

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Annual General Meeting 7th March 2015 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Meeting opened 10.00am, Attendees:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Voting?
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary/Excalibur meets	
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	Yes
Tim Allen			
Simon Wilson	Earby PC		Yes
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club	Conservation Officer	Yes
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Bernie Bond	Burnley CC		Yes
Martell Baines	Bradford PC		
Ian Cross	Bradford PC		
Ian Lloyd	Northumbrian SG		Yes
Thomas Gamble	Sheffield Uni Speleo. Soc.		Yes
Dave Brook	Bradford PC		
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Fiona Durham	Yorkshire SS	Taking minutes	Yes
Glenn Jones	CNCC Tech Group	Treasurer	Yes
Roy Holmes	Dent House SS	Chairman	
Geoff Whittaker	Th'owd Skool	Ingleborough/Aygill meets	Yes
Pete Allright	Dent House SS		Yes
Andy Gordon	Kendal Caving Club		Yes
Alistair Rollinson	York Uni CPC		
Rachel Findlay	York Uni CPC		
Will Scott	York Uni CPC		Yes
Chris Camm	White Rose PC		Yes
Kay Easton	Bradford PC	Assistant Conservation	Yes
Harvey Lomas	Yorkshire Ramblers		
Matt Jenkinson	Rubber Duck CC		Yes
Pat Halliwell	Craven PC		Yes
Ric Halliwell	Craven PC	Meets sec (various)	
Bob Mehew	Grampian Speleo Group		
Jonathan Tompkins	Over and Under CC		Yes
Ray Duffy	Red Rose CPC		
Philip Judson	Gay Outdoor Club		Yes
Jim Sloane	Lancashire UG		Yes
Pete Bann	Northern Boggarts		
Ceris Jones	Lancashire UG		
Peter Hambly	Northern Pennine Club		Yes
Will Whalley	Sheffield Uni Speleo. Soc.		
Lee Prior	Th'owd Skool		

Notes on proceedings

A total of 23 voting cards were issued (the quorum was eight). A tally of the unclaimed voting cards showed there were 13 (Grampian, Lancashire C&C, Flat Learning Curve, Morley, Pegasus, Swaledale, Airedale, North York Moors, St. Helens, Pendle, Yorkshire Ramblers, Elysium, Bolton and Bowland Penning MRT). This matches the total number of full member clubs (37). At the start of the meeting each voting representative, in exchange for their letter of authorisation, was issued with a voting card and two ballot papers, one for election of the Committee and one for election of the Officers. These ballot papers can be seen at the end of these minutes. Statements provided by the two last-minute applicants for the position of Training Officer were also circulated at the start of the meeting as these had not been available for any significant duration ahead of the meeting for review.

(1) Apologies for absence

Les Sykes (Training Officer)
Alan Speight (Casterton Fell meets)
Johnny Latimer (Access Officer)

(2) Acceptance of minutes from 2014 AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a true and correct record:

Proposed: Pete Monk
Seconded: Pat Halliwell
Votes: Unanimous in favour

(3) Matters arising from the 2014 AGM

- Simon Wilson felt minutes should be labelled as 'draft' and not put on the public website until approved by those who attended the meeting. There was some discussion about this. Pat Halliwell felt the norm should be that the minutes would be put on the website and marked as unapproved and any major problems/accuracy issues addressed at the next committee meeting. She suggested that in future the minutes could be posted on the new secure part of the website marked as draft.
- Matt Ewles said that the current procedure was that the minutes were circulated to attending officers to ensure no serious inaccuracies but not to all attendees prior to making them public.
- Tim Allen asked about attendees who were present as observers. Matt Ewles said the CNCC does not have an email circulation list of individual attendees, just clubs.
- Bob Mehew said anything slanderous or libellous should be addressed as soon as possible.

There was further discussion which led to the following proposal being put together:

'Draft minutes will be circulated only to meeting attendees (e.g. via the members area of the website) and only made public once approved at the next meeting'

Proposed Pat Halliwell

Seconded Philip Judson

Votes: In favour (14), against (3), abstentions (5), non-voting (1)

Concern was expressed by Matt Ewles and Kay Easton that this would mean minutes not becoming public for Committee meetings for more than three months, and for General Meetings for more than one year, which they felt was far too long and a step backwards for CNCC transparency.

