

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Agenda for Committee Meeting 6th June 2015, Hellifield Village Institute, 9:30am

Items in RED have been added approx 1 week before meeting

- (1) Apologies for absence
- (2) Acceptance of minutes from the January Committee meeting (these have already been through the one month review process before making public on the website).
- (3) Any matters arising from the January Committee meeting?
- (4) Officer's reports (will be made available approx one week before meeting)
 - a. Chairman's report – Roy Holmes
 - b. Secretary's report – Matt Ewles
 - c. Treasurer's report – Glenn Jones/Pete Bann
 - d. Conservation Officer's report – Kay Easton
 - e. Training Officer's report – Dan Irving
 - f. Access Officer's report – Johnny Latimer (**VERBAL UPDATE TO BE DELIVERED – may require Committee input on how to proceed on certain matters**)
 - g. **BCA E&T representative report – Simon Wilson**
 - h. **Webmaster report – Gary Douthwaite**
- (5) Meets Secretary's reports (will be made available approx one week before meeting)
 - a. Leck Fell – Andy Farrow
 - b. Casterton Fell – Alan Speight
 - c. Ingleborough Estate – Geoff Whittaker
 - d. Birks Fell/Stump Cross/Fairy Holes/Robinsons – Ric Halliwell
 - e. Penyghent – Sam Allshorn
 - f. Other areas
- (6) Permits for CHECC

See Appendix A for a full discussion of this agenda item. A way forward will need to be determined at this Committee meeting; please discuss within your clubs and come to the meeting with ideas on what you believe the best resolution would be, and what you believe would be acceptable and non-acceptable resolutions to this situation in anticipation on voting on all conceivable/suggested resolutions.

(7) Role of the CNCC in Bolting

This agenda item comes as a suggested topic for discussion by Matt Ewles. A possible way forward is outlined in Appendix B, to serve as a starting point for discussions.

(8) Confirmation of Co-opted Officers

The following are the co-opted officers and those performing additional recognised roles in the CNCC. Please let the CNCC Secretary know if you wish to stand down from (or step up to) one of these roles ahead of the meeting.

If there are no changes, we need to reconfirm this team to continue for up to another year.

Meets Secretaries:

Leck Fell meets secretary: Andy Farrow

Casterton Fell meets secretary: Alan Speight with handover planned to Hannah Walker

Birks Fell, Mongo Gill, Fairy Holes, Robinsons meets secretary: Ric Halliwell

Penyghent meets secretary: Sam Allshorn

Bowland meets secretary: Tony Brown

Aygill and Ingleborough meets secretary: Geoff Whittaker

Excalibur Pot meets secretary: Matt Ewles

Additional co-opted officers:

Webmaster: Gary Douthwaite

Access Officer: Johnny Latimer (role will become full officer role in March, and until then Johnny has already received a vote of confidence to perform the role until then)

Minutes Secretary: Role delegated on meeting-by-meeting basis

Additional representative roles:

CNCC Technical Group representative: Les Sykes

BCA E&T representative: Simon Wilson

BCA representative: Martell Baines

Eurospeleo 2016 representative: Ian Lloyd

Possible new role:

Bolting Officer (depending on outcome of previous agenda item)

Roles from last year no longer in place:

Assistant Conservation Officer

(9) Nicola III radios

See Chairman's report – a discussion of this will depend on whether comments and/or a formal request for funding have been received from the cave rescue organisations by the time of the meeting. If not, or if more time for discussion within clubs is felt necessary to make a decision, this can be postponed to the September meeting.

(10) Discussion on how CNCC should vote at BCA meeting

We should discuss the agenda for the BCA meeting on 13/14th June to provide our BCA representative guidance on how the CNCC wishes to vote particularly with respect to the election of officers and the two major proposals. The BCA agenda can be found here:

http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=about:documents:general_meetings:agm_agenda_2015.pdf

The details regarding elections are (reproduced from agenda document on 30th May 2015):

Elections

22. Election of Officers and National Council Members

22.1. Chairman

Nomination: *Andy Eavis, proposed by Damian Weare, seconded by Nigel Ball*

22.2. Training Officer

Nomination: *Nigel Ball, proposed by Damian Weare, seconded by Hellie Brooke*

22.3. 2 Club Representatives

Nomination: *David Cooke (Cheddar CC), proposed by Andy Sparrow, seconded by Rachel Sparrow plus 1 further position to be appointed at the meeting.*

