

“Clubs are Open”

A proposed campaign to
drive club membership

Clubs Webinar
4th May 2021

Agenda

- Welcome and roundtable introductions (Dom)
- Why the "Clubs are Open" campaign is important to The BMC (Jonathan)
- Outline plan (Ian)
- Breakout groups discuss key aspects
 - Message / Audience / Connections / Action
- Feedback from groups (All)
- Wrap up and next steps (Dom)

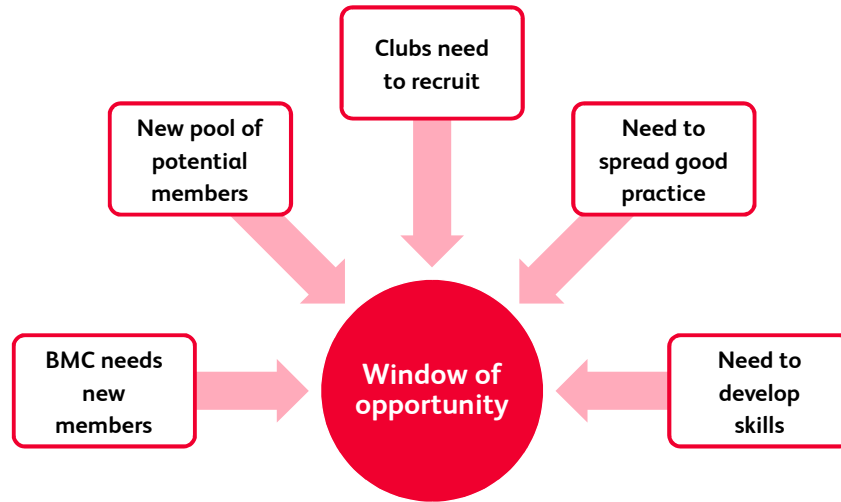
Background – Why is Growth Important?

- Representation:
 - the NRB for participants in climbing, hillwalking and mountaineering
 - The NGB for competitions in climbing, hillwalking and mountaineering
- Growth:
 - The Sport is Growing & Developing
 - The BMC and its member clubs need to grow with it
 - Threats if we don't: relevance, reputational, relegation, replacement
- Services:
 - The more we grow, the more we can do – volunteers and staff.

Background – Why is Growth Important?

- Pandemic has significantly impacted club membership
 - Affiliated club members ↓ 10 % on 2020
 - Student club members ↓ 50 % on 2019/20
- Post-pandemic – growth in interest in 'the outdoors'
 - Wall climbers forced outside
 - People discovering walking in their local area
 - Record visitor numbers in National Parks
- Post Olympics – likely growth in 'the indoors'
 - For some – an end in itself
 - For others – the start of a lifetime of experiencing many of the disciplines of the sport

Opportunity



'Clubs are Open'

- Targeting
 - Existing climbers and walkers, not currently members of affiliated clubs or BMC
 - New participants in outdoor activities
- 3 strands of activities:



Potential benefits

For the BMC

- New long-term members; bounce back in numbers
- Heightened club engagement
- Mitigation of access & participation risks
- Focus on member-generating activity

For affiliated clubs

- New, active members
- Increased reach for recruitment activities
- Increased support to broaden membership
- Increased engagement with BMC volunteers

Questions

For tonight:

- How can we shape this idea to be of most benefit for clubs?
- Are there risks/benefits we've missed?

For clubs to consider:

- How open is your club to new members?
- Could your club benefit from being involved?

Possible levels of club involvement:

Update info & contacts on BMC website

1

Promoted and listed as 'Open to new members'

2

Run a local 'Clubs are Open' recruitment event

3

Let's share ideas on what to do...

A: Message

- What benefits are we aiming to communicate and how should we do this?

B: Audience

- How do we reach the target audiences of experienced and new climbers and walkers who aren't already BMC members?

C: Connections

- How do we join up interested potential joiners with appropriate clubs and encourage the next step?
- How do you think a potential new member will view your club?

D: Action

- What can clubs do to welcome, engage with and ultimately recruit potential joiners?

