

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL

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BMC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 2022 AGM held entirely online using Zoom Webinar
at 7pm on Wednesday 18 May 2022 (the Meeting)

Directors Present:

Andy Syme (AS)	President and chair of the Meeting (AGM Chair)
Flavia Alzetta (FA)	Independent Director
Paul Davies (PD)	CEO
Martyn Hurn (MH)	Nominated Director
Roger Murray (RM)	Chair
Peter Saleniaks (PS)	Council Nominated Director (CND)
Fiona Sanders (FS)	CND
Carl Spencer (CS)	CND
Jonathan White (JW)	Nominated Director (Clubs)
Caroline Worboys (CW)	Independent Director

Voting Members Present (in alphabetical order):

Daniel Attwill	Rodney Gallagher	Andy Potter
Frank Bennett	Jon Garside	Philip Powell
Abbi Blakey	John Glynn	Dudley Pritchard
Tharin Blumenschein	Will Green	Jon Punshon
Michelle Bradbury	Agustin Guardiola	Stephen Quinton
Bernard Bradbury	Oscar Hardy	Andy Reeve
Simon Bradshaw	Wendy Harnan-Kajzer	Lynn Robinson
David Brown	Chris Hewett	Ted Rodgers
Ross Burnage	Darren Johnson	Frank Scott
Andy Cairns	Peter Judd	Tarquin Shipley
Alison Cairns	Ali Lancashire	Mandy Singleton
Rab Carrington	Simon Lee	Michael Smith
Mark Chung	John Leigh	Trevor Smith
Steve Clark	Hazel Lewis	Angela Soper
Nick Colton	Oli Lewis	Chris Stone
John Cousins	Kim Leyland	Chris Sweetman
Stephen Crowe	Steve Long	Jane Thompson
Alex Cummings	Karin Magog	Rya Tibawi
Robert Dufton	David Medcalf	Pete Watson
John Farrow	Richard Nadin	Helen Wilson
Catherine Flitcroft	Martyn Nutbrown	Philip Wilson
Brenda Fullard	Robert Pettigrew MBE	Cathy Woodhead
Richard (Taylor or Mendelsohn)		

BMC Staff Present: Joelle Chisholm (JC) – Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Alvin Foy (AF) – IT & Database Co-Ordinator
Lucy Valerio (LV) – Company Secretary (CoSec)

Also in attendance: Iain Dickinson (ID) – Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC Chair)

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1 Andy Syme introduced himself, welcomed all those joining the third entirely virtual AGM of the BMC and said he would be chairing the Meeting (the AGM Chair). He noted the start time on the agenda was 7pm, but gave members a couple more minutes to join.

1.2 The AGM Chair reported there were approximately 50 attendees and it was a couple of minutes after 7pm, he therefore declared the Meeting formally open.

1.3 He said in order to ensure that those in attendance could participate in the Meeting, to check there were sufficient people in attendance to form a quorum and that they could hear, a quick poll would be launched. He asked the CoSec to launch the poll. The poll was launched, the question was "How many BMC members are watching the AGM on your device?". After a minute the poll was closed. The results were:

49 attendees answered the poll:
1 person – 47 attendees (96.4%)
2 people – 2 attendees (3.6%)

The AGM Chair noted that this meant there was a quorum for the Meeting, as the directors present were also Voting Members.

1.4 The AGM Chair set out some housekeeping points:

- the Meeting would be recorded;
- if a member had a question they must type it in the Q&A box – the CoSec was monitoring the questions and she would put questions to the panellists during the Q&A sessions;
- members had the ability to upvote a question so it would move to the top of the list;
- if a member had a follow-up question they could raise their hand and they would be unmuted, or they could use the Q&A function;
- the chat function had been disabled;
- all the resolutions and elections were being put to a poll;
- the resolutions and elections would not be voted on one at a time, instead the AGM Chair would announce when the voting opened and members could then access the voting website using the details emailed or posted to them by UK Engage;
- if members had not had their code, they should email bmc@uk-engage.org;
- UK Engage were dealing with all the voting this year and voting would close at 9.15pm;
- the results would be published on the BMC website on Thursday 19 May.

1.5 The AGM Chair referred to the agenda for the Meeting and introduced Roger Murray, the Chair of the BMC, to give his review of 2021.

2 Chair's Report of 2021

2.1 The Chair began by introducing himself to the Meeting stating he was known to many members and he hoped his appointment would be approved later on.

He then gave a presentation which started with a slide on 'Introduction and Recognition'. The main points were:

- 2021 had been another challenging year dominated by the impacts of Covid;
- the past four years had been challenging for the BMC, in particular:
 - managing through the pandemic and its impacts;
 - delivering on the Organisational Review Group (ORG) change programme;
 - learning how to operate within its post ORG structure; and
 - starting on the journey to becoming an effective National Governing Body (NGB);
- the BMC could not do everything, it was good news that it had lots of challenges and opportunities, but it must prioritise, as like most businesses it was constrained with staff time and money; and

- his predecessors, Paul Drew and Gareth Pierce, had led the BMC and especially the Board through turbulent times, and their delivery and sheer hard work should be recognised as it had got the BMC to the position it was currently in.

2.2 He then set out a summary of the finances of 2021, noting that ID and FA would provide more detail later on. The key points were:

- 2021 saw a deficit of £0.11million, which was funded out of reserves;
- reserves at the end of 2021 were £1.11million;
- this was a good outcome which had required a lot of work by a lot of people, but there had been no progress on:
 - the front-end and back-end IT systems
 - refreshing the marketing and communications
 this was being rectified in 2022, and substantial progress had been made already in 2022;
- grant funding had been secured in 2021 with £0.56million for elite competition climbing from UK Sport and £0.14million from the Government's furlough job retention scheme;
- inevitably the membership and insurance sales were negatively impacted due to Covid; and
- the plan for 2022 was to run a deficit which was budgeted at £0.290million but might turn out to be lower dependent on both membership and insurance growth and expenditure, with the Board agreeing to target an outcome of £0.275million.