22.4. 2 Individual

*Hellie Brooke, proposed by Robin Weare, seconded by Nigel Ball
and: Bernie Woodley, proposed by Robin Weare, seconded by John Hine*

The two main proposals are (reproduced from agenda document on 30th May 2015):

1) "That this General Meeting authorises Council where Council sees appropriate, to poll its membership using solely the means of electronic mail and the list of e-mail addresses of members that it holds, subject to such safeguards as adopted by Council, to obtain the view of its membership on the question or questions put in that poll. And that Council is duly authorised to act on that view and if necessary implement such actions which are consequential to that view. Save that any such view obtained by such a poll shall not bind a General Meeting."

2) "This meeting confirms that the Constitution allows BCA to seek clarification from DEFRA and Natural England on their existing guidance on The CRoW Act and its application to caving."

I believe that the CNCC has already voted to support seeking of clarification regarding CRoW at the additional Committee meeting last year, so it is assumed that we will support the second proposal.

(11) Date and time of future meetings

Next meeting: Committee meeting 12th September 2015 (draft agenda due 1st August)

(12) Any other business?

Appendix A

Permits for CHECC

This was raised at the AGM and it was suggested that this was a matter for the Committee to look into. SUSS asked whether it would be possible for the CNCC to issue permits to CHECC, rather than them having to apply for permits for CHECC events. Since the AGM there has been email discussion between the CNCC Secretary, the BCA Membership Officer (Glenn Jones), the BCA Secretary (Damian Weare), Nick Williams (BCA Insurance Officer) and Bob Mehew. The following summarises some of the key points of these discussions:

- (A) There are three types of BCA member: Individual, Group and Associate. Of the Group membership this is divided into Clubs, Access Controlling Bodies, Regional Councils and Constituent Bodies. CHECC is a Constituent Body and do not pay a fee to the BCA.
- (B) Constitutionally, the CNCC can only issue permits to member clubs (full or associate) unless specified otherwise in the access agreement. Our constitution also states that *“All paid-up member clubs of the British Caving Association (BCA) and properly constituted cave rescue associations, unless already full members, will become associate members”*. Technically CHECC are not a member club of the BCA and therefore they do not qualify as an associate member of the CNCC. However, this is based on strict interpretation of the constitution. As CHECC has a club-like structure (it has a constitution, officers and members), it could be argued that they can be treated as a club in this circumstance.
- (C) A similar situation exists in Ireland: Irish clubs are not BCA members and so cannot apply for permits, therefore, a resolution was to make SUI (Speleological Union of Ireland) a member club of the BCA to allow them to apply for permits for Irish clubs.
- (D) If we choose to accept permit requests from CHECC, without good reasoning why this is a bespoke situation, we might also, in the interests of fairness, have to accept permit requests from other BCA Group members. This includes all regional councils, as well as the following constituent bodies: Association of Caving Instructors, Association of Scout Caving Teams, British Cave Research Association, British Cave Rescue Council, Cave Diving Group, National Association of Mining History Organisations and the William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust.
- (E) The BCA public liability cover of CHECC does not cover their members. When clubs are issued with a permit the club has a duty to ensure that the permit is used in accordance with the specific requirements of the agreement. With regard to ensuring that individuals using the permit have BCA insurance, this is easy for a club to do. However, this would be more complex for CHECC as their insurance does not extend to their members, and it would need to be an expectation that anyone using a CHECC permit had their own BCA insurance if this was a requirement of the access agreement. However, CHECC itself as the permit holder would not be able to directly verify this in the same way a club could of its members.
- (F) It is worth noting however that only the more recent of CNCC access agreements (Excalibur Pot, Whitewell Pot, Dow Cave, Ingleborough Estate) specify a need for each caver using the

permit to have BCA membership. Other older access agreements (Leck Fell and Casterton Fell) only require the club to which they are members to have BCA membership.

- (G) The current situation is also less than ideal with respect to insurance; SUSS are applying for permits for use by CHECC events. Some of these permits will be handed over to and used by clubs or individuals where no members of SUSS are present. Therefore, essentially, one club is applying for a permit and then handing this permit over; again, with no means of verifying those using the permit have up to date insurance.
- (H) Nick Williams has confirmed that BCA and CNCC (and the relevant landowners) will be covered for the activities associated with arranging access whatever the status of individual members of CHECC clubs.
- (I) Therefore the insurance matter may be limited only to ensuring adherence to the conditions set out on the permit (e.g. for access arrangements which specify that all individuals must have BCA insurance), and not to concerns about whether there is adequate public liability insurance for the CNCC and landowners.

