

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting 12th September 2015 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Meeting opened 9.35am, Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Committee voting?
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary, taking minutes	
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	
Adrian Turner	York Uni CPC		Yes
Dan Irving	OUCC	Training Officer	
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club		Yes
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Andy Farrow	Northern Boggarts	Leck meets	
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes
Simon Wilson	Earby PC	BCA E&T Rep/IC anchors	Yes
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Ray Duffy	Red Rose CPC		
Martell Baines	Bradford PC	BCA rep	
Kay Easton	Bradford PC	Conservation Officer	Yes
Pat Halliwell	Craven PC		Yes
Ric Halliwell	Craven PC	Birks Fell/Robinsons/Mongo/Fairy Holes meets	
Bernard Bond	Burnley CC		Yes
Alan Speight	YSS	Casterton meets (outgoing)	Yes
Hannah Walker	YSS	Casterton meets (incoming)	
Roy Holmes	Dent House SS	Chairman	
Jim Sloane	Lancashire UG		Yes
Ian Walker	Red Rose/YSS		
Chris Camm	White Rose PC		Yes
Johnny Latimer	Earby PC	Access Officer	
Geoff Whittaker	Th'Owd Skool CC	Ingleborough meets	

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

(1) Apologies for absence

Ian Cross (Bradford PC)
Will Whalley (SUSS)
Pete Bann (Northern Boggarts, Treasurer)
Sam Allshorn (ULSA, Penyghent meets)
Ian Lloyd (Northumbrian SG)
Fiona Durham (YSS)

The meeting opened with the Chairman welcoming Dan Irving (new Training Officer) and Hannah Walker (taking over Casterton Fell permits) to their first CNCC Committee meeting.

(2) Acceptance of June Committee meeting minutes

There were two comments on the minutes:

- Ric Halliwell said that with respect to Birks Fell, the National Trust is the landowner. Therefore, the minutes (section 5) should be amended to clarify that he had made no progress in negotiating with the National Trust regarding increasing access to Birks Fell Cave (and not that the National Trust had made no progress with improving access). This will be amended in the final published minutes.
- Martell Baines said that the statement 'Martell Baines said she believed that the two anchors had their own merits and that the IC anchor was best for use in small spaces' did not adequately reflect her actual statement at the meeting. The Secretary will work with Martell to ensure that this is amended appropriately in the final published minutes.

Acceptance of minutes:

Proposed: Not recorded in error

Seconded: Not recorded in error

Votes: 11 votes for, 1 abstention

Action: Matt Ewles make necessary change and issue the final minutes.

(3) Matters arising from the June Committee meeting

The following actions/outcomes resulting from the June meeting were presented:

- Johnny Latimer confirmed that he has contacted the Local Access Forum (LAF) regarding the issues with Langcliffe Estate as suggested at the June meeting. This matter is scheduled for discussion at their next meeting (November).
- Andrew Hinde confirmed that a new stile at Bull Pot of the Witches had been provided and was installed by members of RRCPC shortly after the June meeting.
- Matt Ewles has sent a letter to the land agents for Casterton Fell to pursue more open access here for cavers. This was sent at the end of June but there has been no reply yet so he said he planned to follow this up over the next few weeks. Johnny Latimer added that he

has been in contact with the land agent (Edward Johnson), and they have received the letter and are taking it under consideration. Therefore, there is no need for any follow up at the moment as it was being considered.

