

MINUTES of the CNCC COMMITTEE MEETING held on 27th January 2012 at HELLIFIELD VILLAGE INSTITUTE

The Meeting commenced at 20.05.

PRESENT: R Holmes (Chairperson), Les Sykes (Secretary), Fay Hartley (BCC), S Lieberman (RRCPC), Alan Speight (YSS), Tony Brown (NB), Harvey Lomas (YRC), Andrew Hinde (Gritstone Club/Natural England), Bernard Bond (BCC), Pete Monk (Northern Boggarts), Don Mellor (CPC), Ray Duffy (RRCPC), Andy Whitney (RRCPC), Ian Lloyd (NSG), Victor Wain (WRPC), Kay Easton (Minutes Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES. Glenn Jones, Ric Halliwell, Pat Halliwell, Pete Allwright, Jim Sloane

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: Minutes accepted and signed as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MINUTES:

Under Item 4 Treasurer's Report: Alan Speight said that the quoted cost of bone dating of £508 per bone had been reduced to £360 per bone inc. VAT.

4 OFFICERS' REPORTS

Chairman's report Nothing to report

Secretary's report Written report appended to Minutes

Treasurer's report

Written report appended to the Minutes

In the absence of the Treasurer, Les Sykes said that finances were currently healthy, mainly as a result of money from Natural England and sales of the Rigging Guide. However, CNCC did not receive any regular income, and therefore he recommended purchasing necessary equipment, e.g. for surveying, and continuing to hold the bulk of the money in CNCC funds. The committee agreed to hold the funds in the CNCC accounts for the current period as we are unsure when the NE money will stop for funding conservation work.

He recommended a bulk buy of survey notebooks for resale to clubs and buying 3 Disto's, two of which would be well used by Red Rose/YSS and the third would be available to other clubs. Andrew Hinde said that with current low interest rates it was better to invest in equipment than to leave money in an account. Alan Speight said YSS/RRCPC could be the same Disto, and it was better to purchase only those which were immediately needed, since technology was improving all the time. No-one raised any objections.

Les reminded the Committee that CNCC would consider requests from any club for exploration/conservation work.

Access Officer's Report Written report appended to the Minutes

There has been a change to the arrangements for the Army; they now need a permit from Alan.

The new Leck Fell agreement is in place.

Ireby Fell problems are currently in abeyance

Access to Pippikin Pot – ask on the day, do not ring in advance

Les reminded clubs that written requests for permits should be on new club notepaper and not in re-used envelopes.

Conservation Officer's report Written report appended to Minutes

CNCC has acquired a new asset in the shape of a bat detector, currently being used by Dave Hodgson in Boreham Cave. The detector is capable of identifying and monitoring separately all the bat species (apart from a recently identified species) likely to be found in the caves of the area.

Andrew suggested that as the number of CNCC assets increases we would need to draw up an asset register, rules for the loan and use of the assets, and a policy for replacement.

Upper Dentdale caves have had a long standing pollution problem. Andrew said there was now an opportunity to deal with this using catchment sensitive farming processes under the EU Water Directive. Grants from the EEC fund were available to provide bunded tanks and drainage within yards etc. Similar action was also possible at Semer Water.

Proposal on clearance of rubbish from sites of speleological interest:
attached to minutes

Andrew introduced Tony Brown's proposal that CNCC nominate a person/persons to draw up a Code of Practice for the removal of rubbish from sites of speleological interest. BCA Insurance has always covered removal of scrap and low level waste, but the proposal covered removal of potentially hazardous waste.

Andrew said it was always possible to obtain advice from the Environment Agency on specific hazards.

Answering Sam Lieberman, Les said that drawing up a risk assessment was not

“covering our backs for the insurance” but was necessary because CNCC has a duty of care towards its volunteers. The Risk Assessment needs to demonstrate the hazards have been contained. CNCC has already obtained HSE advice on the removal of asbestos.

It was agreed that Andrew Hinde and Les Sykes would draw up a Code of Practice before the AGM. Waste removal work should be put on hold until this document was in place.

Training Officer’s report Written report appended to the Minutes

Technical Group report Written report appended to the Minutes., together with the Anchor Tests Report

In the Anchor Tests Report, Method section, the reference to a 18mm diameter by 10mm deep hole should read “100mm deep”

We are awaiting delivery of 2000 German anchors.

5 MEETS SECRETARIES’ REPORTS

Leck Fell Written report appended to Minutes

Casterton Written report appended to the Minutes

Birks Fell Ric Halliwell reported by email “Permit requests are very slow (6 so far). Also I have only had a few requests (less than the 5 available) for Robinson’s Pot, to be balloted at the AGM. Please remind members to seek permits, as I want to make sure we use all 5 permits each year”

Penyghent and Fountains Fell No report received

Other Areas No report received

6 BCA REPORT Nothing to report

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7 i) Andrew said he had drawn the farmer’s attention to two sheep carcasses in the entrance to the Lower cave of Ribblehead Cave.

