

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting 30th June 2018, Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

| Name | Club | CNCC officer/ co-opted role? | Committee voting? |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Matt Ewles | York CC /Northern Pennine Club | Secretary | |
| Gary Douthwaite | York University CPC | Webmaster | Yes |
| Paul Whittaker | Burnley Caving Club | | Yes |
| Alan Jeffreys | Grampian Speleo Group | | Yes |
| Steve Kirk | Craven Pothole Club | | Yes |
| Rachel Ashton | Kendal Caving Club | | Yes |
| Lyndon Easterbrook | ULSA | | Yes |
| Pete Monk | Northern Boggarts | | Yes |
| Pete Bann | Northern Boggarts | Treasurer | |
| Tim Allen | N/A | Access Officer | |
| Dave Botcherby | SUSS | | Yes |
| Simon Wilson | Bradford Pothole Club | Anchor Coordinator and BCA E&T representative | |
| Kay Easton | Bradford Pothole Club | Conservation Officer (taking minutes) | Yes |
| Andrew Hinde | Gritstone Club | Chair | |
| Sam Lieberman | Red Rose CPC | | Yes |
| Graham Derbyshire | BCA Northern Panel/QMC | | |
| Dave Hollingham | Rivendell/CATMHS/AHOEC/QMC rep | | |
| Stuart Whitmey | Earby Pothole Club | | Yes |
| Ian Cross | Bradford Pothole Club | | |
| Chris Camm | White Rose Pothole Club | | Yes |

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

12 out of 14 Committee clubs present (Absent: NPC and YSS).

The meeting opened with a welcome from the chair at 9:35am

(1) Apologies for absence

Maz Holloway (Training Officer)

Victor Wain (Chris Camm representing WRPC instead)

Tony Brown (Bowland meets)

Andy Gordon (Rachel Ashton representing KCC instead)

John Holloway (ULSA, Lyndon Easterbrook representing instead)

Ric Halliwell (Birks Fell/Mongo/Fairy Holes Meets Secretary)

Pat Halliwell (Craven, Steve Kirk representing instead),
Peter Hambly (Northern Pennine Club)

(2) Acceptance of January Committee meeting minutes

The Secretary reported Chris Camm had submitted a correction regarding Grassington Moor (a few typos and incorrect estate names) which would be made before the final version was issues. A vote was taken immediately.

Acceptance of minutes:
Proposed: Ian Cross
Seconded: Rachel Ashton
Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

Action: Matt Ewles (Secretary) to issue the final minutes.

(3) Matters arising from the January Committee meeting

Each action item from the agenda was discussed in order. **Responses highlighted in red.**

| Individual(s) | Action item |
|------------------------|---|
| Matt E. | Issue January meeting minutes as final. Done. |
| Matt E./Tim A. | Announce our opt-out from the Langcliffe Estate agreement and to provide guidance to cavers accessing the caves on this land. DONE via Facebook, Descent, UK Caving, CNCC news page and newsletter. |
| Matt E. | Contact Tony Harrison to thank him on behalf of CNCC for the opportunity to benefit from the Natural England funding. DONE |
| Pete B. | Investigation whether the above funding is subject to corporation tax. DONE Confirmed tax-exempt |
| Gary D./Geoff W. | Implement testing of the online cave booking system. ONGOING Full testing in progress; all persons booking 2-3 days in advance are invited to use the on-line system. Testing will continue until the Craven winch meet and possibly beyond. |
| Andrew H./all Officers | Source information on Northern Pennine caves for Geo Park initiative. DONE – see Chairman’s report |
| Matt E./Maz H. | Verify whether the training grant is being reduced to a maximum of £150/day, as this could impact the costs of future CNCC courses. ONGOING The meeting noted that a £150/day cap on training costs was unrealistic compared with the costs of providing training to a group of people. Although referred to at BCA meeting, it was still unclear as to the status of this cap. ACTION: Andrew H. to pursue. |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Peter H. | Put together a guidance document on data protection requirements. DONE, and scheduled for discussion at this meeting. |
| Alan J. | Follow up on getting details of Scottish caves to add to CNCC website (names, grid references, access details as a minimum). ONGOING |
| Matt E. | Contact BCA Y&D group to offer CNCC support/encouragement. DONE |
| Matt E. | Write to QMC to invite to next Committee meeting to discuss their concerns and access requirements. DONE. We welcomed two representatives of QMC to lead discussion later in meeting. |
| Matt E. | 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. ONGOING – see Secretary’s report. Most clubs replying wished to remain members but with no commitment to taking an active part. Sam L. said previous policy had been to be as inclusive as possible. He offered to contact Swaledale. Andrew H. said dormant clubs gave the impression of a democratic deficit, that apparently we are operating on the basis of only 50% of clubs. Ian C. pointed out this was a good response for organisations, and that caving club representation at an AGM might well be considerably below that. Tim A. said he had contacted Airedale, who were supportive of CNCC but will not be taking an active role. Matt E. said his preference would be to strike off defunct clubs only, to retain clubs who are still active (regardless of whether they participate) and instead seek to improve attendance by seeking new members. David B. said his action to discuss this with student clubs was ongoing. Further discussion needed at October meeting. |
| Matt E, Pete B., Andrew H. | Investigate possible ways to make Natural England a CNCC member. Discontinued: Events have moved on – See Chairman’s report. |
| Tim A. and others | Work to implement CROW changes to website agreed at this meeting. Complete – See Secretary’s and Access Officer’s reports. |

