

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting, 14th January 2023, Hellifield Institute

Attendees:

Name	Abbr.	Affiliation	CNCC role?	Voting?
In Person				
Andrew Hinde	AH	Gritstone Club	Chair	No
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group		Yes
Alistair Rollinson	AR	Northern Pennine Club		Yes
Alan Speight	AS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	Anchor Coordinator	No
Adele Ward	AW	North York Moors Caving Club	Access Officer	No
Chris Camm	CC	White Rose Pothole Club		Yes
Ethan Griffiths	EG	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Elliot MacInnes	EM	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Gary Douthwaite	GD	York Caving Club	Web administrator	No
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club		Yes
Ian Patrick	IP	Craven Pothole Club	Training Officer	No
Juliet Smith	JS	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Joshua Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Secretary	No
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	PR & Communications	Yes
Pete Bann	PB	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	No
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Paulina Poterlowicz	PP	York University Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Rebecca Hay	RH	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Simone Sambento	SS	Grampian Speleological Group		No
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club		Yes

Online				
Andy Gordon	AG	Kendal Caving Club		Yes
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	University of Leeds Speleological Association		Yes

12 out of 13 Committee clubs present (Absent: YSS)

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

The meeting opened at 09:33

1) Apologies for absence

- Tony Brown

2) Acceptance of minutes from the October Committee Meeting

- One error correction regarding High Birkwith section, needs correcting to avoid saying there is “no access”.
- ME highlighted his later addition to the minutes, where he retrospectively withdrew his support for funding for work at Pot Black.

Vote to accept the October 2022 Committee meeting minutes, subject to correction of the discussed errors.

Proposed: PH

Seconded: IC

12 votes for, unanimous

Action: JY to correct and issue final minutes.

3) Declaration of conflicts of interest

- AH is affiliated with Natural England, which may have implications relating to cave access.

4) Matters arising from the October Committee Meeting

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise June 2022 Committee meeting minutes. Done
Adele W	Renegotiate access arrangements with the Langcliffe Hall Estate following BCA insurance changes. Ongoing
Ian P / Gary D	Report on the numbers of people who have attended CNCC training workshops at the AGM. Ongoing, will be in the reports for the AGM.
Matt E	Publish a message regarding leaving ropes in caves. Before publication, a draft statement should be circulated by email to the committee for feedback. Draft produced and for discussion later in this meeting.
Josh Y	Update the CNCC website for access to High Birkwith caves. Done
Josh Y	Reply to the Heron Pot reporter to inform them of the CNCC's decision. Done
Matt E / Gary D	Look at where we can have clear warnings about ash dieback, especially where trees appear on rigging topos. Ongoing, expect to be completed soon.
Josh Y	Reply to Neil Conde regarding the Alum Pot plaque. Done
Matt E / Gary D	Investigate potential ways for warnings on the website to be reviewed or updated. Mentioned in report, a change to the system is needed. ME/GD are exploring options. The main issue has been dealt with, so the action can be closed.
Andrew H	Investigate alternative venues for the AGM. Done

5) Reports

Chairman's report

- Regarding the photo exhibition, they are £4000 short on funding. They haven't asked for a specific amount, but it should be noted that any CNCC contribution would not be claimable from the BCA. AH said he will try and find out whether or not the project will start going ahead with current funding. He suggested offering up to £500, but asked for the committee's opinion.
- ME said that if we contribute, we should negotiate that we should have the right to use the digitised photos in any CNCC media. PH gave the example of the CPC's approach, they are happy for any of their archive photos to be used as long as the CPC's provision of the material is acknowledged. If such rights could be secured for the caving community to be able to use the photos, ME suggested that we might be willing to offer more than £500.

Secretary's Report

Vote of thanks to JY for his work as CNCC Secretary.

Proposed: PM

Seconded: ME

12 votes for, unanimous.

Treasurer's Report

- Nothing raised.

Conservation Officer's Report

- Trees affected by ash dieback at 3 cave entrances have been sorted, work is ongoing.
- PM mentioned that various trees have fallen over around the entrances to Whitewell Pot and Hell Hole, but he didn't think they were preventing access. JY offered to visit Whitewell entrance and take some photos.

Vote of thanks to Martin Holroyd for his work on trees around cave entrances.

Proposed: PM

Seconded: SW

12 votes for, unanimous.

- SL and AH reported that work at Wretched Rabbit and Lancaster Hole are both waiting for dryer weather.
- PH said that a CPC member is willing to do some work on the entrance to Aquamole Pot, and that he would just need £50-100. CPC would be able to provide some volunteers to get the work done.