8 DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

AGM 3rd March 2012, Hellifield Institute.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm



Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Committee meeting 27 January 2012

Secretary's Report

The period from September has been very quiet. Items will be covered later in this report.

The old CNCC Xerox photocopier is looking for a new home. It is free and if anyone wants it let me know and I will bring it to the meeting. The photocopier does need a new cartridge before it can be used.

Access Officer's Report

I have reminded the Leck Estate manager that the new license agreement is due, as far as I am aware this is in hand and it will be granted for the next twelve months.

I have met with the new owner of South House Farm;; everything is as it was with the previous owner. Parking is permitted when visiting the Allotment, B&B is available and there are plans for a Certificated Location for five units at the farm. New details are on the CNCC web site.

The issues surrounding Ireby Fell Cavern are still active and to date the owner has failed to arrange a meeting with the CNCC.

CNCC Technical Group

The problem surrounding the replacement anchor has now been resolved. I have attached the test data at the end of the report (see CNCC website) so that everyone has a copy of what has been achieved during the summer months by those involved in the exhaustive testing.

BCA Equipment & Techniques Committee

At the last meeting the E&T committee recommended that the batch 1 PECO anchors are decommissioned as they (BCA) have a reduced level of confidence in the metal. There may be some instances where these cannot be removed safely and a marking system may need to be used to identify them.

Training Officers report

Nigel Ball has taken over as the BCA training committee convenor.

Les Sykes

CNCC secretary

CNCC Training Officer

CNCC Access Officer

Report to CNCC Committee Meeting 27th January 2012 ☞ Leck Fell Access Agreement

Since the last AGM (5th March 2011) 48 clubs (3 more than at similar point last year) have now been issued with permits, for the year 2011/2012. In addition, 12 clubs have permits for 2012/13. This represents an increase in activity on the previous year. Although up to the middle of November things had been rather quiet, subsequently however demand for permits was very high, with the week between Xmas and New Year being more or less fully booked, with a range of clubs, not just those being locally based.

Moving forward there have been quite a few requests for permits during February and March, up until the start of the closed season and beyond. The following weekend dates are now fully booked, as follows; 18th Feb, 3rd March, 4th March, 10th March, 17th March, 24th & 25th March, 14th July and 25th Nov 2012.

The following weekend dates up until the start of the closed season have availability either being not yet booked at all, or with just one permit booked, as follows; 4th & 5th Feb, 11 & 12th Feb, 19th Feb, 25th & 26th Feb, 11th March, 18th March and 31st March 2012.

There has been some concern about unauthorised access, although fortunately not to the point, as yet, whereby the Estate has had cause to comment or complain. The situation is being actively monitored and responded to when incidents come to light.

Jim Sloane (CNCC Meets Secretary Leck Fell)

Casterton Fell Report for 2011

A total of 38 clubs were issued with permits for the whole of 2011- (10 more than in 2010) and this added up to a total of 179 permits issued in total, a big increase from the 128 permits issued for the whole of 2010

The major clubs all requested permits with the exception of the N.P.C. another club not applying for permits was Imperial College Caving Club

Permits can now be requested and issued by email make everyone's life much easier, They can also be turned around in less than a week (provided I am not on holiday) and not the 3 month that it says on the CNCC web site – I would suggest the site be altered to reflect this

Overall there are no problems to report and there are plenty of permits available.

Alan Speight (CNCC Meets Sec – Casterton Fell)

CNCC Conservation Officers Report Jan 2012

The conservation works at Cupcake Pot have been completed by a dedicated team from Northern Boggarts. The work was well reported and published in Descent Magazine. This was an exemplary piece of cave conservation undertaken during and after the exploration phase.

CNCC volunteers have been out in gruesome conditions to erect stock proof fences around open shafts at Large Pot/ Little Pot and Thorney Pot- Kingsdale. This work was requested by the landowner Mr Handley of Thornton Hall. He has lost several lambs each year at this location. Caver relations are much improved now. He is now open to requests for digging on his land if you speak to me (Natural England) in advance.

Ian Walker has begun a major restoration of the entrance to Crescent Pot with his team from Durham University and other individuals. About 6 days work have been completed so far. This is costly in materials and very hard work. The resultant improvements to the safety of the pitches are well worth their efforts on your behalf. A feature in Descent will conclude the program of works.

RRCPC have almost completed the clearout of rubbish from the bottom of Barbon Pot. Much stabilisation work has been done on the ledge below the chock stone. A fine clean washed shaft awaits future visitors.

I have edited a Cave Conservation Plan for Witches II. The final draft is just awaiting an updated survey of the Leck Beck Head sumps. It will be available as a large pdf file, with a few library paper copies.

