

COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

British Caving Association

DRAFT MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

VILLAGE HALL, CLAPHAM

16 March 2024

ATTENDEES

CLUB REPRESENTATIVES (VOTING)

CLUB		NAME		
Birmingham Student Caving Club	BSCC	Kai Trusson	KT	Zoom
Bradford Pothole Club	BPC	Ian Cross	IC	
Burnley Caving Club	BCC	Ben Blackburn	BB	
Craven Pothole Club	CPC	Pat Halliwell	PH	Zoom
Elysium Underground Group	EUG	Alison Fuller-Shapcott	AFS	
Grampian Speleological Group	GSG	Alan Jeffreys	AJ	
Kendal Caving Club	KCC	Andy Gordon	AG	Zoom
Morley Potholing Club	MPC	Stuart Clarkson	SC	
Northern Boggarts	NB	Pete Monk	PM	
Northern Pennine Club	NPC	Alistair Rollinson	AR	
Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club	RRCPC	Sam Lieberman	SL	
Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Raymond Bell	RB	
Univ of Leeds Speleological Association	ULSA	John Holloway	JH	
White Rose Pothole Club	WRPC	Phil Parker	PP	
York Caving Club	YCC	Adrian Turner	APT	
York Univ Cave & Pothole Club	YUCPC	Rebecca Hay	ReH	
Yorkshire Ramblers Club	YRC	Harvey Lomas	HL	
Yorkshire Subterranean Society	YSS	Adrian Howden	AHo	

OFFICERS (outgoing)

Chair	Andrew Hinde	AH	Zoom
Secretary	Jill Bolton	JMB	
Treasurer	Pete Bann	PB	
Conservation Officer	Kay Easton	KE	Zoom
Assistant Training Officer	Mark Richards	MR	
Anchor Co-ordinator	Alan Speight	AS	
PR & Communications <i>(Acting Chair)</i>	Matt Ewles	ME	
Web Administrator	Gary Douthwaite	GD	
Minute Secretary	Josh Young	JY	

OBSERVERS

Craven PC / BCA Chair	CPC	Russell Myers	RM
Craven PC / BCA Treasurer	CPC	Chris Bolton	CJB
Independent	-	Tim Allen	TA
Independent	-	Tim Pickering	TP
Craven Pothole Club	CPC	Ric Halliwell	RiH
Morley Potholing Club	MPC	R Lawrence	RTL
Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club	RRPC	Ian Walker	IRW
York Univ Cave & Pothole Club	YUCPC	Elliot MacInnes	EM
Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Liam McCarthy	LM
Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Chris Craig	CC
Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Mags Oleszek	MO
Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Lukas Szadowiak	LS
Durham Uni Speleological Association	DUSA	Ben Dawson	BD
Durham Uni Speleological Association	DUSA	Louie Baker	LB
Durham Uni Speleological Association	DUSA	Jakub Dominkow Slu	JD

The meeting opened at 10:03am, with Matt Ewles in the chair. He explained that Andrew Hinde was unable to attend in person, and was therefore using Zoom. There were no objections to ME chairing the meeting.

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jane Allen	JJ Beavan	Tony Brown	Dinny Davies	Laurence Jordan
Paul McWhinney	Ian Patrick	Aila Taylor	Adele Ward	Stuart Whitmey

1.2 VERIFICATION OF QUORUM.

With sixteen full member clubs present, including three online, the AGM was declared to be quorate. (The constitution requires a minimum of ten clubs).

2.0 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3.0 APPLICATIONS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Birmingham Student Caving Club

The application for Birmingham's membership was proposed at the January committee meeting by ULSA, and seconded by YCC.

Vote: 16 votes in favour (unanimous)

Carried

3.2 Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club

The application for Ulster's membership was proposed at the January committee meeting by ULSA, and seconded by YCC.

Vote: 16 votes in favour (unanimous)

Carried

JMB commented that social media confirmed the Ulster cavers were regular visitors to the Dales. RB added that they planned to attend meetings in person, as it provided a good excuse for a visit. The chair welcomed both clubs to the CNCC.