- Matt Ewles has sent an email to CHECC (in June) to discuss the availability of permits to them, but has yet to receive a response. He acknowledged that it was the student summer holidays and said he hoped for a reply over the coming months. Hannah Walker said she will contact them via Facebook to encourage them to reply as soon as possible.
- Simon Wilson asked whether the CNCC Technical Group had provided details of anchor placements to the BCA as agreed at the June meeting. Nobody knew, so Matt Ewles will follow up on this with them.
- Gary Douthwaite said that the anchors section of the website had been updated as agreed at the June meeting. Full details are included in the webmaster report.
- Roy Holmes said he has been in touch with the three Cave Rescue organisations to make them aware of the £500 funding available for communications equipment. He said that they are waiting for confirmation from the BCRC who are supplying the radios, but no ancillary equipment, before confirming exactly what funding they require. In response to questions, Roy confirmed that the amount agreed was a maximum £500 per cave rescue organisation (CRO, Swaledale and UWFRA) so a total of £1500 of funding was on offer.
- Andrew Hinde said that the archives of historic communications between the CNCC and Natural England will be taken to Hidden Earth for transfer to the BCRA.
- Martell Baines delivered a verbal report to the room on the outcomes of the last BCA meeting (no minutes of this report taken as full details of all outcomes are available in the BCA minutes). With respect to plans to standardise their membership, Chris Camm said that the only reason his club were in the BCA was for the public liability insurance; he asked how the planned changes might affect the cost of the insurance. Andrew Hinde said that the BCA were keen to even out the fees paid by CIMs and DIMs, but it is unclear at this point what impact this will have on the actual costs.

(4) Officers reports

Chairman's report:

No questions

Secretary's report:

No questions

Treasurer's report:

A few additional matters were raised with respect to the Treasurer's report:

- Matt Ewles provided a verbal summary of the Treasurer's report, in the absence of Pete Bann. Andrew Hinde and others asked whether the CNCC could pursue the use of online banking. Matt explained the complexity of this particularly for organisations such as the

CNCC, and agreed that while this was desirable in the long run, for now he was keen to simply get the signatories sorted to allow us to start issuing cheques again.

- Sam Lieberman asked who was doing the rigging work at Stake Pot (as mentioned in the Treasurer's report). Matt Ewles confirmed this was Graham Coates, and he has already done Fall Pot. Sam added that RRCPC were having a clean-up in Ease Gill on 3rd 4th October, and asked if this could be advertised through the CNCC. Matt said this shouldn't be a problem and asked if the relevant information could be sent through as soon as possible.

ACTION: Sam L/Ray D to provide information on Ease Gill Cleanup weekend to Matt, and Matt to circulate this to all full members and advertise it through CNCC website.

- Ray Duffy added that they would also be having a clean-up of ropes from the system, such as those in County Pot and Pippikin. He confirmed that some ropes in the system would be left as they were considered important escape routes, but others were not.
- Ian Walker said that there was a fine line between conservation and safety, and asked which ropes should be left in and which should not?
- Matt Ewles asked whether the BCA had records of what ropes were 'fixed aids' in Ease Gill? Simon Wilson said that the BCA did look into a fixed aids policy but this was abandoned.
- Matt asked whether we should issue a list of which ropes are deemed 'fixed' and should be left in place and replaced when necessary. Andy Farrow said that Pete Knight did this for the DCA. Gary Douthwaite said a list could be published on the CNCC website and asked if we could come up with a quick list now to act as a starting point. Several were listed (including Fall Pot, Stake Pot Echo Pot, the Magic Roundabout, Notts II and Lyle Cavern) but this list was not exhaustive and further work would be needed.

ACTION: No specific action agreed regarding fixed aids but discussion offline may be useful?

Conservation Officer's report:

No questions.

Training Officer's Report:

Dan Irving introduced himself and provided a verbal report.

- Dan confirmed that the CNCC will be arranging a SRT/rescue/rigging workshop in January or February. Exact dates are still being confirmed, and he would work with Matt Ewles to advertise this to full member clubs as soon as possible.
- Ray Duffy said that there was a side-route down the Cow Pot entrance pitch which was sometimes used for training. He said that this was currently on spits and asked whether Simon Wilson would be happy to install IC anchors on this route to benefit training. Simon said that one of the principles of IC anchors is to keep anchors to a minimum, and asked whether this installation could be justified on conservation grounds, given that the YSS/BPC has a training wall. Alan Speight confirmed that the YSS training facility was available for all, and was not a money-making facility for their club. Simon said he was keen to avoid putting anchors in where they were not necessary, and Dan Irving agreed. Sam Lieberman said that

the current spits are in reasonable and serviceable condition at the moment. Alan Speight said that use of Ease Gill for training could be seen as a breach of the access agreement, although it was mentioned that as the Cow Pot entrance is open to daylight it is technically covered under CRow. Simon thought training should be best kept to walls and quarries. Dan said that it would be nice to retain some spits in such locations such that people can be trained in their use, although Simon added that he believed that no more spits should ever be installed. The end outcome was not to install any resin anchors, however, Matt Ewles added that should the spits currently in place become unserviceable, the issue might be raised again.

