

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting, 14th January 2021, on Zoom

Attendees:

Name	Abbr.	Affiliation	CNCC role?	Voting?
Joshua Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Secretary	No
John Holloway	JH	University of Leeds Speleological Association		No
Russel Myers	RM	British Caving Association		No
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Ric Halliwell	RH	Craven Pothole Club	Birks Fell etc. Meets	No
Andrew Hinde	AH	Gritstone Club	Chairman	No
Ben Wright	BW	Bradford Pothole Club	Treasurer	No
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club		Yes
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	University of Leeds Speleological Association		Yes
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	PR & Communications Officer, Excalibur Meets	Yes
Gary Douthwaite	GD	York Caving Club	Webmaster	No
Kay Easton	KE	Bradford Pothole Club	Conservation Officer	Yes
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Ian Ball	IB	Yorkshire Subterranean Society		No
Tim Allen	TA	n/a	Access Officer	No
Mark Richards	MR	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	BCA E&T Rep	No
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club		No
*Liv Golby-Kirk	LG	York University Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
*Tony Brown	TB	Northern Boggarts		No
*Fiona Durham	FD	Yorkshire Subterranean Society		Yes

* These individuals arrived after the first vote.

9 out of 13 Committee clubs present (Absent: GSG, KCC, NPC, WRPC)

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

The meeting opened at 19:01

1) Apologies for absence

Alan Jeffries (GSG)

2) Acceptance of minutes from the October Committee Meeting

No issues raised.

Vote to accept the October 2020 Committee meeting minutes.

Proposed: PH

Seconded: PM

6 votes for, 1 abstention

Action: JY to issue final minutes.

3) Matters arising from the October Committee Meeting

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise June Committee Minutes Done
Gary D	Look into automating monthly booking system reports for Henry Bowring. *Secretarial note: Though not finished at the time of the meeting, this is now done. ME has sent an update covering June to December 2020 and has asked for his feedback on how often he actually wants these. Done
Matt E	Put out a polite reminder to be mindful of parking on Leck Fell. Done
Tim A	Write to National Park Authority regarding caving access at High Birkwith. Postponed until end of Covid restrictions.
Josh Y/Mark R	Put forward a proposal to the BCA E&T committee that the BCA purchase a batch of IC anchors to allow them to be installed throughout the UK. Done. This proposal was passed at the following E&T meeting.
Gary D/CNCC Officers	Arrange incorporating Simon Wilson's anchor documentation into the CNCC website. Ongoing. Once all content has been formatted, JY to contact Simon.
Matt E/Gary D	Work with RW to adjust the wording and add the University Caving Advice document to the CNCC website. Done

4) Reports

Chairman's report

- SL mentioned that there was some uncertainty around some of the CNCC Covid advice. AH pointed out that because the CNCC is trying to give more specific and useful guidance, it is more difficult to be 100% sure the advice is perfectly agrees with government guidelines. ME said that all statements were reviewed by the CNCC officers, and none of the advice suggested doing anything illegal. He added that individuals who want to go caving will do it regardless of what the CNCC says, so the aim is to advise on how to be most responsible and stay within the law.

Secretary's Report

- SL said that RRCPC has a disto belonging to CNCC. He will email AH with details so it can be documented.

Treasurer's Report

- While discussing the proposal that urgently required spending above £500 could be approved by a majority of Officers, it was questioned whether an upper limit was required. It was decided that this was not needed, and that the ability for any 1 officer to veto spending as suggested in the wording of the proposal was enough to minimise any risk of uncapped, unnecessary spending.
- It was clarified that this is only intended for when a payment needs to be made quickly, and the expense is deemed non-contentious. This is not a permanent substitute for Committee consultation/discussion of all >£500 expenses where time allows for discussion and where the payment may generate mixed opinions.
- SL asked for a requirement that the committee be informed promptly after any large payments. AH said that this will be requested, but not put into the wording of the proposal.

Vote on proposal that as long as 4 out of the 6 elected officers agree to an expenditure, and the other elected officers don't disagree, then the treasurer can authorise a payment of above £500.