2.3 He then talked about organisational development in general, and stated the following:

- the BMC was a remarkably complex organisation, particularly given its size, and this was shown in the Annual Governance Statement, there was a mixture of trusts, subsidiaries and partners who were fundamental in what the BMC wanted to deliver;
- the Board was like a medium-sized business, it spent both members' and public money and there was an administrative burden which the BMC was seeking to reduce whilst becoming more professional;
- the BMC must increase and be seen to increase its presence in Wales, and the appointment of a Policy & Campaigns Officer who had the ability to influence the Senedd and associated Welsh bodies was part of this;
- the Board approved the report reviewing the specialist committees in March 2021:
 - this recognised the importance of the work that these committees deliver, much of which was at the heart of what the BMC delivered to its members;
 - the volunteers and staff were dedicated to these committees and did a considerable amount of work;
 - the BMC needed to get much better at communicating the work undertaken more widely, to both its current and future members; and
 - there were a wide range of recommendations in the report and these were being implemented.

2.4 He then set out organisational development relevant to the Board:

- JW had done a lot of work through which portfolios for each director had been put in place, this was done with the intent to focus the work of individual directors and make the workload more manageable;
- the directors did a huge amount of work on behalf of the members;
- after the AGM the Board would lose three directors:
 - Di Hopper had handed in her resignation, as she had recognised she was not able to commit sufficient time to the role, as shown in the Board attendance record in the Annual Governance Statement;
 - JW and JD had completed their terms and were not seeking second terms
- the Board would be co-opting two directors to the Nominated Director roles and a recruitment process would be undertaken for a new Independent Director.

2.5 The Chair then spoke about the many partners of the BMC and noted that:

- the Partners' Assembly, very much through the work of FS, had increased in strength and purpose throughout 2021;
- the 'Your Movement Matters' report surveyed over 5,000 people who actively participated in BMC activities, the results were analysed by Leeds Beckett University, there was some powerful analysis from this and it could be found on the BMC website;
- the Sport England bid for funding had resulted in the BMC being awarded £2.8million over five years, this was all focussed on indoor climbing;
- the Sport England award was to the BMC, but the BMC was not the sole organisation to deliver the objectives, it had funded partners which were Mountain Training, both Mountain Training England and Mountain Training UK & Ireland (together MT), the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) and the National Indoor Climbing Awards Scheme (NICAS) (together the Funded Partners);
- negotiations were ongoing with the Funded Partners in respect of delivery of the objectives; and
- the BMC had started working with MT and Plas y Brenin on making a case to Sport England for funding of the BMC's core outdoor mountain activities.

2.6 He moved on to 'A National Representative Body and a National Governing Body', noting that the two roles were different and made the following points:

National Representative Body (NRB)

- this was where the BMC's history came from, and because of this it was the focus of the majority of our membership;
- the BMC already delivered a lot in its role as a representative body, but it did a poor job of communicating what it had done and does do; and
- there was no question that the BMC could do more and it needed to increase its focus and work as the NRB and to get much better at communicating the work it did in this space.

National Governing Body

- this role had developed more recently with the advancement of competition climbing;
- because this was a more recent development, the BMC had not stepped up to the role;
- this was the focus of UK Sport and Sport England, it was where they put their money and so required delivery; and
- over the next funding cycle, the BMC, with the Funded Partners, needed to become much better as an NGB and demonstrate leadership in that space.

2.7 Finally, the Chair said thank you, to the BMC's members, partners and stakeholders, as the BMC would not be able to do what it did without all of these people or organisations.

The Chair then handed over to Iain Dickinson, the FAC Chair to give a presentation on the BMC's finances in 2021, with support from FA, the director who was on the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC).

3 Accounts and Financial Matters

3.1 The FAC Chair introduced himself, and FA who joined the Board in 2021 and since December 2021 also sat on the FAC. He went on to say:

- the FAC supported the Board on financial matters, they reviewed the quarterly accounts and forecasts and were involved in the budget process;
- 2021 was another busy year dealing with the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the BMC;
- he thanked the finance team at the BMC, Alan Brown and Yas Prabakaran for their excellent work in supporting the BMC during this period;
- a new senior leadership team (SLT) had been formed in 2021, and completed in 2022 with the recruitment of Joelle Chisholm, the new CFO, and this was a real step forward with how the finances would be managed; and

- JC had years of experience as a CFO and CEO in other sporting NGBs and was a great addition to the BMC.

3.2 The FAC Chair then turned to the financial matters, starting with the income received in 2021. He referred to the diagram set out in the annual report which provided members with details and noted the following:

- the headline was that total income was £3.55million;
- income was up 9% from 2020, this was a big increase, but it was an increase from the first year of Covid, and it was due to the ability to run more events and an increase in grant funding, both of which alleviated the reduction in membership income;
- the main changes from 2020 were:
 - £287,000 increase in Sport England and UK Sport grants;
 - £115,000 increase in training and partner income from more events held; and
 - £140,000 decrease in subscription income.
- income was comprised of the following:
 - £2.213m of membership subscriptions, which was £1.796m from individual members and £417,000 from club members, this was 62% of the BMC's income;
 - £561,000 to support the competitive activities of GB Climbing, including £386,000 grant income, which was 16% of the income;
 - £281,000 trading income, of which £144,000 was travel insurance sales, this was 8% of income;
 - £352,000 was all other income including another £167,000 in grant income, this represented 10% of income; and
 - £139,000 was from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which was 4%.

