

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Annual General Meeting 11th March 2017 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Voting?
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	Yes #
Bernard Bond	Burnley CC		Yes #
Peter Hambly	NPC		Yes
Ian Cross	Bradford PC		
Simon Wilson	Bradford PC	E&T Representative	
Pat Halliwell	Craven PC		Yes
Ric Halliwell	Craven PC	Birks Fell etc. meets	
Martell Baines	Bradford PC	CNCC/BCA representative	
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes #
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Kay Easton	Bradford PC	Conservation Officer	Yes #
Roy Holmes	Dent House SS	Chairman	Yes
Rachel Findlay	York Uni CPC		Yes #
Joshua Young	York Uni CPC		
Pete Bennett	Rubber Duck CC		Yes
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Ray Duffy	Red Rose CPC		
Victor Wain	White Rose PC		Yes
Kelvin M ^c Kivitt	Durham CMC		Yes
Fiona Durham	Yorkshire SS		Yes #
Stuart Whitmey	Earby PC		Yes #
Maureen Blair	Earby PC		
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club		
Tim Josephy	Yorkshire Ramblers		Yes #
Lyndon Easterbrook	ULSA		
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes #
Marion Holloway	ULSA		
Alan Jeffreys	Grampian SG		Yes
Andy Gordon	Kendal CC		Yes
Philip Judson	Gay Outdoor Club		
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary, taking minutes	

Authorisation letter delivered to Secretary in advance of the meeting (by email).
All others provided hard-copy authorisation letter to the Secretary on the day.

Total number of full member clubs present and voting: 18 (Quorum = 10)

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

Full member clubs not present (21 in total):

Airedale Caving Club
Bolton Speleo Club
Bowland Pennine MRT
Cave Diving Group (Northern Section)
CNCC Technical Group
Elysium Underground Group
Flat Learning Curve Pothole Club
Gay Outdoor Club (member present but non-voting)
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
Sheffield University Speleological Society
St Helens Caving Club
Swaledale Outdoor Club
Th'Owd Skool Caving Club

(1) Apologies for absence

Pete Allright (Dent House SS)
Pete Bann (Treasurer)
Tim Allen (Access Representative)
Ian Lloyd (Northumbrian SG)
Johnny Latimer (Access Officer)

The meeting opened at 10:00 am with a welcome from the Chairman.

(2) Applications for full membership

No applications received this year.

(3) Acceptance of minutes from the 2016 AGM

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

Proposed: Pat Halliwell
Seconded: Kay Easton
Votes: 17 votes for, 1 abstention

(4) Matters arising from the 2016 AGM

Matt Ewles summarised the list of actions from the 2016 AGM (these can be found at the end of the minutes from that meeting). The following were the key points:

- New membership cards not yet made (for Durham CMC, CDG Northern Section).
- The article on Birks Fell was included in the June 2016 newsletter.
- The IC representative vacancy was widely advertised but no interest had been expressed.
- Matt apologises that the planned display of conservation works intended for EuroSpeleo did not happen due to lack of time, however, he said he is still planning on putting something together for a future event such as a Hidden Earth.

There were no questions or additional comments.

Actions: Matt Ewles to ask for new membership cards to be made for Durham CMC and CDG Northern Section (before next General Meeting). Matt and others to work towards a CNCC display of conservation works which can be used at events such as Hidden Earth (no timeframe).

(5) Officers reports

Chairman's report:

No questions.

Secretary's report:

Andrew Hinde said he felt that the lack of interest in the IC representative position wasn't necessarily a bad thing, as it suggested people were content with the status quo and didn't feel the need for any additional representation for non-club cavers. Matt Ewles said it was as much about creating the opportunity, and agreed with Andrew's interpretation. Simon Wilson said that he and Tim Allen would have been the two most likely people to stand for the role, but they are both involved in the CNCC in other ways now.

Treasurer's report:

Several points were raised:

- Matt Ewles said he will follow up with Pete Bann regarding high interest accounts.
- Sam Lieberman said we have had a lot of money for a long time; should we be setting a threshold/contingency amount below which we shouldn't drop if we decide to spend some? Andy Gordon said that we would need to define what such a contingency was actually for, e.g. cave conservation. Kay Easton said that there was already a separate cave conservation emergency fund available outside of the CNCC should any urgent needs arise.
- Ric Halliwell reminded everyone that the reason we have the current funds available is due to past sales of rigging guides, which we no longer have as an income stream. In response to

a question from Simon Wilson, Ric clarified that he wasn't complaining about the fact we no longer sell rigging guides, just mentioning that he believed it has played a historic part in developing our current financial status, and this should be considered.