- Simon Wilson asked whether the CNCC Technical Group had one of the BCA's sets of Hydrajaws and if so could they be provided to the IC anchor team. Nobody knew but Matt Ewles said he could ask in his follow-up regarding anchor placement records.

ACTION: Matt Ewles to follow up with CNCC Technical Group about submitting their records to the BCA E&T and whether they have the Hydrajaws.

Access officer's report:

Johnny provided a verbal update to the room:

- He said that there was a new contact for Ingleborough Estate (Patrick Holmes).
- He has written to Langcliffe Estate to discuss the ongoing issue with access to the caves on their land (mainly Penygghent Pot and Dale Head Pot). The caves are covered under the tax exemption policy and therefore he believed that cavers should be given access to them, but Langcliffe Estate do not wish to discuss this. Johnny has written to HMRC to inform them of the situation but no response as yet. Matt Ewles asked whether by the CNCC controlling access to these caves we were breaking the law. Johnny thought not, but suggested that depending on what happens over the coming months, we may have to withdraw from the access agreement. Simon Wilson suggested we write to the landowner to inform them that we will be doing this; however, Ric Halliwell said it would be better if the Local Access Forum were to author such a letter. We will wait until the LAF meeting in November, by which point we will hopefully have a reply from HMRC, and a decision can be made on what further action if any we should take on this matter.

ACTION: Johnny to raise the matter at the LAF meeting in November and continue to work with HMRC to investigate all possible options. Report options to the January meeting.

Webmaster's report:

- Alan Speight said he thought the website was excellent.
- Matt Ewles provided a verbal summary of the new 'Get Involved' section on the website.
- Andy Farrow asked about spam filtering; he is currently receiving a lot from his address being public on the website. Matt Ewles confirmed that he received quite a lot too (several per day) but that this was unfortunately a consequence of making yourself contactable. Gary said that he will look into this to see if anything can be done to reduce spam emails.

ACTION: Gary to investigate ways to reduce spam for those with email addresses on the CNCC site.

- Pete Monk asked about an online booking diary for permits. Gary said that work on that had started some time ago but was put on hold, as access details were changing so often at the moment and he didn't want to put a huge amount of work into creating a bespoke system when details of the access agreement were likely to be changing.
- Penyghent and now Casterton have a Google calendar available to allow applicants to check permit availability before sending an application.

IC anchor report:

- Simon Wilson added that 11 anchors for Serendipity pitches in Link Pot would be included on the next report.
- Alan Speight asked about the manufacture of the anchor, and was there any scope to get them manufactured externally? Simon said that he can keep up with the demand at the moment; however, he would be willing to consider external manufacture if this became necessary in the future.
- Pat Halliwell asked about the current procedure for reporting defective anchors (with respect to a report about a loose anchor in Gaping Gill). Matt Ewles explained that the defective anchor report had historically always gone to the CNCC Technical Group, but currently it comes to him and the Chairman while it is being tested following the amendments to the anchor section of the website.
- A question was asked about how one could request an anchor placement. Matt suggested that the best course of action would be to contact one or both of the installer groups.
- Pete Monk asked about who owned the copyright to the CNCC rigging guides, and could they be made available on the website? Matt Ewles confirmed that the copyright was held by the CNCC Technical Group, and that historically (and also currently) the CNCC had made quite a large amount of their annual income from sales of their rigging guides. However, he agreed that this would be nice to look into in the future if the CNCC Technical Group were interested. Simon Wilson said that he had no intention to produce paper/book versions of the IC anchor rigging guides, but would put them on his website instead.
- Pat Halliwell asked whether the new Northern Caves would include rigging topos, and Simon clarified that although they will include a guide, they will not include the topo.
- Matt Ewles explained that the CNCC website had been updated for all caves installed with IC anchors to direct people towards the IC anchor website for the rigging topo. Simon said he was very keen to encourage people to draw rigging guides.