Proposed: BW

Seconded: ME

9 votes for (unanimous)

Conservation Officer's Report

- KE said that help has been requested at Starting Handle Pot. Tony Credland has put in lots of his free time clearing rubbish and installing cement and scaffold around the entrance. He would like someone to inspect the entrance, and for help hauling the rubbish out. It was decided that this will likely be a straightforward job, but will most likely have to wait until after lockdown.

Action: KE/AH to arrange conservation work at Starting Handle Pot. (Action postponed until after Covid restrictions.)

- TA said KE should expect to hear from those responsible for the Barry Andrew legacy fund, who intend to ask for the CNCCs assistance clearing up one of his abandoned digs. Harland Pot on Dowlass Moss contains all sorts of equipment relating to a long term dig which will need clearing out. When PH said that it was named after Janet Harland from Giggleswick, ME asked for contact details so that he can keep her in the loop if any work does get done there. It would be a good piece of local PR to maintain good relations with people in the local area.

Access Officer's Report

- RM confirmed that the BCA had not received any complaints or correspondence regarding CNCC Covid advice. RH suggested that the CNCC ask the CPC chair for his opinion on Covid advice, as he is highly qualified in the field.
- TA informed the committee that the CSCC had asked whether they can copy the CNCC's advice for their own region, and that this was a good sign that inter-regional relations are improving.

Training Officer's Report

- Regarding note 1, AH said that he believes the QMC usually makes enough money to break even nowadays, so is not drawing significant amounts of money from the BCA. Regarding note 2, he said that the private company in question was Yorkshire Dales Guides, who received money with the support of the CNCC. The money was primarily spent on equipment, not on paying wages for the guides.
- RM said that this proposal was voted through with the last council, but he has reservations about it. He believes that the BCA should pay the going rate for a professional to come in and provide services as long as there is some transparency and openness about how the appointments are made. He expects that this will be discussed again at the next council meeting. When it was voted through, there were more people abstaining than voting.
- BW pointed out that this rule would apply to any training where the expenses were being claimed back from the BCA. This would include anything organised by the CNCC. RM said that it was more of a grey area, as the proposal may be overwritten by some part of the BCA constitution.
- SW asked whether this would apply to club-organised training. AH replied that it would if the club is claiming the money back from BCA, even if indirectly through the regional council. However, if the training is BCA funded then it cannot be restricted to club members only.
- ME said he fully supported IP's concerns about the recent BCA vote not to refund costs for professional instructors. ME felt that this was a preposterous stance from an organisation that is cash-rich and volunteer-poor. ME said that he understood there are potential conflicts of interests in monetarised training, and it needs to be ensured BCA funds are not used to give 'jobs for mates' in the instructed caving community, but this could be easily overcome by BCA having an approved supplier list and ensuring transparency in which suppliers are being used and why.
- AH asked whether anyone on the committee did not approve of an instructor getting paid a day rate for providing training services. There were no objections, so AH confirmed that Ian has the backing of the CNCC committee.
- TA requested that we formally ask the BCA to review this issue. In his experience, the QMC and Training Committee tend to work behind the scenes to bring a complex document to BCA Council for approval, with most voting representatives not understanding the details of the document and will just support it if that's the mood of the room.

Action: JY to email the BCA Secretary to suggest the BCA revisit the issue of paying professional training providers for their services.

BCA E&T Representative's Report

- ME remembered that Mark Sims (BCA E&T Officer) wanted to change the BCA Anchor Policy and in particular, remove the requirement that the BCA must nominally approve all anchor installation training providers. ME asked whether any action had been taken yet. MR said he didn't know, but would find out and discuss with ME separately.
- AH asked whether anchor installers in other regions would need specific training on installing IC anchors. MR said he did not know but could find out. ME said that they just need to make sure the information on the hole size, type of resin etc are passed on. GD pointed out that there should be some mechanism for alerting installers to changes in practice, such as the recent change of resin. ME said that this is something the BCA E&T team should be organising.

Anchor Coordinator's Report

- Nothing raised.