- Phillip Judson suggested an expenditure cut-off to ensure preservation of contingency money; we should not spend more in one go than we would usually spend in a year, without additional consideration. Matt Ewles said that we already have a £500 spending cap, above which all expenditures need to undergo consideration by the Committee.
- Matt said that the CNCC had invested a lot of money in projects over the last few years, including a significant contribution to production of the Northern Sump Index, the grant for communications equipment for rescue organisations and a large investment in conservation. We have also funded prizes for various events. Despite this we have hardly dented our total funds, as most other expenditure we claim back from the BCA (citing the Treasurer report as an excellent demonstration of this). Matt said he was therefore not very concerned for the immediate future. However, he acknowledged the concern that we are currently spending money without any definitive budget or plans for how in the future we might continue to support certain high-cost projects with no defined source of income.
- Simon Wilson suggested that we could consider crowd funding for any major initiatives in the future, for example, supporting the anchor scheme.
- Roy Holmes thanked Ric and Pat Halliwell for auditing the accounts.

Action: Matt Ewles to ask Pete Bann about high interest accounts.

Conservation Officer's report:

No questions.

Access Officer's report:

A vote of thanks to Johnny Latimer, who is stepping down at this meeting, was proposed by Pat Halliwell, seconded by John Holloway and received unanimous support (18 votes). There were no questions regarding the Access Officer report.

Webmaster's report:

Andrew Hinde said he thought the use of social media was a real leap forward, highlighting the value of Facebook for engaging with cavers. He suggested we continue to take advantage of this for future dissemination of information, and persuade the BCA to follow suit. Gary Douthwaite said he believed the use of social media helped caving councils to reach a younger audience.

A vote of thanks to Gary was proposed by Pat Halliwell and seconded by Rachel Findlay, and this received unanimous support (18 votes).

Meets Secretary reports:

Casterton: Matt Ewles said that Hannah was doing an excellent job, turning around permit requests very quickly and often at short notice. No questions were raised.

Robinson's Pot: Ric Halliwell said that all permits for this year had now been issued.

Fairy Holes: Andrew Hinde has been trying to contact the land agent (Savills, York). The initial contact seemed positive, however interest has slowed and we are now issuing permits without an up to date agreement. No objection to this has been raised and the only issue is that sometimes the gamekeeper doesn't open the gate in the morning, meaning a longer than usual walk. Matt Ewles asked what needed to be done next; do we just need to keep chipping away towards getting a new agreement signed; Andrew confirmed that yes, he will keep trying.

Action: Andrew Hinde to continue to try to establish an agreement for Fairy Holes.

No questions were raised on any other areas.

Vote to accept all reports:

Proposed: Sam Lieberman

Seconded: Andy Gordon

Votes: 18 for (unanimous)

(6) Discussion on BCA constitutional amendments

Matt Ewles introduced this topic and suggested that as three clubs present in the room had already fed back their thoughts to him by email (Bradford, Kendal and NPC), that a good way to start these discussions would be to go to each of their representatives to share their thoughts.

- Martell Baines opened by saying that the Bradford Pothole Club would prefer not to have either statement in the BCA constitution as both indicate some responsibility of compliance. The statement should be removed altogether.
- Ray Duffy said that the Red Rose CPC couldn't make head nor tail of the amendments.
- Pete Hambly said that the NPC Committee was unusual in that it doesn't support CRoW applying to caving and were concerned about complete removal of the statement from the BCA constitution as this could be seen as landowner hostile. They felt that access via CRoW could compromise vulnerable sites such as Shuttleworth Pot. Additionally, (with respect to a different BCA proposed change) the NPC do not support solely online balloting as this would disenfranchise approximately 9% of their membership without email (note; all subsequent discussion relates to the CRoW-related amendment; other amendments were returned to under Any Other Business at the end of the meeting).
- Andy Gordon said that Kendal CC had canvassed their membership. Opinions were split between removal of the entire statement (as per Tim Allen's proposal) and coming up with some alternative replacement. However, given the complexity of writing a new statement, the overall feeling was that complete removal of the statement was the best option.
- Phillip Judson emphasised that removal of the statement doesn't mean we are opposed to landowners. He expressed concern that the statement is entirely saying something about others; not cavers; and consequently, doesn't have any place in the BCA constitution.