3.3 He went on to provide details of the expenditure in 2021:

- the diagram in the annual report reflected the broad range of activities undertaken by the BMC;
- total cost was £3.65million;
- costs had increased by 20% as activities had resumed and also as a direct result of the increase in grant funding which allowed the BMC to do more;
- the main changes from 2020 were:
 - increased costs of GB Climbing, these were largely offset by the grants received;
 - £130,000 increase in membership costs due to more staff and the combined liability insurance increase;
 - £170,000 increase in access and conservation costs, due to additional staff members; and
 - costs increased across the board, so the 20% increase was a result of 2020 being so depressed in terms of the activities the BMC was able to do in 2020;
- the costs were:
 - £1.1million of membership support costs, including the costs of the insurance scheme;
 - £530,000 of office and admin costs, including trading and the AGM;
 - £889,000 of gross costs for GB Climbing, with net costs after grants and other income being £327,000 and actual direct costs being £144,000. The reason for the net costs being £327,000 was because this area was growing, so there was an allocation against it, including overheads of £184,000;
 - £453,000 for access and conservation work including all owned and managed sites;
 - £247,000 to support technical and training programmes;
 - £177,000 committed to partnerships, heritage and sector leadership;
 - £113,000 on clubs and huts;
 - £114,000 on youth and equity programs; and
 - £29,000 to support expeditions and international representation.

3.4 He then set out the headlines of the finance in 2021:

- there had been a good recovery from the Covid period;
- income increased by 9%;
- costs had increased by 20%, it had been anticipated that costs would increase more than income and it had been carefully managed;
- good management had allowed the BMC to build back the cost base to drive the income increase. A decision had been made to incur such costs to do all the good things the BMC does for its members and the wider community;
- membership was recovering broadly back to pre-pandemic level;
- Sport England award of £2.2m for the 2022-27 cycle, which was £500,000 more than the previous cycle;
- UK Sport Grant award of £1.5m for 2021-25, this was new money as GB Climbing had not received grant income from UK Sport previously.

3.5 He turned to the headlines of the accounts for 2021:

- the BMC was managed and reported on as a small business with similar accounting requirements, it was however subject to the Code for Sports Governance which broadly required UK listed company levels of governance;
- this mix meant that there was great scrutiny applied to how members' and public money was spent, and the FAC worked hard to ensure that too large an administrative burden was not placed on the BMC;
- the audit was the second year it had been conducted by Hurst, there were no issues and it was a quality audit;
- there was cash in the bank of £2m;
- the profit and loss account showed a loss of £110,000;
- the balance sheet remained healthy with net assets of £1.1m;
- the BMC had reserves of £1.1m;
- there was an accrued liability of £975,000 from membership fees;
- the reason that the cash in the bank did not equal net assets was due to the deferred income liability, which represented membership fees not yet taken to income e.g. if someone joins in June 2021 the subscription fee is taken as cash up front, but half is shown as income in 2021, the other half is a liability at the end of the year to provide the membership service until June 2022. This was standard accounting practice.

3.6 He then looked at the actual performance in 2021 against the budget:

- the budget in 2021 was based on a budgeted loss of £271,000, actual loss was £110,000 so the performance was £168,000 better than forecast;
- the budget for 2021 was set in December 2020 when the world was still in the midst of the pandemic, the FAC and Board set this precisely because they expected costs to come back quicker than income and because the BMC was well managed they knew that the reserves of £1.1m could be dipped into;
- every budget was wrong as soon as it is set, so the senior management team (SMT), FAC and the Board actively managed the budget throughout the year;
- the key variances that resulted in the £168,000 variance between the budgeted and actual loss were:
 - membership income - £91,000 less than budgeted;
 - travel insurance sales - £79,000 less than budgeted;
 - additional furlough income - £126,000 more than budgeted;
 - office savings - £135,000 more than budgeted;
 - specialist programs and volunteers - £68,000 more than budgeted; and
 - other - £2,000 more than budget.

3.7 The FAC Chair turned to membership figures:

- membership was a big issue for BMC finances, it got £2.2m or 62% of its income from subscriptions, so it mattered;
- the best point in time to take a snapshot of membership numbers was the beginning of May due to club renewals;

- the total member figures as at start of May were as follows for preceding years:
 - May 2019 – 84,000
 - May 2020 – 81,000
 - May 2021 – 73,000
 - May 2022 – 80,000
- this showed that broadly, membership levels had recovered to May 2020 level, however the BMC still needed to recover 4,000 members to return to entirely pre-pandemic levels; and
- the pandemic was therefore still having an effect on the BMC's finances in 2022.

3.8 Finally, he spoke about 'looking forward':

- there were some key areas from a business perspective:
 - to grow the membership, with the aim to be at 100,000 members by 2024;
 - to review/enhance membership propositions in terms of different offers for different needs: families, youngsters, indoor climbers, clubs;
 - to improve users' digital experience to help add value for our members; and
 - recovery and review of the insurance offering to ensure it offers best value for the members.
- the key areas from a financial perspective were:
 - the 2022 budget was set at a maximum loss of £290,000; and
 - overall improvement/enhancement of financial management, in particular to improve the speed and efficiency of financial systems, develop financial controls and engage budget holders, and to financial plan to 2024 aligned with the strategy.

In summary the BMC finances were well managed and the accounts were fine.

The FAC Chair then introduced Paul Davies, the CEO.

4 CEO's Report

4.1 The CEO thanked all of those for attending and RM and ID for their reports.

He then spoke about the challenges faced by the BMC in 2021:

- Covid impacted everyone – the ability to get out and climb outside, or go climbing indoors was severely curtailed as shown by Sport England data:
 - number of people rock climbing or bouldering:
 - Nov 19/20 = 116,200
 - May 20/21 = 76,000
 - number of people climbing or bouldering wall:
 - Nov 19/20 = 157,000
 - May 20/21 = 84,200
 - number of people climbing and bouldering:
 - Nov 19/20 = 234,000
 - May 20/21 = 135,400
- this impacted on membership, income and delivery;
- prudent financial control, government support and reluctantly reducing some of the delivery had kept the BMC in a good position and allowed it to retain the committed specialist staff;
- participation in all forms of climbing fell, but it was on its way back up;
- there was a success story in the number of people regularly participating in hill walking, with the latest data showing that nearly 3.4million people went hill walking at least twice a month;
- the challenge for the BMC with hill walking was whether the BMC was relevant, visible or connecting to those regular hill walkers.