4.0 PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

4.1 INDIVIDUAL CAVER REPRESENTATIVE

ME described the background to the creation of the Individual Caver Representative (IC Rep) position in 2016, and the fact no one has ever taken up the role. He further explained why the committee proposed changing the role to remove the need for the IC rep to be a BCA DIM, and allow all individuals in the room at the AGM to cast a vote for them.

This set of proposals was to remove the requirement for the IC Rep to be a BCA member, and to widen the "electorate" from BCA Direct Individual Members (DIMs) to all cavers attending the AGM.

On March 6, Craven PC emailed the Secretary with an amendment to the motions, which she circulated to all full member clubs, along with the Officer Reports. ME explained that we are not able to accept this, as proposals for constitutional amendments must be submitted eight weeks in advance. Nevertheless, he invited Craven to explain their concerns in more detail.

RM responded on behalf of Craven, expressing concern that people may not be able to see the proposals until after the deadline for amendments. It was explained that the proposals were discussed in detail at the January committee meeting, before the deadline.

PH added that the club were also concerned that the IC Rep would have one vote as an individual, in contrast to a large club such as Craven only having one vote on behalf of over two hundred club members.

TA responded to this latter point, by describing how he encounters lots of small groups who cave independently of clubs. They currently have no representation at the CNCC. An IC Rep would be representing probably several hundred independent cavers. Having this representation would also look good when dealing with other bodies, such as the Yorkshire Dales National Park, showing that we are a truly representative body. The very fact we haven't previously had an IC Rep demonstrates that we need to remove barriers.

AS queried the situation with public liability insurance, if a non-BCA member was on the CNCC committee. This point was raised by Craven prior to the January committee meeting, and clarified by Josh White, the BCA Insurance Manager:

I've received the following wording regarding non-BCA members being able to be on CNCC committee:

In respect of who is a committee member of any body, it is a matter for the BCA as to whether they need to become a member.

They don't have to be a paid member, as their role is that of a committee member/trustee of the club.

We don't require committee members be affiliated members of the NGB, that is up to each individual NGB.

If a claim was made against a committee member in their role on the committee, this would fall under the Directors & Officers liability cover, as they are picked up under the definition of Insured Person.

In short - there is no problem from an insurance perspective with the changes Matt was proposing at the committee meeting.

Answering a question from IRW, ME confirmed that CNCC full member clubs do not need to be BCA members.

SL asked if TA would accept the role if there was no vote attached to it. TA replied that he would not, as having the vote demonstrated that they were an equal member of the committee.

RB asked how TA would reach out to these individual cavers, in order to get their voice. TA stated that he would use normal CNCC communications (email, social media, etc) to ensure they know how to get in touch. He is not coming into this role with an agenda, or particular issues he wants to propose. However he wants to see the IC role filled and is happy to stand as a representative.

Furthermore, TA explained that (as a former CNCC Access Officer) he had already worked to remove barriers. Examples include negotiating with landowners to allow permits to non-club and non-BCA cavers.

JMB explained the difference between a representative (such as the IC Rep) and a delegate. Essentially, a representative is empowered to make their own decisions, whereas a delegate is instructed to vote in a certain way.

CJB pointed out that even some BCA Council voting members don't have to be BCA members.

SC queried how individual cavers could be represented at AGMs, since only full member clubs currently have the right to vote, and suggested this might be amended in the future.

RM asked about the IC Rep's accountability, compared to the club reps being held accountable to the club's members. Also, from his perspective of BCA Chair, the CNCC and BCA are in many ways the same body, and he believes everyone should be a BCA members.

ME commented that many BCA members also cave independently of clubs. As well as DIMs, many CIMs are club members just to get insurance or for historical reasons, but they mostly cave outside their club. These cavers could be represented by the IC Representative. Hence, in addition to non-BCA cavers, the IC Representative may be providing a voice for far more BCA members than any club.

GD added that there are 1126 people on the CNCC Cave Booking System, and 230 said they are not BCA members. This is 20% of all users, a significant number.