- Andrew Hinde said that Bob Mehew's proposal does make a 'nod' to landowners but was extremely complex to follow.
- John Holloway said that ULSA want rid of the sentence altogether.
- Pat Halliwell said that the Craven PC had discussed the amended wording and was broadly in favour of making the proposed change; but they had not discussed removal of the sentence altogether. Pat felt that there would probably be broad support for this.
- Martell Baines emphasised that at the BCA meeting there were just a few very vocal people pushing the new wording that is currently proposed.
- Tim Josephy said the Yorkshire Ramblers had discussed this at their Committee meeting and one member, a solicitor, couldn't see any difference between the existing and the proposed new statement. Therefore, the BCA should either leave the statement alone, or remove it altogether; there is no point in making the proposed change.
- Pete Monk said the Northern Boggarts had discussed the matter and felt the statement should be removed and would support Tim Allen's proposal to do so.
- Pat Halliwell proposed that the CNCC gives its support to Tim Allen's proposal. This was seconded by John Holloway. This received 17 votes for and one abstention.
- Andrew Hinde called for some clarification; are we instructing our representative to support Tim's proposal at the BCA Council meeting in a few weeks' time or at the AGM in June? There was a general agreement to give support to Tim's proposal at both meetings.

Action: CNCC representative at BCA meetings to give support to Tim Allen's proposal for the amendment to the BCA constitution.

(7) CNCC and Anchor Installation

Simon Wilson opened by presenting a summary of the details on the agenda.

- Pete Monk asked if we had formally adopted or co-opted the post of anchor coordinator before and if not is it about time for us to do so? Matt Ewles suggested that if we accepted Simon's suggestion, this is exactly what we would be doing.
- Pete said that he has complete confidence in Simon to perform the role well; but we need to make sure that there is some contingency if anything happened to Simon; could anyone else do the role or is Simon the only man who could? Pete asked about insurance and liability to the CNCC associated with us taking on increased responsibility for anchors.
- In response to Pete's comments/questions, Simon Wilson said that the BCA insurance policy covers all BCA members for caving, specifically including installing anchors; there is no actual requirement to be a qualified installer to confer liability insurance.

- Simon said that the suggested proposal would be to create an Officer/Co-opted position to coordinate anchors for the CNCC; this is in line with BCA policy which advises that all regions should have an anchor coordinator. When the IC anchor was first endorsed by the CNCC, Simon did not feel that was the right time to propose an anchor coordinator position, but things have now changed. He has invested a lot of his own money into the anchor placements, but now he would appreciate some assistance with this.
- Simon said that behind the scenes Sam Allshorn does a tremendous amount of work too, and he is by no means a 'one man band'. There was ample contingency.
- Simon said that if his suggestion was accepted, he would wish to train new installers, and would also support the appointment of a new trainer, so he wouldn't then be the only person who could train IC anchor installers.
- Kay Easton said that despite Simon's reassurances about liability, by accepting his suggestion we would be taking on additional responsibilities. Kay said she would prefer reassurance from the BCA Insurance Officer that the CNCC has adequate liability cover.
- Matt Ewles said he would chase this up with the BCA.

Action: Matt Ewles to obtain a definitive statement from the BCA Insurance Manager to confirm that we are indemnified for liability associated to running an anchor scheme.

- Phillip Judson asked what happens if a non-BCA member does some bolting under the scheme? Simon said that they wouldn't be given access to the anchors; it is in the BCA anchor policy that all installers must be BCA members.
- Alan Jeffreys asked whether the BCA anchor policy required a formal inspection process for anchors that are installed? Simon said that we are not required to inspect anchors, and that we must continue to put the emphasis on the end user to perform a pre-use inspection.
- Matt Ewles said that he had spoken with the BCA E&T (Nick Williams and Bob Mehew) to pre-empt a question as to whether the BCA would reimburse the suggested expenditure. The following reply from Nick Williams was read out:

BCA's financial guide to Regional Caving Councils states that:

"Anchors and Resin will be provided for free by the Equipment Committee for sites where all BCA Member Clubs have access."