(5) Meets Secretary's reports

Leck Fell:

No questions

Casterton Fell:

Alan Speight said he has only issued six permits for August, and is handing over the role to Hannah Walker today. Pete Monk proposed a vote of thanks to Alan, which was supported by all 12 voting Committee representatives.

ACTION: Matt/Gary to ensure CNCC website is updated with contact details for Hannah.

Ingleborough Estate:

No questions

Birks Fell/Stump Cross/ Robinson's Pot/Fairy Holes:

- Andrew Hinde had just signed the access agreement for Fairy Holes with the new quarry owner (Eastgate Quarries Ltd). They have essentially copied the Lafarge agreement (some changes were made initially but these were mostly deemed unsuitable so were withdrawn). We can therefore confirm that the agreement will remain for next year.
- Ric Halliwell provided a verbal update on the situation with Robinsons' Pot. Following discussions, the National Trust had agreed to 12 permits per year, however, the tenants at Darnbrook House were not comfortable with this number. As a compromise, eight permits per year will be available from 2016, the first Saturday of May/June/July/August/September, and the third Saturday of May/July/September. This is expected to be a sufficient supply to mean that there is no need for permits to be agreed by drawing lots at the CNCC AGM as in previous years, and instead permits could be obtained by email. Ric said he did not feel this agreement could be extended to individual cavers at the moment, on grounds of the expectation of the tenants for caving groups to be of larger numbers.

ACTION: Matt Ewles/Gary Douthwaite to update CNCC website with new access information.

Penyghent and Fountains Fell:

No questions.

Other areas:

- Tony Brown said that the resurgence for Whitewell Cave was not in the Bowland agreement as it was previously thought to be blocked; however, it is now apparently open. He will look to bring this into the agreement. Pete Monk asked whether the agreement could be opened out to individual cavers, rather than just clubs. Tony said he was hoping to see the landowner soon to get this arranged.
- Kay Easton said that some groups had reported difficulty using the Whitewell Pot entrance, and that Tony had suggested. Matt Ewles confirmed that upon his visit with York Caving Club it had been less than obvious that one of the links in the chain was a C-link which could be undone. Apparently a previous group has assumed a spanner was necessary to open the entrance! It was suggested that the permit should probably include some mention of this to avoid any future confusion.

ACTION: Tony to discuss with landowner inclusion of resurgence in Bowland agreement, and the possibility of making access possible for individual cavers. Amend permit to provide instructions on opening of the Whitewell Pot gate.

Vote to accept all Officers and Meets secretary reports;

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Andrew Hinde

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

(6) IC Anchor discussion and proposal

Pete Monk opened the discussion by asking whether the CNCC have a 'box' of Bolt Product anchors, and who owns them? Simon Wilson said that Glenn Jones is the official holder of the stock of these and they were property of the BCA. He said that 2000 had originally been ordered, although not all of these had yet to be delivered, but this was not a concern for the CNCC. John Holloway said that these anchors could be sold on to industry if we have an excessive supply.

The proposal was read out:

"That the IC anchor, as already approved by CNCC Committee and BCA E&T committee, is adopted as CNCC's anchor of choice on conservation grounds when available."

John Holloway confirmed that ULSA were still happy to second this proposal.

Vote to accept the proposal:

Proposed: Andrew Hinde

Seconded: John Holloway

Votes: 11 votes for, 1 abstention

(7) Date of AGM 2016

It was agreed to change the date. Matt Ewles said that to move it back a month into April would be unconstitutional. He said that either of the previous two weekends would be fine, but that he would have to offer apologies as he was on vacation, but stressed that his attendance was not necessary. It was agreed to reschedule the AGM for Saturday 5th March, with no objections presented.

ACTION: Matt Ewles to update AGM date on website and alert member clubs.