Note: This matter is revisited later in the meeting (see Any Other Business).

(4) Officer's Reports

All reports were taken as read.

Chairman's report:

No questions

Secretary's report:

No questions, but Pete Monk said it was very reflective and accurate.

Treasurer's report:

- John Holloway asked who owned the copyright to the CNCC rigging guide publications. Glenn Jones confirmed that it is the CNCC Technical Group.
- Glenn Jones as outgoing treasurer asked who should submit 2014 report to BCA and who should send the HMRC tax return. He was happy to do it and was in the best position to do so, but as he was no longer going to be treasurer after this meeting he wanted agreement that this would be acceptable. It was agreed without objection he should do both.

Conservation Officer's report:

No questions

Training Officer's report:

No questions

Access Officer's report:

- Andrew Hinde gave a brief update on Fairy Holes: The most recent access agreement ran out in December 2014. Emails from Lafarge indicated that the agreement just rolled on until the new owner of the quarry takes over later this year.
- Ric Halliwell said he had already cancelled the April permit and the next one was June.

- Matt Ewles asked if the CNCC needed to take action. Andrew Hinde felt no, not at this time.
- Pat Halliwell asked if Andrew would carry on negotiating due to his good relationship with the current owners – Andrew agreed to do this.
- Bernie Bond suggested a letter of thanks be sent to Lafarge and Andrew agreed to do this.
- Ric Halliwell reported that the closed season on Birks Fell was changing to April and May but more information would become available in due course.
- Ric Halliwell said one permit was still available this year for Robinson's Pot. He hoped to arrange additional permits in future years but that it would be difficult if all existing ones were not currently being used.

Technical Group report:

No questions

Acceptance of all Officers and Meets Secretary's reports:

Proposed: Pat Halliwell

Seconded: Pete Monk

Votes: In favour (22), against (0), abstentions (0), non-voting (1)

(5) Draft CNCC constitution

- Matt Ewles noted that the draft constitution had been available on the public website for some time. The aim today was to vote on whether to accept the entire document. The draft constitution had already been proposed by Northern Boggarts and seconded by the Gritstone Club at the January 2015 Committee meeting.
- There were no further questions from anyone present.

Votes to accept new constitution: In favour (23), against (0), abstentions (0), non-voting (0)

(6) Discussion and vote on secondary constitution amendment

- This had been detailed in appendix A of the meeting agenda. The proposal was to remove the line "applications for permit will only be accepted from member clubs of the Council". Matt Ewles explained the rationale for this amendment; that the new Ingleborough Estate access agreement (established in January) was a contradiction to this as it allows all BCA individual members and clubs to apply for permits.
- Sam Lieberman asked if the proposed amendment (i.e. removing the line altogether) left it unclear who could apply for a permit and asked if there should be a statement saying who could apply in place of the existing line.

- Tim Allen asked if he should not be able to apply for permits as an individual.
- Matt Ewles said the Casterton Fell and Leck Fell agreements (along with all other access agreements with the CNCC) say permits can only be issued to BCA or CNCC member clubs. Therefore, in all cases it is the access agreements themselves that define who can be issued with permits and that the aim of this amendment was to remove constitution hurdles to individual cavers where the access agreement allowed.
- There was general support for replacing the line in the constitution rather than removing it and following a discussion with several suggestions the following proposal was reached:

‘Applications for permits will be accepted only from CNCC member clubs except when specified otherwise by the access agreement’

Proposed: Pat Halliwell

Seconded: Chris Camm

Votes to accept: In favour (20), against (0), abstentions (2), non-voting (1)

(7) Election of CNCC committee for the year 2015-2016

- All voting representatives had been issued at the start of the meeting with a ballot paper listing 14 clubs which had provided ahead of the meeting notification of their intention to stand for Committee. No further clubs stood on the day. Matt Ewles said that voting would be conducted according to the procedure in the new constitution, meaning that each voting representative should put a cross against up to a maximum of fourteen clubs which they would be happy to make up the Committee.
- Ian Lloyd suggested that as there were 14 places and 14 applicants, a show of hands to block vote them would be simpler in this situation. Matt Ewles agreed to proceed with this providing there were no objections.
- John Holloway said that he had been mandated not to vote for certain clubs.
- Therefore a full ballot paper vote then went ahead in accordance with the constitution.
- Ric Halliwell was given the ballot papers to count the votes.

