

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Draft Minutes of Committee Meeting 18th January 2020, Hellifield Village Institute

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Abbrev.	Affiliation	CNCC officer/ co-opted role?	Committee voting?
Conor Morrison	CM	York University Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Andrew Hinde	AH	Gritstone Club	Chair	
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group		Yes
Tony Brown	TB	Northern Boggarts	Bowland Meets	Yes
Fiona Hartley	FH	Northern Pennine Club		Yes
Alan Speight	AS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	Anchor Coordinator	Yes
Gary Douthwaite	GD	York Caving Club	Webmaster	No
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	Secretary	No
Pete Bann	PB	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	No
Ric Halliwell	RH	Craven Pothole Club	Birks Fell etc meets	No
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Ben Wright	BW	Bradford Pothole Club		No
Ray Duffy	RD	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Ian Patrick	IP	Craven Pothole Club		No
Jean-Luc Heath	JH	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Holly Bradley	HB	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		No
Elliot Snape	ES	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		No
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	University of Leeds Speleological Association		Yes
Kristien Brook	KB	University of Leeds Speleological Association		No
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club		Yes
Chloe Goodman	CG	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Kay Easton	KE	Bradford Pothole Club	Conservation Officer	Yes

Rosie Marshall	RM	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Paulina Poterlowicz	PP	York University Cave and Pothole Club		No
Alistair Rollinson	AR	Northern Pennine Club		No
Chris Camm	CC	White Rose Pothole Club		Yes
Josh Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Assistant Secretary, taking minutes	
Tom Galpin	TC	Kendal Caving Club		Yes

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

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

The meeting opened at 09:35am with a welcome from the chair and a round of introductions.

1) Apologies for absence

Sheffield University Speleological Society
 John Holloway
 Sam Lieberman
 Tim Allen

2) Acceptance of October 2019 Committee meeting minutes

No issues raised.

Proposal to accept the October 2019 Committee meeting minutes.

Proposed: Ray Duffy

Seconded: Pat Halliwell

Votes: 11 votes for (unanimous)

Note: only 11 voting reps at this point; WRPC had not yet arrived.

Action: Josh Young to issue final minutes.

3) Matters arising from the October Committee meeting

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E	Finalise June Committee minutes. DONE
Matt E	Draft constitutional changes to remove Training Officer. DONE. ME reported that this has been submitted to the AGM agenda. However, an applicant has come forward and will introduce himself during this meeting, so it is looking more likely that these amendments can be cancelled.
Andrew H	Update the committee at the January meeting on the status of work at Bill Nix's dig on Hurnell Moss. AH reported that although no significant engineering work has taken place, this is likely as Bill is currently abroad. However, things at the dig have been moved and tidied, and a satisfactory invoice has been submitted to the CNCC. PB mentioned that although the invoice was approved, Bill has not yet responded on how to pay him. Action closed.

Individual(s)	Action item
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. AH reported that the stiles are in good condition, but the step at the top of one stile is missing. He is currently making a new one. He also suggested that a reflector may be needed on the stile, so it can be located in low visibility. A reflector would need to be reflective in all directions and not bleach in the sun. Various suggestions were given but no ideal solution was found. Action closed, AH to continue improving the stile.
Pete B	Arrange payment of £100 to Ian Lloyd and ask for an update on progress for next committee meeting. PB reported that Ian has not yet replied on how to pay him, so this has not yet been done. ME said that he definitely is aware that CNCC agreed to pay, so it's now up to him to ask for it. BW reported that Ian is currently working with the farmer to get the new gate. Action closed.
Gary D	Advertise RRCPC's Easegill cleanup event on the CNCC's online platforms. DONE.

4) Reports

Chairman's report:

- With respect to the BMC and YDNP meetings he has attended, AH mentioned that cycling as a sport has a major influence on the National Park. As such, it's important the CNCC attends these meetings, to ensure caving is not overlooked.
- RH asked for more permit requests for Fairy Holes in Weardale. ME suggested doing some online promotion for Fairy Holes and Robinsons, and mentioned that Fairy Holes is a really good trip.

Action: ME/GD to promote Fairy Holes and Robinson's Pot via CNCCs online platforms.

Secretary's report:

- Responding to AJ, ME replied that he still needed articles for the newsletter. He is aiming to publish in March, but it is currently looking light on content.

Treasurer's report:

- RH confirmed that he and PH are happy to audit the CNCC accounts again this year.

Conservation Officer's report:

- AH said that two projects, repairs to fencing at Sell Gill and to the track at Lancaster Hole, are happening at the same time.
- AH asked that if anyone has any ideas for conservation projects, they should contact KE.
- IP suggested improving the wall around Alum Pot. AH said the farmer is against putting in a stile due to potential liability. IP replied that the fencing by the path, where the stream enters the pot, is the real issue. AH said he'd speak to the landowner, but he may not agree to fix it if he is not losing any stock. It was pointed out that, if anything, repairing the fence would reduce liability.