(8) Additional Proposal for Consideration

“That CNCC officers approach the Instructed Caving organisations/practitioners and invite them to consider the formation of a joint CNCC/Instructed Caving Liaison Group”

- Andrew said that this situation already exists in Derbyshire where it works well.
- Dan Irving said that he sits with the BCA Training Committee and so has already started work to help improve relations and communications between the CNCC/BCA/instructed cavers.
- Roy Holmes asked if there had been any major issues recently that has prompted this? Dan said no, but one of the main matters being discussed by the BCA Training Committee was £2000 available for training which was not being used and could be put to use by Regional Councils. Andrew Hinde said that there may be access and conservation issues too. Johnny Latimer raised a historic example of a caving instructor approaching a landowner via their Member of Parliament to get access, and said it would have been much better had this request come through the CNCC instead.
- Dan said that there were 1000's of level 1 and 2 caving instructors and 50+ CICs and currently there was no means for them to be represented within the CNCC. He said that in theory they are represented by the BCA Training Committee.
- Matt Ewles asked what the scope of this proposal would be? Dan said that it would be difficult to individually represent the thousands of level 1 and 2 caving instructors. They are represented by the BCA Training Committee, and the BCA cannot interfere with the Regional Councils. Andrew Hinde said he simply wanted to ensure that if issues do arise in the future, the instructed caving community have a point of contact in the CNCC and feel that they can raise their issues with us and that we will work to address them.
- Pat Halliwell asked whether there is currently a central point of contact for CICs? Dan said yes, the Association of Caving Instructors (ACI), but this only represents full CICs (of which there are relatively few) and not the thousands of level 1 and level 2 caving instructors who are not CIC-qualified and who are operating around the country.
- Chris Camm asked whether the CNCC could be taking on any liability by working on behalf of the instructed caving community.
- Andrew Hinde suggested that the initial scope could be to simply invite a member of the Northern Panel (a sub-group of the BCA Training Committee) to attend our meetings. Tony Brown and Dan Irving both believed that such a gesture would be well received.

Acceptance of the proposal:

Proposer: Andrew Hinde

Seconder: Alan Speight

Votes: 11 votes for, 1 abstention

ACTION: Matt Ewles and Dan Irving to work together to produce a letter to invite representatives of the instructed caving community to join CNCC meetings and to build relations.

(9) Date and time of future meetings

Next meeting: Committee meeting 16th January 2016

(10) Any other business?

Tim Allen letters: A discussion about representation for individual cavers

Matt Ewles briefed the room on the situation:

Two letters had been provided to the CNCC Committee ahead of the meeting, putting forward a case for why the CNCC should be working harder to achieve representation for individual cavers. The first letter was circulated to the Committee. Based on replies received from several individuals, and his own thoughts, the CNCC Secretary had replied to Tim to acknowledge the letters but to say that he felt them to perhaps be too negative and not to adequately acknowledge that progress had been made in many of the areas the original letter seemed to raise. The second letter from Tim then followed and was circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting.

NOTE: These letters are reproduced at the end of these minutes (Appendix 1a and 1b), with permission from Tim.

A discussion of these letters was held.

- John Holloway said that several people had asked why the CNCC was not doing more for individual cavers.
- Alan Speight asked whether we were talking about DIMs, CIMs, or all cavers regardless of BCA affiliation, and pointed out that we were already well on route to improving access across the board for all cavers.
- Andrew Hinde suggested that Tim's point about representation for DIMs is something we should be considering.
- Pat Halliwell asked how this would work from a voting perspective, and Matt Ewles said that if we were to have a DIM representative, how would we go about electing them? Several people said that we could simply invite all DIMs to attend our AGM to vote on who should represent them.
- Roy Holmes asked how many DIM's were in the room: Seven.
- Pete Monk said that while there were no voting rights at present there were no barriers to any individual getting involved currently. John Holloway said that the issue was that individual cavers were not able currently to deliver a vote or to propose motions.

- Martell Baines suggested that we need to make it more clear on the website that individual cavers are welcome to come to our meetings. Matt Ewles said that the information on the website (in the new 'Get Involved' section) did say this, but suggested that perhaps it could be split out into a separate section to emphasise this more.