There were no other matters arising.

(4) Reports

Chairman’s report:

- Andrew H. said he had had a meeting with Natural England (NE) Health and Safety team, which had not been productive. They adhered to their view that caves with a pitch or with flowing water were Statutory Confined Spaces, somewhat at variance to the long practice of taking parties of school children into such places. This makes it impossible to continue the Stories in Stone project with NE as a partner. The project will be wound up, a new project set up with CNCC as the sole partner, and outstanding funding transferred to the new project. Kay E. would take over from Andrew as Project Officer.

- Work committed has almost been completed
 - NE will no longer pay travel expenses
- It is possible that NE might compensate the remaining partner (CNCC) with the previously agreed funding, from Ingleborough NNR funds. However, CNCC have already committed to contributing £500 per year, and this commitment has barely been called upon, so Andrew suggested there was little need to call on Ingleborough NNR funds. In reply to Sam L., Andrew said that Stories in Stone was already restricted in area to Ingleborough and its two flanking valleys, so accepting NNR funds would not further restrict the scope.
 - Although this item had been scheduled as Item 8 in the Agenda, it was agreed to continue the current discussion.
 - In reply to a question, Andrew said that the monitoring of caves that had SSSI status was in abeyance: NE had suspended all monitoring of SSSIs in response to priorities elsewhere. However, Andrew wished to keep the monitoring programme for the benefit of the caving community. This may benefit from further offline discussions.
 - Matt E. said the reason this had been tabled on the Agenda was that the setting up of the new project would transfer the liability to CNCC. Sam L. asked if it would be covered under the BCA insurance. Andrew confirmed that it would, and Tim A. said that Nick Williams as BCA Insurance Officer had said we should not let “insurance” stop us doing conservation work on caves.
 - Pete M. questioned the liability and responsibility placed personally on Kay E. as Conservation Officer and Project Officer. It was pointed out that Kay would carry out a risk assessment consistent with caving industry standards, and that being Project Officer did not require her to be physically present at all projects; she would appoint a suitable project manager/site manager for each project. Kay said she had received written assurance from the HLF partner that liability was with CNCC and not with her as an individual (and her willingness to take on the role was dependent on that assurance); Matt said that the CNCC liability would be backed up by BCA Insurance. Other caving organisations have historically been carrying out work of the type we are proposing to do.
 - It was proposed that the Committee should agree to the transfer of the Stories in Stone project to CNCC as proposed by Andrew.

Proposed: Alan Jeffreys

Seconded: Stuart Whitmey

Votes: 12 for (unanimous)

- Tim A. said he welcomed the idea of a joint meeting with the North Pennines UNESCO Geopark Partners Group. He had been doing field research for Dr. Pearson, who was researching into the 18C literature on caving, and needed help identifying un-named caves, and would be prepared to do a presentation at such a meeting. Andrew said the meeting was scheduled for 6-7 July 2019, and could feature visits to Hudd Gill Burn Mine, and Knock Fell Caverns, for which caver support would be needed, and an exhibition at Bowlees Museum, which would be a publicity opportunity for CNCC. Andrew said it was important

that CNCC should be involved with organisations which have an impact on caving but no understanding of the caves.

Secretary's report:

- The next newsletter would probably be issued in the next month; there was already a lot of material.
- Tim A. suggested we need a "Support CNCC" campaign.
- David B. suggested sending a rep to CHECC, or perhaps materials for a presentation that could be given by someone already attending. Andrew H. said it would be good if the resurrected Lancaster University caving club could be involved in CNCC and asked for ideas on what further support we could give them.

