

# BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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## Chair of the Board of Directors (voluntary position)

Company: British Mountaineering Council  
Position: Chair of the BMC Board of Directors (the Board)  
Duration: An initial 3-year term, with the possibility of a second 3-year term  
Remuneration: Voluntary position; travel and accommodation expenses only  
Location: Remote with Manchester office base

## The BMC is seeking a new Chair of the Board

### About the BMC

The BMC has a dual role: we are the national representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales; and the national governing body for competition climbing in Great Britain. We are a passionate advocate for our members, the wider outdoor community and competition climbing.

Mountaineering has a proud history and the BMC was established in 1944. Over 75 years later, we have over 75,000 members, a dedicated volunteer network, over 30 members of staff and a head office in West Didsbury, Manchester.

The BMC operates BMC insurance, a widely respected and wide-ranging insurance product for travellers, trekkers, hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and skiers. Competition climbing is also making its debut as an Olympic sport in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo and we have one qualified athlete as part of Team GB.

In 2019, the BMC Board, following extensive consultation across the membership, specialist committees, partner organisations and Members' Council, developed its next strategic plan to 2024; it sets out the BMC's vision and purpose, and defines the five core values that underpin our work for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers: Community, Adventure, Sustainability, Respect and Aspiration.

The plan is broken down into Strategic Themes and Foundation Activities as follows:  
Strategic Themes:

- Access, conservation & environmental sustainability
- Membership engagement, services & support
- Education, inspiration & skills
- Organisational development & sector leadership
- GB Climbing – competitions, talented athletes & the GB Teams

Foundation Activities:

- People: staff, volunteers & members
- Money: financial management & business development
- Communications and member insight: IT, database & online
- Governance: systems, procedures & standards
- Collaboration: clubs, partners & stakeholders

## Governance

Following a period of constitutional change to ensure compliance with the Sport England and UK Sport Code for Sports Governance, the BMC has been through a substantial period of change in recent years, and is now organised as follows:

- The Board: runs the business – responsible for the overall direction and organisational policy of the BMC and ensuring its financial viability
- Members' Council: custodians of the sport – acts as the representative body of the members, and consults with the Board holding them to account on behalf of the members
- CEO and staff: responsible for the day-to-day operation of the BMC and the coordinating core for c.700 active volunteers
- Specialist Committees: the force multiplier – mainly volunteers who provide guidance and support to the staff, members and other bodies on specific areas and significantly boost the organisation's capacity
- Areas: the public face of the BMC in 10 regions, organising meetings, events, determining local policies and recruiting critical volunteers including access representatives
- Members: required to approve major decisions of a constitutional nature at an AGM

## Chair Role

The Chair will provide leadership to the Board and guidance, support and mentorship to the CEO. The Chair is the business head for the organisation and is key to setting the tone and culture as well as ensuring delivery against the vision and strategic direction. The Chair is pivotal to creating the conditions for overall Board and Director effectiveness. The Chair is ultimately responsible for ensuring the Board has the right composition, skills, knowledge and understanding, and most importantly works as an effective team to fulfil its duties.

## Chair Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities of the Chair as a Director of the BMC, it is the responsibility of the Chair to:

- Provide leadership to the Board and, in conjunction with the CEO, set its agenda and ensure that decisions are implemented
- Meet Board transparency commitments by ensuring that timely and accurate minutes are produced and summaries are provided for dissemination
- Stimulate an effective, dynamic and inclusive Board which is representative of the interests of members and facilitate the effective contribution of all Directors ensuring they are well informed and receive timely and clear, accurate information to enable considered decision making
- Appreciate the full breadth and depth of the organisation's capabilities and capacity, including its internal delivery through volunteers and staff, discreet charities and companies, and external input to other organisations as the lead body for the mountaineering community
- Ensure that the organisation concludes the major re-organisation started in 2018, and realises the benefits of the transition through embedding, refining and delivering with the new structure. In tandem, ensure the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the business is monitored and plans are adjusted accordingly
- Chair the Nominations Committee and ensure the Board effectively oversees any other sub-committee of the Board