ACTION: Matt Ewles to review content of Get Involved section with respect to individual cavers

- Ray Duffy asked whether this was fundamentally about access; Matt Ewles explained that his impression here was that the concerns revolved around democratic representation.
- Simon Wilson said that there were two groups of cavers here; those who are not a member of anything (i.e. non-BCA cavers) who we cannot represent easily, and those who are Direct Individual Members of the BCA. He said that we (the CNCC) cannot decide who a DIM representative should be and suggested that the BCA should choose a representative to attend our AGM to be ratified.
- Johnny Latimer suggested we should put in place the infrastructure to allow a DIM representative to be on the Committee, and we should have a proposal today to make this happen and to be seen to be making a positive step towards allowing individual cavers to bring their views to the CNCC.
- Kay Easton said that currently the CNCC was working hard to get access for non-club cavers, but we are asking them to take it on trust that we are representing their needs. We should create a more formal recognition of this representation.
- Simon Wilson echoed that he believed we should be asking the BCA to appoint our representative for individual cavers, and provide a letter to confirm their appointment.
- Andy Farrow suggested that it needed to be a representative for individual cavers, not just DIMs. Martell Baines said that we needed to distinguish, as many DIMS are also members of clubs, but many individual cavers were not.
- Johnny Latimer said we shouldn't worry at the moment about the mechanics of how appointing the representative for individual cavers would work, but that we should simply focus on creating this opportunity.
- The Chairman called for a proposal, which was put forward by John Holloway:

"The CNCC will endeavour to create a voting Committee position for Direct Individual Member representation and will investigate how this can be incorporated into the constitution. The selection process will be determined following consultation with the BCA."

- Pat Halliwell expressed concern that there had not been sufficient time to consult with clubs on this proposal. There was a general discussion about this, with some claiming that all club representatives in the room should have the freedom to make a decision autonomously on this matter. Matt Ewles said that he would feel very uncomfortable proceeding with a vote on a non-agenda proposal of this magnitude if any of the Committee club representatives

felt that more time was required to consider this, as this could be undemocratic. Others pointed out that the proposal did not specifically mean any changes would happen, but would simply result in the presentation of a constitutional change at the AGM where a vote could then be taken on whether to proceed. Matt said that he felt however a proposal put to the AGM had much greater gravitas if it could be proposed and seconded ahead of the meeting, and that it had the support of the outgoing Committee.

- As a compromise, Matt suggested an amendment to the proposal to incorporate an electronic poll of the Committee on suggested constitutional changes to be put forward to the AGM. John Holloway captured this as the following:

“The CNCC will endeavour to create a voting Committee position for Direct Individual Member representation and will investigate how this can be incorporated into the constitution. A suggested constitutional amendment will be drawn up and circulated to the Committee for an electronic poll in sufficient time for it to be taken forward to the AGM if accepted. The selection process will be determined following consultation with the BCA.”

The above proposal:

Proposed: John Holloway

Seconded: Simon Wilson

Votes: 11 votes for (one committee representative had left, so unanimous)

ACTION: Matt Ewles to work with the previous constitution team (Kay Easton, Ric and Pat Halliwell) to come up with some wording to make it possible for a position on the Committee to be created for a DIM representative, and to contact the BCA to consider options as to how such an individual might be appointed or elected. Present suggestion(s) to the CNCC Committee by email in sufficient time for an informed vote to be made by email, and in sufficient time for the decision to be progressed to a proposal for constitutional amendment at the AGM in March.

- Bernard Bond provided a verbal update to the room on Skirwith Cave; no problems.
- Simon Wilson showed to the room an anchor he had removed from Heron pot, which may have become loose due to resin shrinkage. He said that the UIAA are looking into different resins, and that the CNCC had one of the biggest datasets in the world on such matters.
- Andrew Hinde raise a concern that proposals at CNCC meetings were being raised and seconded but then being ‘scuppered’ from going to a vote by the Secretary. Two examples were the proposal at the June meeting regarding the IC anchor and the original proposal above regarding the constitutional changes. He said the Chairman should ensure that once a proposal is made and seconded it must go to a vote unless retracted by the proposer. Matt said that with respect to the IC anchor proposal in June, this was proposed and seconded very quickly and out of the blue (and was not on the agenda). Therefore, he was concerned that to proceed immediately to a vote would have given insufficient time to consider this and that those in the room might not be fully aware of the intended scope of the proposal. He said that some non-agenda proposals were ones for which representatives of Committee clubs could be expected to use their discretion on, however, some, such as an agreement to

start down the road towards individual caver representation, had substantial and significant implications, and he wanted to be sure all Committee clubs felt they'd had sufficient time to engage with their members on these. There were no overall outcomes of this discussion.

