

# COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

## British Caving Association

### Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 11th March 2023, Clapham Village Hall

Attendees:

Name	Abbrev.	Affiliation	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Voting?
<b>In Person</b> (by order of signing the attendance sheet)				
Jill Bolton	JMB	Craven Pothole Club		No
Josh Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Secretary	No
Gary Douthwaite	GD	Northern Pennine Club	Webmaster	No
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Chris Camm	CC	White Rose Pothole Club		Yes
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club		Yes
Robin Lawrence	RL	Morley Pothole Club		Yes
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	PR & Communications	Yes
Richard Jennings	RJ	Peak Caving Club		Yes
Bernie Jordan	BJ	Lancashire Climbing and Caving Club		No
Lawrence Jordan	LJ	Lancashire Climbing and Caving Club		Yes
Simone Sambento	SS	Grampian Speleological Group		No
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group		Yes
Pete Bann	PB	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	No
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Tim Allen	TA	n/a		No
Dinny Davies	DD	RRCPC / ULSA	Fairy Holes / Robinson's Access	No
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Ric Halliwell	RH	Craven Pothole Club		No
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club		Yes
Harvey Lomas	HL	Yorkshire Ramblers Club		Yes
Jon Beavan	JB	Northern Cave Club		No

Roy Evans	RE	n/a		No
Andy Gordon	AG	Kendal Caving Club		Yes
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	University of Leeds Speleological Association		Yes
Ian Patrick	IP	Craven Pothole Club	Training Officer	No
Ben McGuire	BM	Combined Services Caving Association		No
Andrew Hinde*	AH	Gritstone Club	Chair	No
<b>Online</b>				
Alison Fuller-Shapcot	AF	Elysium Underground Group		Yes
Adrian Howden	AHO	Yorkshire Subterranean Society		Yes
Adele Ward	AW	WRPC, YCC, NYMCC, CDG	Access Officer	No
Becca Hay	BH	York University Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Kay Easton	KE	Bradford Pothole Club	Conservation Officer	No
Mark Richards	MR	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	BCA T&E Rep	No
Peter Hambly	PHA	Northern Pennine Club		Yes

\* Did not sign register, added from memory.

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

Full member clubs not present (13 in total):

Airedale Caving Club  
 Burnley Caving Club  
 Cave Diving Group (Northern Section)  
 CNCC Technical Group  
 Dent House Speleological Society  
 Durham Cave and Mine Club  
 Gritstone Club  
 Lancashire Underground Group  
 Over and Under Caving Club  
 Pegasus Caving Club  
 Rubber Duck Caving Club  
 Sheffield University Speleological Society  
 Th'Owd Skool Caving Club

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

The meeting opened at 10:01am.

#### 1) Apologies for absence

John Holloway  
 Tony Brown

#### 2) Applications for Full Membership

Nothing raised.

### 3) Acceptance of minutes from the 2022 AGM

No issues raised.

#### **Proposal to accept minutes of the 2022 AGM.**

Proposed: ME

Seconded: IC

Votes: 18 votes for (unanimous)

**Action: JY to issue final minutes.**

### 4) Declaration of conflicts of interest.

- AH is affiliated with Natural England, which may have implications relating to cave access.
- MR and IP are professional outdoor instructors who are involved with running CNCC training workshops.
- GD, CNCC webmaster, owns an IT company which provides services to CNCC.

### 5) Matters arising from the 2022 AGM

- GD reported that work on the dye tracing database is ongoing.
- IP read out an updated version of his proposal for including non-CNCC anchors on our rigging topos, and received feedback from the room. Action ongoing.

### 6) Reports

#### **Chairman's report:**

- Following an earlier decision to provide funding for the Black Pot dig on Leck Fell, TA asked whether the CNCC should discuss the idea of funding other digs. AH and ME explained that in this particular situation, money was provided based on this being a conservation project to re-open access to an existing cave, before the individuals would continue explorations using their own funds. However, TA and IP asked whether funding for digs would be a good way of spending the CNCC's accumulated funds, which are currently losing value to inflation.
- Some argued that funds would be better spent on subsidising training workshops and on conservation work such as maintaining entrances. However, it was pointed out that the BCA reimburses CNCC for all this work. The BCA will fund almost everything except exploration. A informal show of hands was requested, which showed that the room was widely in favour of CNCC funds going into exploration. It was decided that individual projects could bring a request for funding for the CNCC committee to vote on. This would then be brought back up as a standing item at each AGM to confirm whether the CNCC should continue doing this for another year.
- When asked for up-to-date info on the Horner photo collection, AH explained that the CNCC is contributing £500 towards the digitisation and that the BCA and BCRA had been asked to match this funding. This would mean that these high resolution images would be freely available for anyone to use.
- AH asked for volunteers to attend BCA meetings to represent the CNCC, other than the chair.
- Regarding the BCA report, GD clarified that although discussions are ongoing, the return of Hidden Earth this year was not yet confirmed.