Action: AH to speak with landowner regarding the walls and fencing around Alum Pot.

Access Officer's report:

- AH expressed thanks to Tim Allen on behalf of CNCC. He remarked how the access situation at Casterton Fell is now improving after many years of conversations with Mr Bowring. It's a real triumph for Tim that soon all 3 estates (Ingleborough, Leck, and Casterton) will be on the online booking system.
- RH said he'd been talking to the management at Stump Cross Caverns, and that it may soon be possible to get access to Mongo Gill without needing a permit. The proposed alternative is to make the cave accessible using a "Derbyshire key."
- AH said that the next significant access issue is Birks Fell. RH said he thinks there are lots of trips happening outside of permits, as 20 years ago there were around 40 permits issued a year, compared to around 4 nowadays. ME said he thinks people just aren't going, and that it would encourage more trips if Tim A could arrange open access.

Anchor Coordinator's report:

- ME put forward several suggestions for anchoring projects that he had received from different people, and asked whether those present had any opinions:
 - Graham Coates
 - Waterfall anchors along the Old Ing to Dismal through trip.
 - First pitch and climb in Sylvester Pot.
 - Matt Ewles
 - Growling Hole, East Kingsdale
 - Pay Sank
 - Shep Pot
 - Upstream pitches in Toyland, Valley Entrance.
 - Mick Ellerton
 - Fossil Pot
 - Scanty Lardos Pot
- AS said that if they don't yet have anchors, they should be anchored.
- AH asked whether the BPC could install the anchors in Pay Sank. BW replied that no one in the club is qualified, but that he'll see what he can do.
- AS said that the CNCC should own its own resin applicator gun.
- BW asked whether the CNCC had a drill for installing anchors. ME said that it used to, but not anymore. GD suggested waiting until installers ask before buying one, and that for now it should just be made clear that installers don't *have* to use their own equipment.
- ME suggested training Mark Sims, Gary Douthwaite and Graham Coates as trainers. This would then be enough people to run an annual installer training session. PH suggested starting a list of those interested in being trained; AS replied that clubs should take this on. ME said that he would like there to be a training session before summer.
- GD asked for an update on anchor pullers; AS said it will be a couple of weeks. ME gave context: a puller is needed for removing old anchors, and as Simon Wilson's old puller is unavailable 2 more are being made for the CNCC. GD mentioned that use of the pullers will be included when training installers. He also explained that the holes can be reused, so there is no additional damage to the cave. AJ asked whether pulled anchors are reusable; GD replied that they are not.
- ME mentioned that an American caving group wanted to learn from the CNCC's anchoring expertise, so he passed them on to Bob Mehew who is happily communicating with them.

- AH asked whether ME received his defective anchor report. ME replied yes, and that he is storing all such emails. He will periodically sort through these to see which anchors/caves keep cropping up, and should be acted upon.
- BW asked how many anchors the CNCC has; ME said there are approximately 550 IC anchors.
- AH said that the final vote to approve the reports will be counted as approval from the committee for the requests AS made in his report.

The WRPC representative arrived during the above discussion. There are now 12 voting clubs.

Webmaster's report:

- GD asked that people send him any news he can publish, even if it's just a photo. For example, a photo of the new gate in Nidderdale.
- GD reported that the online booking system is working well, and that he has received no complaints.
- AH asked if there is a way to see how much use Birks Fell is getting outside of permits. ME suggested a logbook in the entrance. BW suggested finding out through word of mouth. AH explained that there would be no point negotiating access if there are only 3 groups a year using the cave. KE suggested posting on UKCaving, with an explanation of why we want to know and an anonymous poll. BW mentioned that no individual should be able to see the other results, so only CNCC will know how much the cave is being used unofficially.

Action: GD to publish an anonymous poll via the CNCC's social media.

- GD pointed out how news articles make a big difference to activity on the website.
- JH said that the website is an invaluable resource, and that YUCPC now completely rely on the online rigging topos.
- RH said that some southern clubs he has spoken with are very impressed with the online booking system, and say it's the best access system they've ever come across.

Meets Secretaries' reports:

- AH expressed thanks to all Meets Secretaries for their work.

Proposal to accept all reports.

Proposed: Pat Halliwell

Seconded: Fiona Hartley

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

5) Changes to BCA funding rules

- AH said that the meeting had a positive outcome overall. He said you want strong institutions, not strong men. The BCA is this now and follows its membership, without being dominated by individuals.
- AH said that the regional council funding amendment was passed without comment, thanks to the proposal being well designed with a solid argument behind it. The change means that the BCA finance committee no longer decides what money is spent on, and this is now up to the local councils. He said that this funding ensures the BCA is doing the right thing by its members, and that members can now see the impact of their membership. It will also mean there is less rivalry between regions, as there will be no more tensions over funding.