I am sure that I speak for everyone in the CNCC in saying that we want to make access as easy as possible and permits as available as possible. However, we also need to ensure that we work within our constitution, or provide sound justification if we make exception to it. To issue permits to CHECC would require an acknowledgement that we are going to (technically) deviate from our constitution, and could, unless we are careful with justification, put us in a situation of having to issue permits to all other BCA regional councils and constituent bodies. However, it is also accepted that CHECC does have a structure very much like that of a club, and so an argument could be put together as to why they qualify as a CNCC associate member for the purposes of getting permits.

The issue of responsible permit usage is a complex one. We need to be as confident as possible that sub-issued permit (i.e. ones not issued directly from the CNCC to the club who are the end user) are passed onto BCA insured clubs, or used by BCA insured cavers where this is a requirement of the access agreement (Excalibur, Dow, Ingleborough, Whitewell Pot). This is easier to verify when a permit is issued to a club for use directly by its individual members, but less easy for an organisation such as CHECC to verify. However, the current situation of SUSS applying for many permits and then handing them over for use by those outside their club is an arguably worse arrangement.

A precedent for creating the flexibility requested here for CHECC has already been set for SUI.

This is something that the CNCC Committee needs to discuss and make a decision on.

Based on these discussions, the following are my recommendations as CNCC Secretary for the Committee to consider, however, please consider these as a starting point for discussions rather than locked down suggested proposals.

- The CNCC considers establishing an arrangement for CHECC, which accepts them as an associate member or equivalent, with solid justification for them being able to apply for permits for use by their members.

- If necessary we can look towards a carefully worded constitutional amendment to cover this come the AGM next year.
- As part of this arrangement, we could make clear our expectation of CHECC that they will put in place suitable processes to ensure that those permits are sub-issued responsibly and for use by BCA insured member clubs, and by BCA insured cavers within their member clubs where this is a specific requirement of the access agreement.
- We are assuming here that the need for CHECC to apply for permits would be limited ONLY to major CHECC events (e.g. their AGM gathering in November), and not for year round applications on behalf of student clubs. This would need to be stipulated.

I will invite a representative from CHECC and SUSS to attend this meeting to join the discussions.

Appendix B

CNCC and Bolting (discussion matter suggested by Matt Ewles)

As detailed in my election statement in March, I personally feel that we need to see the role of the CNCC in bolting expanded and more clearly defined. I would therefore like to use this Committee meeting to elaborate on this and see if the Committee would consider some suggestions.

There are many caves which could benefit from good anchors. The CNCC is a trusted name and 'standard' when it comes to installing these. Furthermore it is an expectation of the BCA anchor policy that Regional Councils take a substantial role in bolting in their region. We now have at our disposal the new Bolt Product P-anchors and the IC Anchors, and with the increased popularity of some trips with dubious spits (many of the ones in Mike Cooper's book) there is the opportunity for the CNCC to continue our leading role in bolt installation.

Currently the bolting 'division' of the CNCC is the CNCC Technical Group. This was established partly to allow those involved in bolting to apply for permits, and to take any liability away from the CNCC. We have received recent confirmation from Nick Williams however that any BCA member installing anchors is covered by the BCA's public liability, and so there is no longer any concern about this.

My understanding is that although any BCA insured caver is covered for public liability for installing anchors, it remains an expectation (albeit not one required for insurance purposes) that anchor installation is done in accordance with their anchor policy.

After speaking with the CNCC TG, they support the initiative of bringing the CNCC's bolting activity back into the CNCC itself (rather than being primarily administered through the CNCC Technical Group, a separate club) and to establish a CNCC bolting initiative and policy.

I feel that this would be an excellent start to overhauling the way the CNCC manages bolting.

Firstly there is the question of who should run a CNCC anchor scheme? Historically, the Training Officer has always doubled-up as the CNCC Technical Group contact. However, I have spoken with our new Training Officer and we agree that managing a CNCC-organised bolting initiative is a standalone job that requires the dedicated attention of an officer.

