



ANNUAL REPORT

2020



President's Report



What can I say about the past year? We have all been affected in one way or another by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As I reflect, it's hard to believe that this is the second year that we have had to run the AGM virtually. Hopefully COVID-19 is a once in a century occurrence which we will soon be through, although it does look as though things will have to change for a while longer.

It is with great sadness that two BMC Patrons have recently died. Doug Scott, CBE and Lord Tony Greaves. My thoughts go out to their family and friends and to everyone who has lost loved ones during the past year.

Despite there being hardly any face-to-face work or meets, staff and volunteers have continued to work tirelessly on behalf of members and the wider community. Notably, when lockdown first happened, the access team stepped up to work with expert volunteers and partners to produce guidelines on what we could and couldn't do. Also, the support for clubs and huts has been impressive and I've had some great feedback from clubs on how much they valued this work. Talking about clubs, the Pinnacle Club is celebrating its centenary in 2021; many congratulations and may you go from strength to strength.

All meetings moved to virtual platforms. Whilst I recognise the importance of face-to-face meetings, especially Area Meetings, which offer a great opportunity to meet up with other local activists, having virtual meetings has opened up the attendance to people who wouldn't ordinarily be able, or want to, attend a face-to-face meeting.

Thank you to all the local area volunteers, specialist committee volunteers, volunteers who have focused on the BMC governance. Whether it's one hour, or hundreds of hours, your input is valued so much and the BMC simply could not function without your expertise, time and commitment. My personal thanks are extended to all the staff for their continued work; during the past year, with all the challenges that have been thrown our way, it really has been quite phenomenal.

It's been a really tough year for everyone who relies on our activities for a living, from mountain guides to people who run or work in indoor climbing centres. As lockdown once more begins to ease and things slowly start to open up, I really hope we can all soon get back to the activities that make us who we are.

With climbing debuting at the Tokyo Olympics, I wish Shauna Coxsey all the best. I look forward to being able to watch climbing competitions once more and maybe even judging again at the local youth competitions – I have missed them so much.

Thank you for your continued support and membership of the BMC. It really does mean a lot and contributes to the work that staff and volunteers are doing on your behalf for the continued love and dedication of our activities and sports.

After being President for three years, I have decided not to stand for a second term. It's fair to say that it has been challenging at times, but, on the whole it has been incredible. The support I have received from so many of you has meant so much. I hope I have opened up the door for members from all backgrounds to put themselves forward in the future to show that we are representative of not only all the activities, but the communities we serve. It has been an absolute honour and privilege to serve as your President.

Thank you, stay safe and hope to see you soon.

With very best wishes



Lynn Robinson
BMC President

Chair's Report



2020 was a very challenging year for the BMC from a number of perspectives, in particular COVID-19, but I think the saying "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger" is very applicable.

First off, I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to Gareth Pierce, my predecessor as Chair, Dave Turnbull for his incredible service as CEO for 18 years and now ongoing role as head of access, conservation & environmental sustainability, Lynn Robinson for her time as President and all the other former directors who contributed so much to the BMC, along with all the other volunteers, staff and members who make the BMC what it is.

This Annual Report summarises the work of the BMC in delivering services and activities for its members and working with a wide range of partners.

From a financial perspective, in line with the commitment to members at the 2019 AGM, the BMC generated a surplus of £200k for 2020 via very prudent control of expenditure, despite a significant impact to income from COVID-19 restrictions. 2021 is looking equally challenging regarding income but the surplus in 2020 provides mitigation against this. The BMC is now in a good position to take advantage of some of the opportunities in front of us, particularly around the growth in hill walking both pre- and post-lockdowns, the enhanced profile from work on access, conservation & environmental sustainability, the increased exposure with competition climbing debuting at the Tokyo Olympics, the growth in indoor climbing (when walls are open), and the much improved strategic partnerships with all of our partners.