4.2 He moved on to look at the changes within the BMC:

- the SLT was now complete, with Gavin Finch in post as Chief Commercial Officer, and JC as the new CFO and he had been in post as CEO for just over 12 months;
- the SMT had been reshaped, with 'Heads of' now in place and it was working very well:
 - Dave Turnbull – Access Conservation and Environmental Sustainability (ACES)
 - Lorraine Brown – GB Climbing
 - Jon Garside – Sport & Community Development
 - Kate Anwyl – HR & Office

4.3 He set out the highlights of 2021, and encouraged members to read the Annual Report as it showed the phenomenal amount of work and activity that goes on through the BMC and its staff and volunteers all pulling together:

- ACES action on climate change:
 - sustainable steps being taken, including using Zoom and other methods to reduce the need to travel, a lot had been learnt from the lockdowns;
 - lift share website launched in September 2021 which made it easier for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers to get to the mountains and crags whilst saving money, cutting emissions and reducing stress; and
 - the Climate Project, he thanked everyone who had donated to this and Montane and Cotswold who had given significant donations as a result of Black Friday.
- ACES action on the environment:
 - the series of advice codes and films to support the 'Respect the Rock' and 'Respect the Wild' campaigns, which looked at minimising the impact climbing, walking and camping trips have on the environment;
 - the Hills 2 Oceans campaign returned in 2021, including a partnership with Surfers Against Sewage which developed the Million Mile Mountain Clean; and
 - two major Mend our Mountains projects were completed.
- ACES action on policy and politics, with briefing papers being prepared and work with other colleagues, in particular on:
 - the Environment Act;
 - the Access Commission;
 - the Planning Bill;
 - Environmental Land Management Schemes; and
 - All Party Parliamentary Group for Mountaineering, which had continued online during the pandemic.

- 4.4
- Membership Engagement Support and Services (MESS) delivery on youth, equality, diversity and inclusion (YEDI):
 - Your Movement Matters – which involved seven of the UK's leading walking, climbing and outdoor leisure organisations partaking in a ground-breaking research project to examine the demographics of the people who go walking and climbing, their motivations and participation patterns, which would be the springboard for a lot of good work undertaken in 2022; and
 - Finding Our Way – a great podcast with Cress Allwood and Mary-Anne Ochata diverse voices talking about a diverse range of mountaineering and outdoor activities.
 - MESS
 - Wild Horizons podcast all about hill walking launched, hosted by Niall Grimes with guests;
 - increased visibility in social media, with 15,000 likes added to Facebook and Instagram followers increased by 5,000; and
 - 70 films added to BMC TV, including 32 new Women in Adventure films.
 - MESS delivery in supporting clubs:
 - clubs were at the heart of the BMC and it was constantly looking to respond to the changing needs in the support of them;
 - the Clubs' Committee worked with the club network, staff and volunteers to implement its new Clubs Strategy, supporting recovery from the pandemic, growing club membership and improving BMC and club engagement;
 - club training;

- Find Your Adventure was a campaign started in response to the pandemic which has now shifted in focus to the longer-term support of clubs, helping to make them more visible and promoting the benefits of club membership;
- Local Area Networks, created to enable improved communications between clubs and to support the sharing of good practice and solutions to common problems.

4.5 He then spoke about Education Inspiration and Skills (EIS) and what had been delivered:

- winter skills lectures;
- coach education workshops;
- youth lockdown lecture series;
- child protection training;
- activity cards for schools – this was a fantastic resource which helped teachers help children to just get started with climbing; and
- led by Jon Garside a new and improved route setting course for coaches, to provide them with new tools.

A lot of the lectures had moved online in response to the pandemic, and were continuing online, with it being looked into whether hybrid or virtual only would help more people attend.

4.6 He turned to projects delivered in respect of partnership and collaborating with Climb Scotland, MT, the ABC and NICAS regarding the production of safety resources and also the 'Get Climbing' campaign surrounding the Olympics.

He set out the role the BMC had played in leading the sector, particularly in relation to political issues:

- it joined with other leaders from the indoor climbing industry who formed part of a group presenting evidence to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, and requested financial support to help safeguard the future of the sector;
- it challenged the threat to outdoor education centres caused by the loss of business, particularly during the period of the pandemic when English and Welsh government policy prevented overnight outdoor educational visits in England and Wales;
- it recruited a Policy & Campaigns Officer specifically for Wales in 2021, this had enabled the BMC to strengthen its representation of climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in Wales;
- it worked with other outdoor organisations to form a new cross-parliamentary group in the Senedd on outdoor recreation; and
- it published a manifesto for climbing and hill walking in Wales, which highlighted the need for access to coast and countryside for all, whilst considering sustainable management of Wales' stunning land and seascapes and trying to grow an active, healthy nation participating in outdoor activities by recognising the value of hill walking and climbing.

4.7 He moved on to GB Climbing, focussing on their domestic highlights first:

- a successful bid for funding from UK Sport;
- which allowed the first Head of Performance to be recruited;
- a great calendar of national competitions across the disciplines and categories, this included the Youth Climbing Series, the Junior British Bouldering Championships and the British Lead Climbing Championships, which included paraclimbing

Then international highlights second:

- competition climbing had its Olympic debut at the Tokyo Olympic Games;
- Shauna Coxesy was hampered by injury in the run-up to the games, but secured her place in the history books as Great Britain's first climbing Olympian, she had since been elected as President of the International Federation of Sport Climbing's Athletes' Commission;

- Hamish McArthur was double world champion at the IFSC Youth World Championships, both boulder and lead disciplines and he won a bronze medal in the lead discipline at his first senior World Championship; and
- the paraclimbing team won six medals at the IFSC Paraclimbing World Championships, with Abbie Robinson and Matthew Phillips retaining their titles for the third consecutive time.

4.8 The CEO then presented information on looking forwards, and the focus for 2022:

- the BMC had four pillars: indoor climbing, rock climbing, hill walking and mountaineering and these were the focus for the BMC
- there was a high level of satisfaction in respect of rock climbing support, but the BMC needed to up its game in respect of indoor climbing, mountaineering and hill walking;
- there would be a focus on stepping into the role of NGB, but it would not be the BMC's sole focus, as the BMC would seek to deliver its obligations as an NGB and NRB, as many members wanted and needed the BMC to deliver on both roles;
- the Sport England award allowed for a better indoor climbing system to be created involving clubs, coaches, volunteer and officials, which would be underpinned by safety and safeguarding and would help deliver on youth, equity, diversity and inclusion;
- working towards the goal of 100,000 engaged members by 2024, membership growth was important as it would allow the BMC to become a stronger voice for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers and to really represent them and to help create the next generation.

