

# COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

## British Caving Association

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### Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Committee voting?
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary, taking minutes	
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	
Adrian Turner	York Uni CPC		Yes
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Andy Farrow	Northern Boggarts	Leck meets	
Ian Lloyd	Northumbria SG	Eurospeleo representative	Yes
Steve Kirk	Craven PC		Yes
Martell Baines	Bradford PC	BCA representative	Yes
Tim Allen	N/A		
Victor Wain	White Rose PC		Yes
Ray Duffy	Red Rose CPC		
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Roy Holmes	Dent House SS	Chairman	
Johnny Latimer	Bradford PC	Access Officer	
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club		Yes
Bernard Bond	Burnley CC		Yes
Tony Brocklebank	Earby PC		Yes
Fiona Durham	Yorkshire SS		Yes
Simon Wilson	Bradford PC	BCA E&T Rep/IC anchors	
Pete Bann	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	
Lyndon Easterbrook #	ULSA		

# did not sign attendance register in error but attendance confirmed during review of minutes by Committee.

Numbering of sections in these minutes relates to agenda item numbering.

Committee clubs not present: Over and Under Caving Club and Lancashire Underground Group

## **(1) Apologies for absence**

Kay Easton (Northern Boggarts/Conservation Officer)

Ian Cross (Bradford Pothole Club)

Ric and Pat Halliwell (Craven Pothole Club)

Geoff Whittaker (Th'Owd Skool Caving Club/Ingleborough meets)

Dan Irving (Over and Under Caving Club/Training Officer)

The meeting opened at 9:35am with a welcome from the Chairman.

## **(2) Acceptance of September Committee meeting minutes**

- Tim Allen said he was pleased with the report on the discussion regarding individual cavers, but emphasised that his point in the letters was not just about representation for individual cavers, but for all groups of cavers.
- Matt Ewles acknowledged this and said that the CNCC had already addressed many of these points through relations now established with the CDG, CHECC and recent efforts to build relations with instructed cavers, as well as individual cavers.
- No changes were requested to the draft minutes prior to finalisation.

Acceptance of minutes:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Sam Lieberman

Votes: 9 votes for, 2 abstentions (the YSS representative had not yet arrived)

**Action: Matt Ewles issue the final minutes.**

## **(3) Matters arising from the September Committee meeting**

No matters arising.

## **(4) Officers reports**

### **Chairman's report:**

No questions.

### **Secretary's report:**

John Holloway asked whether Northern Caving (the new rigging guide) was anything to do with the CNCC. Matt Ewles explained that this was published by, and the copyright owned by the CNCC Technical Group and not the CNCC, and that the two were separate entities.

### **Treasurer's report:**

Several matters were raised with respect to the Treasurer's report:

- Pete Bann said that he had heard nothing back from the rescue organisations regarding the offer of money (£500 each) towards communication equipment. Roy Holmes discussed the merits of the different radio systems and said he was going to pursue this with them.

**Action: Roy to continue to work with the three CROs to ensure this funding is taken advantage of.**

- Andrew Hinde commented on the amount of corporation tax paid by the CNCC. Matt Ewles said that in the past the money from the sales of rigging guides came directly to the CNCC and it was mostly this money that was subject to corporation tax. He added that now this money was no longer coming in, we may no longer have a corporation tax liability. Johnny Latimer said he may be able to obtain some advice on whether this is the case.

**Action: Johnny to look into corporation tax status, communicate findings to Pete Bann, and Pete to work towards removal of the CNCC from corporation tax if no longer liable and if possible.**

- Andrew Hinde said that the first aid training given to CNCC conservation volunteers had expired. He suggested the Firebird was a competitively priced supplier at £75 per person and that there may be opportunity for some new people to attend. Andrew said he can confirm the costs more accurately in due course and that these costs may be recoverable from the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership or Natural England.

**Action: Andrew to present full costs when possible to Treasurer and investigate whether this money may be recoverable from IDLP or NE.**

#### **Conservation Officer's report:**

The Conservation Officer had given apologies for this meeting.

- Andrew Hinde provided a verbal overview of the recent Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership funding from the Heritage Lottery fund (see Jan 2016 newsletter for details).
- Pete Monk asked when this project would be getting started. Andrew said that as of this month (January) it had officially launched.
- Pete asked whether the funding was held by the IDLP and released as needed. Andrew confirmed that this was the case and we would need to claim money back from the fund retrospectively for works performed.
- Pete asked if we had lined up a series of projects for the IDLP partnership. Andrew said this was something for us to decide. There was a proforma in place already with several projects and priorities listed (for example, Owl Hole, Katnot Cave, Skirwith Cave). However, beyond this there was great flexibility for us to decide on appropriate projects.
- Tim Allen asked whether the National Parks are aware of this project. Andrew said that the National Park have representatives on the board for this project so individuals will certainly be aware, but not sure whether the National Park as a wider organisation is fully aware.
- Tim suggested it would be good to promote this with the National Park as an excellent example of cavers looking after their caves.

