

# COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

## British Caving Association

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### Minutes of Committee Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Meeting opened 9.30am, Attendees:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Committee voting?
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary/Excalibur meets	
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	
Tim Allen	Northern CC		
Simon Wilson	Earby PC		Yes
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club	Conservation Officer	Yes
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Bernie Bond	Burnley CC		Yes
Martell Baines	Bradford PC		Yes
Ian Cross	Bradford PC		
Geoff Whittaker	Th'owd Skool CC	Aygill meets and Leck (interim)	
Les Sykes	Lancashire UG	Training Officer	Yes
Victor Wain	White Rose PC		Yes
Ric Halliwell	Craven PC	Birks/Fairy/Stump/Robinson's meets	
Pat Halliwell	Craven PC		Yes
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Fiona Durham	Yorkshire SS		Yes
Glenn Jones	CNCC Tech Group	Treasurer	
Roy Holmes	Dent House SS	Chairman	

Committee members not sending a representative:

Northumbrian SG  
Over and Under CC\*  
Yorkshire Ramblers

\* Apology received from Mick Ellerton that nobody from OUCC was able to attend.

### **(1) Apologies for absence**

Ray Duffy (RRCPC)  
Kay Easton (BPC)  
Jim Sloane (LUG)  
Alan Speight (YSS)  
Mick Ellerton (OUCC)  
Sam Allshorn (ULSA)  
Johnny Latimer (EPC/BPC)  
Ian Lloyd (NSG)

## **(2) Acceptance of minutes from June Committee meeting**

Andrew Hinde said that there was an incorrect statement in section 3a and would supply a correction to the Secretary to include as a retrospective addition to the minutes document.

Statement supplied by Andrew prior to issuing of these minutes shown below:

### ***(3a) Matters arising from the January committee meeting: Digging on SSSIs***

*AH stated that the working group had produced an initial draft but further information needed to be added. All the **information** was included in the Shuttleworth Pot book and the Witches Cave conservation plan.*

*Correction to minutes;*

*This “information” was in a Descent article, not the Shuttleworth Pot book or the conservation plan.*

Tony Brown provided some clarification to the minutes regarding the finger bone dating:

*If the Scoska skeleton turned out to be Bronze Age it would be the only Bronze Age skeleton found in the Dales so the bone is potentially of great importance. The rest of the incomplete skeleton is believed to be in the possession of Leeds Museum but currently lost. A dating would add impetus to a search for the lost skeleton. Tony Brown updated the meeting by saying that BCRA had agreed funding and the bone had been sent for to SUERC for carbon dating in September with an expected result by November.*

Acceptance of minutes:

Proposed: Pat Halliwell

Seconded: Andrew Hinde

Votes: 10 votes for (unanimous: White Rose PC representative had not arrived yet)

## **(3) Matters arising from the June Committee meeting**

Matt Ewles updated the room on the Skirwith Cave situation which had been resolved since the previous meeting (details of the new arrangement are on CNCC website).

Matt said he has contacted Hellie Brooke regarding CHECC representation for the CNCC. Hellie has agreed that this would be a good idea, and hopes that a representative could be in place after the CHECC Committee meeting. Matt hopes to discuss this further with Hellie at Hidden Earth.

Andrew Hinde said that a draft SSSI cave digging guidance has been prepared and was being circulated for review and that comments were welcome by email. A paper version was circulated to all attendees (no electronic version to be circulated yet). Andrew stated that the aim was not specifically to encourage digging on SSSIs but to encourage those who are digging to do so responsibly. The aim is to place the final document on the CNCC website.

## **(4) Officer's Reports**

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

No questions

### **Secretary's report:**

No questions

### **Treasurer's report:**

Andrew Hinde asked about the questions raised by Tim Allen. Matt Ewles clarified that this was to be covered in a later agenda item specifically dedicated to this matter.

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

No questions

### **Access Officer's report:**

Andrew Hinde asked what had happened with the access at Dow Cave. Les said the landowner had objected to commercial groups using Dow Cave to make money.

