

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Minutes of Committee Meeting 5th October 2019, Hellifield Village Institute

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Abbrev.	Affiliation	CNCC officer/ co-opted role?	Committee voting?
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	Secretary	
Gary Douthwaite	GD	York Caving Club	Webmaster	
Kay Easton	KE	Bradford Pothole Club	Conservation Officer	Yes
Pete Bann	PB	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group		Yes
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club		Yes
Ric Halliwell	RH	Craven Pothole Club	Birks Fell etc meets	
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club		
Jon Beavan	JB	N/A		
Ray Duffy	RD	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Andy Gordon	AG	Kendal Caving Club		Yes
Andrew Hinde	AH	Gritstone Club	Chair	
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	University of Leeds Speleological Association		Yes
Chris Camm	CC	White Rose Pothole Club		Yes
Tim Allen	TA	N/A	Access Officer	
Alan Speight	AS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	Anchor Coordinator	Yes
Conor Morrison	CM	York University Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Fiona Hartley	FH	Northern Pennine Club		Yes
Josh Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Assistant Secretary, taking minutes	

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

12 out of 13 Committee clubs present (Absent: SUSS)

The meeting opened at 09:30am with a welcome from the chair and a round of introductions.

1) Apologies for absence

Sheffield University Speleological Society
John Holloway
Tony Brown (Northern Boggarts, Bowland meets)

2) Acceptance of June 2019 Committee meeting minutes

No issues raised.

Proposal to accept the June 2019 Committee meeting minutes.

Proposed: Sam Lieberman
Seconded: Andy Gordon
Votes: 9 votes for, 3 abstentions

Action: Matt Ewles to issue final minutes.

3) Matters arising from the June Committee meeting

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E	Finalise January Committee minutes. DONE
Tim A/Matt E	Issue and publish guidance for cavers accessing Barbondale. DONE
Matt E	Report back to October Committee meeting on CaveFest discussions. DONE, see Secretary's report.
White Rose PC	Undertake work at Providence Pot; CNCC to fund; Take photos of work, before, after and during and produce short report for newsletter. CC reported that visits to the site are being undertaken to assess the situation. He confirmed that the site remains stable, but they are cautious about the type of cement used to avoid polluting the water supply. Action closed, CC to contact CNCC if any advice or assistance is required.
Matt E	Continue to try to work out way forward for CNCC anchor scheme, and ask Mark Sims to be E&T representative. See agenda item. ME said that AS is taking on many of the Anchor Coordinator jobs. He mentioned that work is continuing to make the anchor scheme more open.
Simon W	Compile list of the jobs associated to anchor coordinator. Action closed.
Tim A/Matt E	Tim to follow up on Leck Fell; write letter (Matt to circulate) and communicate outcome to cavers. DONE, see Access Officer's report.
All clubs	Discuss BCA personal accident insurance for October meeting. See agenda item.
Andrew H	Action/consult on guidelines and generic risk assessments for CNCC owned equipment (action carried over from this meeting). DONE

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E/Gary D/All	<p>Produce and set up a CNCC stall at Hidden Earth; Anyone willing to volunteer to man it to contact Matt. Clubs to ask for volunteers. DONE</p> <p>Further Discussion: AH asked whether the stand won a prize, but ME mentioned that only club stands were eligible. ME also noted that there was a lack of northern caving club stalls. TA Suggested this was just due to the larger size of the trade hall, which made it seem empty. The hall had space for more stands. ME thought it may have been due to the short notice of venue this year. JB said that several people had reported a general lack of northern cavers.</p> <p>AH expressed how good it is to promote younger cavers attending Hidden Earth, and that it would be good if venues such as Wrexham become the norm. He wondered whether it was possible to find a suitable venue in the north. GD reminded everyone that a simple suggestion is not enough for the Hidden Earth Committee, and that they require someone to visit the location and properly assess its suitability.</p> <p>PH thanked ME and GD for preparing the stall. TA suggested that CNCC run a stall for the next few years, as it had a big impact at the show.</p>
Matt E	Draft constitutional changes to remove Training Officer. Ongoing.