- Take the lead in succession planning for the Board. Oversee the recruitment of new Directors, ensuring Board composition meets the requirements of the Articles of Association (AoA), and that an appropriate skills audit is undertaken to identify skills gaps
- Support the development needs of individual Directors and the Board as a whole and ensure the performance of individual Directors and of the Board as a whole and its committees is evaluated annually. Ensure Directors who are not performing effectively are supported to improve performance or, where necessary, are removed from office, in line with the provisions of the AoA
- Manage board meetings to ensure that sufficient time for discussion of complex issues. In conjunction with the CEO set the agenda for meetings. Agendas should take full account of the issues and the concerns of all Directors and should be forward looking and concentrate on strategic matters
- Communicate with Board members between meetings and update them on any relevant developments and/or foster teamwork
- Establish a close working relationship with the CEO, providing support, advice, line management and annual performance appraisal, whilst respecting executive responsibilities, and where appropriate, challenging the CEO
- Facilitate change and address any areas of conflict within the Board and the organisation, liaising with the CEO and others to achieve this
- Build consensus with the Members' Council, President, key stakeholders and across the wider membership to ensure the smooth running of the BMC and to work the Members' Council to develop strategic aim, providing vision and leadership within a framework of policy, financial and risk controls
- Lead reviews of strategic items and achieve outcomes that enable the Board to formulate and implement detailed plans to deliver agreed objectives and support the implementation or organisation change in line with the ORG
- Monitor and evaluate the BMC's overall performance against agreed measures and undertake regular evaluations of Board performance together with acting on the results of performance evaluations to promote improvements across the organisation

Anyone undertaking this role needs to recognise that it requires a serious time commitment.

### Person Specification

In addition to the areas described in the responsibilities above, the Chair should:

- Uphold the highest standards of integrity and probity
- Set the agenda, style and tone of Board discussions to promote effective decision-making and constructive, inclusive debate
- Promote effective relationships and open communication between the Directors, staff and senior volunteers
- Build an effective and complementary Board
- Promote the highest standards of governance
- Ensure a clear structure for, and the effective running of, Board sub-committees and subsidiary organisations
- Ensure effective implementation of Board decisions
- Ensure the organisation pursues its objects as defined in the AoA and operates within its defined policies
- Safeguard the good name and values of the BMC.

The skills, experience and qualities of the Chair which are essential include:

- Demonstrable ability and experience of chairing a high performing Board of an organisation of a similar size and complexity to the BMC
- Direct knowledge and experience of the operation of membership organisations
- History of consensus building with stakeholders both within and outside an organisation
- Sound understanding of the management of financial and human resources, together with experience of delivering improved performance
- Track record of making well-balanced, sound judgements when under public scrutiny and/or lobbying
- Background in both commercial and not-for-profit environments; ideally with working experience of membership recruitment and services and sports governance
- Successful leader with effective and confident communication skills; listening, written and verbal, with a high degree of emotional intelligence
- Resilience and integrity to reach well balanced judgements in an impartial, objective and transparent manner
- Ability to consider the wider issues rather than be involved in the detail
- Demonstrate a sense of depth and rigour in decision making
- Understanding of the cultural differences of private and public sector stakeholders and ability to build consensual responses to issues

Desirable skills, experience and qualities of the Chair include:

- Welsh speaker

As stated above we have five core values: community, adventure, sustainability, aspiration and respect. Within the latter, we celebrate the rich variety of British climbing, hill walking and mountaineering, build inclusive relationships and respect each other. In line with this we are keen to achieve a more diverse Board and we encourage applications from under-represented groups, in particular people from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and women.

**To apply for this position please send the following items to our Company Secretary, Lucy Valerio, at [lucy@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:lucy@thebmc.co.uk):**

- a. A one page covering letter explaining your interest in the role; and
- b. An up-to-date CV with details of two referees.

**If you wish to speak to the current Chair prior to applying you can contact Paul Drew on [p.drew@thebmc.co.uk](mailto:p.drew@thebmc.co.uk)**

**The closing date for applications is midnight Sunday 5 September 2021.**

**Shortlisting interviews will take place over the phone the week commencing 13 September 2021.**

**All applicants who meet the criteria and pass the shortlisting interview will then meet with a stakeholder panel the week commencing 20 September. This will be done virtually.**

**All applicants will then be invited to a face to face interview with a panel, and to meet the CEO, at the BMC's office in Manchester on Tuesday 5 October 2021. This is to provide candidates with the opportunity to see the BMC.**