

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

AGENDA FOR COMMITTEE MEETING

10th June 2023 at 9:30am

- 1.0 Apologies for absence, and verification of quorum.
- 2.0 Declaration of conflicts of interest
- 3.0 Acceptance of minutes from January Committee Meeting
(already reviewed for one month, before publication on website)
- 4.0 Matters arising (and updates) from January Committee Meeting

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Josh Y	Finalise October Committee Meeting minutes	Done
Ian P / Gary D	Report to AGM on numbers of people who have attended CNCC training workshops	Done
Matt E	Amend and publish CNCC statement on ropes left in caves	Done
Matt E / Gary D	Look at where we can have clear warnings about Ash Dieback, especially where trees appear on rigging topos	Done
Adele W / Andrew H	Re-draft Langcliffe access agreement to remove mention of landowner indemnity insurance	
Matt E / Josh Y	Contact mailing list & member clubs to encourage them to run "New to Caving" events	Done

5.0 OFFICER REPORTS

(Available one week prior to meeting)

- 5.1 Chair Andrew Hinde
- 5.2 Secretary Jill Bolton
- 5.3 Treasurer Pete Bann
- 5.4 Conservation Officer Kay Easton
- 5.5 Access Officer Adele Ward
- 5.6 Training Officer Ian Patrick
- 5.7 Other reports *(optional)*
inc Web Admin / PR / E&T Rep / Anchor Co-ordinator / Access Co-ordinators

6.0 CONFIRMATION OF CO-OPTED POSITIONS

(vote required for approval)

Access Co-ordinators

Stump Cross

(vacant)

Robinsons & Fairy Holes

Dinny Davies

Excalibur Access

Matt Ewles

Bowland Access

Tony Brown

Web Administrator

Gary Douthwaite

Anchor Co-ordinator

Alan Speight

PR & Communications Officer

Matt Ewles

Minute Secretary

Josh Young

Assistant Training Officer

Mark Richards

Online Booking Co-ordinator

Discontinued ?

7.0 CONFIRMATION OF BCA REPRESENTATIVES

(vote required for approval)

BCA COMMITTEE:

Conservation Working Group

Kay Easton

Youth & Development Working Group

Aila Taylor

Equipment & Training Working Group

Mark Richards

& Ian Patrick

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

(for discussion and vote)

8.0 CNCC Equipment Store (Appendix 1)

9.0 Exploration Grants (Appendix 2)

10.0 CNCC Funds (Appendix 3)

11.0 Non-CNCC Aids (Appendix 4)

11.1 Inclusion on CNCC Topos

11.2 Update of website re Topos

12.0 CNCC Independent Caver rep (Appendix 5)

13.0 Any other business

14.0 Details of next meeting

Committee Meeting to be held on 21 October at 9:30am

Venue: Clapham Village Hall (Postcode LA2 8DZ)

APPENDIX 1
AGENDA ITEM 8.0
CNCC EQUIPMENT STORE
(Suggestion by Matt Ewles)

I would like to ask for CNCC Committee and Officers to discuss the feasibility of CNCC acquiring or renting a store. We currently own a large amount of kit which is stored at Colt Park Barn courtesy of Andrew Hinde, plus various other items which are held by other Officers such as photo displays, banners, PR materials, Audio-Visual equipment, SRT training kit, Caves and Karst books, as well as historical documents.

In some cases, it is practical for individual officers to hold CNCC assets at their home/workplace, but in other situations it is an inconvenience, plus it makes those assets harder to access when required.

At the AGM we discussed how good it would be for CNCC to be able to have a store of digging materials or scaffold, which obviously isn't feasible without somewhere to keep it.

Finally, one of the limiting factors to CNCC supporting new-to-caving events is the availability of loan kit. Currently there is no scope to purchase oversuits, undersuits etc as we would have nowhere to store them.

Overall, having a Dales-based facility could open up a lot of doors for CNCC to further support northern cavers in ways we currently cannot (and spend BCA's money, which I am passionate about doing). I know nothing about the availability/costs of hiring a lock-up or something similar, but am keen to hear from anyone who does; or even from anyone who knows of such a potential facility.