4) Reports

Chairman's report:

No questions.

Secretary's report:

- AH expressed gratitude to ME for his efforts and accomplishments as Secretary.
- TA said that Jane Allen had talked to the Cavefest organisers; they are keen to come north, but would need to alter the format of the event. TA also mentioned that UKCaving had donated prizes to the last Cavefest. He explained that the event is similar to the discontinued "Cavers Fair" and that it was worth the CNCC supporting the organisers. RH mentioned that another club which had helped Cavefest in the past had a bad experience, and wouldn't want to help again. JB thought that some cavers were suspicious about it being a commercial venture.
- PM asked what Cavefest is; TA explained that it is not associated with any "caving politics," but is intended to have more of a festival atmosphere. Its main goal is to organise leaders to run caving trips; this is one reason why the format would need to change if it were to take place in the north.

Treasurer's report:

- AH informed PB that there were some Stories in Stone (SIS) claims which had not been approved as they were not appropriately itemised. He confirmed that they would be submitted the following Wednesday. LH asked how the SIS refund system works. AH explained, saying that SIS will repay some items at 60% of their value and others at 100%. PB mentioned a need to show HMRC that the CNCC makes a net loss.
- TA talked about how the BCA Conservation and Access (C&A) committee accepted the proposal that C&A funding decisions should be made by the C&A committee. He believed that this proposal would then be accepted at the BCA council meeting.

- TA also spoke of a proposal from the BCA treasurer Howard Jones, aimed at reducing the annual BCA surplus. This proposes the abolition of disallowed expenditure categories, thus removing limitations on what can and cannot be funded from the BCA. ME said that this was in fact his proposal to Howard. He believed it was pointless for BCA to nitpick what expenses can be refunded when they have such a surplus.
- AH stated that the BCA would not refund travel expenses for conservation work volunteers, and suggested proposing to the BCA that travel expenses should be refunded at the HMRC standard rate of 45p per mile. TA said that the E&T committee refund travel expenses for anchor installers, so why could C&A not do the same for conservation volunteers?
- AH reminded everyone that PB intends to stand down at the next AGM, and that all should keep an eye out for a potential replacement treasurer. GD confirmed that this has already been advertised on social media. AH thanked PB for all his hard work. TA said that Howard Jones, BCA treasurer, had said that PB was the best treasurer out of all the regional councils. PB said that it was not down to him, but to the high standards of the CNCC.

Conservation Officer's report:

- AH met with Bill Nix regarding his dig on Hurnell Moss. Work is ongoing, soon to be concluded. Steel work is now in place and is half covered-up. Bill submitted an £800 invoice, but this was rejected as it was not itemised. Total amount likely to be £1000-£1200, recoverable from SIS.

Proposal to approve the refund to Bill Nix, subject to Andrew Hinde approving the invoice.

Proposed: Kay Easton

Seconded: Pat Halliwell

Votes: 11 votes for, 1 abstention.

Action: AH to update the committee at the next meeting on the status of work at Bill Nix's dig on Hurnell Moss.

- JB contacted the National Park regarding the state of a stile on the way up to Tatham Wife. They replied that it had been installed by cavers. JB asked if SIS can repair or replace the flimsy stiles? ME said that, knowing the area, it would benefit from having a proper crossing point for cavers to use. AH said that JB should contact AH and KE about this.

Action: AH/KE to update the committee at the next meeting on any decisions made and/or work done on this potential conservation project.