- Roy Holmes added that this was also an excellent opportunity to get something about caving into the National Park newsletter.
- Andrew added that the project was not just about cleaning caves, it is also about educating people/children in cave conservation, monitoring cave conservation, and ensuring appropriate press releases.
- Tim Allen added that he believed keeping it in the press was very important, and that he is meeting with a reporter on the Tuesday after the meeting and could work with Andrew to ensure this project is appropriately reported.

**Action: Tim/Andrew to look into appropriate press coverage of this project.**

#### **Training Officer's Report:**

The Training Officer had given apologies for this meeting.

- Martell Baines provided a verbal summary of the recent BCA Training Committee meeting, where the suggestion was made of splitting the BCA Training Committee from the BCA. (More information can be found in the minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016 BCA meeting)
- Roy Holmes asked whether we needed to make a decision today on whether the CNCC should support this (as we have a vote on the BCA). Martell said not specifically yet but it was something for us to be aware of as it may come to a vote in the future.
- Tim Allen said that in the Dales 70000 people take an instructed caving trip each year.
- Tony Brocklebank asked how this split might work. Andrew Hinde said it would basically mean spitting the professional instructed side (including the award qualifications) away from the club/recreational side of caving. The BCA Training Committee would still be a constituent body of the BCA but without the representatives of recreational training (including the different regional councils).
- Andrew suggested that as Dan Irving is both a CIC award holder and CNCC Training Officer, he provided a very useful link between the two sides should a split happen.
- Andrew suggested that a proposal to do this could be forthcoming before the next BCA meeting. Martell is unable to attend to represent the CNCC at this meeting and so either we will need to apologise or send another representative.

#### **Access officer's report:**

Johnny Latimer provided a verbal update on the following points:

- Birks Fell closed season is now reduced to only March/April in new access agreement.
- No response yet from Leck/Casterton Fell landowners regarding Eurospeleo access.

- The Coates family have agreed to continue non-permit based access to their land on Fountain's Fell as per last year, with a call at Rainscar House being sufficient.
- The Langcliffe Estate landowner is now representing himself with no land agent involved. Matt Ewles asked what Johnny thought the way forward here was with regard to increased access to Penyghent Pot and Dale Head Pot. Johnny said that HMRC can write to him to press him for land access, but this is not something they usually do. Withdrawing from the access agreement altogether needed to remain on the table as a possibility.
- Andrew Hinde said that correspondence from Matt Ewles with Rachel Briggs at the Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum (requesting their assistance with access at Langcliffe Estate), had been forwarded to Natural England and had come to Andrew's attention. Natural England have written to HMRC to enquire about the situation, and were informed that HMRC believe the current access agreement is an acceptable approach. Therefore, increased access here cannot be pursued through further engagement with HMRC with regard to the Tax Exempt Heritage Asset status of the land as discussed at previous CNCC meetings.
- With regard to Birks Fell, Tim Allen asked whether the landowners gave a reason for the change in the closed seasons. Johnny said that the previous closed season (the entire winter) was decided on safety grounds due to the highly flood prone nature of the cave, whereas the new closed seasons did not consider this and was due only to lambing.
- Tim asked whether the fact that Birks Fell is off the land of the farm, and is next to a public footpath, was raised during the access discussions. Johnny said that the farmer wanted all cavers to call on route to the cave. Furthermore he (Johnny) was not directly involved in the access discussions, so the opportunity to raise these matters was not available. Johnny also said that unfortunately, there was no opportunity incorporated to allow permits to be available to individual cavers.
- Andrew Hinde said that the Fairy Holes agreement for 2016 has been signed. There is a bill for £120 as a solicitor fee for amending some dates on the agreement. This has been paid by Andrew but he would appreciate consideration of reimbursement from the CNCC for this (this was put out to the room, no objections, so this will be paid).

**Action: Pete to arrange reimbursement of £120 to Andrew.**

- Andrew suggested we did not want to set a precedent for paying this fee each year and so it would be good to work directly with the quarry to establish a more standard CNCC access agreement (not requiring solicitors). Previously, Lafarge wouldn't accept an agreement with an organisation, just a named individual (historically, Andrew). However, it would be far preferable to get an agreement directly with the CNCC instead.

**Action: Johnny to work with Andrew to try to establish CNCC access agreement with quarry.**

- Ray Duffy asked whether the quarry was still working. Andrew clarified that it is not, however, this does not mean any decrease to the required regulations.

**BCA update:**

Martell Baines (BCA/CNCC representative) provided a verbal update on matters of relevance to northern caving from the BCA meeting from 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016:

- The BCA endorse Tim Allen's approach and the campaign to change DEFRA's interpretation of the CRoW act to cover caving. They have allowed him a budget to pursue this campaign as their appointed CRoW Liaison Officer.
- Eurospeleo was discussed, and clarified to be a separate business entity to the BCA.
- No disciplinary action is to be taken regarding the Bear Grylls incident at Long Churn caves.
- A draft of the new cave conservation code is published in the meeting minutes.

**BCA Equipment and Techniques report:**

Simon Wilson (BCA E&T/CNCC representative) provided an overview of the BCA Equipment and Techniques meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015:

- This was a quick summary, with specific reference to ongoing work to inspect loose anchors across the Dales. Tim Allen asked about resin shrinkage, and Simon said this was something he was researching. Minutes of this overview were not taken as a full summary of this meeting can be found in the minutes available on the BCA website.
- Simon would like to suggest that the BCA consider accepting grade 304 stainless steel in addition to 316.

**IC anchors report:**

Supplementary to the report included in the meeting documents, Simon confirmed that the anchor installation in Big Pitch route in Gingling Hole was complete but the Big Rift route was not.

Acceptance of all Officers reports:

Proposed: Ian Lloyd

Seconded: Bernard Bond

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

**(5) Meets Secretary's reports****Leck Fell:**

Andrew Farrow circulated a report (see Appendix 1 for a scan of this document). In summary:

- Over 30 permits were being issued per month and there are no problems with the Estate.
- A new Shuttleworth Pot conservation guide is being issued with all permits for this cave, and a new, simplified general permit design has been created.

- Pirate trips are being regularly reported online.
- Matt Ewles asked if groups with Shuttleworth Pot permits could be made aware of the recent collapses at the bottom of the Divers pitch. Andrew said that he had already made all groups with upcoming permits aware of this. Simon Wilson said that plans for re-anchoring of this pitch were already in hand.

**All other areas:**

No questions

Acceptance of all meets secretary reports:

Proposed: Bernard Bond

Seconded: Andrew Hinde

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

## **(6) Draft Constitution amendments**

Matt Ewles opened this part of the meeting with a discussion of the draft constitution.

- Matt summarised how this had been drafted in response to the accepted proposal at the September Committee meeting, to come up with some draft constitutional amendments to enable a representative for individual (non-club) cavers to serve on the CNCC Committee.
- An electronic poll of the Committee had been conducted during November to identify the preferred way to elect this individual. Options were to elect them at our own AGM (through majority voting of all BCA DIMs present) or to ask the BCA to elect this person at their own annual meeting. The overwhelming majority were in favour of us appointing this individual ourselves at the CNCC AGM. This option was therefore included in the draft constitution.
- Matt explained that there was one additional amendment unrelated to the individual caver proposal that had been suggested (section 3b).
- This single suggested amendment (3b) was discussed first.
- Ian Lloyd asked what bodies other than CHECC could be covered by this suggested change. Matt confirmed that theoretically anybody with suitable public liability insurance equivalent or identical to BCA insurance could be considered. However, each would need to be reviewed on a case by case basis by the CNCC Committee.

This suggested amendment (3b), as presented, was then put to a vote:

The amendment was proposed by Ian Lloyd

The amendment was seconded by Pete Monk

Votes: 11 in favour of the amendment, 1 abstention

- The discussion then moved onto all other amendments relating to individual caver representation. John Holloway expressed concern about the term 'IC' for Individual Caver

representative, suggesting this could create confusion with IC anchors. Matt Ewles said that the definition was presented upon first use in the document. Matt asked whether anyone else in the room shared the concern, but the general consensus was that providing it was adequately defined in the document, it should not be a concern.