It would also be good to understand whether costs for a store (rent, insurance etc) might be reclaimable from BCA (I will investigate this ahead of the meeting and hopefully come with an answer).

Finally, such a facility would need someone to take responsibility for looking after it; Are we likely to find a volunteer? In short, I'd like to hear whether CNCC Committee feel this would be a good idea, before we move on to explore practicality, logistics and resource.

APPENDIX 2

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 EXPLORATION GRANTS *(Suggestion by Matt Ewles)*

At the AGM, CNCC Committee were tasked with coming up a scheme by which we can issue grants to support northern exploration.

I would like to put forward some suggested wording for such a scheme. This is really difficult to get right, because on one hand, we can't give money to support an unauthorised dig, or one with no clear conservation plan (it would not look good for CNCC to fund a dig, only to then have to fund cleaning up the mess after), and there obviously needs to be some kind of plan in place for use of the money. But simultaneously, if we make it too complex, nobody will bother applying.

In reality, I suspect most well-established digging groups will self-fund rather than have any hassle. However, for smaller teams, newer diggers, or those with ample enthusiasm but who might struggle to afford things like scaffolding, such a scheme could be very enabling for them.

This wording is just a starting point. All feedback welcomed.

SUGGESTED WORDING:

The CNCC welcomes applications for exploration grants across the areas we represent (northern England and Scotland), as part of an initiative to support those who seek to further our knowledge of northern caves and discover new places that others might enjoy.

Funding is primarily intended to help cover costs associated to procurement of materials and consumable items or equipment hire, but other costs will be considered.

To make an application, please email secretary@cncc.org.uk with a summary of your project including what the nature of the work you are seeking funding for is (e.g. shaft sinking, stabilisation, underground digging, diving, pitch scaling, conservation, surveying), project timeframes, the amount you need and, as accurately as possible, a costed breakdown of how this is going to be spent. All applications will be decided by CNCC Committee.

Any project receiving CNCC funding must show that all necessary permissions are in place, including Landowner/Natural England consent, and must demonstrate, where relevant, that conservation and public/livestock safety issues have been carefully considered.

It is important for CNCC to be transparent and therefore publish details of projects receiving funding. Furthermore, grant recipients are expected to provide follow-up on how the project has gone (or is going) once some reasonable progress has been made. The exact expectations associated to each grant may vary on a project-by-project basis.

APPENDIX 3

AGENDA ITEM 10.0

CNCC FUNDS *(Suggestion by Pete Bann)*

Annual accounts presented to the 2023 AGM showed the CNCC has approximately £14,000 in cash. This is held at Barclays Bank, in current and savings accounts.

There was a brief discussion at the AGM about the best use of CNCC funds, particularly in a time of high inflation.

The CNCC needs to hold sufficient Working Capital to cover it's outgoings (both known and also unexpected), especially as the BCA will only re-imburse the region once a year.

Following the two earlier agenda items (Equipment store, Exploration grants) this is an opportunity to discuss in more depth the use of CNCC funds.

APPENDIX 4

AGENDA ITEM 11.1

INCLUSION OF NON-APPROVED ANCHORS ON CNCC TOPOS

(Suggestion by Ian Patrick)

To allow the CNCC to show “non approved” anchors on topos that would be deemed useful to cavers. Such anchors would be clearly differentiated from approved anchors on topos and a suitable disclaimer attached to the topo.

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AGENDA ITEM 11.2

UPDATE OF FIXED AIDS SECTION OF WEBSITE

(Wording by Matt Ewles)

The Fixed Aids section of our website is a little out of date, given our recent installation of ground spikes and our decision to show non-CNCC approved anchors on our topos.

I would like to suggest the following wording changes to the fixed-aids section on our website.

CURRENT TEXT 1:

The only fixed aids that the Council of Northern Caving Clubs currently supports are stainless steel resin anchors which have been installed by trained installers in accordance with the British Caving Association’s anchor scheme. This includes P-type anchors installed by the CNCC Technical Group and, more recently, IC anchors installed by the IC anchor team.