Action: All reps to seek to get more people involved in CNCC

- An anonymous donor has funded the NECAFE (Northern England Caving Award For Exploration) award and cash prize in an attempt to encourage more communication between cavers and clubs about exploration and digs. Sadly, there were no applications for the award in the first year, and the donor would be happy for the CNCC to take over the publicity and administration. Tim A. said he supported the award, but felt anonymity was not helpful and gave rise to suspicions about the motives of the donor, and that the name was not immediately indicative of the purpose. The prize was generous, but the nature of exploration was that smaller amounts were required at intervals, rather than one lump sum, and caver explorers tended to be self-funding.
- Tim also said it was difficult to publicise digs in progress because of sensitivities over access. Gary D said the award was intended for a later stage, once the exploration had been carried out and written up for publication.
- Tim suggested that, rather than asking cavers to apply for the award, for the judging committee (perhaps CNCC) to consider those projects which had been published. It was noted that this would be facilitated by the requirement of the award that all candidate explorations should be published in *Descent*. Being awarded on the basis of published reports had the advantage over being applied for while a dig was in progress that it did not entail publicising sites where equipment may be stored.
- In reply to questions it was clarified that the award was for exploratory work only, and not for conservation projects, and that it was for work in the CNCC region. Rachel A. wondered whether it could be given retrospectively to get the ball rolling. On the question of whether it was the cave or the cavers which were required to be in the north of England, Alan J. advised the former; if it were the cavers, then the Award would be dominated by international exploration.
- Matt E. said it could be possible to revisit the rules if necessary.
- Sam L. stressed the importance of taking on administration only, in order not to acquire a financial commitment in the event of the donor no longer being able to fund.

- Andrew H. expressed the gratitude of CNCC that this Award had been set up to encourage exploration and greater cooperation in the region.

Action: Matt E. to talk further with donor; and to explain the anonymity and the name were felt to be problematic.

Treasurer's report: Nothing to add to written report

Conservation Officer's report:

- Tim A. commented that on recent trips there had been two dead sheep in Newby Moss, and that a colleague had undertaken a 90m prussik with a dead sheep in Long Kin West. He asked for more stockproofing of caves, not just for the farmers' benefit, but for the benefit of cavers themselves. Andrew H. advised that he would not be content with any fencing on common land, and explained that any fenced area would be deducted from the Single Farm Payment or Basic Payment – and that non-declaration of a fence would mean the farmer facing fines. Where possible, capping is better than a fence.

Access Officer's report:

- Lord Shuttleworth and Mr Bowring were accepting in principle for the on-line booking system to apply to Leck and Casterton Fells, but Tim A. wanted to see it working successfully on Ingleborough first. On the wider question of access, the Committee supported Tim's approach to negotiation.
- Tim drew the Committee's attention to the positive reception of the CNCC gift of Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales vol 2 which he had presented to six landowners, including Lord Shuttleworth who had sent an appreciative response. Chris C. said the situation in Wharfedale was different, with no large estates, but was assured that gifts would still be appropriate to foster good relations.

Action: Matt E. to present copies to the owners of Jenga Pot and Excalibur Pot

Action: Chris C. and Tim A. to liaise over presentation to Wharfedale landowners.

- Tim produced for the meeting copies of the National Park Visitor Magazine with a double page spread on caving.
- Tim commented that Langcliffe Estate had shown no concern over CNCC's withdrawal from the out-of-date agreement.

Training officer's report:

- A paperless surveying course had been arranged.

Action: Matt E, after consulting Maz as necessary, to pass to Pete Bann information to enable him to pay for room hire, and on which cheques should be cashed and which returned to participants entitled to a free place.

- Andrew H. said he had participated in the CNCC SRT course, which had been well organised and well run.