Access Officer's Report

- AW asked AH to summarise the current access situation at Birkwith. The YDNP took notice of all the letters they received from the community about access here, and Tim Allen wrote to local MP Julian Smith. The national park confirmed that they are keen to see access restored but they do not have any statutory powers to force access. However, they will work with us and help where they can. This is a credit to the work of the CNCC and the caving community in raising the profile of the sport.
- One possible route forward is for the national park to pay the landowner, which would be a similar situation to the parking fee at Boreham Cave which stood for 2 years. These payments would be from DEFRA through an agri-environment scheme. However, AH believes that this funding, likely around £2500 per year, would be insignificant compared to the farm's income.
- AH said that the access agreement for Langcliffe needs redrafting to remove the mention of landowner indemnity insurance, as this is no longer included in the BCA's insurance scheme.

Action: AW / AH to redraft Langcliffe access agreement to remove mention of landowner indemnity insurance.

- AH has done the annual access agreement at Fairy Holes. As time has gone on, the landowners have become more relaxed and flexible, and would probably be amenable to 2 Saturdays a month. AH believes we don't need this, but believes that the occasional second Saturday trip could be negotiated.
- SW reported that the new owner at Crina Bottom is very caver friendly.
- PH said Ric Halliwell had arranged for someone to take over permits for Mongo Gill. He will send details to JY when this has been sorted. There have been no bookings for 2-3 years.

Training Officer's Report

- Following the success of the CPCs first new to caving event, IP called for more clubs to run their own events which the CNCC could publicise. ME said the fact the CPC event was fully booked provides a good basis for doing a PR push to member clubs and the mailing list.

Action: ME / JY to contact mailing list & member clubs to encourage them to run “new to caving” events.

- A cave instructor has asked if he can use Lost Johns' for an SRT improvers workshop. ME & AH agreed that it's fine because it is on access land, and that the cave just needs to be booked on the booking system.
- IP requested that in April the trainer's rate is increased from £145 to £150 per day.

Vote to increase trainer's rate to £150 per day.

Proposed PM

Seconded: ME

12 votes for, unanimous.

Training & Equipment Rep's Report

- Nothing raised.

PR & Communications Officer's Report

- ME asked for caver's help to sort out the warnings on the website. It would be greatly appreciated if individuals could investigate the current situation in these caves and report back. For example, a warning was added 5 years ago regarding the entrance to Voldemort Pot, so it is worth knowing whether the warning can be taken off or if some conservation work needs to be done.
- Regarding the statement about leaving ropes in caves, SL recommended shortening it, mainly by cutting down the preamble.

Vote to endorse ME's statement, providing that the suggested changes are made.

Proposed: AR

Seconded: IC

1 abstention, 11 votes for. Motion passed.

Webmaster's Report

- ME pointed out that the data suggests most people are booking caves at the last minutes, rather than far in advance.
- AH noticed that 20% of users of the booking system report themselves as not being BCA members. He suggested doing some PR to promote the currently vacant position of an Independent Caver representative on the CNCC committee.

Vote to accept all reports.

Proposed: IC

Seconded: SL

1 abstention, 11 votes for. Motion passed.

6) Approval of anchors for Greenwood Pot

- AH worries that if the CNCC doesn't anchor it, someone else will. It's better for it to be done with CNCC approved anchors and techniques, along with all the associated record keeping. CC suggested anchoring it without doing any PR, just quietly adding it to the website. This would reduce the risk of increased numbers of visitors upsetting the White Scar show cave. AH added that approval as a project does not guarantee that it will be anchored, it's still up to installers whether they would like to take it on as a project.

Vote to approve the installation of anchors in Greenwood Pot.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: CC

5 abstentions, 7 votes for. Motion passed.

- AS suggested that additional anchors are installed in FOUL Pot to make it safe. ME agreed, and added that the original anchors are "minimalist". Adding some more would bring it more in line with how other caves are typically anchored.

Vote to approve the installation of additional anchors in FOUL Pot.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: CC

12 votes for, unanimous.

7) Date and time of next meeting

- Nothing raised.

8) Any other business

- SL reported that RRCPC members have been having difficulties with residents at Smithy House, on the road up to Bull Pot Farm. He requests that people are cautious and courteous when driving up this public road.

Meeting closed at 10:59

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise October 2022 Committee meeting minutes.
Ian P / Gary D	Report on the numbers of people who have attended CNCC training workshops at the AGM.
Matt E	Amend and publish CNCC statement on ropes left in caves.
Matt E / Gary D	Look at where we can have clear warnings about ash dieback, especially where trees appear on rigging topes.
Adele W / Andrew H	Redraft Langcliffe access agreement to remove mention of landowner indemnity insurance.
Matt E / Josh Y	Contact mailing list & member clubs to encourage them to run "new to caving" events.