- AS asked about the Nidderdale gate situation. An email has been sent to the CNCC from Ian Lloyd asking for a contribution to replace a defective gate which is used by divers in Nidderdale to access a dive site at Nidd Head. They wished to replace this gate as a gesture of goodwill to the landowner who permits access to the site.
- ME said that the feeling from the last committee meeting was that, as a dive site, repairs to the access gate should be funded by the CDG. AS replied that it is hard to release money from the CDG as there is no system set up to do so, and that it is the same landowner as for Goyden. There followed an extended debate regarding how to avoid setting a precedent of CNCC funding farmers' gate repairs, and how much of the £100 contribution should be paid by CNCC. Eventually a proposal was made.

Proposal that a £100 contribution be paid to Ian Lloyd for access infrastructure at Nidd Head.

Proposed: Alan Speight

Seconded: Chris Camm

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

Action: PB to arrange payment of £100 to Ian Lloyd and ask for an update on progress for next committee meeting.

Access Officer's report:

- TA reported that in his meeting with the Leck Fell landowners, Tom Shuttleworth was very accommodating, and apologetic that previous attempts at communication had been overlooked. In the meeting, Tom was keen on the introduction of the online booking system, though less keen on removing the closed season. TA is optimistic that his dealings with Tom Shuttleworth will bring a new perspective on these things, especially as Tom is a paraglider and is therefore familiar with access issues.
- Things are looking good at Joint Hole, which is a CDG training site. TA has been advising CDG on their dealings with the new landowner there. It appears that this new owner will be amenable to allowing access.
- AH asked about the new landowner at Masongill Hall, which owns the land for Ireby and some West Kingsdale caves. TA replied that although he hadn't been keeping a close eye on this, all seems ok and he met the owner last year. RH reported that although the tenant farmer isn't keen on cavers, they have had good experiences with the owner.
- AS asked about the current situation at Birkwith. TA said that cavers have reported that the farmer at High Birkwith told them to park along the road. Due to the possibility of blocking farm access, the CNCC advises parking at Low Birkwith farm.
- PH mentioned that the High Birkwith farmer has applied for the public highway to end before his farm. She wondered if the public would be given an opportunity to comment on this. AS said they would. He said that currently the council see no issue with shortening the public highway, and that the farmer's objection is to people turning in his yard. TA doesn't believe that any more can be done.
- SW asked if the Ireby landowner, is happy for things to stay as they are, open access, but without any formal agreement. It was confirmed that he is.
- TA asked if anyone wanted to take some Cave & Karst books to give to landowners. He still has several, but they are useful to keep for when land changes hands.
- TA is not available at the BCA council meeting on 11/01/2020, so someone will need to stand in as CNCC representative. AH asked where the meeting was. ME replied that it will be in a village in the midlands. There will be WiFi available for remote access, but it would be better for the representative to be there in person. He confirmed that travel expenses would be covered by the BCA. TA said that the volunteer should be someone familiar with the BCA. It's important that the CNCC needs to speak out in favour of the progressive policies. AH said that if anyone is interested they should come forward.
- SL said that RRCPC is doing an Easegill cleanup event on 16/11/2019. AH said that they could use the CNCC's stal washer, as long as work is taking place less than 100m from a water source. RD said that this would potentially be useful, and that he will have a think about it. TA suggested that potential volunteers could combine it with going to the Kendal Mountain Festival underground session. RD said that anyone interested should just show up at Bull Pot Farm, at around 10am.

Action: Gary Douthwaite to advertise the Easegill cleanup event on the CNCCs online platforms.

Webmaster's report:

- GD reported that, since his report, there had been lots of new interested in the online booking system. The system may require a capacity boost in the future, but this would be at minimal cost.

Meets Secretaries' reports:

- RH reported that WRPC don't want their Fairy Holes permit for November, so this is now available. There have so far been no requests for Fairy Holes or Robinson's pot permits for 2020. If anyone wants one, just email RH.
- AH asked whether Geoff Whittaker (Aygill Caverns, Ingleborough, Leck and Casterton meets) is happy and on-board with all the recent access developments. ME confirmed that he has spoken with Geoff and he is happy, but is finding himself with less to do now that he isn't issuing permits anymore.
- AH commented that it's nice to see some activity in the Bowland area. He wondered whether there is a CREG (Cave Radio & Electronics Group) meeting soon.