REPLACEMENT TEXT 1:

The primary fixed aids that the Council of Northern Caving Clubs currently supports are stainless steel resin bonded anchors which have been installed by trained installers in accordance with the CNCC or BCA anchor scheme in place at the time of their installation. This includes P-type anchors installed by the CNCC Technical Group up to approximately 2015, and since 2015, IC anchors installed by CNCC-approved installers.

CURRENT TEXT 2:

The CNCC does not support, maintain or endorse use of any other kinds of fixed aids in caves. We strongly recommend that cavers avoid use of fixed aids such as ropes, ladders and instead take your own ropes into the cave, and avoid use of unofficial anchors. There can never be certainty how long a fixed aid has been there, and what damage or wear it may have suffered in that time.

REPLACEMENT TEXT 2:

The CNCC may, under some limited circumstances, install or make cavers aware of alternative anchors or belays in caves. Examples include installing ground spikes where a surface belay is needed but the surface rock does not support resin bonded anchors, or the display of selected non-CNCC approved anchors, scaffold or tree belays on our rigging topos. In all such situations, these anchors or belays will be differentiated on topos from approved anchors and additional warnings will appear on the topo to emphasise that groups must take additional responsibility and care if choosing to use them. Cavers should avoid use of fixed aids such as ropes and ladders as these are often abandoned without maintenance or inspection, and can be prone to very rapid and unobvious deterioration.

CURRENT PARTICIPATION STATEMENT:

The only fixed aids supported by the CNCC are resin anchors installed in accordance with the British Caving Association anchor scheme. A list of approved anchors can be found on the CNCC website. Any other anchors found in caves are not approved or supported. Resin anchors are for use by experienced cavers only who are fully trained in rigging techniques and who have understood all of the information in our 'anchor safety' document from the CNCC website, including the need to always perform a pre-use inspection on every anchor and to always rig from multiple anchors. The CNCC does not support, endorse, monitor or maintain any other fixed aids in caves including ropes and ladders (as well as any other items left behind by other cavers), and urges all cavers to avoid using any such fixed aids altogether.

REPLACEMENT PARTICIPATION STATEMENT:

The primary fixed aids supported by the CNCC ('approved anchors') are stainless steel resin bonded anchors installed in accordance with a CNCC or BCA scheme. A list of approved anchors can be found on our website and shown on our rigging topos. The CNCC may install or advise on the availability of alternative anchors and belays only in situations where approved anchors are not available or where caver awareness of alternative anchors or belays is deemed beneficial. These will be differentiated on our topos from approved anchors, and cavers must understand that the decision to use them incurs even greater personal responsibilities and judgement, as CNCC cannot claim the same confidence in their integrity as we can for approved anchors. Anchors are for use by experienced cavers only who are fully trained in rigging techniques and who have understood all of the information in our 'anchor safety' document, including the need to always perform a pre-use inspection on every anchor and to always rig from multiple anchors. The CNCC does not support, endorse, monitor or maintain any ropes or ladders in caves. We urge all cavers to avoid using any such fixed aids for safety-related purpose as their condition may be compromised.

Other fixed aids section:

Can be removed (now covered in replacement text 2)

APPENDIX 5

AGENDA ITEM 12.0

CNCC INDEPENDENT CAVER REPRESENTATIVE (CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT)

(Suggestion by Matt Ewles)

In the interests of encouraging someone to come forward for the Independent Caver representative on the CNCC Committee, I believe CNCC Committee should consider amending point 5c of our constitution at the next AGM:

From:

The Committee may, only if there is an eligible applicant at the election, also include one additional member whose role it is to represent individual cavers undertaking trips outside of a club structure (known herein as the Individual Caver (IC) representative). The IC representative must be *an individual member of the BCA*, and has one vote on the Committee.

To:

The Committee may, only if there is an eligible applicant at the election, also include one additional member whose role it is to represent individual cavers undertaking trips outside of a club structure (known herein as the Individual Caver (IC) representative). The IC representative must be *one individual*, and has one vote on the Committee.

(ie Deleting the requirement to be a BCA member)