(8) Election of officers for the year 2015-2016

- All voting representatives had been issued at the start of the meeting with a ballot paper listing all individuals who had provided ahead of the meeting notification of their intention to stand for an officer position. No further individuals stood on the day. Matt Ewles said that voting would be conducted according to the procedure in the new constitution, meaning that each voting representative should put a cross against any individual (maximum of one per officer position) they would like to vote for.

Chairperson:

Roy Holmes was re-standing and there were no other candidates.

Secretary:

Matt Ewles was re-standing and there were no other candidates.

Treasurer:

Peter Bann who was standing for the Treasurer's post was asked which club he belonged to (Northern Boggarts). There were no other candidates.

Conservation Officer:

Kay Easton said she was a member of the Bradford PC and Northern Boggarts and had been Assistant Conservation Officer for the last year, and had been involved in a lot of surface conservation works and saw her role as facilitative. There were no other candidates.

Training Officer:

Paper statements from two applicants had been circulated at the start of the meeting. One (Dan Irving) had submitted this just in sufficient time for it to be circulated electronically the night before, but the other (Marion Nutter) was only available on the morning of the meeting. Neither applicant was able to attend. Matt Ewles read out the statements, and asked that Marion's name be added to a blank box on the voting form under Training Officer.

- Ric Halliwell was given the ballot papers to count the votes.
- There was a short tea break while votes were counted by Ric Halliwell and verified by Matt Ewles. It was decided that the actual number of votes received by each club/candidate will remain confidential and only the final outcome announced.
- Thanks were given to all retiring officers with agreement from the room. It was suggested that the Secretary would write to each one expressing this formal thanks.

Committee:

All 14 standing clubs met the eligibility criteria (3+ selections) and were elected.

Officers:

The posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Conservation Officer were filled by the single standing candidates. Dan Irving was elected to the post of Training Officer. Pat Halliwell expressed her thanks to Marion for standing (there was general agreement across the room) and suggested that as she had some very good ideas, we should put her and Dan in touch.

(9) Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act update

Tim Allen (as a member of the BCA's CRoW working party) had been invited by the Secretary to give a brief update on the CRoW situation over the last year. Brief points were:

- Prior to last year's CNCC AGM the BCA had a neutral position on this matter.
- Many cavers put forward a case against this and a working group was formed which reported back to CNCC. A list of caves affected was published.
- Tim gave notice of an article written by him in 2014 and later published in Descent.
- Natural England and Defra took the position that CRoW did not apply to caves.
- BCA reviewed the situation and the item was put on the BCA AGM agenda. The AGM then tabled the motion that the BCA should "consider the situation". They could not discuss the matter for technical reasons, but asked the BCA access committee to look into the matter.
- Brief was given (independently of the BCA) to Dinah Rose QC to consider.
- BCA access committee met in August 2014 and asked BCA chairman to meet with Natural England and DEFRA and report back.
- October 2014 - BCA Council meeting decided to poll members. This took place in December 2014 and 37% of BCA members and member clubs voted, of which 62% favoured the motion "Should BCA, on your behalf, campaign for the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to apply to going underground?"
- BCA authorised the executive to co-opt whoever they thought appropriate onto a sub Committee. January 2015 BCA had a meeting attended by Tim Allen and Andrew Hinde. A plan was conceived to gather support from all sectors before a meeting by BCA with Natural England and DEFRA.

Discussion followed:

- Andrew Hinde and Bob Mehew pointed out that BCA constitution does not stop the organisation seeking clarification of the law, but does stop it seeking to change the law. The motions going forward to the BCA AGM was to endorse the executive in seeking clarification of the law.
- Ian Lloyd asked where the motion would go in the future. Did Tim Allen think a test case would be held in court or would advisory notes be issued over the interpretation of the law by DEFRA? Tim thought the second most likely and pointed out most landowners were not against allowing cavers public access under CRoW.
- Tim Allen said that in the past the assumption was that open access to cavers would upset landowners but a recent survey of 150 landowners by the Yorkshire Dales National Park

(YDNP) indicated otherwise. Ian Lloyd asked if they were heavily in favour or “just don’t care” to which Tim responded with some examples.

