

BMC Climbing and Hill Walking Festivals

Area guidance note

Background

'Climbing and hill walking festivals' have been held in many BMC Areas over the years; examples include events in the Avon Gorge, the Duddon Valley, the Gower, Harrison's Rocks, Land's End, North Devon / Cornwall, Northumberland, Stanage, Tremadog and Wilton. Festivals are typically run by local volunteers with administrative and financial support from the BMC office, they are a great way of bringing climbers and walkers together, recruiting new members and providing a focus for Area activities.

Common themes

Whilst there is no fixed model for BMC festivals the following common themes can be identified:

- Choice of venue and festival base (e.g. specific campsite, pub, etc) is critical.
- Forward planning, publicity and promotion are essential for a successful festival.
- Festivals need leadership and strong central figures to give them cohesion.
- Organisers must obtain relevant approvals and consents (e.g. from landowners, conservation bodies, local authorities or National Park Authorities).
- Festivals do not need to cost very much in order to be successful.
- Festivals should ideally include a hill walking dimension.
- Raffles, freebie gear giveaways, quizzes and competitions all help attract people.
- People like participating in crag clean-ups as part of the overall festival event.
- Wet weather options are useful.

Event planning, administration and promotion

- All festivals to be held under the banner of the 'BMC' require approval by the relevant Area Meeting. As a general rule no more than one festival per Area per year should be held (they can take more organising than people think).
- Planning for area festivals should begin well in advance of the event date. Once you've identified a date, notify Tony Ryan at the BMC office, so that your event can be recorded in the calendar of BMC events (and we can see whether it might clash with another event!).
- Area festivals must be approved by the BMC; there is an approval system which enables us to protect volunteers involved in organising events – see [Organising BMC Events](#)
- Limited BMC funding may be available to support the basic running costs; typical contributions are in the range £250.00 - £1000.00 depending on need and the nature of the event planned. There will be an annual budget for festivals subject to demand and affordability, and a budget must be agreed with BMC office during the planning process.

- Organisers may form partnerships with 3rd party organisations (e.g. a local climbing club) but festivals should not be 'sponsored' by a sole commercial body (retailers, manufacturers, distributors) without checking with the BMC office for potential conflicts with other sponsorship arrangements.
- A wide range of practical issues need to be considered, to include: car parking, toilet facilities, overnight accommodation and litter collection/disposal.
- Festivals involving crag clean-up activities require a risk assessment to be carried out by the organiser(s); all attendees at such events must sign an individual risk assessment form. The relevant BMC access & conservation officer can help you with the risk assessment.
- Any participation by under-18s must be fully considered and arrangements put in place to ensure child safety and enhanced risk assessment measures as required. The BMC contact for advice is Nick Colton.
- The BMC website, Local Areas site, social media channels, email newsletter and Summit magazine can all be used to help promote festival events. The BMC marketing & communications team can support you with event promotion.
- BMC staff support may be available on the day / weekend of the festival but it should be noted that this does not fall within the specific remit of any staff members; festivals rely heavily on local volunteer effort. Organisers should discuss their requirements with relevant BMC staff on a case by case basis.

BMC contacts

Area administration – Tony Ryan: tony@thebmc.co.uk; 0161 438 3334.

Access & conservation (England) – Rob Dyer: robd@thebmc.co.uk; 0161 438 3309.

Access & conservation (Wales) – Elfyn Jones: elfyn@thebmc.co.uk; 01690 360 666.

Child safeguarding – Nick Colton: nick@thebmc.co.uk; 0161 438 3305.

Marketing & events – Emma Travers: emma@thebmc.co.uk; 0161 438 3318.

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