And

"Grants are available to cover the costs of the instructor and consumables for training (including refresher training) in the placement of anchors from the Equipment Committee."

Although the IC anchor has been designated by the E&T, its estimated manufacturing cost of around £6 per anchor, including VAT is substantially more than other designated anchors manufactured by Bolt Products at around £3.50. As Chair, I am currently prepared to approve the refund of expenditure by CNCC on purchasing IC anchors to the value of £3.50 per anchor. However, I must await the agreement of the E&T before considering covering the additional cost.

The cost of resin for placement and training in the use of IC anchors will be reimbursed.

N Williams - BCA E&T Chair

- Matt said that during these discussions with Nick and Bob, he had also been advised to ask Simon whether the anchors would be provided from the factory in a fully finished state, or whether Simon would be finishing them himself (as this had liability considerations). Simon confirmed that the anchors would be fully finished and ready to use on leaving the factory and he would not be personally finishing the anchors.
- Kay suggested that Simon's suggestion should be preceded with a statement that it is subject to receiving suitable assurance from the BCA Insurance Manager regarding liability cover for the CNCC.
- Andrew Hinde raised the higher cost of the IC anchor versus other types. Simon said that we've had no solid supply of anchors for about ten years, and he felt the BCA E&T had been a bit tight fisted on their spending on anchors. Simon said that these IC anchors were about the same cost as a karabiner and could not see why this was causing so much concern.
- Gary Douthwaite said that as lots of the CNCC's money has come from historic rigging guide sales, he could not imagine a better way to spent it than on new anchors.
- Martell Baines picked up on Simon's earlier suggestion of crowd funding, and suggested that this could be used to give a sense of individual cavers investing in the anchor scheme. Could we use this as a way of getting people engaged? There was general agreement with this, although Gary said that there was also a risk people might ask why we are seeking crowd funding when the CNCC has in the region of £20000 sat in the bank. Kay Easton said that we might be able to justify it based on rigging guides being freely available now. Matt Ewles said that he agreed that the crowd funding idea was a good one; and could be considered for the support of future projects if necessary. However, for now, he believed there was a need to 'get on with the job', and given that we have the money available, he didn't feel the crowd funding was something that we should be exploring on this occasion.
- Matt Ewles asked for clarification regarding the anchor coordinator position; did Simon envisage this being a co-opted role or a full Officer role (emphasising that a full Officer role would take time to amend the constitution and then advertise the role). It was agreed that co-opted would be sufficient for now.
- Pat Halliwell suggested that we needed to draw this towards a proposal, and proposed (with some input from Pete Hambly regarding the 'initial expenditure' part):

'Subject to assurance of the CNCC having the appropriate liability insurance from the BCA Insurance Manager, the CNCC agree to the initial expenditure of up to £3900 to be granted for the purchase of approximately 650 IC anchors which will be owned by the CNCC and used to benefit anchor installation and replacement projects. A co-opted position within the CNCC of 'anchor coordinator' will be created. The anchor co-ordinator will work on behalf of the CNCC to oversee anchor installation and replacement in accordance with requirements of the BCA Anchor Policy.'

(This is as per Simon's suggestion, prefixed with a requirement for liability confirmation and the word 'initial' added prior to 'expenditure').

Seconded: John Holloway
Votes: 18 for (unanimous)

Ray Duffy suggested a vote of thanks to Simon; this was proposed by Sam Lieberman and seconded by Bernie Bond and received unanimous support (18 votes).

Andy Gordon then proposed that Simon Wilson is appointed the co-opted anchor coordinator for the CNCC. This was seconded by Pete Bennett and received unanimous support.

Action: Simon to take on the role of CNCC anchor coordinator and subject to receiving the relevant liability insurance statement, progress the production of the IC anchors.

(8+9) Election of CNCC Committee/Officers for the year 2016-2017

Matt Ewles opened the elections by introducing the voting procedure.

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). Matt asked if anyone had any questions for any of the applicant individuals or clubs.

- Gary Douthwaite said he had noted that Burnley Caving Club have been on the Committee for the last year, and are standing again, yet have not attended any Committee meetings.
- Bernard Bond apologised for Burnley's lack of attendance.
- Matt Ewles asked if Burnley would be making provisions to ensure better attendance this year if re-elected to the Committee. Bernard confirmed that yes, they would.