PM said the Northern Boggarts were also initially against this proposal, but following further discussion the club is now very much in favour. We finally need to push this forward.

PROPOSAL 1

To amend point 5c of the constitution

From:

*The Committee may, only if there is an eligible applicant at the election, also include one additional member whose role it is to represent individual cavers undertaking trips outside of a club structure (known herein as the Individual Caver (IC) representative). The IC representative must be **an individual member of the BCA**, and has one vote on the Committee.*

To:

*The Committee may, only if there is an eligible applicant at the election, also include one additional member whose role it is to represent individual cavers undertaking trips outside of a club structure (known herein as the Individual Caver (IC) representative). The IC representative must be **one individual**, and has one vote on the Committee.*

Proposed by ULSA

Seconded by Earby PC

16 votes in favour/ 2 votes against /0 abstentions

Carried

PROPOSAL 2

To insert Clause 7b (vii) of the constitution as follows:

Only if there are no applications received conforming to the above criteria, or if none of the applicants prove to be eligible upon voting, may applications for the vacant post of Individual Caver Representative be accepted which are made on the day from those present and eligible at the meeting..

Proposed ULSA

17 votes in favour/ 0 votes against /1 abstention

Seconded Earby PC

Carried

PROPOSAL 3

To amend Clause 7c (iii) of the constitution as follows:

All persons who are present at the meeting may vote for the IC representative, and should do so by each selecting one applicant.

Proposed by ULSA

17 votes in favour/ 0 votes against /1 abstention

Seconded by Earby PC

Carried

PROPOSAL 4

To amend Clause 9i of the constitution as follows:

From:

Outcomes will be decided by majority vote of all voting representatives present.

To:

Outcomes will be decided by majority vote of all voting club representatives present, or, in the case of the IC representative election, of all individuals present.

and delete Clause 9j of the constitution:

The only exception is voting for the election of the IC representative, for which only attending Direct Individual Members of the British Caving Association may vote. BCA membership card to prove DIM status must be brought to the meeting to enable a vote.

Proposed by ULSA

17 votes in favour/ 0 votes against /1 abstention

Seconded by Earby PC

Carried

4.2 CNCC NAME CHANGE

ME provided some background to the motivation behind wanting to change the name.

SL asked about the process for changing the legal name, and its effect on the bank account. PB replied that it was easy, and Barclays just required a signed letter

SL then queried the effect on access agreements. ME explained that there were very few agreements remaining, although it was something to check.

AH commented that the Fairy Holes agreement is with himself as an officer, not with the CNCC as a legal entity.

PROPOSAL 1

To change the name of the "Council of Northern Caving Clubs", whilst maintaining the abbreviation CNCC.

Proposed York CC
15 votes in favour /3 votes against /0 abstentions

Seconded YUCPC
Carried

PROPOSAL 2

To hold an election during the 2024 AGM to select one of the following names as a replacement for "Council of Northern Caving Clubs":

- *Council for the Northern Caving Community* 15 votes
- *Council of Northern Cavers and Clubs* 3 votes

Proposed York CC
The new name is therefore "Council for the Northern Caving Community"

Seconded YUCPC

PROPOSAL 3

To amend the title and Clause (1) Definition 1a of the constitution with the new name.

Proposed York CC
18 votes in favour (Unanimous)

Seconded YUCPC
Carried

PROPOSAL 4

To amend Clause (1) Definition 1b

from: *The council is a voluntary association of recognised caving clubs.*

to: *The council is a voluntary association of cavers and recognised caving clubs.*

Proposed York CC
18 votes in favour (Unanimous)

Seconded YUCPC
Carried

5.0 ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM 2023 AGM

IC asked if we could include last year's minutes in the papers for this year's AGM, as it's easy to forget to read them ahead of the meeting. JMB replied that she could add them temporarily, for a few weeks in advance of the meeting.