Breakout Group A

Feedback

A: Message

What benefits are we aiming to communicate and how should we do this?

People

- Friendly, like-minded people, with all kinds of interests in the outdoors, from all kinds of backgrounds
- The best place to find new partners for your next adventure
- Clubs are a source of lasting friendships which often go beyond 'just' climbing or walking
- A sense of community and belonging, founded around a shared appreciation of the outdoors and wild places

Activities

- A structured program of 'Meets' with forward visibility of all sorts of outdoor activities at weekends & mid-week, near to home and further afield / abroad
- A diverse range of activities – the chance to 'branch out' into related experiences e.g. climbing, mountaineering, ice-climbing, MTB etc
- Opportunities for spontaneous ad-hoc get-togethers; flexible around busy lives and e.g. work patterns or parenting responsibilities
- Often based at club huts a great resource and base for your adventure

Skills

- Tapping into the knowledge of more experienced club members as you develop your skills
- Peer-to-peer training, mentorship and encouragement from a peer group to help you stretch your comfort zone
- Dip your toe in the water in related activities with people who know what they are doing
- Some clubs offer skills development sessions e.g. learn to lead or mountain navigation

Resources

- Huts / bunkhouses in great locations, reserved exclusively for members
- Newsletters & Journals
- WhatsApp & FB Groups

...and BMC Benefits

- 3rd Party Liability Insurance
- Summit
- Discounts etc

Breakout Group B

Feedback

B: Audience

How do we reach the target audiences of experienced and new climbers and walkers who aren't already BMC members?

Audience

- The BMC has c. 75,000 members, but the sport has over 3m regular participants.
- To increase the BMC's representation, and to increase membership, this campaign has to target non-members. It must be external, not internal.
- Hillwalkers and indoor climbers are the largest untapped pool, plus many indoor climbers move outdoors, and walkers become mountaineers (& vice versa)..
- Up to 25% of visitors to some national parks are there for the first time.

Advertising

- Structured campaign with consistent logo / branding at the core, plus tailoring to clubs and segments.
- Posters – at walls and other locations that clubs meet at.
- Posters (and stands?) at local outdoor shops, and at honeypot locations.
- Structured advertising through national retailers – e.g. Cotswold.
- On-line advertising via e.g. UKC, UKH & UKB.
- Advertising in outdoor magazines and associated periodicals (e.g. Geographical), in a similar way to BMC Travel Insurance.
- Advertisements in more general press?
- Core funding from BMC, evaluate potential further funding from Sport England and specific Clubs themselves.

Channeling

- Create landing page(s) for potential members - similar to individual member landing pages, and include link/address in adverts.
- Linked from this, establish a resource directory page of existing guidance about clubs for potential club member
- All clubs to update their entries on the BMC clubs listings page, including the types of members they want.
- All clubs to ensure contact details and info for prospective members on their website or social media is up to date and easy to follow.

Segmenting

Advertising segmentation/staging could be as follows:

- General / National, Regional & Local
- Experienced / Novice
- Youth / Ex-Students / Family / Older
- Diverse: Gender, Orientation, Race
- Sector: Alpine / Rock / Walking / Indoor

Breakout Group C

Feedback

C: Connections

How do Clubs make themselves attractive to potential joiners and encourage the next step?

