

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Annual General Meeting 10th March 2018 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Voting?
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary & Excalibur meets	
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	Yes
Victor Wain	White Rose PC		Yes
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Pete Bann	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	
Chris Hunter	Kendal CC		Yes
Peter Hambly	NPC		Yes
Ian Cross	Bradford PC		Yes
Phil Gillespie	Rubber Duck CC		Yes
Hannah Walker	Red Rose CPC	Casterton Meets	
Ray Duffy	Red Rose CPC		
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Harvey Lomas	Yorkshire Ramblers		Yes
Alan Speight	Yorkshire SS		Yes
Steve Kirk	Craven PC		Yes
Paul Whittaker	Burnley CC		Yes
Peter Wilson	Burnley CC		
Stuart Whitmey	Earby PC		Yes
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club	Chairman	
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes
Lyndon Easterbrook	ULSA		
Josh Young	York Uni CPC		Yes
Steve Robinson	CDG Northern Sec		Yes
Andy Clough	CDG Northern Sec		
David Botcherby	Sheffield Uni SS		Yes
Simon Wilson	Bradford PC	E&T Rep & Anchor Coordinator	
Nick Bainstow	BSD		
Juliet Parker-Smith	Gagendor		
Martin Albacete	York Uni CPC		
Jean-Luc Heath	York Uni CPC		

Total number of full member clubs present and voting: 17 (Quorum = 10)

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

Full member clubs not present (22 in total):

Airedale Caving Club
Bolton Speleo Club
Bowland Pennine MRT
CNCC Technical Group
Dent House Speleological Society
Durham Cave and Mine Club
Elysium Underground Group
Flat Learning Curve Pothole Club
Gay Outdoor Club
Grampian Speleological Society (apology received)
Gritstone Club (member present but non-voting)
Lancashire Caving and Climbing Group
Lancashire Underground Group
Morley Pothole Club
North York Moors Caving Club
Northumbrian Speleological Group (apology received)
Over and Under Caving Club
Pegasus Caving Club
Pendle Caving Club
St Helens Caving Club
Swaledale Outdoor Club
Th'Owd Skool Caving Club

(1) Apologies for absence

Tim Allen (Access Officer)
Ian Lloyd (Northumbrian SG)
Marion Holloway (Training Officer)
Alan Jeffreys (Grampian Speleological Group)
Kay Easton (Conservation Officer)
Bernie Bond (Burnley Caving Club; alternative representative present)
Ric and Pat Halliwell (Craven Pothole Club; alternative representative present)
Sam Allshorn (ULSA; alternative representative present)

The meeting opened at 10:00 am with a welcome from the Chairman, saying how good it was to see such a good attendance.

(2) Applications for full membership

No applications received this year.

(3) Acceptance of minutes from the 2017 AGM

No comments; the meeting proceeded immediately to a vote for acceptance of the minutes:

Proposed: Lyndon Easterbrook

Seconded: Victor Wain

Votes: 17 votes for (unanimous)

(4) Matters arising from the 2017 AGM

No matters arising.

(5) Officers reports

Chairman's report:

Note from Secretary: Due to emails from Andrew Hinde ending up in the Secretary's spam folder (due apparently to it having been sent using a Hudl), the Chairman's report was not included in the reports circulated ahead of the meeting. I apologise to Andrew for missing this and giving the false impression that a report had not been written ahead of the meeting.

Andrew Hinde read out his report:

"The past year has seen significant developments for Northern Caving thanks to the individual contributions of CNCC officers and member clubs. I would like to extend my thanks to all who have given up their time to benefit other cavers from all over the country and overseas. Rather than use the Chairman's prerogative of stealing all the other officers thunder from their individual reports, I will just thank them for their outstanding contributions and ask that you circulate these reports as widely as possible."

Andrew commenting on the very high workload of some of the CNCC Officers recently and appealed to them to seek to delegate work where possible to volunteers. Andrew also suggested that anyone willing to help should come forward, particularly younger cavers who may initially be put off by caving 'politics'. He emphasised that what we do is not 'politics' but 'administration'.

Secretary's report:

No questions.

Treasurer's report:

No questions.

Conservation Officer's report:

Pete Monk raised the ongoing Natural England health and safety issues which were preventing work being done under the Stories in Stone project; asking whether this had been resolved yet. Andrew Hinde said that he has a meeting on 6th April to discuss this with senior management, aimed at creating a draft risk assessment to get things moving.