John Holloway said that ULSA strongly support publishing of access agreements, which initiated a lengthy discussion on the subject. In response to a question from Tim Allen, Pat Halliwell said that as the agreements are between the CNCC officers at the time and the landowner, it cannot be assumed that the landowners would be happy with wider circulation of the documents. Simon Wilson said he wished to see the agreements, and referred to the wording in the constitution;

*'All member clubs shall be issued with full details of agreements when completed or revised'.*

There was mixed opinion in the room as to whether this required the full unabbreviated document to be circulated. Andrew Hinde asked if anyone objected to publishing the full documents. Nobody did, however Les Sykes said that he, and some landowners might not want their personal details to be included on a more widely circulated document. It was also raised that not all agreements on the CNCC website are between the CNCC and the landowner (e.g. Jointer Hole/Boreham/Fairy Holes).

Matt Ewles suggested that the best way forward was for the Access Officer to research and bring to the attention of the Committee any issues that may need to be considered before agreements (full documents) are made available to all full member clubs.

Tim Allen said he had come across an agreement between HMRC and the Fountains Fell estate that the land is a Tax Exempt Heritage Asset. In response to Pat Halliwell, Tim said that the document was only a summary with no date. He said that as this allowed access to the estate for taxpayers, and he is a taxpayer, he should have access. Andrew Hinde asked what Tim thought the CNCC's response to this should be. Tim said that he thought that all taxpayers should have equal access.

### **Training Officer's Report:**

Andrew Hinde has discovered a need for winch training for conservation volunteers and will work together with the Training Officer to address these needs.

Acceptance of Officer's reports:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Andrew Hinde

Votes: 11 votes for (unanimous)

## **(5) Meets Secretary's reports**

No questions were raised regarding any specific reports, although Tim Allen said he had noted very few cavers on Leck Fell recently on Sundays. Geoff Whittaker said he doesn't believe caving there is on the decline, but he has received some cancellations lately. Ric Halliwell noted there had been a reduction in Birks Fell/Mongo Gill permits and that some Fairy Holes permits were unused.

Acceptance of Meets Secretary's reports:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Bernie Bond

Votes: 11 votes for (unanimous)

## **(6) CRoW discussion**

Andrew Hinde verbally updated the room on the recent BCA Conservation and Access meeting:

There was a consensus at the meeting that the BCA needed to clarify the CRoW situation. The BCA chairman is to speak with Natural England and DEFRA about it. One meeting with DEFRA has already taken place, which was productive, but resulted in the BCA being asked for more information ahead of future meetings. The emphasis was to maintain the focus on the BCA's negotiator (the Chairman) and that the situation would not be helped by third parties taking an involvement. The BCA needs to present one voice on the matter, even though the members are split, with an overall majority in favour of supporting caving to be covered under the CRoW act. Several more meetings are scheduled, but it was going to be a long road ahead.

Tim Allen has published the CRoW submission to the QC and a link to this will appear in an upcoming issue of Descent magazine. Tim said that the CNCC will have to deal with Dinah Rose's opinion as it is a strong argument in favour of caving being allowed under the CRoW Act. Andrew Hinde said that if there was no change in the position of DEFRA, the CNCC will need to pick up the pieces to maintain the status quo while ensuring good landowner relations are maintained. The Access Officer has already spoken with landowners to make them aware of the situation.

## **(7) UKCCEF representative**

Matt Ewles said that no other interested parties had come forward.

Acceptance of Kay Easton as UKCCEF representative:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Pat Halliwell

Votes: 11 votes for (unanimous)

## **(8) Treasurer's response to further questions on CNCC finances**

Tim Allen said he couldn't comment as he hadn't seen the responses. He asked about the presentation style of the accounts. Glenn Jones emphasised that the CNCC had consulted an accountant who had no problem with the style, and that the CNCC can present the accounts in any style it deemed appropriate. Ric Halliwell confirmed that the Craven Pothole Club were thoroughly

auditing the accounts and had no problem with them. Glenn said the presentation style used was one taught to him in his previous employment in the financial sector.