Therefore, if the CNCC Committee feel that establishment of a new CNCC-organised anchor scheme and policy is something we should pursue (it is something I would strongly encourage); we would need to elect a co-opted officer to oversee this.

The Committee is recommended to read the following, which is the BCA E&T's anchor policy.

http://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=equipment_techniques:anchor_policy_2013.pdf

Following discussions with several people in the CNCC who are interested in bolting, an overall theme was that any CNCC based bolting scheme needs to be in compliance with this anchor policy from the BCA. Based on this, the following are suggested founding principles of a CNCC anchor scheme that I believe we could consider moving forward with:

- (1) The CNCC Resin Bonded Anchor Scheme should be administered by a designated officer or co-opted officer of the CNCC, The roles of this officer will include:
 - a. Maintaining a list of approved installers and trainers
 - b. Organising training for volunteers wishing to place anchors under the scheme (it is useful if the officer is an approved trainer/installer themselves however, this is not essential as the role can be primarily administrative/facilitative).
 - c. Being the first point of contact for reports of defective anchors.
 - d. Ensuring that suitable action is taken regarding defective anchors.
 - e. Arranging and publicising a list of upcoming or desired projects and ensuring that these projects are approved by the CNCC Committee.
 - f. If necessary, recruiting approved installers to participate in these projects.
 - g. If necessary, facilitating the provision of materials for these projects.
 - h. Ensuring that any costs for approved installations are passed to the Treasurer for reimbursement from the BCA Equipment and Techniques Committee.
 - i. Collecting the necessary records of each installation, publicising the location of the new anchors and provision of the records to the BCA E&T Committee.
 - j. Ensuring the various criteria below are followed for all projects.
- (2) The scheme shall cover the use of anchors for any purpose, including ladder and line, SRT and for other fixed aids (as outlined in section 1 of the BCA policy document).
- (3) The scheme shall only cover the use of anchors and resin as designated suitable by BCA's E&T Committee (as outlined in section 2 of the BCA policy document).
- (4) The CNCC shall establish procedures to consider and approve the choice of locations for the placing of designated anchors in our region (see section 4 of the BCA policy document).
- (5) The CNCC shall ensure that training and recording of installers will be done in accordance with BCA E&T guidelines (as outlined in Section 5 of the policy document). The CNCC shall make every effort to ensure that the training is easily available to all interested parties.
- (6) CNCC will maintain records of all designated anchor placements installed via its scheme (as detailed in section 6 of BCA policy document) and list those locations on the CNCC website.
- (7) The CNCC will provide a means for reporting of defective anchors and will take action on such reports (as outlined in section 7 of the BCA policy document).

Therefore, in summary, for an anchor installation to meet the criteria of the suggested CNCC anchor scheme, and to meet the expectations of the BCA E&T policy:

- The installer must be approved by the CNCC
- The location for installation must be approved by the CNCC
- The materials used should be approved by the BCA E&T
- The CNCC must keep records of the installation
- The CNCC must provide an easy way to report defects
- The CNCC must act upon any reports of defects

Matters such as exactly what qualifies someone to be an approved trainer, what the training to approve someone as an installer comprises of, exactly how the records are kept and how the bolting is communicated etc. are matters which I believe would be to the discretion of the CNCC and can be visited as a separate agenda item at a later date once we have a bolting officer in place.

It would be good to use this committee meeting to see if there is enthusiasm to establish a CNCC scheme as outlined above, and to see if anyone is interested in being a co-opted officer to help run this. Please let me know if you have any questions you would like me to get an answer to from the relevant persons, or any additional information you require ahead of the meeting.

This agenda item is intended purely as an open ended discussion. The above are my personal suggestions only for how we could proceed to reinvigorate the CNCCs anchor scheme and bring it in line with BCA expectations, and is intended to providing some focus for the discussions. It is based primarily on feedback I have had from several individuals that I contacted during March. However, please come to the meeting with any additional ideas and thoughts for discussion, and with ideas about what you would (and wouldn't) find acceptable and perhaps even some nominations for individuals you feel might be interested in the role, should it be created.

It is hoped that with a CNCC anchor policy clearly defined, and with a recognised lead within the CNCC for this, we can push forward with some exciting projects before the end of the year. There is little that the CNCC has been more respected for over the years than the resin bonded anchor scheme, and I hope that this initiative can enable this to continue.