Proposal to accept all reports.

Proposed: Pat Halliwell

Seconded: Alan Speight

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

5) CNCC Anchor Policy

- ME gave background info. The original policy was written jointly between ME and Simon Wilson, the previous Anchor Coordinator. It was intended to outline how the CNCC Anchor scheme works, and to show how the scheme complies with BCA policy. Now that Simon is no longer involved with CNCC, it would be good to spread the workload of the Anchor Coordinator between several people. The policy has been rewritten to reflect this. Additionally, in future anchors will be issued only for specific projects which will be approved by the CNCC committee.
- CC suggested that installers be given a small stock of anchors to be used during new exploration. This avoids the need for temporary bolts. ME replied that there was an installer who held a stock of anchors, but he ended up going rogue with this freedom and not making the appropriate records. Installers will come to the CNCC with a project, and will then be given anchors.
- ME suggested the CNCC needs more installers. There are currently 7 or 8, but it is very easy to get trained. There are lots of potential projects, but not enough installers to do them. There needs to be an annual training session. AS said that he has anchors but no resin, and a list of all past installations. However, records from some installers are missing. He is happy to give out a small number of anchors to installers, but won't micromanage everything the way Simon Wilson did.
- RD suggested using concrete bolts during exploration. This avoids wasting IC anchors by not putting them in the optimum place. CC said that using IC anchors means that the best location isn't used up with a temporary bolt. GD said that concrete screws are a good option as they can be replaced with IC anchors.
- ME repeated that the old system where installers have a stock of anchors didn't work. As more installers are trained, the risk of missing anchors increases. It is essential that all anchors are tracked, and giving anchors for specific projects is the only way. AH agreed, emphasising the importance of complying with BCA policy. ME said that installers can just consult the officers by email if the project is time-sensitive.
- AS said that Simon will be keeping his anchor puller, so he will be arranging for 3 more to be made.
- LE forwarded some feedback from Sam Allshorn, who suggested a rewording in section 4. He suggested that only new installations needed approval, and that it is not needed where bolts are already in place. AS mentioned the issue of commercial cavers adding anchors to make routes easier, so wording needs to be clear that this applies specifically to replacing the

anchors that are already there. GD suggested that installers having a small number of bolts would be ok, so they could replace loose or defective anchors as they are found.

- CC said that installers should be trusted to make the judgement onsite. He said explorers can't be expected to halt at the top of a new pitch to go and ask the CNCC. GD pointed out that the policy only covers IC anchors. Diggers can continue to put in any other type of anchor they want.
- LE asked how easy it is to get more trainers, to allow more installers to be trained. ME replied that it is fairly simple; we just need to ask the BCA E&T committee to ratify individuals as trainers. ME said that a few of our existing installers have already volunteered including GD and Graham Coates.
- ME pointed out that nothing in the policy stops installers keeping 2 or 3 spare anchors. He also said that this policy can be revisited at any point in the future.
- After much discussion, the following amended wording in section 4 was reached as a compromise: "The CNCC Committee will approve all anchor placements under the CNCC anchor scheme (except for anchors being replaced on safety grounds) prior to the work being carried out. This should ideally be via a Committee meeting but in the event the timing doesn't work then this can be achieved by email correspondence."

Proposal to accept the new Anchor Policy as amended.