Andrew confirmed that a surface project at FOUL Pot was already planned.

Access Officer's report:

No questions.

Training Officer's report:

In the absence of the Training Officer, Matt Ewles provided an update:

- Matt said he was really pleased that Maz had stood again for the position.
- The recent first aid course had been much appreciated by the attendees, but it had been a shame to see half of the spaces vacant. Matt said that there was a desire to run more first aid courses in the future, but some indication that these were wanted would be good; he urged anyone interested to email the Training Officer (training@cnc.org.uk).
- The paperless surveying course that is running from March has a healthy signup. Matt thanked John Holloway for picking up the organisation of this during Maz's absence.

Anchor Coordinator's report:

No questions on the report.

Matt Ewles provided a summary of the ongoing initiative to see systematic inspection of all resin anchors. The numbering of anchors on cave topos is ongoing, however, decisions were still needed as to what the reporting forms would contain and what information should be gathered. Matt said that this has been on the action list for nearly two years and wondered whether Simon would be able to help progress this. Simon agreed that this could be moved up the priority list. Matt said he was willing to take on the job of encouraging cavers to participate, once the scheme is live.

Action: Simon/Matt to try to escalate this initiative.

Webmaster's report:

Andrew Hinde asked whether the number of users of the website was now sufficient to allow us to generate advertising revenue? Andy Clough suggested that this may be more hassle and effort than it was worth; Gary Douthwaite agreed but felt it could be something to at least investigate.

Action: Gary to investigate whether advertising could have any merit.

Meets Secretary reports:

Comments/questions were raised on the following areas:

Casterton:

Andrew Hinde highlighted the significance of some of the changes in procedure highlighted by Hannah Walker's report. Hannah delivered a verbal summary of the change to clarify to applicants that a permit for Casterton Fell could in fact be used for any entrance regardless of which one was specified. Matt Ewles elaborated, saying that the access agreement document specifies no need to issue permits specific to individual entrances (unlike Leck Fell) and also there was no requirement in the agreement for the club letterhead document to be provided. Matt said these changes were intended to make sure the CNCC were not placing any additional restrictions/requirements on cavers beyond those absolutely required by the access agreement. Matt confirmed that we do still ask people to state their anticipated entrance for the purpose of the Google calendar (which can be used to help avoid congestion particularly at Lancaster Hole; Hannah said she tends to warn groups of potential conflicts) but that the naming of a specific entrance on the permit was not definitively binding; and access could be made via any entrance providing a permit was in place.

Bowland:

Tony Brown said that the land agent has changed (it is now Savills) and the new agent is a little more cautious especially about digging. However, no issues for access have been encountered.

Fairy Holes:

Andrew Hinde expressed surprise at the availability of the June permit, when the water was at it's 'warmest'.

No questions were raised on any other areas.

Acceptance of all reports:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Harvey Lomas

Votes: 17 for (unanimous)

(6+7) Election of CNCC Committee/Officers for the year 2018-2019

Matt Ewles opened the elections by introducing the voting procedure, emphasising particularly that there are more applicants for the Committee (15) than there are vacancies (14) and explaining that voting clubs can only vote for a maximum of 14 applicants.

All voting representatives had been issued voting forms with their voting cards at the start of the meeting (see end of document for a reproduction of the forms used).

Andrew Hinde asked if anyone had any questions/comments before voting.

- Lyndon Easterbrook asked whether we could not just elect 15 clubs to the Committee. Matt Ewles confirmed that the constitution only allowed for 14 clubs on the Committee.
- Lyndon also asked about geographical criteria for Committee applicants. Matt said that until three years ago the constitution required all members (and hence Committee) to be based in the northern region. This was changed to read that members must have a significant input/involvement in northern caving, and that this could easily be true for clubs geographically based outside of our region.
- Ray Duffy asked what we would have to do to allow 15 clubs on the Committee; Matt Ewles confirmed that this would require a constitutional amendment, which would need to be put forward for discussion and approval at the next General Meeting.
- Simon Wilson urged for the opportunity for all clubs wanting to get involved to be 'given a go' at being on the Committee, and felt it was time for SUSS to be given a chance.
- Matt Ewles urged for whichever club that does not make it onto the Committee to come along anyway to Committee meetings in a non-voting capacity; emphasising that almost all votes for the past four years have been unanimous or close to unanimous, and that what the CNCC really needed was ideas, involvement and participation, which could be delivered without the need for a voting card.