COVID-19 was obviously the most significant external impact in 2020 and into 2021, with very wide-ranging impacts on society, the economy and the BMC. We have had multiple and complicated restrictions on access to the hills, crags, huts, office spaces, indoor walls, foreign travel and pretty much everything related to BMC activities. While this has been a major challenge, with major hits to our income particularly with a loss of travel insurance and membership income, it has also highlighted why we need the BMC. As well as providing information to members and the wider community (I can't count how many times I've had to read the latest access advice given

I live near the Wales/England border), the BMC has been able to take sector leadership in advising both the English and Welsh governments.

We have taken our strategic plan with its five major themes; services to members and clubs; access, conservation and the environment; education and skills; sector leadership and advocacy; and competition climbing, and built on this to develop "Strategic Action Plans" across the whole of the BMC with targets, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and objectives. This has provided coherence around all the BMC activities and made it much clearer where we need to develop further and invest more.

Since the 2017 inception of the Organisational Review, the BMC has spent a huge amount of time and energy in improving its organisational structure and governance, and I'm pleased to say this upcoming AGM recommends putting in place one of the last remaining planks, the Members' Council. It isn't that the BMC will now ignore governance issues, but moving forward, the focus will be more on bedding in the new structures, getting them working effectively and most importantly delivering on what our members want.

Finally, I'd like to welcome numerous new volunteers, councillors, staff and directors to the BMC – this year has been difficult and the Board in particular had a torrid time in summer/autumn 2020, but I'm very confident we have come out of this and now have a very capable and committed team to ensure the continued success of the BMC.

Best wishes for your climbing and hill walking activities – hopefully see you on the hill, crag or at your favourite wall at some point.