Proposed: Lyndon Easterbrook

Seconded: Alan Speight

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

6) BCA Personal Accident Insurance

- TA believes that, in his experience as CNCC's representative to the BCA, popular opinion will not change and the proposal will be accepted. However, he believes it is a waste of money. LE, after confirming that the policy is "all in or all out", said that ULSA thinks the idea is not sustainable, and that individuals should arrange their own personal accident insurance.
- ME pointed out that the insurance is something which is potentially useful to some, particularly younger cavers, and was investigated initially by the BCA Treasurer as a way to reduce the BCA surplus and use its funds for the benefit of its members. If it's accepted, there is likely to be claims, so there is a risk the benefit will become unviable. SW suggested the BCA take the policy while the rate is low, then back out if it goes up later. FH said that if the goal is to reduce surplus, there are other ways to spend money. The BCA should be promoting caving, not acting as an insurance broker. RD suggested that the BCA could simply reduce its membership fees, or donate to Ghar Parau.
- A vote was taken to gauge the mood of the committee clubs present. This was not an official vote on a proposal. Vote that the CNCC be in favour of the BCA proposal on personal accident insurance. 1 vote for, 5 votes against, 5 abstentions.
- ME summarised that since the Personal Accident Insurance was first conceived, other uses of BCA surplus have arisen, and there are now better ways to spend the surplus. TA will therefore vote against the proposal.

7) Matters relating to the BCA Council Meeting

- TA says that, in his experience of the BCA, the most sensible approach goes forward. He reported that the CSCC are saying that various votes from the BCA AGM are invalid, but ME has found counter-arguments for each of their points. AH said that it's important to stop the tactic of deferring proposals to sub-committees, and just push to a vote. TA said he will back-up ME's counters to CSCC's points. AH affirmed that TA has the authority to vote on CNCC's behalf. LE confirmed that ULSA supports all that happened at the AGM.

- LE asked whether it was worth having a source of funding for exploration in the UK. TA replied that there was once a promising plan to use Hidden Earth profits for this purpose, but it never got off the ground. The general issue is that most don't think it's worth going through the application process and administration for relatively small amounts of money.
- AH reminded everyone of the upcoming BCA ballot. He urged everyone to read the documentation available before voting, whether voting as an individual or as a group. ME said that the vote would likely occur in mid-October. In order to pass, the proposals would need a 70% majority. AH said it was an important vote, and is a fundamental part of reforming the BCA. GD said that even if you don't have an email address, you can still use the token provided on the ballot letter to vote online.
- FH asked whether this would affect CNCC's role in BCA. ME clarified that if accepted, the proposals would revoke the group vote at General Meetings. However, CNCC, as a regional council of BCA, would still have a position and vote on BCA council, which runs the affairs of the BCA throughout the year, so that would not change in any way.

8) Date and time of next meeting

Confirmed as Committee Meeting Saturday 18th January 2020, Hellifield Village Institute, 9:30am.

9) Any Other Business

- AH asked if CNCC help was still required for a digging equipment store. AS replied that there was no need, and that a group of individuals were already making good progress. CC suggested the BCA could contribute to the cost of these equipment stores. TA replied that the BCA contributes by providing the public liability insurance.
- CM said that Manchester University Speleology Club (MUSC) need to run expensive weekends away in order to train their members in SRT. He asked if anything could be done to help them out. ME replied that they should contact the BCA training officer.
- TA promoted the Kendal Mountain Festival underground session. This is a big festival with global influence, so it's a great opportunity to increase the profile of caving. The event is on 15/11/2019, and tickets cost £15. Among other things, there will be a film on Scottish caving, talks on the Dachstein expedition and a talk by Roo Walters on laser scanning.

Meeting closed at 12:04pm

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E	Finalise June Committee minutes.
Matt E	Draft constitutional changes to remove Training Officer. (action carried over)
Andrew H	Update the committee at the January meeting on the status of work at Bill Nix's dig on Hurnell Moss.
Andrew H/Kay E	Update the committee at the next meeting on any decisions made and/or work done on a potential conservation project repairing stiles on the route to Tatham Wife.
Pete B	Arrange payment of £100 to Ian Lloyd and ask for an update on progress for next committee meeting.
Gary D	Advertise RRCP's Easegill cleanup event on the CNCC's online platforms.