Meeting closed 12:14pm.

Summary of action items dictated or inferred from this meeting:

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E	Update June minutes and issue.
Sam L/Ray D/Matt E	Provide information on Ease Gill Cleanup weekend to Matt, and Matt to circulate this to all full members and advertise it through CNCC website.
Matt E	Follow up with CNCC Technical Group about records and Hydrajaws.
Gary D	Ensure CNCC website is updated with contact details for Hannah Walker.
Johnny L	Raise Langcliffe Estate issue at the Local Access Forum meeting in November and continue to work with HMRC to investigate all possible options. Report options to the January meeting.
Gary D	Investigate ways to reduce spam for CNCC officers/permit secretaries.
Matt E/Gary D	Update CNCC website with new Robinson's Pot information.
Tony B	Discuss with landowner inclusion of resurgence in Bowland agreement, and the possibility of making access possible for individual cavers. Amend permit to provide instructions on opening of the Whitewell Pot gate.
Matt E	Update AGM date on website and alert member clubs.
Matt E/Dan I	Work together to produce a letter to invite representatives of the instructed caving community to join CNCC meetings and to build relations.
Matt E	Review content of Get Involved section with respect to individual cavers.
Matt E <i>et. al.</i>	Come up with some wording to make it possible for a position on the Committee to be created for a DIM representative, and to contact the BCA to consider options as to how such an individual might be appointed or elected. Present suggestion(s) to the CNCC Committee by email in sufficient time for an informed vote to be made by email, and in sufficient time for the decision to be progressed to a proposal for constitutional amendment at the AGM in March.

Appendix 1a: First letter from Tim Allen to CNCC Committee received 15th August 2015

To the CNCC Committee.

Dear all

Following on from the discussion at the AGM I wonder if you could give some time at your next meeting to discuss the issue of representation. Obviously you are a council of clubs, represented in practice by officers and a committee of up to 14 club reps. However, you are the regional council of the BCA where I expect the intention is that you would represent the interests of all of its members. At present the relevant reference in the CNCC constitution appears to be the line "To represent the general interests of member clubs and northern cavers". However only clubs have any real say in regional matters which effect other groups and individuals. Off the top of my head the following are part of the Dales caving scene but how many have any real representation on the 'Council';

Full member clubs
Associate member clubs
Non-member clubs
Foreign clubs
Individual members of BCA
Individual club members of BCA
Individual cavers or small groups of cavers not members of caving clubs or BCA
Cave Diving Group (northern section)
Local Cave Instructors and the CIC northern panel
Regional representation of other national bodies such as NAMHO, CHECC, ACI, etc.
Cave scientists and other specialist interests groups
Rescue Organisations

Some years ago the subject of individual membership was discussed. Club reps were asked to consult with their clubs on the matter. A few reported back, York and the Boggarts were the only ones I remember, both were quite positive on the subject but nothing was followed up.

Most cavers associate the CNCC with the permit systems. If CRoW applies to caving then permits will no longer be required for the vast majority of caves in the region and the role of the CNCC will have to change. What will the 'Council', as it is structured now, offer to cavers in the north of England. I suggest now is the time to make preparations for the future and truly represent all cavers.

On the related matter of access for individuals the AGM voted in favour of the motion, "The CNCC should actively promote access for individual cavers (CIMs/DIMs)". It is six months since this motion was passed. Could the meeting confirm whether any steps have yet been taken to "actively promote access for individual cavers".

I offer you the following personal experience of the permit system run by the CNCC. I use this example to demonstrate that the present situation cannot be right or good for northern caving.