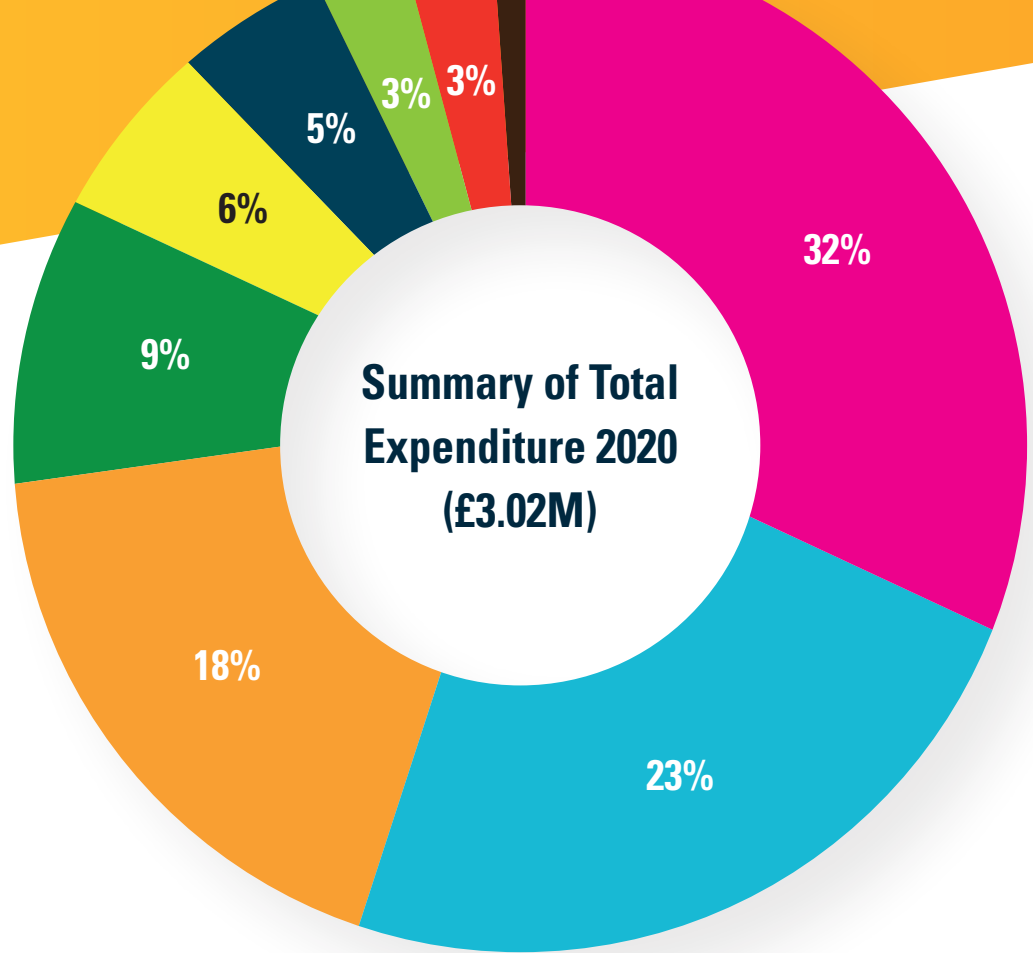
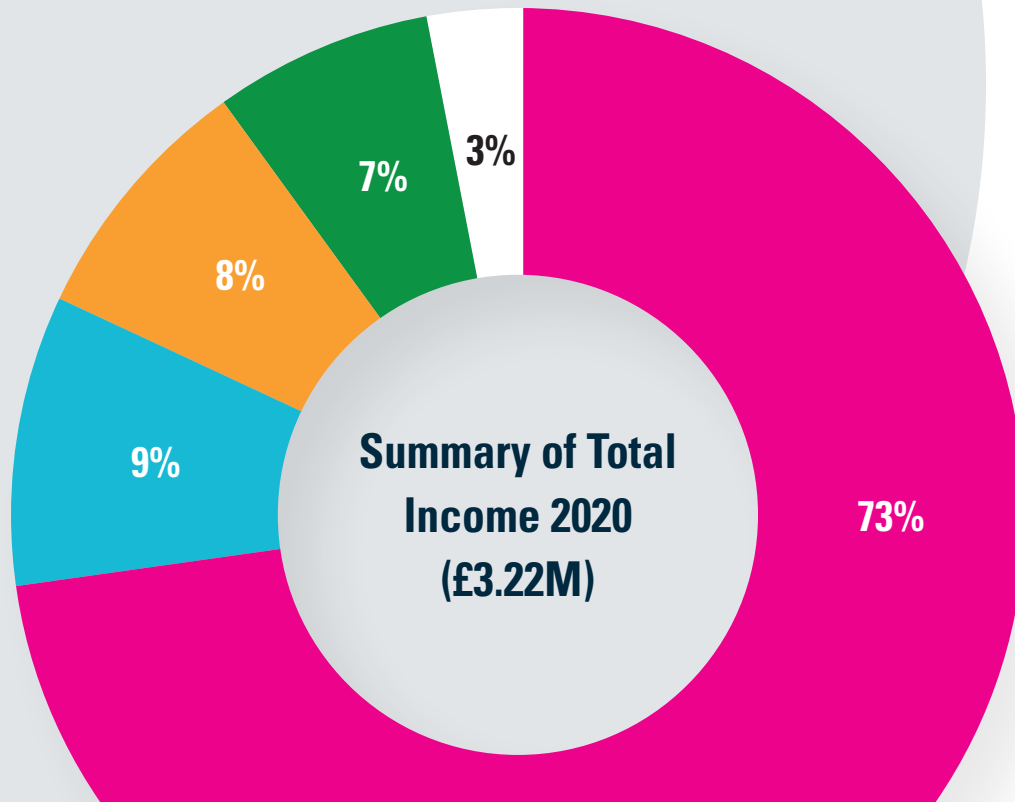


Paul Drew
Chair, BMC Board of Directors

Finance Report

- **£2.35M** of membership subscriptions comprising **£1.89M** from Individual Members and **£458k** from Affiliated Clubs.
- **£274k** to support the competitive activities of GB Climbing.
- **£266k** of trading income, of which travel insurance contributed **£143k**.
- **£237k** of all other income including training grants.
- **£93k** from the government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

Income (before interest and CJRS) was down 5% on 2019, the decline more than accounted for by reduced commissions from the sale of travel insurance.



- **£967k** of membership support costs including the costs of the insurance programme.
- **£691k** of office & admin costs including trading and the AGM.
- **£542k** of gross costs for GB Climbing (net cost after grants **£268k**).
- **£283k** for access and conservation work including managed sites and rocks.
- **£187k** to support technical and training programmes.
- **£156k** committed to partnerships, heritage and sector leadership.
- **£91k** to support clubs and huts.
- **£83k** to support youth and equity programmes.
- **£24k** to support expeditions and international representation.