VOTE to accept the minutes

Proposed IC (BPC)

Seconded SC (Morley)

14 votes in favour / 0 against / 4 abstentions

Carried

(Abstentions by clubs who were not present at the 2023 AGM)

5.1 MATTERS ARISING (and updates) from 2023 AGM

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Josh Y	Finalise 2022 AGM minutes	Done
Committee	Implement an exploration fund system as appropriate Confirm at 2024 AGM if members are happy to continue	Done / On agenda
Gary D	Work with TC to incorporate the dye tracing database into the CNCC's web hosting	Done
Ian P	Re-draft proposal regarding retrospectively adding anchors to the CNCC list of approved anchors	Done
Adele W	Offer a Memorandum of Understanding to restore access to Stump Cross area caves	Done
Gary D / Jill B	Update Section 4d of the constitution	Done
Committee	Constitutional changes to remove requirement for IC representative to be BCA member	On agenda

GD explained that the Dye Tracing Database is a really good resource, and deserved some publicity.

<https://watertracing.cncc.org.uk/>

RM mentioned that Stump Cross are asking for confirmation of BCA insurance cover for cavers accessing Mongo Gill.

6.0 OFFICER REPORTS

6.1 Chair (AH)

Following a question from SL, AH confirmed there was no update on the High Birkwith situation.

6.2 Secretary (JMB)

JMB confirmed that the suggested date for the next AGM is 22 March 2025, and not as stated in her report.

CJB (BCA Treasurer) commented that the £1000 grant given to YUCPC was likely to be reimbursed from the BCA Y&D budget, rather than general BCA funds.

ME thanked JMB for a successful first year as secretary.

6.3 Treasurer (PB)

The Secretary apologised for including a simplified version of the accounts in the Officer Reports, rather than the original financial statements provided by the Treasurer. This was a significant error, since these documents included the signature of the independent "scrutineer" (in lieu of the usual declaration that they have scrutinised the accounts and supporting documentation).

JMB agreed to post the original documents on the CNCC website, and ME showed the signed paper copy to the meeting.

(PB announced, later in the meeting, that this will be his final year as treasurer.)

6.4 Conservation Officer (KE)

Nothing raised

6.5 Access Officer (AW)

JMB read out a late report from AW:

My second year as access officer, I've continued to promote positive relationships with landowners when engaging with them and the wider community regarding Caving. No problems have been reported with the new arrangements with Stump Cross. We are working the Braida Garth to resolve a incident that recently took place, my thanks to John Cordingley for his support with this. I've attempted to visit several times without success. Langcliffe estate did not respond to emails, therefore recorded delivery letter will be sent.

ME gave some background to the incident at Braida Garth. A caving group had been unable to ask for permission at the farm. Their return, in the early hours, caused the dogs to start barking, so the farmer, who was worried about thieves, called the police. ME suggested that we may offer additional advice to cavers following a discussion with the farmer.

6.6 Training Officer (IP)

JMB commented that the CNCC workshops are effectively a national training programme, since people attend from all over the country. MR confirmed this, since they have now trained approximately 1000 cavers from around the UK, who say they can't get most of these courses elsewhere.

CJB said that as the BCA is currently running at a deficit, it would be helpful to reduce the amount of subsidy, perhaps by increasing the contribution from course participants. AH commented that we have great uptake, with very few empty places. We should examine the balance between attendee and CNCC contributions.

6.7 Web Administrator (GD)

Nothing raised

6.8 PR & Communications (ME)

JMB highlighted ME's request for volunteers to help with PR, managing warnings, and generally keeping an eye on the CNCC website to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date

6.9 Training & Equipment Rep (MR)

JMB thanked MR for an informative report, covering safety issues with Petzl harnesses and adjustable lanyards, plus a link to useful technical information on the BCA website.

6.10 Inclusivity Co-ordinator

Nothing raised

6.11 Youth & Development Rep (AMT)

Nothing raised

6.12 Anchor Co-ordinator (AS)

JMB mentioned an email from Sam Allshorn, asking permission to install anchors in various places. This is not an AGM matter, so she will organise an email vote to approve these projects, rather than wait until the June committee meeting.