All voting representatives were asked to complete their voting forms (Officer and Committee voting were performed simultaneously) and return forms to the Secretary. A break was taken while votes were counted by Matt Ewles, and independently verified by Andrew Hinde.

Outcome:

All standing Officers and Committee received a minimum of three votes. All Officers were elected. The club that received the fewest votes was Rubber Duck Caving Club, so their Committee application was not successful. The other 14 clubs were appointed.

Officers and Committee for 2018-2019 are:**Officers:**

Chairman: Andrew Hinde

Secretary: Matt Ewles

Treasurer: Pete Bann

Conservation: Kay Easton

Access: Tim Allen

Training: Marion (Maz) Holloway

Committee:

Bradford Pothole Club

Burnley Caving Club

Craven Pothole Club

Earby Pothole Club

Grampian Speleological Group

Kendal Caving Club

Northern Boggarts

Northern Pennine Club

Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club

Sheffield University Speleological Society

University of Leeds Speleological Association

White Rose Pothole Club

York University Cave and Pothole Club

Yorkshire Subterranean Society

The actual number of votes for each are not reported. All met eligibility acceptance (min. 3 votes). The number of voting forms returned was confirmed to tally with the number of voting representatives at the meeting (17).

Andrew Hinde reopened the meeting after the break. Matt Ewles confirmed the results. Andrew Hinde extended the continuing welcome of the CNCC to Rubber Duck CC at Committee meetings (even if in a non-voting capacity).

(8) Access to caves on CRoW designated land

- Andrew Hinde opened the discussions by reminding everyone that this represented a significant change to CNCC procedure and attitude, and discussion was welcomed.
- John Holloway said that ULSA felt this was a good idea, but emphasised caution that some routes to caves are not exclusively on access land. We need to avoid giving this impression.

Matt Ewles cited the recent example of Dale Head Pot and Penyghent Pot, where the route of approach to each commences on a public footpath flanked by non-access land; in these cases, we had emphasised the importance of following these footpaths until the access land was reached. Matt agreed that this is something to consider, and that each cave should be considered to see whether any notes on route of approach were needed.

- Ray Duffy felt that Tim has done a good job of the wording; there were 'nods' of agreement from several others in the room.

There were no further comments/questions, so a vote was taken to support the course of action/suggestions put forward by Tim Allen:

Proposed: Ian Cross

Seconded: Chris Hunter

Votes: 17 for (unanimous)

Action: Tim and others to work offline to implement these changes.

(9) Online cave booking system

A presentation of the working of the online cave booking system was delivered by Gary Douthwaite and Matt Ewles using the live system (which is currently in testing phase). During the presentation several questions/comments were put forward.

Because Matt Ewles was answering these questions, as well as taking the minutes (and it was not possible to do both), the following minutes represent a snapshot of the major questions/points from memory, and not a definitive record of every question that was asked.

- Most questions related to the number of bookings a user was able to make, and the number of bookings per cave.
- Matt Ewles confirmed that the number of bookings was one per cave entrance, as this mirrored the current system on Ingleborough. This seemed like a sensible suggestion to also take forward for Leck Fell too (as this would represent a substantial improvement there) but this was open for debate and negotiation and would be left to Tim's discretion. Matt felt that the land agent would expect there to be some restrictions on numbers, and that the one booking per entrance per day could be a good suggestion to put forward. Casterton may require some unique consideration as bookings will need to be issued for the fell rather than for specific entrances, to avoid a reduction in access associated to the system.
- It was asked if those making bookings on behalf of a club might have a higher limit set (as they often need to book many caves at once). What about people undertaking a long-term project wishing to book more access to a single cave than the system allows?
- Matt and Gary confirmed that the system will always be administrated by a person (Geoff Whittaker has volunteered) and the limits were arbitrary and not set in stone and were only intended to avoid excessive bookings being made by one user; in the event of more being

required the administrator could assist. Clubs could get around the issue by having multiple individuals booking access; although it was agreed to investigate a better solution.