Costs were also markedly down on 2019. A surplus of £200k was reported for the year – a strong result given such difficult times and the reducing income.

Headlines & highlights

A review of 2020 couldn't possibly begin with anything other than reference to the impact of COVID-19, not just on the BMC, but around the globe. It was a year like no other, and brought immense challenges to society, to the climbing, hill walking and mountaineering community, and to the BMC.

At the beginning of 2020, following extensive consultation across the membership, specialist committees, partner organisations, and National Council, the BMC's Board of Directors agreed the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, organised around five 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

These five themes are supported by five foundation activities categorised broadly as: People; Finance; Communications; Governance; Collaboration.



THE CLIMATE PROJECT

Access, Conservation & Environmental Sustainability

The BMC promotes the freedoms, rights and responsibilities of climbers and hill walkers, works on their behalf to influence legislation and policy across England and Wales, campaigns on climate change, access and environmental issues, and aims to lead by example in all aspects of environmental impact. Whilst responding to COVID-19 developments across England and Wales – including pushback on unreasonable restrictions – dominated the work of the BMC access & conservation staff and volunteers in 2020, plenty of other important campaign and policy work also continued to be rolled out.

In March, we launched The Climate Project, a campaign to support the work of Moors for the Future restoring blanket bogs in the Peak District and South Pennines. Our Hills 2 Oceans (H2O) campaign to remove litter and plastic from our hills, mountains and crags also continued into 2020, encouraging people to reduce the amount of litter that ends up in our oceans; and our NoMoorBBQs campaign called on the government to make the use of disposable BBQs in public spaces, including open moorland, heathland and grassland a criminal offence. In partnership with Mountain Training and UK Outdoors, the Save Outdoor Centres campaign called on parliaments in England and Wales to decide urgently on when outdoor residential centres could open, and for the respective education ministers to provide clear guidance to schools on allowing children to participate in overnight stays.

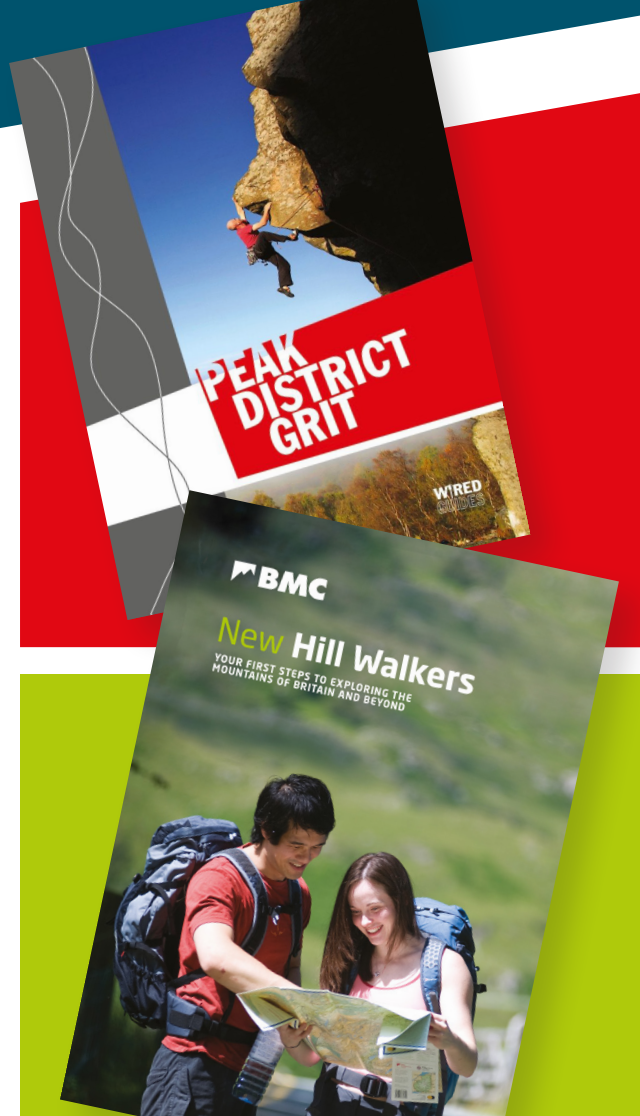
During the year, the BMC also developed a formal position statement on driven grouse moor management, and committed to continue to use our position to help raise awareness of the sometimes illegal and unsustainable practices this can involve.