I have purchased an ultra sound Bat detector for cave research projects. This will become the property of CNCC and distributed to any affiliated club undertaking research. Terms of use will have to be drawn up.

In an attempt to promote cave conservation to caving novices I have collaborated with John Gardner to produce a visitor guide to Great Douk Cave. A useful resource to Cave Leaders or anyone who thought there is nothing of interest in beginners caves. It is available as a pdf download from the Northern Caves Monitoring Scheme website, the CNCC website or as a waterproof A4 sheet from selected suppliers.

Northern Caves Monitoring Scheme: <http://www.northerncavemonitoring.org.uk/>

PROPOSAL ON CLEARANCE OF RUBBISH FROM SITES OF SPELEOLOGICAL INTEREST

For some years, Natural England and CNCC have funded and supervised the removal of rubbish from sites of speleological interest, notably Barbon Pot and Gunnerfleet Caves. The work depends on gaining the trust of farmers and landowners. Illegal disposal of rubbish is likely to incur penalties although the rubbish in the sites under question generally predates prohibitive legislation and in any case it would be difficult to attribute responsibility for illegal action to any individual. Natural England in consultation with the Environment Agency have worked effectively in clearing sites and maintaining goodwill with local farmers on the understanding that there will be no legal repercussions.

In April 2011 we started to clear Tip Wood in Bowland with the support and approval of the Land Agent but the work was called to a halt after someone contacted the agent and warned of the probable presence of harmful substances. We assumed that this referred to corrugated asbestos sheets that we had brought up. CNCC subsequently determined that we were adequately covered for the particular type of asbestos found provided that we observed correct practices and procedures. However, the Estate Office was still unwilling to authorise more than the removal of what had already been brought to the surface.

For CNCC and Natural England there are issues that will apply generally to similar activities using volunteer labour. We need to clarify and document procedures and protocols for the clearance of rubbish of speleological interest using volunteer labour. The main points should be covered under the following, which need to be expanded and clarified:

Supervision of projects by Natural England with support and guidance by statutory bodies, notably the Environment Agency

The nature of **hazardous substances** likely to be found and the circumstances under which it is necessary to consult expert advice

Legislation on disposal of rubbish and the implications for using volunteer labour in its removal

Drawing up of **risk assessments** and the circumstances under which they cease to apply and work needs to cease, and the drawing up of amendments to risk assessments

When it is necessary to call in **specialist contractors** for the safe removal of hazardous substances

Costing and payment of work using volunteer labour

Insurance and the need to ensure that everything above is adequately covered

I propose that a nominated person draws up a code of practice for the removal of waste from sites of speleological interest to cover the above and any other concerns that may arise during discussion and consultation.

Tony Brown

Northern Boggarts

January 14 2012

APPENDIX: Issues to be considered when drawing up the Code of Practice.

Below are the main issues raised in correspondence with Les Sykes and Andrew Hinde:

- As well as asbestos there are also concerns about animal carcasses which are a biohazard, and other materials, for example in old refrigerators. Substances not hazardous in themselves may become so when combined, mixed or in contact with a reactive agent. Action on human tissue can be primary or secondary.
- Under current legislation it is illegal to deposit waste except in a licensed waste reception centre. Removal of illegally deposited waste is tampering with the evidence. Conveying someone else's waste requires a waste carrier's licence.
- Waste removal is a specialised task. Those employed to do it, do so after adequate training..
- If you receive payment for dealing with waste you need to be either registered or hold a licence. Technically the volunteers do not get paid but CNCC has received money from Natural England quoted for at an hourly rate. This arrangement may need to change and we need to clarify the circumstances under which volunteers can work on behalf of the CNCC and under the BCA insurance scheme. Should there be an incident, then technically CNCC is responsible and we have a duty of care. How to cost and pay for future work is an issue given that what we originally conceived as conservation has now taken on the mantle of waste management with all the complexities of contracting and HSE regulations

- Natural England have supervised the removal of rubbish in the past and we need to be clear how this lies with the Environment Agency who are the Government body responsible for ensuring the safe removal and disposal of waste material.
- The Environment Agency have offered the services of an inspector to supervise and risk assess the activity. Are there dangers here? If something was uncovered that was a problem, could it end in a prosecution? To the landowner it might appear that we were complicit in the actions of the Environment Agency.
- We need to be particularly careful in drawing up risk assessments. When a hazard not covered by the risk assessment is found it is an automatic stop work and re-assessment with additional control measures. These additional control measures will probably require the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Under the PPE regulations state you must receive appropriate and adequate training and the use of PPE must be supervised.
- If CNCC use a subcontracted specialist we need to know if that would make us an employer. It would be easier for Natural England to subcontract but the cost could be prohibitive.