4.9 He then spoke about 'Convening and Facilitating':

- the BMC needed to know when to lead, when to collaborate and when to follow; and
- at the heart of what the BMC would do, would be bringing people together, the volunteers, staff, commercial partners, system partners, and facilitating this to ensure all the dots were joined together to ensure the BMC was working for its members and the wider sector.

The CEO finished his presentation by summarising:

- 2021 had been a difficult year for everyone, but we got through it;
- the outdoors and indoors had opened back up and the sector was thriving;
- the BMC was in a good place and well positioned to lead, facilitate and collaborate within the sector; and
- in 2022 the BMC must increase the visibility of all the work that it does for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers.

The CEO thanked all the members and noted everyone was vitally important in the BMC family. He then handed back over to the AGM Chair.

5 Voting Opens

The AGM Chair stated that before the first members' Q&A session he would now start the formal proceedings of the Meeting and said that:

- notice of the Meeting was sent to members and published on the BMC website on 29 April, accordingly the requisite notice of the Meeting had been given and it would be taken as read;
- the resolutions and elections would not be read out individually, instead the voting website was now open and members could access it using the login details sent to them by UK Engage, if members did not have this they should email bmc@uk-engage.org;
- resolutions 1 to 5 were ordinary resolutions and so required a simple majority to pass i.e. at least 50%;
- resolutions 6 and 7 were special resolutions and so required not less than 75% to pass;
- all the resolutions were being voted on by way of a poll;

- there were three options next to each resolution – ‘for’ ‘against’ and ‘abstain’. If a member abstained this was a vote withheld which was not a vote in law and would not be counted in the calculation of the proportion of the votes for or against a resolution;
- elections 8 and 9 had one candidate standing and so the options were the same as per a resolution – ‘for’, ‘against’ and ‘abstain’;
- election 9 was only open to BMC Voting Members who were also Mountain Training candidates, so members should not worry if they could not see this election; and
- voting would remain open until 9.15pm and the results would be published on the website on Thursday 19 May.

6 Members’ Q&A

6.1 The AGM Chair moved on to the questions and noted the CoSec would start with the question with the most upvotes and work through the questions this way. He said if a member felt their question was not answered, or if they had a follow-up point they could either raise their hand to be unmuted, or use the Q&A function.

6.2 Q1 came from Rodney Gallagher who asked the Chair of the Board to explain why the Board was currently short of three directors.

The Chair answered and referred to the attendance of DH at Board meetings as set out in the Annual Governance Statement, which showed that she had had insufficient time to dedicate to the role which was a shame as the BMC needed the skills and expertise she brought, and she either had to step up or step down and so she had decided to step down. As a result, the Board would be looking to recruit someone to fill this role post-AGM.

In respect of the two Nominated Directors resigning he noted that firstly they had both had very successful terms, but were now working flat out in their professional careers and secondly the Nominations Committee (NomCom) had looked at the skills that were required, which had resulted in the roles advertised being slightly different to positions held by JD and JW. This process had not resulted in anyone who met the skills required who was appropriate to join the Board at this stage. The Board would therefore be looking to co-opt into these roles.

He added he had had a lengthy meeting with JW to talk about a smooth transition and to ensure all his knowledge was not lost and he would have been delighted if JW had been able to complete a second term, which was also true of JD.

The vacancies were therefore not as a result of a breakdown in Board relationships.

JW clarified that he had reached the end of his first three-year term and he was not seeking a second term, he had not resigned. The Chair added JD was in the same position, and JD was busy working hard on a strategy for equality, diversity and inclusivity.

6.3 Q2 was from Hazel Lewis who asked how much did the elite sport involvement cost the BMC in the year of the report compared to the grant received.

The Chair replied that this had been answered by the FAC Chair and the expenditure slide which set out the £327,000 cost associated with GB Climbing. The FAC Chair added that figure included allocated overheads of the organisation. The CEO noted that as the NGB, there would always be an expectation that the BMC would need to put some money in, a minimum co-contribution, in order to get a return and investment from Sport England and UK Sport. The AGM Chair noted the direct spend was £144,000.

Q3 came from Rodney Gallagher who asked if the BMC would make available to the membership full details of the successful bid for Sport England funding, detailing what needed to be delivered.

The Chair responded that at present the BMC was moving from the overall shape of the bid to the outcome with the Funded Partners, and once this had been satisfactorily completed and there was a ‘contractual relationship’ in place, then they could share it. However, whilst in negotiation

mode this would not be shared. The CEO concurred with this and said he would be more than happy to put out a detailed summary to show the exciting projects the grant would fund.

- 6.4 Q4 was from Chris Sweetman who asked if there was any funding from Sport England for hill walking.

The AGM Chair said not at present, but the BMC was building up to approach Sport England about this. The CEO added there was no direct funding, with Sport England focussing on indoor climbing only. He said the benefit of this was that a lot of the learning done and delivery around indoor would be directly applicable for outdoor, e.g. youth clubs. The funding would also allow the BMC to reprioritise some of the contributions it would put alongside the Sport England work so this liberated some funding to go towards hill walking and hill walking was a big focus for the BMC over the next few years.

Chris Sweetman had a follow-up which was that a few years ago there was a massive vote at an AGM to get accreditation to Sport England and this would benefit hill walking, there was also a dedicated hill walking officer and with Sport England it was not about sport but about physical activity, so he did not understand why a few years ago there was a vote to get Sport England on board with the BMC and the main remit was about hill walking.