Webmaster report: Nothing further to report

BCA representative report

- Andrew H. said it was important that there should be CNCC representation at BCA and he was immensely grateful to Tim A. for taking on the role.
- Tim noted that the CNCC claim for expenses from BCA was far lower than other regional bodies. It would be important in the future to claim wherever we can as our own funding streams dry up. The Mendip funding is mainly gate maintenance, an expense which we do not have. Spending on newsletters and publicity is not claimable – should we push for claiming, for example, hard copies of all newsletters?
- Tim noted that CNCC officers do not claim travel expenses whereas officers of other regions do. A suggestion from the floor was that officers should claim, then donate the amount to CNCC funds. Matt E. said CNCC claimed for most of what was possible, the exception being for travel which traditionally we did not claim for. He wondered if we could claim for display stands and banners, but Tim thought not. Andrew believed the BCA Finance Committee would ask us to use our own CNCC funds before claiming from BCA.
- Sam L. suggested we publicise among ourselves what can be claimed for.
- Pete B. said there was an outstanding claim for anchors awaiting resolution (Anchor Coordinator's report refers).

Action: Tim A. to continue polite enquiries about what items could be claimed for and to resolve the anchor claim.

Anchor Coordinator report:

- Simon W. said that anchor replacement in Roaring Hole is partially complete, and work to install anchors in Marble Sink is complete. Quaking Pot, Jockey Hole and Pasture Gill Pot are in progress.
- Kieran Hodgson has been approved as an installer.
- There is a report of loose anchors in Alum Pot. A replacement is on hold waiting for better resin tests.
- The BCA Equipment and Techniques Committee is on a good footing, with Mark Sims as convenor. The meeting on-line in April was a very efficient meeting. It discussed a new anchor for use nationally. The present stock of IC anchors will be used only by CNCC. The new anchor will be tested. Full funding for CNCC's purchase of IC anchors was agreed. Damien Weare was approved as anchor installer trainer. There was some discussion of loose

anchors. Anchor records are to be standardised across all regions. Concrete screws were discussed (as per Simon's report on the CNCC website).

- Matt E. asked why IC anchors were not to be used nationally? Simon explained that it was to keep things simple, and to conserve stock. It was unlikely that more IC anchors would be made after the current stock eventually ran out – it was better to find an off-the-shelf replacement.
- Sam L. asked about the anchor in the Hall of the Mountain King – was this the way in from Peterson? Simon said it was.
- Andrew H. asked about the data on test beds; Matt responded that this was under the Technical Group heading on the CNCC website. Andrew then asked about the anchors and the large number of holes in Yordas. Gary D. suggested this may be the result of spit practice for expeditions.

Action: Andrew and Simon to liaise about removal of the anchors.

It was proposed that the reports be accepted:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Sam Lieberman

Votes: 12 for (unanimous)

(5) Confirmation of co-opted positions and representatives

- Geoff Whittaker has taken on the role of on-line booking coordinator. Tim Allen has agreed to be BCA representative. All others had agreed to carry on. Hannah Walker may be away for 5 months over winter, and Tim agreed to cover if no-one else was willing.

Proposal to confirm those in co-opted roles and positions:

Proposed: Rachel Ashton

Seconded: Lyndon Easterbrook

Votes: 12 for (unanimous)

(6) Relationship between CNCC and the instructed Cave Community

- Andrew H. said that historically CNCC had not had good relations with the instructed caving community. He noted that Derbyshire PICA operates successfully – he was not suggesting the same model for CNCC, but we wished to open channels of communication. Most people get their first experience of caving through an instructed group.
- Dave Hollingham, speaking for the Quality Management Committee (QMC) agreed the need for communication. He explained that recent changes in training responsibility in BCA had split instructed caving from recreational caving. QMC would oversee the Local Cave Leaders Award scheme and CIC. These awards were open to all cavers, as a support mechanism to allow people to have confidence in leading groups, and to offer to potential recreational cavers their first caving experience.

