



**Club Welcome Pack, for new
members
Club Guidelines**

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Club Welcome Pack for new members

1. Introduction

This document forms part of the BMC Clubs Committee Club Guidelines collection providing support across a range of areas and is available to view on the BMC website. This document provides advice for clubs who want to introduce or update their Club Welcome Packs for new members.

Please don't be put off by the length of this document; we have tried to provide anything and everything that could be of use for your club. You can choose to use whichever parts are most suitable for your club.

A Welcome Pack could easily be available in a hard copy format that you give to new members, as a document or pages on your website, or a bit of both with some information as hard copy and the rest on the website.

You may find that some longer standing members would benefit from having the information available to them too!

2. Suggested content for a Club Welcome Pack

The list below suggests the different advice that you may wish to offer to new members of your club. Where appropriate it is worth considering the differences between a new member who is already a competent walker/climber or member of another club and someone who is a novice, i.e. fairly new to all mountaineering activities.

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2.1 Introduction to the club

Provide an introduction to your club that a new member would be interested in reading. Include details about when the club was formed, the number of members, where people meet and the frequency of meetings (i.e. first Tuesday of the month, every Wednesday, at the pub/social venue, at a climbing wall etc.). Talk about the types of meets that the club offers, are they all at a weekend or do you offer mid-week evening climbs/walks, or maybe mid-week daytime activities for those who are retired, work shifts etc. Do you do full week (or longer) meets to Scotland, the Alps etc? Do you have a club hut? If so mention it here.

2.2 Process to become an aspirant/prospective member

Clubs have different systems to become a member, and for some clubs the first step is to join or register as an aspirant or prospective member. Explain the process clearly so that a potential member knows what they need to do; bullet points or flow diagrams are often the best. Include any costs that they may face, the membership form, and deadlines that they need to meet.

2.3 Process to become full member

Whether a potential member can become a full member of the club immediately or whether your club requests people to attend a set number of meets, ensure that the potential member knows what they need to do; again, bullet points or a flow diagram are often the best formats.

2.4 Membership form

A club membership form has three key functions; firstly for the club to gather contact details for the club to use and for completing affiliations to the BMC; secondly for the new member to sign to agree to adhere to the club policies; and thirdly for the new member to sign up to the BMC Participation Statement.

A sample membership form is available in the Club Guidance Notes on the BMC website.

2.5 Meets list, and information about how to book on to meets

If you assume that a new member hasn't been involved with a club before but that getting outdoors is probably one of the main reasons why they want to join the club, a new member will be keen to know how to book on to meets. However, just introducing them to the meets secretary on their first evening at the club usually won't be enough as they will be meeting lots of other people then too.

Including information on how to book a place, when to book (i.e. how early/late you can book), how to arrange transport, cost of meets (and how to pay for them), cancellation details and how information about the meet will be communicated to members (email, Facebook etc.) will be invaluable. Also include details on informal meets and how/where/when members organise them.

If your club has communal meals on overnight meets explain this.

Many clubs hold social events (curry nights, lectures/slideshows, Christmas meals) so include information about these too.

London MC has a really good [FAQs](http://www.londonmountaineeringclub.com/about-us/faqs) section on their website to give you an idea of the sort of information to include and how to set it out (www.londonmountaineeringclub.com/about-us/faqs)

2.6 New/novice member meets information

Some clubs hold specific meets (weekends or single days or evening social events) for new and/or novice members. These meets may have the aim of introducing new members to other new and existing members, or have the aim of providing novice members with the skills needed to safely walk and climb outdoors.

If your club offers this type of activity then ensure that you promote these within your Welcome Pack.

Other clubs have a more informal approach to supporting new and novice members through standard evening social activities and standard weekend meets. Use the Welcome Pack to explain what you can offer for new members.

It is important that, unless you have qualified professional instructors delivering your club training sessions, you are explicit to novice members that your club is not set up to deliver formal training. However you should also be clear that as a member of your club (and therefore a member of the BMC) the BMC insurance will cover them when being instructed by another member of the club.

2.7 Details about equipment for meets

Once a new member has booked on to a meet they will need to know what equipment to bring along with them. Some new members will be competent climbers or walkers and will know the gear required for a day on the hills or at the crag. For other, particularly novice, members more advice will be required. Even those with experience may need advice on what to take when staying at a club hut, or going on their first winter meet.

There are several suggested kit lists detailed later in sections 2.14 . 2.17.

If your club has equipment that members can borrow explain what you have, and how members can borrow it.

2.8 Information about key people in the club

It is important for a new member to have contact details for some of the key people in your club. This will probably include the New Members Secretary, Meets Secretary/Organiser, and Chairman. It is useful to have names, an email address or phone number, a photo and a few lines about them.

2.9 Club Rules & Policies

Each club should have a set of rules for members to follow that ensures that the club runs smoothly. Clubs may not call them ~~rules~~ but ~~guidelines~~ or something similar. New members should be given a copy of these so that they are aware of the rules from the start.