So far this year I have applied to five different authorities for permission to descend the caves listed below:

1. The Torca del Carlista cave in the Basque Region of Northern Spain. Permission was sought from the department representing both the Enkarterri region and the National Park.
GRANTED

2. The Salle de la Verna of the Pierre Saint-Martin cave in the French Pyrenees. Permission was sought from the local authorities and the company set up to run the guided tours into the chamber. **GRANTED**
3. Three trips involving exploration of an area, and visits to known caves in the Peoples Republic of China. Permission was sought from several local governments and the Guilin Institute of Karst Geology. **ALL GRANTED**
4. Tlamanictla Cave, Mexico. Provisional permission was sought through the Mexican Society for Underground Exploration and a number of other interested parties. **GRANTED**
5. Birks Fell Cave, Yorkshire Dales National Park, Northern England. Permission was sought from the Council of Northern Caving Clubs, the regional council and access controlling body for my local caving area. **REFUSED**

In addition I applied for a permit to cave on Leck Fell two years ago which was also refused.

I can access caves around the world even in countries considered far more authoritarian than my own. I started attending CNCC meetings three years ago and have brought up this point time and time again and it appears that little has been done to address this particular issue in all that time (other than by necessity at GG). For my part I work hard on local caving issues, trying to improve access and the conservation of our caves. I have promoted northern caving to local and national authorities and attended more BCA meetings than the CNCC's own reps. I am a lifetime member of a well-respected 50 year old Dales caving club. I'm a BCA individual member and officer. I have been heavily involved in both local exploration and survey projects as well as major projects further afield. I even live in the National Park, but despite all this the CNCC refuse me legitimate access to many of the caves on my own doorstep.

Although I use myself as the example this could equally apply to any legitimate caver who is not part of a CNCC member club.

I would be happy to help with improving access by making representations to local authorities and landowners, on behalf individual cavers, as I have made on occasion already.

Thank you

Tim Allen

Local caver

11th August 2015

Appendix 1b: Second letter from Tim Allen to CNCC Committee received 28th August 2015

To the CNCC Committee.

Dear all

The CNCC secretary and other caving colleagues have pointed out that my earlier letter fails to acknowledge the progress that the Council has made in addressing many of the issues that I, and others, have raised over the last few years. I have to agree and feel obliged to put that right. My letter (dated 11th August) only focuses on the present and the future and not on past achievements.

My original "Open Letter to Cavers", sent out widely prior to the 2014 AGM, was critical of the workings of the CNCC. Even so it also recognised the good work the council had done in certain areas and the time the officers dedicated to council business and other aspects of northern caving. That letter may have influenced change, it may not, but most would agree the CNCC is in a better place today than it was back then and I fully acknowledge all those changes for the better.

Since that time many improvements have been made in how the Council is run. Communication is much improved via the web site, the newsletter, facebook and twitter and clear announcements on Council business are regularly made in other media. The relationship with the BCA is vastly different to when I first attended CNCC meetings. The bitter stand-off over the bolt placement documentation is now in the past and the new bolting rep seems fully engaged with BCA as does the new CNCC rep to council. Great news. The problems associated with CNCC administration appear to have been dealt with following the review of the constitution last year. Certainly the conduct, and 'round table' nature of meetings has improved from my perspective. I am also pleased to see that discussions with the instructed caving sector are on the agenda as they are an important part of Dales caving. Of course I welcome all the advances to cave access, especially to places such as Fountains Fell, and recognise that many people have worked to achieve this. However, current access systems still have a long way to go and I offered a personal example of how ridiculous the present system can be. I ask you all to think how others, outside of the CNCC, would view it. I also note that although the BCA would not wish to interfere with the affairs of regional councils it does state within its constitution that, *"Where caving bodies have control of access, ..., such access should be obtained and granted as freely as possible for all responsible cavers"*

The main point of my letter concerned representation. I fully acknowledge that the Council has engaged with other cavers and caving groups who frequent the Dales. The CDG and CHECC are two recent examples which spring to mind. However, it is only member clubs who are truly represented by the council and this does not reflect all those who actually cave in the area. Should the CNCC consider moving towards having committee members, with full rights, representing groups other than clubs such as cave divers, individuals, instructors, youth, etc., alongside the clubs? I hope that the CNCC committee are able to discuss this issue at forthcoming meetings.

Thank you again

Tim Allen

Local caver

26th August 2015