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 the Secretary, and independently verified by Ric Halliwell.

Outcome:

All standing Officers and Committee received a minimum of three votes and were elected. The Committee therefore comprises 14 members for the year 2017-2018.

Officers and Committee for 2017-2018 are:

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
Rubber Duck Caving Club
University of Leeds Speleological Association
White Rose Pothole Club
York University Cave and Pothole Club
Yorkshire Subterranean Society

The actual numbers 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 (18).

Matt Ewles reopened the meeting by welcoming Andrew, Tim and Maz as new Officers and Kendal, Grampian and Rubber Duck as new Committee members.

(10) Date for the coming year

No issues with the suggested dates were raised.

Saturday 8nd July 2017 – Committee Meeting

Saturday 14th October 2017 – Committee Meeting

Saturday 13th January 2018 – Committee Meeting

Saturday 10th March 2017 – Annual General Meeting

(11) Any Other Business

- Matt Ewles said we had not really discussed any of the other proposed BCA constitutional amendments yet; we had only really talked about the one relating to CRoW. Martell Baines said she would appreciate some guidance about how to vote on these other matters at the coming BCA meetings.
- The first matter touched upon was the option to move to electronic polling for future ballots of all members. Pete Monk opened by suggesting it was about time we moved to a means of electronic voting.
- Pat Halliwell said that the Craven are against supplying email addresses to the BCA and many of their members don't use email for caving purposes. Pete Hambly, who had already said earlier in the meeting that about 9% of NPC members don't use email, reiterated their concerns about switching to a solely electronic means of voting.
- Lyndon Easterbrook asked if the BCA could not create a system by which people can opt-into electronic voting.

- Matt Ewles asked everyone in the room whether they felt they would support a reformulated BCA proposal that allowed members to opt into electronic voting but continued to provide a means for a postal vote for those who want it. There was general support for electronic voting under these circumstances.
- Andrew Hinde moved onto the next major discussion point; the use of proxy voting for BCA meetings. There was a broad and fast-paced discussion where numerous varied viewpoints were put forward but with no consensus of support or rejection for the specific proposal.
- Martell said she felt she had sufficiently got the mood of the CNCC to allow her to make informed decisions at the BCA meetings that were in our best interests.
- John Holloway raised a suggestion by Sam Allshorn (not present) that the CNCC ask the BCA E&T to approve Damian Weare as an IC anchor trainer. This was proposed by John Holloway and seconded by Gary Douthwaite and received unanimous support (18 votes).

Action: Matt Ewles to contact BCA E&T to request Damian Weare is recognised as trainer.

Roy Holmes closed the meeting by thanking everyone for putting up with him as Chairman for the last several years, and wished the incoming Chairman (Andrew Hinde) well.

There was a round of applause for Roy.

Meeting closed 11:57am

Summary of action items dictated or inferred from this meeting:

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E.	General secretarial: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue 2016 AGM minutes as final and 2017 as draft 2. Get membership cards made for DCMC and Cave Diving Group Others: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speak with Pete Bann about high interest accounts for CNCC funds 2. Contact BCA Insurance Manager to seek liability assurance statement regarding the CNCC having a dedicated anchor scheme and coordinator 3. Contact BCA E&T to request Damian Weare is recognised as a trainer
All interested individuals	Work offline to put together a CNCC display of conservation works for future Hidden Earth (long term project).
Gary D.	Update Officer and Committee details.
Andrew H.	Continue to seek an access agreement for Fairy Holes.
Simon W.	Subject to go-ahead from Matt E regarding statement from BCA E&T about liability, make necessary arrangements to proceed with sourcing anchors.

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Officer election voting form for Annual General Meeting 11th March 2017

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.

Chairman

X

1. Andrew Hinde	
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Secretary

1. Matt Ewles	
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Treasurer

1. Pete Bann	
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Conservation Officer

1. Kay Easton	
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Training Officer

1. Marion Holloway	
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Access Officer

1. Tim Allen	
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COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Committee election voting form for Annual General Meeting 11th March 2017

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 14 applicants within the application deadline and there are 14 vacancies on the Committee, so you may vote for as many of the applicants as you wish. If there are any of the applicants who you do not wish to vote for (i.e. who you do not support taking a position on the CNCC Committee), leave the box by their club name empty.

Each applicant must receive a minimum of three votes to be appointed.

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

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