A vast number of site-specific issues in England and Wales were handled, often relating to increased numbers of relatively inexperienced climbers and walkers. Nowhere was this felt more acutely than on the sandstone outcrops in the South East

of England. In the summer, a temporary restriction was imposed at one crag, Eridge Green, to protect the especially soft rock, and in autumn we took the unprecedented step of calling on climbers not to climb on the Southern Sandstone crags in the short term to prevent irreparable damage whilst the weather was bad and the rock damp. During the year, we produced 10 'Respect the Rock' films aimed at new outdoor climbers, which can be viewed on our YouTube channel.

The BMC owns and manages eight popular sites across England and Wales; an example of successful management was at Horseshoe Quarry in the Peak District, where a group of volunteers from the Association of Mountaineering Instructors (AMI) replaced the old bolts on a wall popular with beginners and groups. Horseshoe's popularity extends beyond climbing, and as a Site of Special Scientific Interest is home to flora and fauna, including butterflies, whose population was – for the first time ever – monitored over an entire season in a joint venture between the BMC and Butterfly Conservation volunteers.

We now have a Climate Emergency Declaration and will continue to monitor the energy use of the BMC office as well as the annual travel patterns of BMC staff and volunteers. This data will allow us to offset our carbon footprint at the end of each year. In addition, changes have been made throughout the office to the lighting and electrical equipment including computers to ensure these are the most energy efficient they can be. We have also switched our utilities to a renewable energy provider and are completely single-use plastic free. There are also a number of initiatives targeted at the membership including The Climate Project, a lift share site for climbers and walkers (to be launched shortly), a recycling centre outlining where members can recycle or repair their outdoor kit, and a number of articles are planned on low carbon travel options. In 2021, we will be developing and implementing a BMC Sustainable Events Policy and engaging with the membership and outdoor sector more widely on the climate emergency.



Education, Inspiration & Skills

Our goal is to inspire and inform new and existing climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, provide opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and skills, and develop resources to support club delivery, recognising the potential for high-quality events to be a source of revenue.

Just before the first lockdown in March, we organised the second national BMC Hill Walking Weekend in the Lake District, which saw around 60 BMC members come together to gain new skills, discuss important issues including climate change and conservation, learn about the history and heritage of the hills, and walk the local fells. We also published a new edition of the BMC's *New Hill Walkers* booklet.

As restrictions were lifted, we were able to resume delivery of coach education workshops and outdoor climbing events for young people, and provide training opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. We also worked in partnership with the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) to produce new good practice posters for walls. In a two-year agreement with the AMI, we developed a series of 'Ready to Rock' climbing courses for women in 2021/22.

Support for student clubs is an important element of the BMC's work. We couldn't run the annual Student Safety Seminar at its usual venue of Plas y Brenin (the National Outdoor Centre in North Wales), so we moved it online, with a series of nine free workshops on a wide range of topics. One of the BMC's most popular annual events over the years has been the 'Make Winter Count' tour, which this year was adapted into one big online winter hill skills evening, attended by over 650 people.

Following the completion of the series of BMC definitive rock climbing guidebooks to the Peak District, 2020 saw the publication of *Peak District Grit*, the latest selected climbs guidebook in the series published by Wired Guides, a co-operative of UK definitive guidebook publishers including: Climbers' Club, Fell & Rock Climbing Club, Scottish Mountaineering Club, Northumbrian Mountaineering Club, Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, and the BMC.

Organisational Development & Sector Leadership

The BMC acts as a focus point for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers, representing members' views to government across England and Wales, and promoting the ethics and values of British climbing, hill walking and mountaineering.