- Matt Ewles clarified that any individual, regardless of club association or BCA membership could use the system to book access; this fitted with Tim's aspiration to remove all barriers to participation in caving for everyone. Matt clarified that the BCA public liability policy applied regardless of whether the person booking access was a BCA member, and that the cave booking system replaced all prior agreements which required BCA membership. Therefore, there would be no conflicts with existing arrangements.
- Andy Clough of the Cave Diving Group expressed concern about the inclusion of predominantly diver-only caves in the system. Matt Ewles suggested that Andy sent through a list of caves on Ingleborough, Leck and Casterton Fells which fulfilled this criterion. Hurtle Pot was mentioned as an example at the meeting, but Matt clarified that there was no plan to extend the booking system to areas where open access already exists.
- Matt clarified that the purpose of the booking system was to fulfil a need for managed cave access on the major estates, in the most modern, functional and simplest way, however, he felt that cavers may appreciate the ability to see which caves are theoretically free each day and that the system may help to spread caver traffic better and avoid congestion.
- Gary Douthwaite drew an analogy to the EuroSpeleo booking diary, saying that the success of this had been part of the inspiration for the system, and demonstrated that it could work.
- A question was raised about booking for digging; Matt Ewles commented that a booking did not give permission for digging, and this would still need to be followed up through the usual routes (e.g. Landowner, Natural England).
- Alan Speight said that Tim's ultimate aim was completely open and unrestricted access, and he was working hard to achieve that.
- The presentation finished with a demonstration of the ability to use the system to check availability of caves by date; this gained a round of applause.
- Matt Ewles emphasised that the system relied on cavers using it responsibly; not making backup bookings and ensuring any bookings that are no longer required are cancelled. He felt that backup bookings would no longer be required, as any groups needing a change of plan could simply go onto the system in the morning before their trip.

(10) Date for the coming year

No issues with the suggested dates were raised.

Saturday 30th June 2018 (9:30am): Committee Meeting

Saturday 13th October 2018 (9:30am): Committee Meeting

Saturday 19th January 2019 (9:30am): Committee Meeting

Saturday 9th March 2019 (10am): Annual General Meeting

(11) Any Other Business

(A) Diving gear in caves

- Andy Clough raised a matter (which had been pre-discussed with the Officers during the week ahead of the meeting) regarding the removal of diving equipment from caves by those on cave cleanup initiatives, incorrectly thinking the equipment was abandoned.
- Matt Ewles thought the CNCC had discussed this matter a few years earlier and we had concluded that it was also the responsibility of anyone leaving something in a cave to label it to remove any doubt about whether it was abandoned. Andy said that divers do this as best as possible, but some unexpected circumstances force equipment to be left unexpectedly.
- Matt suggested that a combination of greater emphasis on labelling, along with a note on the CNCC website or newsletter to educate people, was a good combined strategy.

Action: Incorporate some information on CNCC website about this, suggesting that anyone who has concerns about potential abandoned diving kit should contact the CDG before removing anything.

(B) Full membership

- Matt Ewles raised the matter of St Helens Caving Club; their contact email address has been bouncing emails for nearly a year, and a postal letter sent two months ago has received no reply. Matt queried whether it is right that completely uncontactable clubs who have no participation in any CNCC activities should be allowed to remain full members.
- Ray Duffy suggested we appeal for them to get in touch in a newsletter and if nothing is heard within a couple of months then we should remove them as full members.
- Chris Hunter emphasised that retaining personal details for longer than necessary (i.e. long after the club has ceased to be involved) was a potential data protection issue.
- Peter Hambly believed that if we cannot communicate with them, their membership should be discontinued.
- Andrew Hinde felt that the main issue of clubs who never attend was that it reduced our General Meeting attendance figures to only about 45% of our membership, suggesting poor participation. Matt Ewles clarified that we have about 20 full member clubs who confirmed four years ago that they wish to retain membership, but who have never participated in any CNCC discussions or meeting since then. Matt asked whether we look to 'cull' some of our membership on the basis of their non-participation?
- Ray Duffy suggested we contact these clubs again for clarification on their status and whether they want to stay involved. Matt agreed and said he would pursue this over the coming year. Matt emphasised that any efforts to 'cull' non-active members should be accompanied by an effort to encourage more active clubs into membership.

- Lyndon Easterbrook suggested CHECC may help encourage student clubs to get more involved; at which point David Botcherby (SUSS representative) said that he was CHECC chair he would communicate this back.