- Sam Lieberman said the main argument against access was conservation. Andrew Hinde said the BCA was already working to condense conservation codes so they were smaller and more relevant.
- Bob Mehew commented that no cave in the CNCC was under section 26 control at this present time but this could change.
- Tim Allen commented that the YDNP access forum had the issue of CRoW on its agenda and was actively looking to the future and was ready for change.
- Andrew Hinde said regional councils do have a role in CRoW. He pointed out the anomaly that CNCC says it will be led by BCA, but BCA cannot involve itself locally as this power is devolved to regional councils. He said CNCC welcomed this, but other regions may not.
- Andrew Hinde said the better briefed CNCC rep we could send to BCA National Council the better. The designated representative Martell Baines cannot attend the meeting on 28th March 2015 and it was agreed it was important someone goes to this meeting. Johnny Latimer (not at the meeting) was intending to go if possible.

Return to discussion of Officer Elections:

At this point, Matt Ewles apologised that he had forgotten to raise something that he had intended under a previous agenda item (Officer Elections):

- Matt noted that Johnny Latimer as Access Officer was co-opted, but the new constitution requires this to be a full officer position. Matt handed over to John Holloway who had requested that this be raised. John said that ULSA wanted a mandate that for the coming year, Johnny Latimer to be voted as a full Access Officer until such time as the post could be advertise and voted on by the 2016 AGM.
- Matt Ewles explained the various options here. He said that he was reluctant to automatically vote Johnny in as fully elected Access Officer, as it would mean that the position had not been advertised on the approach to the AGM as an available vacancy (and could not have been, as it becoming a vacancy depended on whether the new constitution was accepted). Matt said he had intended to retain the role as co-opted until 2016 and have a one year period without an elected Access Officer. He said that during the transition from one constitution to another we would have to accept some interim discrepancies.
- Pat Halliwell proposed the former option (to elect Johnny as a full Access Officer). Matt said he would be happy to support this but only if everyone in the room agreed. Ian Lloyd said he believed our constitution meant the meeting could not do this.
- As a resolution, John Holloway proposed that the council formally endorse Johnny’s continuation in the role as a co-opted officer until the next General Meeting. This was seconded by S. Wilson and there were 23 votes in favour of this (unanimous)

(10) Should the CNCC actively promote access for individual cavers (CIMs/DIMs)?

This agenda item was required in light of the outcome of agenda item 6.

- Andrew Hinde supported access for individual cavers.
- Ric Halliwell asked Glenn Jones if there was a list of CIMs/DIMs. Glenn replied that there is, in the information is in the list sent to access officers.
- Pete Monk said his club supported this, but felt it was a gradual process and pointed out it had ramifications for the name CNCC (i.e. the word CLUB) and suggested a working party be established to consider all such ramifications. Matt Ewles clarified that this was not what the item was about and emphasised that this discussion was limited only to whether the CNCC should promote the inclusion of individual cavers in our access agreements, and not the involvement of individual cavers in any functionalities of the CNCC other than this.
- Glenn Jones said allowing access to individual cavers already existed already in other areas. Ian Lloyd asked if this meant individual southern cavers could come north and gain permits and the process not be reciprocated. Glenn Jones pointed out it is reciprocated already.
- Matt Ewles asked Geoff Whittaker to provide input to the discussion, as permit secretary for Ingleborough Estate, where access for individual cavers had been in place for two months now. Geoff said 39 club, 6 DIMs and 2 CIMs applications had been received this year. Matt suggested that the Ingleborough system was working. Tim Allen questioned this and asked if we should actually judge it by how many people were ignoring the permit system. Matt said that he believed it was successful because the CNCC was providing a means for individual cavers who were willing to work in accordance with landowner's wishes to do so.
- Will Whalley asked if CNCC would allow constituent bodies (namely, CHECC) to make permit applications as currently all their permits are obtained by ULSA or SUSS. Discussion over the official position of CHECC was held between Glenn Jones and Bob Mehew. Bob said that the current situation could lead to problems for the EuroSpeleo conference, However Matt Ewles said the permit system would hopefully be lifted for this event.
- Kay Easton asked if CHECC could become an associate club of CNCC, but Philip Judson felt this was not an AGM matter and should be discussed by the Committee. Sam Lieberman reminded everyone that it was the access agreement itself that controlled who could apply and therefore we should encourage it to be written in such a manner to accommodate groups such as CHECC. Andrew Hinde concluded that the expression in the room was to see if a way forward can be found to provide permits to CHECC. All were in favour of this.

