

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

CNCC Access Officer Application: May 2014

A statement by John Latimer to support his application to perform the co-opted role of Access Officer after the 31st May 2014 Committee Meeting.

This document should be reviewed by The Committee ahead of this meeting

From my experience of the CNCC there's been too much work taken on by too few Officers leading to some Officers wearing multiple 'hats'. Wider involvement of more cavers from a wider spread of clubs or individual backgrounds can only be good for getting the CNCC to become representative of the views of people who cave in Northern England.

With this in mind I will stand for Access Officer at the forthcoming Additional Committee meeting 31/5/14.

In my opinion the CNCC is in the process of much needed reform, I hope to be able to assist with this going forwards.

I live in Clapham and am a tenant of the Ingleborough Estate with some understanding of the Estate's relationship with its caves, access agreement and cavers. I'm a member of two Northern clubs, the Earby PC and the Bradford PC. I don't wish to ramble too much so will keep this as concise as possible when outlining my aspirations for the future.

1. Permits

There have recently been concerns raised over the issuing of access permits for caves. This system needs to be standardised to make it transparent and clear. The other question of DIM's obtaining permits needs a fresh approach focused on making the permits available to all. It's impossible to properly manage an access agreement which isn't fully inclusive. I would work to restore confidence in the system and make permits easier to obtain for club and individual cavers.

2. Communication

The 'Commercial Caving' proposal is an example of poor communication. The Association of Cave Instructors (ACI) felt let down by the Access Officer who was in negotiations with them and the landowners / land agents on their behalf. The CNCC Committee were persuaded to accept the proposal despite the ACI (who the proposal was intended for) not being in favour of it. The result was the proposal being overturned and poor relations between the ACI and

the CNCC. I know many members of the ACI personally and would work to restore the reputation of the CNCC.

There must be more effort to communicate between all parties involved in cave access.

3. Representation

As Access Officer I would actively promote the CNCC and the work it does for caving and access in the North.

There are a number of important groups which at present the CNCC are not adequately represented;

Yorkshire Dales Cave & Crag Access Forum (R & P Halliwell attended 1 meeting on behalf of CNCC). I cannot understand why the CNCC Access Officer hasn't been involved with this group which was established in 2006 and meet regularly in the Dales. The lack of representation at these meetings gives the impression that the CNCC is unaware or uninterested in the larger picture of caver access to the Dales.

BCA CRoW Working Group. CRoW & caving has been debated for years with as yet no definitive outcome. It's good to see that BCA are addressing this situation.

CHECC (Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs). In my opinion this is one group which the CNCC must become much more involved with. CHECC is a direct route to communicating with the UK's biggest group of young, keen, active cavers (the future of our sport).

As Access Officer I would endeavour to attend all of the above meetings and would hope to establish good communication between the groups and the CNCC.

If you have any questions or points to raise please don't hesitate to contact me.

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