Pete Monk suggested a vote of confidence in the Treasurer:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Fiona Durham

Votes: 9 votes for, 2 abstentions

Tim asked if he could see the answers. Matt Ewles stated that it was a matter for the Committee to discuss and decide whether they were happy with the responses before releasing them publically. Simon Wilson said that he thought the person asking the questions deserves to see the answers; however, Glenn reminded the room that the questions were actually asked by an anonymous accountant, and Tim only passed them on, and therefore was not the author.

Acceptance of Treasurer's responses to questions:

Proposed: Bernie Bond

Seconded: Fiona Durham

Votes: 9 votes for, 2 abstentions

Decision to make answers publically available:

Proposed: Simon Wilson

Seconded: John Holloway

Votes: 7 votes for, 3 abstentions, 1 vote against

## **(9) ULSA proposal**

The proposal as received from ULSA:

*'Alan Speight has over several meetings stated that he has a good relationship with the Coates family (Fountains Fell). If he, the meets sec for Fountains Fell and the access officer are in agreement Alan should be tasked by this council to see if he can improve the access arrangements for this fell.'*

The proposal had been received by email from Sam Allshorn. Matt Ewles confirmed that he has verified with Sam that this is a formal proposal by ULSA and not a personal suggestion.

Andrew Hinde asked the ULSA representative what they thought could be improved. John Holloway said they thought the permit system was restrictive and any improvement would benefit cavers.

Vote on ULSA's proposal:

Proposed: Sam Allshorn (in personal communication with Matt Ewles before the meeting)

Seconded: Pat Halliwell

Votes: 11 votes for (unanimous)

Outcome: Alan Speight and Johnny Latimer are to see if Fountains Fell access can be improved.

## **(10) CNCC constitution**

Matt Ewles briefed the group on the documents circulated. The meeting then worked through the most recent document (Supplement C) section by section. Matt answered questions and provided

clarification. The following presents the main points and outcomes. It was assumed that where no concerns were raised at the meeting, the wording in Supplement C was acceptable to everyone. Where options were available reps were asked to vote for **ALL** options they would support (hence the vote tally may exceed the number of voting representatives present at the meeting).

#### Section 3e: Applications for membership

Pete Monk suggested an application form for membership to assist applicant clubs in providing the kinds of details that full members will require when considering their application. Matt Ewles suggested that Pete prepares a draft document for consideration at a future meeting.

#### Section 3e: Applications for membership

##### Option A: 8 votes

Applications may be discussed at a General Meeting only if accompanied by a supporting letter from two full member clubs, one to propose the application and one to second the proposal.

##### Option B: 5 votes

Applications may be discussed at a General Meeting only if accompanied by a supporting letter from one full member club to propose the application. This proposal must then be seconded by another full member club before voting occurs.

##### Option C: 3 votes

Applications must be proposed and seconded by full member clubs before being voted upon at a General Meeting.

As this was quite a split vote, option C was eliminated and the Committee was asked to vote again:

##### Option A: 8 votes

##### Option B: 5 votes

Section 4c: Should the Council be dissolved, all assets belonging to the Council should be sold, the income from which, together with whatever funds are held in the accounts, should be:

##### Option A: 0 votes

Split equally between all full member clubs.

##### Option B: 1 vote

Split between full member clubs based on their number of BCA registered members.

##### Option C: 0 vote

Transferred to the UK Cave Conservation Emergency Fund.

##### Option D: 9 votes

Transferred to organisation(s) of the outgoing committee's choosing where it will be used to benefit cave conservation, access, and/or rescue.

(No re-voting performed as clear majority)

Section 4d: Default expenditure which the Treasurer may authorise without Committee vote:

Andrew Hinde suggested that the default sum be raised to £500 (£100 stated in document). There was full verbal agreement with this in the room, so this will be adopted.