## **Secretary's report:**

### **Vote of thanks for JY's work as Secretary.**

Proposed: PH

Seconded: SW

18 votes for (unanimous)

- JY confirmed that he intends to become assistant secretary, writing minutes and helping JMB transition into the role of secretary.

## **Treasurer's report:**

- PB pointed out that the accounts provided in his report contained errors, and provided a corrected version on paper. The reports document available alongside these minutes has been updated to show the corrected accounts.
- PB said that the CNCC needs to maintain sufficient funds to cover costs before they can be reimbursed by the BCA. AH suggested talking to the BCA treasurer to see if costs could be reimbursed more frequently, and how other regional councils manage this. ME pointed out that this could affect the funds available for funding exploration projects. TA pointed out that the BCA have an emergency conservation fund, which could be used to cover projects which the CNCC could not pay for up front.

## **Conservation Officer's report:**

- ME asked whether there were any photos of the work done at Chanterelle Pot. KE said she wasn't sure if this work had been done yet, so ME will follow up with the individuals who were going to carry out this work.
- PH reported that the CPC had volunteered to sort out the entrance to Aquamole Pot, and will speak to AH to determine exactly what work needs doing.

## **Access Officer's Report:**

- ME has drafted a letter to send to the land agent at Langcliffe Hall Estate, updating them on the fact that the BCA insurance no longer covers unconditional landowner liability.
- At High Birkwith, AH reported that neighbouring land can be used to get within 2 metres of the resurgence at Browgill, but the landowner still has the right to refuse access for the final 2m. This would stop large groups of novices or instructed groups from making the through trip. Calf Holes is accessible.  
JB reported that the National Park had spoken to DEFRA, but were told that as caving is not "open air recreation" it's not under their remit. While the YDNP officers are supportive of us, there is little they are able to do. He said that the club letters to the NP had a big impact, and was the most communication they had received about any issue this year. AH reported that there are plans to introduce landowner payments for access in 2024, but this would only help if the landowner considers the amount to be worth it.  
Relations are currently ok with the landowner and there have been no reports of negative interactions between him and cavers. AH suggested we continue with the current situation and don't do anything to jeopardise possible access in the future.
- SL asked about the big Lune valley project for heritage and improving access, which came from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. ME said he had used various PR channels to spread awareness of the project and encourage cavers to provide feedback. SL said he would contact ME about the upcoming meetings for the project, to see if we can get someone to attend on our behalf.

**Training Officer's report:**

- JMB said she had attended 4 courses and all had been excellent and good value for money. When IP reported that no clubs had offered to host "try caving" events, ME said he knew of two big clubs who were discussing it, but that it might take a while to organise.

**Anchor Coordinator's report:**

- Nothing raised.

**PR & Communications Officer's report:**

- TA has spoken to the Kendal Mountain Festival, who may have a place for the photo display which has been at the YDNP offices. They said they might have a space for these to be displayed over the 4 days of the festival. AJ offered the use of the GSG's freestanding display boards.

**Webmaster's report:**

- Nothing raised.

**Proposal to accept all reports, including the updated treasurer's report.**

Proposed: IC

Seconded: PM

Votes: 18 votes for (unanimous)

**7 & 8) Election of CNCC Committee/Officers for the year 2023-2024**

- JMB introduced herself and her background in caving and in similar committee roles, and confirmed her intention to stand as secretary.

A break was taken while voting representatives completed the voting form. Committee and Officer elections were conducted simultaneously. Votes were counted by JY.

**Outcome:**

All standing Officers and Committee received a minimum of 3 votes and were thus elected.

**Officers and Committee for 2023-24 are:****Officers**

Chair: Andrew Hinde

Secretary: Jill Bolton

Treasurer: Pete Bann

Conservation: Kay Easton

Access: Adele Ward

Training: Ian Patrick

**Committee**

Bradford Pothole Club

Craven Pothole Club

Earby Pothole Club

Grampian Speleological Group

Kendal Caving Club

Northern Boggarts

Northern Pennine Club

Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club

University of Leeds Speleological Association

White Rose Pothole Club

York Caving 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 physical and digital votes was confirmed to tally with the number of voting representatives at the meeting.

#### 9) Stump Cross area access

- AH shared the existing agreement with the room and pointed out the outdated terms. It also has AH and JY as signatories, meaning they would be liable for what it says. This has been included in **appendix 1** at the end of this document. RH reported that it was last signed in 2018, and he had been struggling to get the owner to sign it since. He suggested trying to get the current agreement through to allow groups to visit the caves for now, and to update it next time it is due for renewal. However, it was generally agreed that the CNCC could not continue with this wording, and could not ask officers to put their name to it.
- TA recommended a Memorandum of Understanding rather than a legal document, which is what we have in place with some other landowners. ME pointed out that several years ago CNCC agreed that all new access agreements should enable access for clubs and individuals. Furthermore, we have moved against restrictions for Access Land Caves, or appearing to be the access controlling body. He felt that to enter into this agreement again at this stage, would go against everything CNCC has come to stand for. LE suggested that if AW goes to speak with the landowner, a new face could help encourage them to accept an updated agreement.