PR & Communications Officer's Report

- ME said he intends to keep a steady supply of good news throughout the current lockdown. Installers have recently been following up on loads of loose anchor reports. GD said that Graham Coates in particular had been replacing lots of anchors, which he is able to continue doing through lockdown as he lives locally to many caves.
- ME summarised various ongoing projects and upcoming articles. He said there is enough content to keep up a steady supply of news for the next 3-4 months. Anyone can contact him if they have any ideas for more articles.

Webmaster's Report

- Nothing raised.

Bowland Meets Secretary's Report

- TB gave a verbal report. A landowner spotted a vehicle which he believed to be cavers without permission. While it's not certain that they were caving, they were seen around the cave entrance, away from areas that normal walkers would be. He asked that the committee pass this on to their members, as it puts landowner relations at risk.
- ME suggested putting out a PR piece on the caves of Bowland, with a reminder of the access challenges of the area. However, he pointed out that there will always be people visiting that don't know about access agreements and the CNCC, and that such articles would not reach these people.

Action: ME get in touch with TB, perhaps put together an article on Bowland.

Vote to accept all reports.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: LE

9 votes for (unanimous)

7) Northern Speleo

- RM gave the details of the event. The plan was to have a summer caving event, 26th June to 4th July, hosted at the Kirkby Lonsdale Rugby Union Football Club. The idea was that it would help kickstart caving after the pandemic. The goal was to bring cavers together again and would be especially targeted at students, who have taken a big hit this year. CHECC were heavily involved in the planning.
- The event was officially cancelled the previous evening at a BCA exec meeting. It was cancelled due to the uncertainty of covid, and the new variant causing further restrictions. Even if the event could take place, numbers would likely be heavily reduced, making it difficult to break even. The initial prediction was to have numbers of 300-500 people.
- ME asked whether there was an appetite for a similar event in 2022. RM replied that there was lots of positive feedback about having a caving-focused event, rather than a conference. TA suggested that having the venue at Kirky Lonsdale would put lots of pressure on the caves of Ease Gill and Leck Fell, so there would need to be a system for managing numbers. Eurospeleo showed that car parking would be a significant issue.

- RM informed the committee of another, more international event at the PSM cave system in France. This was also put in motion by Phil Rowsell, and an application has been sent to ARSIP (who manage access to the PSM). The dates are the first 2 weeks of August, but it is still uncertain whether it will be possible.

6) Covid-19

- Nothing raised.

7) Conflict of Interest Statements

- It was decided that, as Ian was not able to attend this meeting, there was little to discuss. AH will ask Ian to put forward a formal statement or proposal for a future meeting.

8) Anchor Projects

- The committee approved of both projects.
- RH recommended that installers use one of the official booking dates to put anchors in Robinson's Pot, rather than arranging a separate date.

JY to advise installers to use an official booking date when installing anchors in Robinson's Pot.

9) Date and time of next meeting

- BW asked whether it would be possible to have the AGM as an evening meeting. JY replied that as the AGM invites a much larger number of people to attend going well beyond the committee, he believes it should be kept at the same time and day as it has been for many years. In addition, as the AGM had already been officially publicised and notified with the current date/time, it can no longer be changed.

10) Any other business

- SL asked if there had been any updates regarding the criminalisation of trespass. TA replied that he hasn't seen anything, most likely as the government has been preoccupied with covid.
- MR asked whether the information about the CNCC Technical Group on the CNCC website should be updated. GD suggested it is moved such that it is more obvious it is an information archive, rather than a description of the current situation. ME said he will discuss this with MR separately.

Meeting closed at 20:38

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
JY	Finalise October 2020 Committee meeting minutes.
Tim A	Write to National Park Authority regarding caving access at High Birkwith. (Action postponed until end of Covid restrictions.)
KE/AH	Arrange conservation work at Starting Handle Pot. (Action postponed until end of Covid restrictions.)
ME	Get in touch with TB, perhaps put together an article on Bowland.
JY	Once GD has formatted all of Simon Wilson's anchor content, JY to contact Simon to get his permission to publish it on the CNCC website.
JY	Email the BCA Secretary to suggest the BCA revisit the issue of paying professional training providers for their services.
JY	JY to advise installers to use an official booking date when installing anchors in Robinson's Pot.