The AGM Chair said it was not the main remit but it was one of the reasons. He said in terms of Sport England its request to the BMC for this funding cycle was to focus on indoor climbing, there was no money offered for hill walking. He stated the BMC would be going back to Sport England to say the funding for indoor climbing was greatly welcomed, but the BMC thought they should also be funding hill walking and the outdoors, as Chris was right, they had been in that space and should be encouraged back into it.

- 6.5 Q5 came from someone with the username Training Team and they asked if the BMC had any remit for mountain running/trail running in the higher environment.

The AGM Chair noted it was not specifically in nor specifically excluded from the articles of association (the Articles), so it was something the BMC could look at. The Chair said activities like sky running were within the BMC's remit, as they were running and sometimes using ropes within mountain environments. The AGM Chair noted from a club point of view a canyoning club had been accepted as an affiliated club and Council felt they were broadly aligned with BMC objectives.

Q6 was from Peter Judd who asked if members could be reassured that some indoor work previously funded by other income would now be covered instead from this new Sport England grant, thereby freeing up other monies to replace lost money for the BMC's work for outdoor activities in compensation.

The CEO and the AGM Chair both said yes.

- 6.6 Q7 was from Bob Pettigrew who asked when was it proposed to return to physical general and annual general meetings as there was no real substitute. There was a follow-up to that from Chris Hewitt and Dudley Pritchard who both asked if an online element could be retained.

The AGM Chair replied that it had been hoped that this year's AGM would have had a physical element but at the time of having to book things and plan the situation regarding Covid was not clear enough to make this possible. He said hybrid Council and Board meetings were being run and so the technology was there, but the cost needed to be looked at in respect of a hybrid AGM and if this was the best use of money versus a virtual only meeting. He said that equally there were other events where it might be possible to do some AGM stuff at and have the actual voting online. This would all be looked at and balanced against the cost etc.

Q8 came from Rodney Gallagher who referred to the 2021 accounts which showed that income was up 9%, but costs were up 20%, he asked what was the projection of income and costs for 2022.

The FAC Chair said that the budget for 2022 had been looked at and set and the income was expected to be £4,034,000 and the expenditure was £4,324,000 which resulted in the budgeted loss of £290,000. The additional income showed growth as a result of the Sport England funding and the continued recovery from Covid.

- 6.7 Q9 was from David Brown who stated that he was appalled that the Board had decided to implement Article 23.7 to promote a change in the objects of the BMC as outlined in resolution 7. Article 23.7 stated "To the extent that the Board decides to refer relevant Reserved Matters directly to the Voting Members there shall be no requirement for the Reserved Matter to come before the Council, and the relevant Reserved Matter shall be taken to the Voting Members for a decision at a General Meeting or AGM." The BMC had a perfectly workable arrangement in the Reserved Matters procedure to adequately engage Council and any member so interested to participate in articles changes and policy issues. Article 23.7 was for extreme situations and events but this was not one of them. Just because the Board could does not mean it should, just because the Board could does not mean it ought, just because the Board could does not mean it was right. He asked why the Board felt it necessary to garner Articles changes by implementing Article 23.7 without involving the members other than a straight take it or leave it approach. He also asked why the Board had strayed into policy by including "to Mountaineers and those interested in Mountaineering" in the resolution?

The AGM Chair replied that the Articles provided that as a member organisation the BMC could go directly to the members and that he felt this was about as democratic as it got. He said a lot of the reasoning for this decision had been covered in the paper that was provided to members and discussed at the Open Forums held. It was an issue that was repeatedly coming up and taking up a lot of time, it was the one subject that took the most time in his inbox than all the other work he did for the BMC, which was unacceptable. He hoped that the members would support the resolution but it was for them to decide.

- 6.8 Q10 was also from David Brown who noted that Area meetings were increasingly poorly attended and many Areas had identified poor publicity of meetings to be a principal cause. The current system of advertising Area meetings from the office simply did not work. Prior to the implementation of the GDPR, Area Secretaries circulated attendance sheets for each meeting inviting attendees to sign in and record whether they were a BMC member or not, and to give an email address if they wished to receive copies of the minutes and topical links to anything discussed, and invites to subsequent meetings. Area Secretaries then used to use these lists to advertise subsequent meetings, and you could ask to be unsubscribed from these lists. He said this arrangement was much more personal and friendlier and asked why it could not be reinstated.

The AGM Chair said this had been discussed by Council and they recognised that the way GDPR was being implemented had caused problems, but they had to implement GDPR and ways to improve how it was dealt with was being looked at.

David had a follow-up and so he was unmuted he accepted what Article 23.7 said but that did not make taking the issue straight to the members right. This matter only came up in April and so it had not been a long-standing matter, which was what the AGM Chair had claimed.

The AGM Chair said he understood David disagreed with the position and he accepted that, but the Board felt the issue needed to go straight to the members and the Articles allowed for this and so this was the decision taken.

The issue of GDPR was then discussed in relation to Area meetings and the AGM Chair noted the old way was not GDPR compliant, he dealt with GDPR in his day job and he felt there were ways it could be improved, but he was not GDPR officer for the BMC and so it was being looked at to ensure the BMC was GDPR compliant.

- 6.9 Q11 came from Bob Pettigrew who stated that the drive for mass membership should not ignore the obvious fact that mountaineering is dangerous, aspirants should not be cajoled into participating without realising that climbing was not netball. Sir Jack Longland averred that the penalties for mountaineering were sharper than the referees' whistle.

The AGM Chair said there was a piece of work ongoing led by Steve Quinton, an Area rep from South Wales, and they were looking at the participation statement and wrestling with that exact issue. There were different levels of risk in different activities at different times and so the question of whether a one size fits all participation statement was correct or not was being looked at in case there was another way of doing it. Fundamentally it was about members accepting the risks for the activities they were doing.

Q12 came from Chris Sweetman who asked of the 80,000 members what percentage listed hill walking as their primary activity.

The CEO said that of the members surveyed when asked which activity was their main activity, roughly 55% said hill walking was their primary activity versus 46-47% for rock climbing.