**Proposal that the existing access agreement for the Stump Cross area is considered invalid, and that the Access Officer offers a memorandum of understanding to attempt to restore access.**

Proposed: IC

Seconded: PM

Votes: 14 votes for, 3 abstentions

(The representative for YUCPC needed to leave the meeting before this vote, so there were now 17 voting representatives).

**Action: AW to offer a Memorandum of Understanding to try and restore access to Stump Cross area caves.**

#### 10) Proposal for constitutional amendment

**Vote to accept the amendment re authorisation of payments.**

Proposed: IC

Seconded: AG

17 votes for, unanimous

**Action: JMB / JY to update section 4d of the constitution.**

#### 11) Dates for the coming year

- It was agreed that future meetings should be held at Clapham village hall if possible.

Secretarial note: As the hall was not available on the suggested date, the October Committee meeting was moved to Saturday 21st October 2023.

15) Any other business

- TA asked why the Independent Caver Representative on the CNCC committee needed to be a BCA member. ME said it was just the way it was done at the time, and that this requirement probably wouldn't be introduced if the position had been created nowadays. He suggested the requirement could be removed at the next AGM.
- LE reported that he will soon be stepping down as ULSA's CNCC representative. He thanked everyone for making him feel welcome and valued.
- SL said that residents along the road to Bull Pot Farm were still having issues with some drivers. ME said he had produced some PR scheduled to go out soon, to keep cavers aware of the issue.

Meeting closed at 12:11pm.

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise 2022 AGM minutes
Committee	Implement an exploration fund system as appropriate and confirm at next AGM if members are happy to continue running this into 2024.
Gary D	Work with TC to incorporate the dye tracing database into the CNCC's web hosting.
Ian P	Re-draft his proposal regarding retrospectively adding anchors to the CNCC list of approved anchors.
Adele W	Offer a Memorandum of Understanding to try and restore access to Stump Cross area caves.
Gary D / Jill B	Update section 4d of the constitution.
Committee	Consider constitutional changes to remove requirement for the IC representative to be a BCA member, ahead of the next AGM.

## Appendix 1: Mongo Gill access agreement

**AN AGREEMENT** made the First day of March Two thousand and Twenty Three **BETWEEN** **LISA TRACY BOWERMAN** of [REDACTED] in the County of North Yorkshire ("the Owners") of the one part and **ANDREW HINDE** as Chairman of The Council of Northern Caving Clubs and **JOSH YOUNG** as Secretary of The Council of Northern Caving Clubs (the Association") of the other part

**WHEREBY** it is agreed as follows:-

1. **THE** Association shall be the controlling authority with sole responsibility to the Owners for the proper control co-ordination and discipline of all potholing and associated activities of its member clubs whilst on or in the owners property or Caves or on any designated paths providing access to same
2. **THE** agreement shall be for the term of two years commencing on the first day of March 2023 at an annual rent of Five pounds (£5) payable in advance on the date hereof
3. **THE** Agreement may be terminated by either party giving four months notice in writing to the other party
4. **ACCESS** to Mongo Gill, Shockle Shaft, Valentine Shaft and Great Expectations Cave ("the Caves") shall be prohibited during Bank Holiday weekends other than by the prior written consent of the Owners
5. **THE** Association shall provide a list each and every month of all visiting member clubs with their proposed dates of entry to the Caves. This list shall be circulated to the Owners and a designated officer of the Council of Northern Caving Clubs. Access to the Caves shall be limited to those clubs named on the list.
6. **THE** Association undertakes.-
  - (a) To insure and at all times keep insured the Caves against all third party public and occupiers liability and risks arising out of the activities of the Association and its member clubs such cover being subject to a minimum level of indemnity for any one incident of two million pounds (£5,000,000)
  - (b) To instruct its member clubs to keep to designated paths ensure closure of all gates, not to deviate across the moors and not to allow any dogs on the land, not to interfere with or obstruct the drainage of water in any way
  - (c) To keep the access covers and shafts litter free and in good and substantial repair to the satisfaction of the Owners and to yield up same free from litter and in good and substantial repair on termination of the term
  - (d) To notify the Owners immediately upon the discovery of any further Caves or matters of special interest
  - (e) Not to do or permit to be done anything that will or may render void or voidable the policy of insurance referred to in clause 6(a)
  - (f) Not to excavate or create any new shafts or entrances without the prior written consent of the Owners
  - (g) Not to use explosives underground or on the surface without the prior written consent of the Owners

- (h) Not to remove any minerals Cave formations, scientific research samples or any similar substances from the Caves without the prior written consent of the Owners
- (i) No solo caving

7. **ACCESS** to Stump Cross Caverns through the tourist entrance will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and with the prior written consent of the Owners

**SIGNED** by the said Lisa Tracy Bowerman in the presence of:

**SIGNED** by the said Andrew Hinde in the presence of:

**SIGNED** by the said Josh Young in the presence of: