respectively, Rob Greenwood and Becky Hammond had stepped down; Andy Reeve and Ana Wass are the newly elected chair and secretary.
- 8.2.9 **South West.** PW reported that the new Culm coast guidebook, published by the Climbers' Club, is due out, and a beach clean, to remove plastic etc. from some of the more inaccessible beaches on the coast has been suggested. The area is planning to hold another West Cornwall climbing festival in 2020.
- 8.2.10 **Yorkshire.** MG reported that the December meeting had included a presentation by Emily Pitts on a recent expedition she had taken part in. MG asked how the office could help areas find speakers for area meetings. AC said that a training day for area chairs and secretaries is planned for 11 January and will cover support for areas in running meetings and engaging members.
- 8.3 Board of Directors\***
- 8.3.1 GP reported that all actions relating to the 2018 accounts had now been completed following a filing with Companies House of a supplementary note alongside the accounts. An explanatory note will need to be prepared for the 2020 AGM.
- 8.3.2 The Board Diversity Action Plan has been approved, and progress on a number of governance matters relating to Trusts reviewed.
- 8.3.3 PS asked about any developments with regard to Board tracking of risks and opportunities. GP said that this would be covered during the teleconference on 12 December.
- 8.3.4 MG asked what could be done to achieve a surplus forecast in future business plans and budgets. GP reminded the meeting that an understanding had been given at the 2019 AGM, in relation to the subscriptions increase, that 2020 would be a break-even year.
- 8.3.5 HJ said that managing the head count would be an important area for future financial planning.
- 8.4 Finance\***
- 8.4.1 HJ reported that the current budget deficit for 2019 is forecast to be £154k, with some potential still to improve that figure.
- 8.4.2 Going forward, more variance analysis will be introduced into the financial reports, and the Senior Management Team (SMT) will be expected to react to variances.

- 8.4.3 The accounting system is to be revamped (from 1 January 2020) to be more efficient.
- 8.4.4 The financial report contains two sets of Income & Expenditure Accounts: Standard and Salary Absorbed. In future, only the latter will be included.
- 8.4.5 The balance sheet shows a net worth of just over £1 million; this time last year it was £1.4 million.
- 8.4.6 FS asked why travel insurance couldn't be purchased by direct debit. CSp said that such offers are credit packages, effectively paying off a loan, and therefore not competitively priced. MP said that 'husband and wife' cover can be competitive for older members.

## **8.5 President\***

- 8.5.1 LR referred the meeting to her report which covered work undertaken in the second half of 2019.
- 8.5.2 As well as acting as chair of National Council and leading its restructuring in accordance with the relevant ORG recommendations, key work has included working with the Board to develop strategic aims, development of the volunteering strategy, and commencement of planning of the 2020 AGM.
- 8.5.3 LR attended numerous events during the period, including the ABC Conference & AGM, the British Bouldering and British Lead & Speed Climbing Championships, the Women's Trad Fest, the Gower Climbing Festival and the Kendal Mountain Festival.
- 8.5.4 She also held meetings with IFSC president Marco Sclaris to discuss the BMC's involvement in the IFSC, and with the president of Mountaineering Scotland to discuss shared issues including competition climbing.

## **8.6 CEO & Office\***

- 8.6.1 DT referred the meeting to his CEO report to the Board, which included reports from the Senior Management Team, which is meeting weekly and developing well.
- 8.6.2 DT had prioritised development of external partner and stakeholder relationships over the last quarter, meeting with various partner/stakeholder CEOs.
- 8.6.3 There is lots of good work happening, although this has placed a higher than normal workload on some staff, particularly in relation to the ODG work and competition climbing.
- 8.6.4 FS asked whether staff were proactive in recruiting new members at BMC events, and felt it would be good to know how many new members were signed up. BMC membership is promoted at events, and those events which require a ticket purchase are priced so as to incentivise membership. HJ added that 32 new members were signed up at the Kendal Mountain Festival in November.
- 8.6.5 CG said that ticket prices at the recent winter skills lecture series were lower for members of non-affiliated student clubs than for BMC members.
- 8.6.6 In relation to IT infrastructure and the events module, PA asked whether we had overcome IT failures and were confident they wouldn't happen again? DT said that the problem had been solved.

## **9. AOB**

- 9.1 **BMC Trusts (David Brown).** DB said that the morning's session revealing the scale of work conducted by the specialist committees was eye-opening, and he suggested that a similar session should be arranged for the three trusts: Access & Conservation Trust; Land & Property Trust; Mountain Heritage Trust.

GP felt that the Board would need to reflect on that suggestion, because of the different relationship the Trusts have with the Board. MA reminded the meeting that the Memorandum of Understanding states that National Council meetings cannot be a rerun of everything already dealt with in Board meetings.

- 9.2 **IT training for National Council members (Fiona Sanders).** This was raised as an AOB item at the September meeting, but there was insufficient time to discuss it at that meeting.

Post meeting note: On reviewing the work plan for the R33 group, AS will be reviewing possible IT and recommend the best solution for National Council. Once decided, training will be provided.

- 9.3 **Thank you letters.** LR to write to Roger Fanner and Will Kilner on behalf of National Council to thank them for their support to the BMC in their roles as National Council reps and Council Nominated Directors.

LR

## 10. Date and venue of next meeting

- 10.1 Saturday 28 March 2020, Beaufort Hotel, Chepstow.  
Start time to be confirmed.

The meeting finished at 17:50.

Summary of action points from the 66<sup>th</sup> meeting:

Ref	Action	Who	By
3.6.4	Update on status of Wired guide to Northern England.	LR	ASAP
5.2.1	Review potential access agreement to Llandarcy.	MW	ASAP
5.2.2	Publish procurement policy once approved by Board.	DT	Feb 2020
5.2.3	Check status of equality survey analysis and publish results.	TR	ASAP
5.2.7	Talk to Jane Thompson about GDPR integration.	MP	ASAP
5.2.8	Viability assessment of voluntary donation to MHT as part of annual subscription.	LR	ASAP
6.1.3	Create log of decisions and actions agreed between formal Council meetings	LR	ASAP
7.2.2.9	Arrange January webinar re. Nationally Elected Councillors	HW	ASAP
9.2	Write to Roger Fanner and Will Kilner to thank for support	LR	ASAP

**The above was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting:**

Signed 

Lynn Robinson, President

9 May 2020