- Pete Monk asked whether, if these amendments were approved at the AGM, we would elect an IC representative on that day to serve for the following year. Matt Ewles said he did not think we should, as the role would not have been subject to the constitutionally required process for election of a Committee position. Instead, the first elected IC representative would be possible for the 2017 AGM if the amendment were accepted.
- Martell Baines asked if we could have an EGM after the AGM to elect one. Matt said he felt not as an EGM did not bypass the need for eight weeks notification to be given for anyone standing for a Committee position, and there would be insufficient time for interested candidates to come forward and for an informed decision to be made.
- Andrew Hinde believed we should be treating this with a greater sense of urgency and suggested that we could simply co-opt someone to the role at the meeting. Johnny Latimer expressed concerns that this would not be democratic, and that individual cavers (DIMs) needed the opportunity to elect their representative in a democratic way.
- John Holloway asked whether DIMs would need to provide proof of their status as a DIM of the BCA to vote. Matt Ewles said yes, and confirmed that the wording in the amendments covered this.
- John then asked whether an individual (DIM) could appoint themselves to the role at the meeting (for example, if they were the only voting individual). Matt Ewles confirmed no. As a Committee applicant, they would be bound by the same rules set out in the constitution and would require a minimum of three selections (votes) for their application to be deemed eligible. Therefore, in addition to their own vote they would require the support of at least two other voting DIM cavers at the meeting, equivalent to a proposer and seconder.

These suggested amendments (all except 3b), as presented, were then put to a vote:

The amendments were proposed by Pete Monk

The amendments were seconded by Bernard Bond

Votes: 10 in favour of the amendments, 2 votes against

## **(7) Engaging with external bodies and other cavers**

This agenda item involved a suggestion from Matt Ewles and Johnny Latimer for the CNCC Committee to ask Tim Allen for assistance in improving access.

- Martell Baines asked if this was something Tim would be willing to accept if we asked. Tim confirmed this was the case and that he has always offered his help in the past.
- Tim then provided a statement in favour of more open access. He highlighted issues in dealing with landowners, who do not have caver needs as high priority, leading to a lack of



response and problems dealing with renewal of access agreements. Tim said he has asked his MP for assistance with improving access. He said that Henry Bowering still believed that access to Casterton Fell was controlled by the Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club, citing this as an example of how out of date landowners are with the current situation. More engagement with local access forums was needed as these are made up of many people including landowners, meaning it provided an important way to engage directly with them.

- Johnny Latimer said that while he was doing his best as Access Officer, he now had more family commitments and his business, both of which meant he wasn't always able to attend the necessary meetings. Tim already attends these meetings and should therefore be encouraged to work with the CNCC to improve access.
- Sam Lieberman asked, if Tim, while attending meetings as part of the CNCC, would be able to make it clear in what capacity he is speaking (i.e. in his capacity as a CNCC representative or whether he is speaking personally). Tim said that he has been attending CNCC meetings for a long time and people would have to trust him to work in the CNCCs best interests.
- Pete Monk expressed concerns that the Lancashire Local Access Forum letter (attached to agenda) implied that the issues with access were due to the CNCC. Matt Ewles said that this too had noticed this and that he had replied to the LLAf to confirm that the CNCC endorses access for individual cavers, but that the issues with granting this are with getting the access agreements amended to make this possible. Tim said that the LLAf had also written to DEFRA to express their concerns.
- Roy Holmes reminded everyone that Leck and Casterton Fell were soon to become part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- Tony Brocklebank suggested that the position of 'Assistant Access Officer' should be an elected role and democratically appointed, not co-opted by the Committee. He suggested that Tim should help the CNCC but we should not create an official title/position for him. Tim said that it would make it difficult for him to have the authority to represent the CNCC with no official title for his role. Matt Ewles suggested the title of 'Access Representative' might be more appropriate than using the term 'Officer'. There was majority agreement.
- Bernard Bond concluded the discussion by saying that Johnny was well trusted in the CNCC, and that as he was asking for help with his role, the CNCC should allow him to have this, and we should move ahead to propose/accept the suggestion.

***Proposal: This Committee request Tim Allen to take the role of Access Representative and to assist and work with our elected Access Officer, on behalf of the CNCC, to improve access.***

Proposed: John Holloway

Seconded: Andrew Hinde

Votes: 11 votes for, 1 vote against

## **(7) CNCC position on the BCA campaign over CRoW**

Matt Ewles, followed by Tim Allen (BCA CRoW Liaison Officer) provided a summary; that the purpose of this agenda item was to see if there was official support from the CNCC Committee for the BCA's campaign to change DEFRA's interpretation of the CRoW Act such that it applies to caving.