Clubs may also have other policies that they wish to share with new members such as Health & Safety or Hut Usage. You may also wish to include the club constitution. Just remember that you are trying to encourage the new member to be active within the club and not for them to drown in paperwork, so be careful of the balance of the documents that they need to have upon joining and documents that can be provided at a later date!

2.10 Training opportunities (aimed at novices)

Some clubs offer training opportunities (both formal and informal) which are aimed at novices. If your club offers this then it is good to make that clear in the New Members Pack.

Some clubs require a minimum competence before members are able to attend a club meet; this may be that a climber has belaying and basic climbing skills or that a walker should be fit enough to walk for a specific length of time to join a club walk. Other clubs may require a higher skill level. It is important that you make this clear to new members. If the club doesn't provide any training opportunities then there are many places that you can direct a novice member towards to develop their skills. These include the BMC club workshops and courses at places like Plas y Brenin.

Details can be found later in section 2.18.

2.11 Information about the BMC, membership and the benefits of joining

As each new member will become a member of the BMC when they join the club it would be useful to provide information about what BMC membership will offer. Some of the key things will include third-party liability cover, discounts at the BMC online shop and at many retailers, and access to subsidised training courses.

There is information later in section 2.19 that you may wish to provide to your new members.

2.12 Safety & Emergencies

If your club has a system in place to support members if there is an incident while out in the mountains then include the details here. For example, some clubs have an in case of emergencies list held by a few key club members who can be contacted should next of kin details be required.

Don't assume that a novice member will know how to contact Mountain Rescue; a good link to provide for them is www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/information-centre/fact-sheets

You may wish to stress the importance of a duty of care to other members within the club and other walkers, climbers and mountaineers they meet while out on the hills.

Participants in Club activities are required to act in a responsible manner conscious both of their own safety and of the impact of their conduct on the safety of others, and hold in mind their individual duty of care to all in their company.

2.13 Child protection implications for clubs accepting under-18s

If your club accepts under-18s as members you need to explain how the system works within your club, who the Club Youth Officer or Club Welfare Officer is, whether young people can attend meets independently or whether there must be an adult with them. If you only allow under-18s as part of a family membership and only to attend family meets this should be explained.

Appendix – containing sample text you may wish to use within your pack

2.14 Kit list - Walking Day (for a novice)

Rucksack . large enough to take all your gear, but small/light enough that you can carry all day

Food & drink . it's always better to have too much than to risk running out. Consider taking a flask with a hot drink if it's a cool day. Water bladders are great as they reduce in size as you consume the liquid making storage easier. Think about the food that you take with you . lunch often gets squashed in your rucksack so choose items that will last. Have a small bag to take your rubbish away with you.

Dry bag for valuables (i.e. to keep your phone inside in case it should rain)

Local map of area, map case and compass (if owned) *

Walking poles (if owned)

Head torch

Whistle

Small first aid kit

Comfortable clothes are key. Take layers so that you can mix-and-match according to the weather. Jeans are not ideal for outdoor activity if there is a chance of rain as they become very heavy when wet. Wicking fabrics are better next to the skin than cotton. Sturdy shoes or walking boots are usually the best footwear along with good socks.

Waterproofs (jacket and trousers), gaiters, windproof jacket, extra layers, sun-cream, hat, gloves, sun cap, sunglasses . choose items depending on the weather forecast.

Remember that even in August you may need a warm hat on the tops!

* some clubs have these items available to lend to novice members

2.15 Kit list - Climbing Day (for a novice)

Harness *

Helmet *

Climbing shoes

Chalk bag

Karabiner and belay device *

Nut key

Any other climbing equipment that you own . slings, karabiners etc.

Rucksack . large enough to take all your gear, plus some space to help carry communal gear

Head torch

Small first aid kit

Food & drink . it's always better to have too much than to risk running out. Consider taking a flask with a hot drink if it's a cool day. Water bladders are great as they reduce in size as you consume the liquid making storage easier. Think about the food that you take with you . lunch often gets squashed in your rucksack so choose items that will last. Have a small bag to take your rubbish away with you.

Dry bag for valuables (i.e. to keep your phone inside in case it should rain)

Local map of area and compass, and/or guidebook (if owned)

Comfortable clothes are key. Take layers so that you can mix-and-match according to the weather, and whether you are climbing, belaying or taking a break. Jeans are not ideal for outdoor activity if there is a chance of rain as they become very heavy when

wet. Check out what the approach to the crag is like . sturdy shoes are usually appropriate, but at times walking boots would be better.
Waterproofs, windproof jacket, extra layers, sun-cream, hat, gloves, sun cap, sunglasses . depending on the weather. Remember that even on a sunny day a shady crag can still be cool, particularly while belaying.