Q13 came from Bob Pettigrew who asked why was there talk of abandoning the director taking responsibility for the clubs, the clubs formed the BMC in 1944 to "collect, harmonise and unite the opinions of mountaineers, and mountaineering clubs", they might not outnumber individual members but the collective experience was immense and must not be ignored.

The AGM Chair said the position was not being removed, there would be a director who would be appointed after the AGM as there were a number of directors who were members of clubs and the Chair would work through a process to appoint someone. The Chair emphasised that the clubs' remit was not being abandoned and there were several directors who could fulfil the role.

It was noted that Bob Pettigrew wished to speak and the CoSec said they would come back to him in the second Q&A session.

7 President's Report

7.1 The AGM Chair started his presentation by stating he was going to look at a couple of themes that he felt were important or interesting to members. He began by focussing on climate change:

- this was a significant issue for many members, and indeed mountaineers all over the world;
- a positive that had come out of Covid had been better use of video conferencing which had allowed the BMC to reduce its carbon footprint and reclaim volunteers' time;
- virtual meetings had increased the ability to hold Open Forums which allowed the BMC to communicate with the interested and passionate members across the UK;
- face-to-face meetings still had a place both nationally and internationally;
- the lessons learnt from the pandemic were being utilised to improve the BMC's climate policy, he noted the excellent work being done by Dr Cath Flitcroft on this, and the approach being taken was to reduce where we could and offset where we could not reduce. This covered anything that the BMC paid for i.e. that went through the BMC's accounts; and
- a key issue for the International Committee was the impact of expeditions, they wanted expeditions to continue but these needed to be done in a way that considered the environmental impact and that put back value to the local community.

7.2 He then updated everyone on Members' Council:

- following the changes made at the 2021 AGM the reorganisation of Council was going well, it was not just a name change;
- it had changed its focus to what do members need and want and this made the meetings more interesting and much more focused;
- there had been four 'Focus Events' at Council meetings, which had covered rock climbing, indoor climbing, mountaineering and hill walking;
- going forwards Council hoped to get more input from Specialist Committee members;
- they were going to start looking at turning what they had learnt into specific 'asks', Council would be providing a set of specific asks to the Board in June;

- there were a number of key issues:
 - the BMC did more than it thought it did;
 - there was a need to celebrate the work done, and to work with members to do more;
 - honey pots and increasing participation were risks to access;
 - there was a need to match membership with increased participation;
 - the BMC was not very visible in the indoor climbing space; and
 - hill walking was often seen as the 'poor cousin' and this needed urgent action.

7.3 He then spoke about the BMC's international focus:

- historically the BMC had been a key player and it was looking to return to this;
- International Mountaineering & Climbing Federation (UIAA) and European Union of Mountaineering Associations (EUMA) were both very positive about more BMC input into their discussions, the BMC was now more embedded in the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC);
- better co-ordination across all international federations, UIAA, EUMA, IFSC and International Federation of Ski Mountaineering (IFSM) was required to ensure that there was cross-fertilisation across these organisations and that they were all learning from each other;
- International meets would restart: 2023 – winter meet with Mountaineering Scotland, 2023 – summer; and
- EUMA's General Assembly and the UIAA's spring meet were both to be held in Leeds.

7.4 He went on to highlight the importance of the BMC's volunteers:

- the BMC staff were a vital part of the delivery;
- volunteers were the life blood of the BMC and without them the BMC could only deliver a fraction of what it did, some of the work they did was not so well known such as:
 - Specialist Committees – he gave some examples: the Technical Committee looking at kit safety and kit standards working with the UIAA; the International Committee representing members' interests in the international arena, the BMC was looking at holding symposiums again; the vital work of the FAC to ensure that members' money was being spent wisely;
 - Local Access Reps – to help members with matters such as access to crags and relationships with landowners;
 - Area Officers – they run local meetings and are key for local engagement;
 - Members' Council;
 - Board; and
 - occasional volunteers
- there was to be a volunteer gala weekend on 8-9 October which was for the following purposes:
 - training for volunteers;
 - a dinner to say thank you to the volunteers and to present the volunteer awards from 2020, 2021 and 2022; and
 - the Specialist Committee reviews of 2022
- the gala was free for volunteers, if they wanted more details they should register at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/C2M7DZZ>, or they could contact the office for details, any volunteer could register for it.

7.5 He then spoke about indoor climbing:

- more BMC members did the fun indoor climbing at walls, it was not just about competitions;
- the BMC had not engaged as well as it would have liked or should have done with indoor climbers or organisations, in particular climbing walls;
- historically, the BMC had not carried out its NGB role as it had wanted to, it had not bid for the funding it should have done, but it had done this now;

- the award from Sport England was a great outcome for the BMC and allowed it to build on the work already done;
- the BMC needed to find better ways to engage as the AGM Chair often spoke to people at climbing walls and they had more often than not never heard of the BMC.

7.6 He then stated it was important to remember the purpose of the BMC:

- good governance was important, and it was right that over the last couple of years work had taken place to ensure the governance structure was right, but:
 - the BMC was about getting the most of a day out with your mates; and
 - the BMC would continue to ensure that it worked for all members with equal vigour and enthusiasm so it remained a broad church whose staff, volunteers and members valued the support and delivery the BMC undertook across all its activities for the benefit of future generations.

7.7 He then concluded:

- whilst the BMC retained high levels of satisfaction in respect of its work for rock climbers, it needed to do more to ensure that equal levels of satisfaction and relevance were obtained from indoor climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers;
- the BMC was doing more than it thought, but needed to ensure members knew:
 - to take advantage of what the BMC does;
 - to recognise the value of the BMC; and
 - allow members to tell the BMC what it needs to do
- the BMC was there for everyone to improve access, conservation and education for all its members; and
- the BMC needed to ensure that it was relevant from the day someone was interested in mountaineering until the day they stopped.