- ME said that as there are no longer any disallowed activities, everything the CNCC does, including volunteer travel expenses and the newsletter, can be claimed back from the BCA. Thanks to this financial security, there is no longer a need to maintain a fund of money.
- For expenditure exceeding £750, a request must be submitted to BCA in advance. This is not for approval, just to allow the BCA to budget appropriately.
- ME said that the BCA budget is at a deficit this year for the first time, but they can afford to do this due to their large amount of surplus funds.
- In addition to this funding change, the BCA will soon be increasing their spending by raising the limit of the public liability insurance from £5 million to £10 million, in light of a recent claim on the BMC's insurance which approached £10 million. GD pointed out that this may need to increase to £15 million in the near future.
- AJ asked about the personal accident insurance. ME explained that now the BCA has found ways to spend its surplus, there is no need to pay for this controversial insurance so it has been shelved for the time being.
- ME said that the BCA AGM will be in Priddy, the weekend of 13/14 June 2020. He said it sounds like a great bash and that we need some northern representation, so committee members should promote this event among their clubs.

8) Date and time of next meeting

Confirmed as Annual General Meeting Saturday 7th March 2020, Hellifield Village Institute, 10:00am.

- AH said he will be absent at the next meeting, so someone will be needed to stand in as chair. He said it should be a straightforward meeting, and that he will approach some people.

Action: AH to find someone to stand in as chair at the CNCC AGM.

- ME suggested finding a new location for future meetings. He said that although it's cheap, at the Hellifield Village Institute there are frequently insufficient tables despite ME repeatedly requesting four with each booking, there sometimes aren't enough chairs, today the heating isn't working. PH suggested speaking to management to see if these things can be fixed. AH added that as more people attend meetings, there will soon be not enough space. BW suggested Horton Primary. LE suggested Settle drill hall. AH expressed the benefits of being able to park right outside the venue. ME said that parking, flexibility, and a nearby train station are all important qualities.

Action: JY to research potential alternative venues for meetings.

9) Any Other Business

- AH suggested IP introduce himself as the candidate for Training Officer at the upcoming AGM. IP lives in Silsden, is a joiner, and has been caving with CPC for 10 years. He is involved in scouting, and sometimes is an outdoor instructor. He has a CIC qualification. IP believes in the benefits of good training in many ways, from clubs, peers, instructors, or from the BCA/CNCC. His goal is to have a calendar full of training days located around the north, e.g. BMC do training for those running novice meets. He also suggested the possibility of involving some under 18s; ME suggested he speak with BCA safeguarding officer.
- He envisions a clear, online system for info, booking, and paying for training. GD said he had discussed such a system with Maz Holloway (previous CNCC Training Officer), so such a thing was on his radar.
- AH asked how much funding for training could be claimed from BCA. IP replied that, as he understands it, individuals contribute sufficiently that if the training is full, it breaks even. The BCA will then fund any shortfall.

- IP stated he is against any formal certification or assessment for recreational cavers. BW said that such a thing would destroy university caving. IP suggested having specialist training for uni clubs. AH suggested he gets in contact with the BCA Youth & Development committee.
- KE asked what training did IP envisage as coming under his remit, and gave the example of training on the capstan winch and use of abrasive wheels which has been provided to CNCC volunteers in the past. IP said that he would consider such training as his responsibility, the only difference being that the BCA may not fund such training. He said he just wants the courses to be as accessible as possible. AH said that in the past, money for this training has come from the CNCC Conservation fund.
- KE asked whether first aid courses would lead to certification, despite his stance against formal assessment. IP replied that yes they would, and this would be an exception.
- RH stated that IP ran an excellent 2-day SRT rescue course for CPC members, so he is definitely competent.
- AH asked whether there could be a central training system run by the BCA. IP said this could be possible in the future.
- BW introduced himself as the candidate for Treasurer at the upcoming AGM. He is a member of BPC, and began caving with MUSC. He has a maths PhD, is a mathematician and data scientist, and has been BPC treasurer for over 5 years, so is well qualified for the role.
- BW said he has watched the CNCC grow over several years, and has been amazed with the progress made. He said he now wants to be a part of it.

Proposal for a vote of thanks to Matt E and Pete B who are standing down from their roles.

Proposed: Pat Halliwell

Seconded: Ric Halliwell

Votes: 12 votes for (unanimous)

Meeting closed at 11:00am

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise October Committee minutes.
Gary D/Matt E	Promote Fairy Holes and Robinson's Pot via CNCC's online platforms.
Andrew H	Speak to landowner regarding potential improvements to the walls and fencing around Alum Pot.
Gary D	Publish an anonymous poll on usage of Birks Fell via social media.
Andrew H	Find someone to stand in as chair at the upcoming CNCC AGM.
Josh Y	Research potential alternative venues for future CNCC meetings.