Section 4d: Decision between option 4d(i) and 4d(ii) (absent from supplementary document B)

4d(i): 0 votes

The Committee may choose to agree an expenditure amount, below which the Treasurer may authorise, and above which must be authorised by the Committee. Until this is agreed, the default position is that all expenditures exceeding £100\* must be authorised by the Committee.

#### 4d(ii): 11 votes

The Committee may choose to agree an expenditure amount, below which the Treasurer may authorise, and above which must be authorised by the Committee. Until this is agreed, the default position is that all expenditures exceeding £100\* must be authorised by the Committee. Where a need for expenditure arises which exceeds the agreed limit, but which is deemed by the Treasurer to require urgent action (before the next scheduled Committee meeting), the Treasurer may seek majority approval of the Committee by documented communication (e.g. email). Documentation showing all responses must be presented at the next Committee meeting.

\* Agreed to amend this to £500 in discussion prior to voting.

#### 4e: The vote was to decide whether to include the following restriction in the constitution:

No more than one third of the Council's total funds may be spent in a given year (AGM to AGM) without prior authorisation by vote at a General Meeting.

Include: 0 votes

Exclude: 11 votes

#### 5a: Option regarding the size of the Committee.

##### Option A: 0 votes

The Committee consists of fourteen full member clubs each of which has one vote.

##### Option B: 11 votes

The Committee consists of a maximum of fourteen and a minimum of ten full member clubs each of which has one vote.

#### 6a: Addition of Access Officer as a full officer position received unanimous support.

### Section 7: Elections of Committee and Officers

The following comments/concerns were raised, but no change to the draft constitution:

Fiona Durham expressed concerns about enforcing the eight week notice period for Officer and Committee applications, suggesting it may result in problems with people not applying in time. Matt Ewles acknowledged the concern, but explained that it would be the job of the Secretary to ensure that the current Committee, and all Full Member Clubs were made aware well ahead of this deadline of the need to apply, and emphasised the working group's strong belief (based on discussions at the previous Committee meeting) that this kind of advanced application was necessary to ensure clubs have adequate time to consider all options to allow an informed decision to be made.

Simon Wilson expressed concerns that this may be creating lots of work for the Secretary. Matt agreed that it did create work, but that he believed there could be fewer duties more important than ensuring the proper proceedings for elections are followed, that clubs were given adequate time to make an informed vote, and that everyone was aware of the requirements.

Section 8: Committee meetings: Matt Ewles said the sub-section lettering would be corrected.

#### 8g: Minutes procedure for Committee meetings:

The new wording presented in supplement C was discussed and accepted.

9g: Matt Ewles outlined the change to this section (Supplement C only) in response to feedback from Bradford Pothole Club (the text added to supplement C is underlined below):

Full member club representatives at General Meetings must produce a letter, signed by an officer of their club, to confirm they have authority to deliver a vote for that club. It is an expectation that this letter has been approved by the club's committee.

Matt asked Martell Baines to explain their concerns. She said that it revolved around the BPC feeling that there was a need to ensure that the representative attending a General Meeting had some kind of authorisation of the club's committee, and not just a single Officer. Pete Monk said that this could be seen as the CNCC interfering with club politics. Matt said that the change to this section shown in Supplement C was a compromise to outline this as an expectation but without putting emphasis on the CNCC to police/enforce this. Martell agreed that this was an acceptable resolution.

9J: Eight OR ten full member clubs shall constitute a quorum at General Meetings:

There was overall agreement with the increase to ten full members for a General Meeting to be quorate (an additional change incorporated into supplement C). Matt explained that this was to match the minimum number of clubs required to form a Committee in the new constitution.

9k: Minutes of General Meetings

The amended wording presented in Supplement C was accepted.