7.8 There was then a video shown In Memoriam to remember the following who were no longer with us:

- Tony Moulam – former BMC President, climber and guidebook writer
- Gareth Pierce – former BMC Chair and Welsh champion
- Rick Allen – mountaineering legend
- Jim Milledge – father of mountain medicine

8 Members' Q&A

8.1 The AGM Chair returned to Bob Pettigrew who said as Senior Vice President of the Sport & Recreation Alliance (SRA) he had welcomed the CEO to his first SRA meeting a couple of years ago, but he saw no mention of the SRA as to organisations the BMC was affiliated to. He said the SRA was extremely important because organisations that accepted government money needed to have an organisation to back you when there was fallout with the government and sometimes the government might take a line that would be unacceptable to mountaineers and so he hoped the BMC would foster this relationship.

The second point he made was about the great patron and world class mountaineer Doug Scott and his memorial service at the Royal Geographical Society, which was packed to the rafters, but there was no BMC representative on the platform and he asked why this was as Doug was a world class mountaineer and a most active patron.

The AGM Chair said he agreed with Bob about Doug Scott and he had joined the service online whilst the CEO was there in person as was Sir Chris Bonington, but it was his understanding no one had asked the BMC to be on the stage.

The CEO confirmed he had been there in person and that the BMC had not had a request to be on the stage otherwise they would have agreed to such a request. He thanked Bob for the warm welcome at the SRA meeting and he said their work was vital and it was very much his intention to keep working with the SRA moving forward and to represent mountaineering within the outdoor

pursuits division of the SRA. Jon Garside noted in the Q&A he attended SRA meetings as BMC's representative.

Bob then commented that the Meeting had been run very well and all the presentations had been very competent.

- 8.2 Q14 was from Simon who stated that GB Climbing was intended to operate as an independent department and asked if it was now operating in this manner.

The CEO responded and said it was not a fully independent department as there would be no benefit in that. There was a shared office and other shared facilities, but it did have its own profit and loss finance and budget. The AGM Chair noted that at present it also cost more than it made so it would be difficult for it to be totally independent.

- 8.3 Q15 was from Pete Watson who asked what specifically the BMC was doing to oppose the new Police Bill which would potentially criminalise wild camping and walking on private land, when 90% of land was in private hands.

The CEO said there were some links on the BMC website, but it was something being looked at by Dr Cath Flitcroft. Cath then posted a link in the Q&A www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-expresses-concer-over-policing-bill. The AGM Chair added he had been asked to sign a letter of support in respect of wild camping and so there was work ongoing in respect of this.

Q16 was from Chris Sweetman who asked how you became a BMC volunteer.

The AGM Chair said he had his name now and that was enough, but it depended what he wanted to do. He said local areas were a good place to start, but he could email the AGM Chair to let him know what he was interested in - president@thebmc.co.uk

Q17 came from Chris again who asked when the BMC first became an NGB.

The AGM Chair said this was a long time ago and JW added the first international competition held was in 1989 so the BMC had effectively been carrying out this role since then. It was not known exactly when the BMC formally became the NGB but it was thought to be in the early 2000s.

- 8.4 Q18 came from Dudley Pritchard who asked how many people were going to join the BMC without prior hill or mountain experience.

The AGM Chair said what the BMC wanted was for anyone who was interested in climbing or mountaineering to come to the BMC and engage with the BMC. He did not think many people would join the BMC and then try an activity, but if they engaged with the BMC to, for example, find a wall or a club, they go and they like it, that then they would hopefully join. The BMC wanted to engage with them as early as possible on their climbing journey.

Q19 was from John Glynn who said that pressures caused by the pandemic had quite properly been described at the Meeting, but given that today's BBC main news related to inflation and a possible recession he asked what effect on the BMC could members expect.

The Chair said he expected to see more staycation activities taking place over the year, so the importance of the BMC work around access and environment needed to improve and recruiting more participants into the BMC to ensure that they are properly trained and behaving in environmentally responsible ways.

The AGM Chair said that people tended to go to the honey pots, and Council had been talking about how to persuade people to visit lesser well-known spots.

The FAC Chair added the BMC had been through various recessions before and weathered them quite well so he did not see this as an issue. Inflation was something all organisations were

having to manage the BMC was alive to it and was managing it and would reforecast at the end of quarter two.

9 Close of Meeting

The AGM Chair thanked everyone for their questions and comments and said that this concluded the AGM. He thanked everyone for their attention and interest and declared the Meeting closed.

He added the voting would remain open until 9.15pm and the results would be published on the website as soon as practicable.

If members had any further questions or comments they could email them to agm@thebmc.co.uk

Approved at the 2023 AGM

Signed.....
Andy Syme, President

Results

	Resolution/Election	For	Against	Abstain	Passed
1.	To approve the minutes of the previous AGM held on 15 May 2021.	596	2	75	99.7%
2.	To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for the year end 31 December 2021.	611	4	58	99.3%
3.	To approve the re-appointment of Hurst Accountants Limited as auditors of the Company.	625	8	40	98.7%
4.	To approve the appointment of Roger Murray as Chair of the BMC whose term of office as Chair took effect from 1 December 2021.	628	13	32	98%
5.	To approve the re-appointment of Fiona Sanders as a Council Nominated Director whose second term of office took effect from 1 April 2022.	618	18	37	97.2%
6.	That with effect from the conclusion of the Meeting the Articles of Association of the Company be amended and that the draft Articles annexed hereto be and are hereby adopted as the Articles of Association of the Company for and to the exclusion of the existing Articles of Association of the Company.	611	12	50	98.1%
7.	That upon the passing of resolution 6 above, with effect from the conclusion of the Meeting, the Articles of Association adopted as a result of resolution 6 above are amended by adding new article 4.13: 'encourage and promote membership of the Company to Mountaineers and those interested in Mountaineering'.	625	20	28	96.9%
8.	To elect a Nationally Elected Councillor to represent indoor climbing for a three-year term to start with effect from 19 May 2022. The candidate is:	610	17	46	97.3%

	Resolution/Election	For	Against	Abstain	Passed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Holmes 				
9.	<p>To elect a Constituency Councillor to represent Mountain Training for a three-year term to start with effect from 19 May 2022. The candidate is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oli Lewis <p>Only open to those who are BMC Voting Members and Mountain Training candidates</p>	214	4	10	98.2%