Action: Matt Ewles to contact all full members who have shown no participation over the last four years to try to identify if they are still wanting to retain membership.

Action: David Botcherby to try to encourage more student clubs with a significant involvement in northern caving, to stand for CNCC full membership and to get regularly involved.

- Matt Ewles said that the jury was still out on whether the £2500 from Natural England for Tony Harrison's work would be subject to corporation tax. Andrew Hinde suggested that we consider a way for Natural England to become a CNCC member, to help avoid corporation tax liability for money given from them. Pete Bann said that an unsolicited donation from a member may not be subject to corporation tax.

Action: Matt, Andrew and Pete work together to suggest a way forward.

(C) Rigging topos and descriptions

- Finally, Gary Douthwaite raised the suggestion of printing and selling a compilation of all the CNCC rigging topos and cave descriptions in response to a few requests. This could perhaps raise a little money for CNCC funds. Lyndon Easterbrook asked whether anyone would want this, given that they are all available to download for free online; maybe only start with a small print run. Simon Wilson said that there are companies online who would print such documents on-demand. Gary felt that many people, particularly clubs, would like to have a full printed compilation at a reasonable price, and Phil Gillespie suggested this was very useful in places with no data signal. Sam Lieberman suggested an online poll to see if there was any interest before going ahead. Matt Ewles emphasised we would also need to check for permission with the various contributors of the topos.

Action: Gary Douthwaite to explore the possibility further.

Meeting closed 11:58am

Summary of action items dictated or inferred from this meeting:

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Issue 2017 AGM minutes as final and 2018 as draft.2. Contact all full member clubs who have been inactive for at least four years to see if they still wish to remain full members. Meanwhile seek to encourage more clubs to get involved to replace them.
Matt E, Simon W.	Escalate the anchor reporting form; decision needed on content.
Matt E, Pete B, Andrew H.	Investigate possible ways to make Natural England a CNCC member.
Tim A. and others	Work to implement CRoW changes to website agreed at this meeting.
Gary D.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update Committee details on website.2. Look into possibility of advertising on CNCC website to raise money.3. Continue testing and implementation of online booking system.4. Investigate possible appetite for printed topos/descriptions.5. Update website with text regarding diving gear.
David B.	Work with CHECC to encourage greater interest in CNCC and possibility of clubs who are regularly involved in northern caving standing for full membership.

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Officer election voting form for Annual General Meeting 10th March 2018

Please read the supporting statements in the agenda before voting.

To vote for an applicant, put a cross in the box by the name of the applicant.

For any applicants who you do not wish to vote for (i.e. who you do not support taking up the stated position), leave the box empty. Although there is only one applicant per position this year, a vote is still required to show adequate support for each of the named applicants. Each must receive a minimum of three votes to be appointed to the position.

Voting is anonymous; this form is not traceable and individual votes are not disclosed.

Chair	X
1. Andrew Hinde	<input type="checkbox"/>

Secretary	
1. Matt Ewles	<input type="checkbox"/>

Treasurer	
1. Pete Bann	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conservation Officer	
1. Kay Easton	<input type="checkbox"/>

Training Officer	
1. Marion Holloway	<input type="checkbox"/>

Access Officer	
1. Tim Allen	<input type="checkbox"/>

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Committee election voting form for Annual General Meeting 10th March 2018

Please read the supporting statements in the agenda before voting.

Put a cross in the box by the applicants who you wish to take a position on the Committee.

This year we have received 15 applicants within the deadline and there are 14 vacancies on the Committee. **You can vote to support the application of 14 or fewer applicants. If you vote for all 15 applicants your vote will be unconstitutional and will not be counted.**

Each applicant must receive a minimum of three votes to be appointed. The applicant with the fewest votes will not be successful in obtaining a Committee position.

Voting is anonymous; this form is not traceable and individual votes are not disclosed.

Clubs standing	X
1. Bradford Pothole Club	
2. Burnley Caving Club	
3. Craven Pothole Club	
4. Grampian Speleological Group	
5. Kendal Caving Club	
6. White Rose Pothole Club	
7. Yorkshire Subterranean Society	
8. Northern Boggarts	
9. Sheffield University Speleological Society	
10. University of Leeds Speleological Association	
11. Northern Pennine Club	
12. Rubber Duck Caving Club	
13. York University Cave and Pothole Club	
14. Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club	
15. Earby Pothole Club	