Age Range/Activities

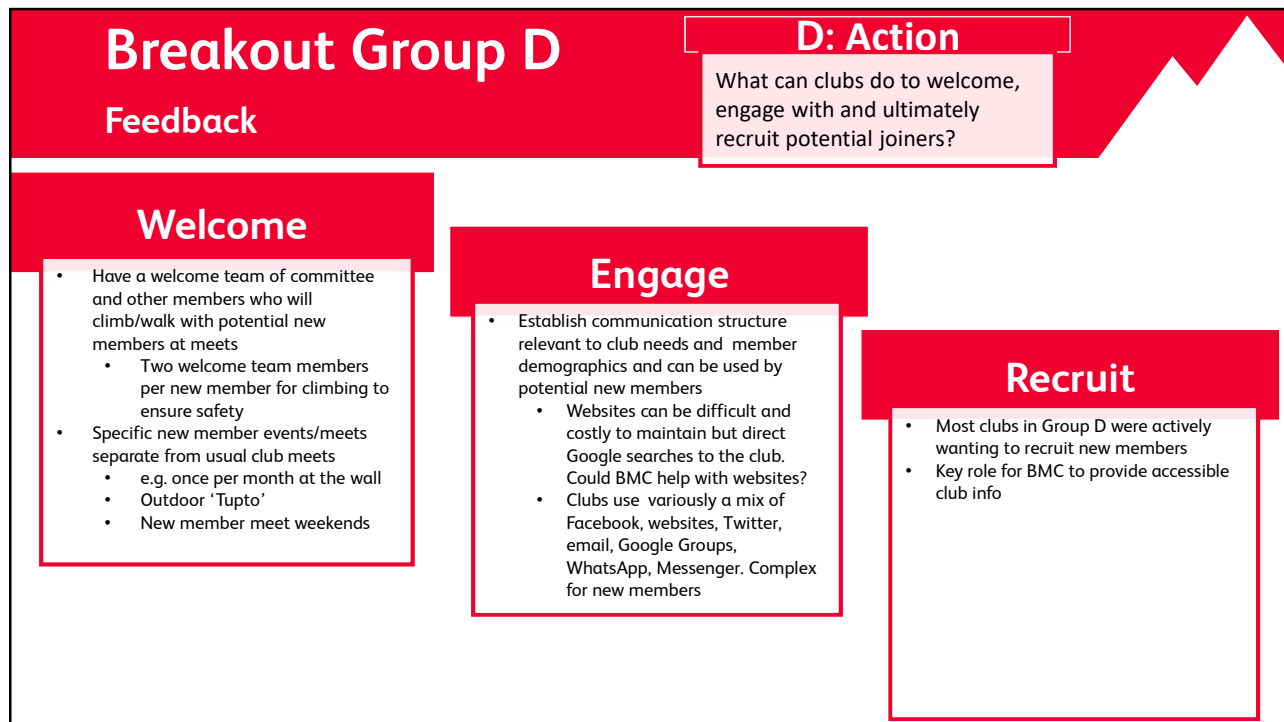
- Many clubs concerned about a 'flat' demographic, ageing membership or a predominantly young membership. *How to expand age range?*
- Some clubs concerned about only attracting members to limited activity, i.e. only attracting climbers when open to walkers as well. *How to attract members for range of activities?*

Social Media

- All clubs use website, email and social media but with a mix of experiences and usage, i.e. Facebook, Instagram, email, website used by a lot of clubs there also some using Twitter, Heja. But level of knowledge and usage varies greatly. Many felt social media training would be useful.
- A view suggested that Instagram appeals to under 30 year olds and Facebook to 30-40 year olds. These are the most popular two platforms for clubs.
- Online groups do not have a membership fee and so clubs have to be clear about stating why it worth paying a membership fee to be a member of a club over a Facebook group.

Potential Joiners

- Some clubs have a known constituency of potential new members, others use websites and posters at walls advertising and some almost word-of-mouth.
- Highlighted risk of unintended exclusivity, through complex joining process or methods of approaching sources of potential new members.
- Use of Facebook to advertise meets to non-club members.
- Some clubs looking at how to build more effective/inclusive family membership.



Next Steps – The draft plan

- Develop & launch comms campaign, with messaging and materials that can be used direct by BMC and also adapted by Clubs locally
 - Monthly rounds of ads / media posts May/June/July/Aug
- Follow-up Clubs webinar to communicate plan and share best practice
- Campaign landing page for Clubs (resources, courses e.g. web design / social media, experience sharing?)
- Campaign landing page for potential new members (Updated Clubs directory, 'why join a club' resources e.g. videos)
- Club sign-up and mobilisation (express interest, and take action - see 1-2-3 on slide 8)
- Clubs mobilise locally to attract and welcome potential members