In May, we achieved a "Good" rating in the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit review process; this has a positive direct impact on funding opportunities from Sport England. During the course of the year, we also upgraded our Equality Standard to Intermediate Level, created an ethnic diversity strategy for the BMC which can be adopted by wider partners, and implemented an adult safeguarding policy. We continued to work closely with partner organisations including the ABC and Mountain Training on a sector-wide safeguarding approach.

We worked with the Alpine Club and the Mount Everest Foundation on setting up the Young Alpinists Group, to advance the next generation of world-leading young UK alpinists via a three-year, elite-level programme developing expedition and alpine skills and experience through support, training and informal mentoring.

Internationally, the BMC is a member of the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) and continues to represent the UK on the UIAA's Safety and Mountaineering Commissions. We are a member of the European Union of Mountaineering Associations (EUMA), and also have representation at the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) through its working group for mountaineering equipment. In October, following nomination by the BMC, the UIAA awarded Honorary Membership to BMC Patron Doug Scott, in recognition of his pioneering feats in mountaineering, immense commitment to supporting mountaineering communities, and significant support to the UIAA through his roles with the Mountaineering Commission and Management Committee.

MAKE WINTER COUNT

WINTER HILL SKILLS EVENING

MONTANE
FURTHER. FASTER.

GB Climbing – Competitions, Talented Athletes & the GB Teams

GB Climbing is an internal department of the BMC, established in April 2020 to fulfil the BMC's role as National Governing Body for competitions, running high-quality events for climbers and paraclimbers, managing the GB Climbing Teams (senior, junior, paraclimbing, ice climbing, ski mountaineering), supporting talented athletes, and working in partnership with the ABC and the climbing walls sector. The work of GB Climbing is overseen by the Competition Climbing Performance Group, which is a sub-committee of the BMC Board of Directors and which replaced the previous Competitions Committee.

The welfare of all participants in high-performance sport is of paramount importance, be they athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or carers. To support GB Climbing athletes' well-being, a welfare support plan was published in early 2020 with the aim of promoting a psychologically safe environment whilst developing a high-performance culture.

The 2020 national and international competition climbing calendars were severely curtailed by COVID-19, including the postponement of climbing's much anticipated Olympic debut; when the Tokyo 2020 Games do take place in July/August 2021, Shauna Coxsey will represent Team GB. In December, the International Olympic Committee officially confirmed that Sport Climbing has been included on the programme for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.



Not all events were struck down by the pandemic; before lockdown we held the Welsh Bouldering Championships for the first time, and internationally, the GB Ice Climbing Team competed for the first time at a senior Ice Climbing World Cup event, held in January in Switzerland. Later in the year, in November, Molly Thompson-Smith and Will Bosi competed at the IFSC European Championships in Moscow, where both were looking to achieve qualification for Tokyo 2020; they fell just short of that aim, but Molly grabbed a bronze medal in the Lead event.

Sponsors play an important role in supporting elite sport, so we were pleased to announce in March that Secur-it, a leading provider of security services and risk management, agreed to provide the GB Climbing Team uniform for the 2020 season, and this agreement has been extended for 2021.

In August, a new high-performance facility was established at the Climbing Works in Sheffield, providing a dedicated training space meeting athletes' specific needs for preparation for international events and enabling accelerated skill acquisition in specific areas.

2020 closed on a high note, when UK Sport approved our bid for Progression and Podium Athlete funding, enabling us to channel investment into the GB Climbing Performance Pathway to help us discover and support the champions of tomorrow.



Our Vision

To create a better future for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

Our Purpose

To represent the interests of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and inspire all generations.

Our Values

Community: We are the voice for our diverse community of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

Adventure: We believe in the freedom to challenge ourselves, taking personal responsibility for the risks.

Sustainability: We protect our crags and mountains, campaign for improved access and promote environmental sustainability.

Aspiration: We help people improve their skills, confidence and achieve personal ambitions.

Respect: We celebrate the rich variety of British climbing, hill walking and mountaineering; we build inclusive relationships and respect each other.

Our 2020–2024 Mission

We will link the work of all our staff, volunteers, clubs, and partners, to campaign effectively and increase engagement, becoming a stronger voice for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.



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