9l: Option of include Emergency General Meeting

Under certain circumstances an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) may be called. This may be achieved at the request of two thirds of the total Committee (rounded down). This request may be made either at a Committee meeting or by other recorded means, with an agreed agenda. An EGM may only be called if there is firm evidence that it would be detrimental to the CNCC or northern caving to leave the intended agenda item(s) until the next planned General Meeting, or until a SGM can be called. Once called, an EGM must be held within three weekends, and an agenda must be made available ten days ahead of the meeting. The constitution may not be amended at an EGM.

There was a general discussion about whether we needed to support the option for an EGM, (especially as this was introduced to accompany option 4e, which has been rejected). Les Sykes proposed that leaving it in created greater flexibility, and Andrew Hinde agreed. There was overall consensus to include the option for an Emergency General Meeting.

10c: All member clubs shall be issued with full details of agreements when completed or revised.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the meaning of 'full details' similar to that earlier in the meeting. Simon Wilson emphasised that he firmly believed the current constitution required us to circulate to all full members the full access agreement documents. Others disagreed. Andrew Hinde said that there was no dispute about whether we wanted to be able to circulate the agreement documents; however, there were some potential concerns to address first.

Vote of thanks to constitution working group:

Proposed: John Holloway

Seconded: Martell Baines

Votes: 9 votes for, 2 abstentions

**Outcome: Subject to the above revisions and option choices, this draft constitution (Supplement C as circulated with the agenda) can now be put to the vote of all full members at the AGM in 2015.**



### **(11) Caving Symposium**

Pat Halliwell clarified that it is the European Symposium, not international. Glenn Jones said the venue was not confirmed yet but anticipated more information would be available at Hidden Earth.

### **(12) Proposal from Tony Brown to simplify Leck Fell permits**

The initial proposal is shown in Appendix A of the agenda document.

Tony Brown provided a verbal summary of this to the room. Ric Halliwell asked if this proposal would cause any issues for landowners, but Les Sykes confirmed that it could run within the current permit system, so would have no impact on the normal protocol from the point of view of the landowner. Andrew Hinde said it was important to ensure any such initiative was well publicised.

There was an overall agreement for Tony to work together with the Leck Fell permit secretary and the Access Officer to explore this proposal further and present a more complete proposal, with all eventualities explained, for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

### **(13) Discussion on 'promoting caving'**

In Johnny's absence, Andrew Hinde said that anyone who wants to contribute to this discussion as outlined in the agenda should contact him directly.

### **(14) Next meeting**

Matt Ewles reminded everyone of the next meeting: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Hellifield, 9:30am.

### **(15) Any other business?**

Sam Lieberman said that a big pile of gravel had been delivered to Bull Pot Farm and spread across the roadside verges on the track towards the house.

Gary Douthwaite appealed for anyone with any photos of cave entrances that they would be willing to have put on the CNCC website to send them to him.

Meeting closed: 12:35pm

**Summary of action times from this meeting:**

Individual(s)	Action item
A Hinde/ M Ewles	Andrew to provide Matt with amended statement regarding June minutes
M Ewles	Discuss CHECC representation further and present to future meeting
J Latimer	To consider all possible issues/concerns regarding making the full document of access agreements available to full members, to present at future meeting
Everyone	Review draft SSSI digging guidelines circulated at meeting and provide and feedback or concerns to Andrew Hinde
J Latimer	To finalise the new Dow Cave agreement and publicise appropriately
A Hinde/L Sykes	Work together to arrange winch training for CNCC volunteers
K Easton	To continue in the role as CNCC representative to the UKCCEF
M Ewles	To make the Treasurer's recent responses publically available
J Latimer/ A Speight	To work together to see if Fountains Fell access can be improved
M Ewles	Update the draft constitution with all changes and selected options in preparation for submission to full members ahead of AGM
P Monk	To produce a draft 'membership application form'
T Brown/J Sloane/J Latimer/G Whittaker	Work together to elaborate on the existing Leck Fell permit proposal to consider all eventualities and present in full to a future meeting
Everyone	Anyone with any good (electronic) cave entrance photos to send to Gary Douthwaite for inclusion on CNCC website