- He said there was a whole range of providers, from a one-man band offering trips for stag nights to those offering advanced training for cavers.
- Andrew wondered what was the preferred term. The BCA uses the terminology “led groups”.
- Andrew said it was important the two sides understood each other, needs for access and where, who is an “official” provider. He wanted to avoid simple caves being “riddled with tat” and would encourage instructors to seek CNCC advice since landowners were not concerned with what was happening underground. He accepted the independence of those leading groups, but was opening a channel of communication.
- Simon W. asked that anchors for training should not be installed underground – initial training should be above ground. Dave H. said that in areas where there were a lot of bolts he agreed there should be discussion, and a channel of communication. The point of contact on QMC should be the Northern Liaison for the Northern Panel.
- Tim A. said we needed to recognise that, if the instructor was operating with the consent of the landowner, that QMC operate in a professional way, and CNCC should not seek to dictate. In the past, there has been some attempt by CNCC to negotiate access for the instructed sector, but he did not believe that this was the way forward.
- Gary D. said that there was a crossover between the needs of commercial groups and student groups – for example the anchor at Dr Bannister’s Handbasin is useful to freshers’ groups.
- Dave talked about training leaders, e.g the CIC scheme which is internationally recognised. He mentioned training to allow people to enthuse others, and guiding experienced cavers through an unfamiliar system. In answer to Andrew, he suggested that there could be a need for access to Leck and Casterton Fells, e.g for training in navigation, e.g the Trident Series.
- Sam L. raised a concern about footfall. There was no restriction on the users of the on-line booking service, so it was important to maintain communication. Dave said that QMC placed importance on conservation, and it was an important part of leading groups.
- Matt E. tried to summarise the discussions. He said that it was clear that access particularly to Casterton Fell was a major aim for the instructed caving community. We are seeking to get this area brought onto the online booking system. Our booking system proposes no restrictions to who can use it. Therefore, it is hoped that this would enable access for all. However, this would depend on Tim’s discussions with the Estate and whether they requested any specific restrictions.

Andrew thanked Dave H and Graham D for their contribution, and they left the meeting.

(7) Data Protection and the CNCC

- Matt E. introduced the Data Protection Policy. In response to a question pointing out that data was required to be deleted once it was no longer necessary to hold it, Gary D.

suggested data on the on-line booking would be deleted after 12 months, or a suitable period, and that personal information would be deleted once the person was no longer an active user. This is something for Gary to look to implement in the system.

- Kay E. pointed out that the Policy did not take account of information held on CNCC Conservation Volunteers, and that she and Matt were in discussion as to how to handle this. Information requested by the Stories in Stone project would be handled according to the HLF policy.

Action: Kay E. and Matt E. to resolve handling of data for Conservation Volunteers.

(8) The future of Stories in Stone (SIS) Cave Conservation Project

This had already been dealt with under Chairman's report and in the discussion on the actions from the previous meeting.

(9) Date and time of next meeting

Sat 13th October 9.30am

(10) Any Other Business

- Alan J. said he was currently digitising Eli Simpson's records, and BCA was concerned about intellectual property rights. He asked for advice. Gary D. said he should publish and wait to see if there were complaints. The worst-case consequence would at worst be a Cease and Desist order. This is the policy operated by Youtube and similar organisations.
- Tim A. said the next BCA AGM was being held in the Dales – did CNCC want an input? David B. suggested that any associated party may need to be arranged by CNCC, that it would not work as an attractant to the BCA AGM if it were a separate event. Andrew H. was not sure that CNCC needed to be involved on the party side. Matt E. suggested we could offer to rig caves for the event or to assist with the organisation if it would be helpful.
- Tim said he still had a box of archived access material. Matt E. offered to take it and sort it.

Action: Tim A. to pass archived access material to Matt E. for sorting.

Meeting closed at 12.45

Summary of specific action items that should be complete by the next meeting:

| Individual(s) | Action item |
|----------------------|--|
| Matt E. | Issue January meeting minutes as final. |
| Matt E. | Table for discussion at October meeting the policy to follow over apparently defunct clubs and inactive clubs. |
| Sam L. | Use contacts to achieve response from Swaledale as to its future CNCC involvement. |

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| Andrew H. | Verify whether the training grant is being reduced to a maximum of £150/day, as this could impact the costs of future CNCC courses. |
| Alan J. | Follow up on getting details of Scottish caves to add to CNCC website (names, grid references, access details as a minimum). |
| All | Seek to get more people to engage with CNCC |
| Matt E. | Talk further with donor of NECAFE; and explain that the anonymity and name are felt to be problematic |
| Matt E. | Present copies of "Caves and Karst in the Northern Dales vol 2" to landowners for Jenga Pot and Excalibur Pot |
| Chris C/Tim A. | Liaise over presentation of copies of "Caves and Karst in the Northern Dales vol 2" to landowners in Wharfedale |
| Matt E. | Consulting Maz H. as necessary, provide Pete B. necessary information to pay for room hire and determine which cheques needed to be returned to participants entitled to free place on course. |
| Tim A. | Continue polite enquires of BCA as to those items for which CNCC can seek reimbursement. |
| Andrew H./Simon W. | Liaise over removal of unnecessary anchors at low levels in Yordas Cave |
| Kay E./Matt E. | Continue to liaise over GDPR requirements with respect to CNCC conservation volunteers. |
| Tim A. | Pass archived access material to Matt E. for sorting. |