- Ian Lloyd asked whether our endorsement of this campaign would cause issues or bad feeling with landowners.
- Tony Brocklebank said that nobody knows what response the landowners would have, and that he felt the CNCC need not either support or reject the campaign.
- John Holloway said that there was a need for the CNCC to establish our position on this as we have a vote at the BCA and we needed to know our position.
- Tim Allen said that about 1800/2500 northern caves are on access land, hence he felt it was extremely important that the CNCC make known their position with respect to the campaign to see these caves covered under CRoW. Other regional councils have already done so (DCA and CCC support the campaign; it is assumed the CSCC do not).
- Sam Lieberman asked if there was still a conflict between the BCA campaign and their constitution. Tim said that this has been looked at and the BCA have decided that they do not need to change their constitution to pursue the campaign.
- Tony Brown suggested (with the meeting drawing on) that we proceed to a vote

### ***Proposal: The CNCC supports the BCA CRoW campaign***

Proposed: John Holloway

Seconded: Bernard Bond

Votes: 11 votes for, 1 vote against

## **(8) Any Other Business**

- Ray Duffy said that, after the previous meeting he had agreed to compile a list of fixed ropes in Ease Gill so we could consider which might be deemed a 'CNCC-maintained' fixed aid. He has been on UK Caving and got a vast array of answers and opinions. Matt Ewles said that the information from UK Caving might prove helpful, however the CNCC has trust in Ray to make his best decision which ropes were the most important to maintain.

**Action: Ray to come up with definitive list of fixed ropes in Ease Gill (or possibly elsewhere too if time allows) which it is felt important that the CNCC list on the website and which we should take action to replace when they are reported as defective.**

- Tim Allen said that the matter of public liability insurance had been raised with BMC representatives. They were surprised that caver's access agreements required public liability

insurance, as this was not the case for their access agreements with the exception of Cheddar Gorge. Tim said that Nick Williams had confirmed that the landowner is covered for any cavers, regardless of their membership to the BCA, and that the aim of the public liability requirement in access agreements was to protect the landowner, regardless of whether the specific caver is insured. Martell Baines added to this confirming that the BCA meeting had confirmed that leisure cavers are covered regardless of whether they have paid a contribution to the insurance.

- Andrew Hinde suggested that this meant non-BCA paid up cavers could make a claim via the insurance and potentially drive up future costs for everyone.
- Tim Allen said that this was simply a point of interest regarding our access agreements. Do we really need to specify that only BCA insured cavers can gain access, if all cavers are insured regardless of whether they have personally joined and paid for BCA?
- Gary Douthwaite suggested a possible problem would be that if people think they don't need to be a BCA member to be insured, they won't pay the BCA fee and therefore there would be insufficient money to pay for the insurance policy.

Meeting closed 12:35pm

**Summary of action items dictated or inferred from this meeting:**

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E.	Issue September meeting minutes as final.
Johnny L. and Pete B.	Johnny to speak with accountant colleague to see if the CNCC might be able to be removed from corporation tax now we no longer receiving money from rigging guide sales, and communicate findings to Pete. Pete to look into necessary process to take us out of corporation tax if possible.
Andrew H.	Confirm more specifics of costs for first aid training for CNCC volunteers to Pete B. and see if these costs may be recoverable from NE/YDLP.
Roy H.	Contact CRO, UWFR and Swaledale MRT to remind them of the £500 funding on offer for communications equipment.
Andrew H./Tim A.	Look into possible press coverage of the IDLP partnership funding.
Pete B.	Arrange reimbursement of £120 for Fairy Holes agreement to Andrew H.
Andrew H./Johnny L.	Look into possibility of establishing CNCC agreement with Fairy Holes quarry owners.
Ray D.	Ray to come up with definitive list of fixed ropes in Ease Gill (or possibly elsewhere too if time allows) which it is felt important that the CNCC list on the website and which we should take action to replace when they are reported as defective.

## Appendix 1: Supplementary report on Leck Fell (Andrew Farrow) as supplied at the meeting

Leck fell report [ JANURARY 2016 ]

### PERMIT ISSUES // CAVING :

Excellent caving turn out – with an average of 30+ permits / month and midweek caving is well supported

### THE ESTATE OFFICE :

The estate office have not communicated any complains – so no problems there

### CONSERVATION :

A new shuttleworth permit template has been introduced emphasising the conservation obligations of a trip down this system

### ADMINISTRATION :

To streamline admin – I have published new permit templates drafted with the assistance of matt E and peat M . Andrew hinde and matt ewles have approved these – and the estate office have accepted the change without comment

### PIRACY :

Pirate trip persist – their true number is unknowable – but trip reports of pirate trips are regularly published online.

END .

### LECT FELL PERMIT ISSUES : 2015

month	Permits issued	note
Jan 15	1	1 Admin error
Feb 15	32	
March 15	37	
July 15	34	
August 15	36	
September 15	32	
October 15	38	
November 15	41	
December 15	39	
Janurary 2016	36	2 So far

For jan 2015 : due to an admin error – I deleted jim sloans data – so only have the tab of permits I issued