* some clubs have these items available to lend to novice members

2.16 Kit list – Staying in a Hut

Sleeping bag

Pillowcase (many huts provide pillows but you may need your own pillowcase)

Towel

Toiletries

Personal medication

Earplugs . great aid to a good night's sleep

Head torch . great to get to or from your bed when others have gone to bed

Climbing / walking equipment and clothing (see kit lists 2.14 & 2.15)

Food and drink for the weekend, including snacks. Huts are usually well equipped with kettles, fridges, ovens, hobs, microwaves and toasters, but tend not to have freezers. The kitchens will have tea towels and kitchen paper but not foil, cling film or plastic bags. Remember that other people will be storing food too so a 4-pint bottle of milk for only a weekend may be excessive and take up valuable space. Some club members may go out to a local pub or café . check with the meets organiser or the new members secretary if this is likely to happen so that you can plan your food accordingly.

Clothes . you will need clothes to wear on your chosen activities (climbing, walking etc), plus comfortable and warm clothes to wear around the hut . many huts don't have central heating!

You may wish to take an extra pair of light shoes to wear around the hut in case your other footwear becomes wet / muddy

Book / magazine to read during quiet times (or if rain stops play!)

Phone charger . mobile reception in many huts is limited so phone batteries can quickly diminish due to the phone trying to find a signal.

Camera

It is best to carry your items in a soft bag. A suitcase / hard-sided bag is not suitable for most huts due to storage.

2.17 Kit list – Camping meet (for novices, based at one camp site)

Sleeping bag

Pillow

Camping mat / camp bed / air bed

Blanket

Towel

Toiletries

Personal medication

Earplugs . great aid to a good night's sleep

Head torch

Climbing / walking equipment and clothing (see kit lists 2.14 & 2.15)

Clothes . you will need clothes to wear on your chosen activities (climbing, walking etc), and warm comfortable clothes to wear on the camp site

Book / magazine to read during quiet times (or if rain stops play!)

Camera

Folding chair . a nice luxury when you don't have to carry it!

Tent . when you book on to the meet the organiser will be able to buddy you up with someone to share a tent if you don't have your own.

Food and drink for the weekend, including snacks. If you have your own stove and cooking equipment you can take them . but check with your buddy as it may be better to share kit. Don't forget crockery, cutlery and a mug. If you wish to take a disposable BBQ check to ensure that the campsite allows them. The cooking equipment you have will often determine what food you take with you. Remember that you won't have a fridge so packet and tinned food is usually the best. Plan for meals that only need one pot to make cooking easier. You may be able to share meals with your buddy to again make the cooking easier. Check with the meet organiser as it may be that everyone will go out for a meal in the evening . making a big difference to your meal planning. Don't forget things like kitchen paper, foil, cling film or plastic bags. Don't forget to take washing up liquid and a tea towel with you to clean up your pans!

It is best to carry your items in a soft bag. A suitcase / hard-sided bag is not suitable for camping due to space in the tent.

2.18 Training opportunities organised by the BMC suitable for Club Members

Every year the BMC Clubs Committee organises training specifically for members of BMC affiliated club. These courses are open to any BMC club member and cover a range of skills including

Outdoor First Aid

Navigation, Hill and Mountain skills

Improvised-rescue for climbers

Improving climbing skills

Scrambling

Full details can be found at www.thebmc.co.uk/clubscourses

The BMC Climbing Movement Masterclasses are ideal for indoor climbers wishing to improve their skills. Run annually and at venues across the country more details about these half-day courses can be found at www.thebmc.co.uk/movementmasterclasses

2.19 BMC Information

Being a member of a BMC affiliated club automatically means that you are a member of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC). The BMC is the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales and promotes their interests and the freedom to enjoy their activities.

The work of the BMC covers a range of areas including access and conservation, safety and skills, competitions and indoor climbing, youth and equity, expedition support, equipment advice, club development, hut support, and guidebook production.

The BMC campaigns on issues ranging from protecting and improving access to our countryside and coast to planning issues affecting the landscapes we cherish. It lobbies locally and nationally to bring these issues to the attention of government and stakeholders to ensure the continual enjoyment of the outdoors and to protect the rights of all climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

Members of the BMC receive many benefits including; civil liability insurance cover; Summit magazine; discounts at hundreds of retailers and many activity providers, on books and maps in the BMC online shop, on magazine subscriptions, and for BMC events; access to BMC travel insurance; voting rights at the BMC AGM and area meetings; and access to Mountain Training award schemes.

There is lots of information and advice available on the BMC website. These are some of the pages that may be of interest to you:

Essential know-how: Clubs	www.thebmc.co.uk/essential-club-know-how
Essential know-how: Hill Walking	www.thebmc.co.uk/essential-hill-walking-knowhow
Essential know-how: Rock Climbing	www.thebmc.co.uk/essential-rock-knowhow
Essential know-how: Indoor Climbing	www.thebmc.co.uk/indoor-climbing-wall-skills
Essential know-how: Winter	www.thebmc.co.uk/winter-climbing-and-walking-skills
Essential know-how: Alpine	www.thebmc.co.uk/alpine-climbing-and-walking-skills
Active Outdoors	www.thebmc.co.uk/active-outdoors