ME added Turbary Pot to the list (from Graham Coates) and TA requested North End Pot.

RM asked about the number of anchors available, in case other regions wished to use some. AS replied that he has over 1000 in stock.

6.13 Access Co-ordinators

Robinsons & Fairy Holes (DD))	
Excalibur (ME))	Nothing raised on reports
Bowland (AB))	

VOTE to accept all the Officer Reports in full

Proposed SL (RRCPC)

18 votes in favour (unanimous)

Seconded AR (NPC)

Carried

7.0 ELECTION OF CNCC COMMITTEE

The Chair decided to bring the elections forward, and return to Officer Reports afterwards. The Secretary explained the voting procedure, and ME invited applications from the floor for the two vacant positions.

TA volunteered to be Individual Caver Representative, and was elected in accordance with the new constitutional arrangements.

The fourteen clubs standing for the fourteen places all received a minimum of three votes, and were therefore all elected to the committee.

The committee for 2024-2025 is therefore:

IC Rep:	Tim Allen
Clubs:	Bradford Pothole Club Ltd
	Craven Pothole Club
	Earby Pothole Club
	Grampian Speleological Group
	Kendal Caving Club
	Northern Boggarts
	Northern Pennine Club
	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club
	Uni of Leeds Speleological Association
	White Rose Pothole Club
	York Caving Club
	York Uni Cave and Pothole Club
	Yorkshire Subterranean Society
	Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club

8.0 ELECTION OF CNCC OFFICERS

KT volunteered for the vacant post of Access Officer.

All candidates received a minimum of three votes, and were therefore elected.

The officers for 2024-2025 are therefore:

Chair	Andrew Hinde
Secretary	Jill Bolton
Treasurer	Pete Bann
Conservation Officer	Kay Easton
Access Officer	Kai Trusson
Training Officer	Ian Patrick

9.0 CO-OPTED OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

The co-opted positions will be presented to the June committee meeting for confirmation. For information, the current holders are:

CO-OPTED OFFICERS

Web Administrator	Gary Douthwaite
PR & Communications Officer	Matt Ewles
Assistant Training Officer	Mark Richards
Minute Secretary	Josh Young
Inclusivity Co-ordinator	Josh White
Anchor Co-ordinator	Alan Speight
Access Co-ordinators	
- Bowland	Anthony Brown
- Excalibur	Matt Ewles
- Robinsons & Fairy Holes	Dinny Davies

BCA WORKING GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Training & Equipment Rep	Mark Richards
Youth & Development Rep	Aila Taylor
BCA Council Rep	Andrew Hinde

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 EXPLORATION FUND

It was noted that no applicants had so far applied to this new fund

VOTE To continue to support the scheme

Proposed by IC (BPC)

Seconded by SL (RRCPC)

18 votes in favour (unanimous)

Carried

10.2 STUMP CROSS PROJECT

For information, following the award of a grant of £400 in January.

PH highlighted that “The Angels of the North” are Craven PC members, and are still hoping for a breakthrough at Stump Cross.

11.0 FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates for the 2024-25 meetings were confirmed:

22 June	9:30	Committee meeting
26 October	9:30	Committee meeting
18 January	9:30	Committee meeting
22 March	10:00	Annual General Meeting

The meeting closed at 12:25pm

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Josh Y	Finalise 2023 AGM minutes	
Jill	Prepare draft 2024 minutes and circulate to clubs	Done
Gary & Matt	Update constitution re Individual Caver Representative	
Gary & Matt	Update constitution re name change	
Gary & Matt	Update website re name change	
Gary & Matt	Update website with new Officers/Clubs/Committee	Done
Gary & Matt	Rebrand all forms of social media	Done
Matt	Publish a PR/Comms piece about AGM outcomes	Done
Gary	Publish "Dye tracing database" link	
Jill	Prepare letter for Barclays Bank re name change	
Jill	Prepare letter for Stump Cross - insurance at Mongo Gill	
Jill	Email committee re approval of new anchors	Done
Jill / Ian & Mark	Discuss BCA subsidy for training courses	Done