The motion **"The CNCC should actively promote access for individual cavers (CIMs/DIMs)"**

Proposer Pete Monk

Seconded John Holloway

Votes to accept: In favour (22), against (1), abstentions (0), non-voting (0)

Philip Judson said he was in favour of promoting access for individual cavers but said he felt it was important that the CNCC does not become a campaigning organisation on such matters.

(11) Any other business?

- Andrew Hinde gave notice to the meeting of the forthcoming winch training funded by the CNCC at the cost of £300 per session. A second course could be run at similar cost, but as this was beyond the treasurers remit of funding without committee approval (£500 limit) this will be passed to the first Committee meeting.
- Simon Wilson raised the issue (already discussed) of the circulation of the minutes and expressed concern that the motion accepted earlier in the meeting had not successfully captured his wishes. Simon said his main concern was that he wanted meeting attendees to be able to change the draft before it was put on the public website (not necessarily that the minutes should remain private until the next meeting). There had been concerns expressed about the delay the latter would incur before minutes were made publicly available.

The earlier proposal was scrapped and amended to one representing the following procedure:

‘Minutes will be labelled as draft and made available only to Full Members (General Meeting minutes) or Committee (Committee meeting minutes) for one month to allow for comments or amendments. Only then will the draft minutes will be made available on the public website. The ‘draft’ label will be removed after the minutes have been accepted at the next meeting.’

Proposer: Simon Wilson

Seconded: Matt Jenkinson

Votes to accept: In favour (17), against (0), abstentions (5), non-voting (1)

- A report from the Leck Fell meets secretary (Andy Farrow) was read out by Matt Ewles. In summary, Andy thanked Jim Sloane for his support during the handover period. Andy has contacted the Estate Office to introduce himself and reports no issues. In total 47 clubs have been issued permits so far for 2015, 32 permits for February and 29 permits for March, with uptake spread across midweek and weekends (at least one midweek trip per week).
- Matt Ewles said provisional dates had been set for the Committee meetings and AGM over the next year and these needed confirming ASAP to allow room booking. Therefore, if there were any objections these should be communicated over the next few weeks.
- Andrew Hinde felt a bigger room would be better and asked if there were any plans to move. Matt Ewles said that this was something to be considered.

Meeting closed: 12:20 pm

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Officer election voting form for Annual General Meeting 7th March 2015
Please put a cross in the box. **You may make one selection per position.**

Chairman

X

1. Roy Holmes	
2.	
3.	

Secretary

1. Matt Ewles	
2.	
3.	

Treasurer

1. Pete Bann	
2.	
3.	

Conservation Officer

1. Kay Easton	
2.	
3.	

Training Officer

1. Daniel Irving	
2.	
3.	

Spaces have been left to allow addition of candidates standing on the day

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Committee election voting form for Annual General Meeting 7th March 2015
Please put a cross in the box of those clubs you would wish to form the CNCC Committee. **You may select a maximum of 14 clubs (there is no minimum)**

Committee	X
1. Craven Pothole Club	
2. Yorkshire Subterranean Society	
3. Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club	
4. Gritstone Club	
5. York University Cave and Pothole Club	
6. Northern Boggarts	
7. Bradford Pothole Club	
8. White Rose Pothole Club	
9. Northumbrian Speleology Group	
10. Lancashire Underground Group	
11. Over and Under Caving Club	
12. Earby Pothole Club	
13. University of Leeds Speleological Association	
14. Burnley Caving Club	
15.	
16.	
17.	

Spaces have been left to allow addition of candidates standing on the day