

Council of Northern Caving Clubs

Proposal to call a Special General Meeting (SGM), Document date: 13th March 2014

During the week prior to the CNCC 2014 Annual General Meeting (AGM), a letter of complaint was received by the CNCC Chairman from the Secretary of St Helens Caving Club (SHCC). This letter requested disciplinary action is taken against the Earby Pothole Club (EPC) for allegedly breaching the CNCC constitution and bringing the CNCC into disrepute, in the form of messages posted by an individual member of the EPC on the UK Caving forum.

This letter was read to the attendees at the start of the AGM; however, as this matter had not been detailed on the agenda, it was proposed to postpone discussion of this request to a SGM. A vote was made which resulted in the proposal for a SGM being accepted.

After the AGM, the officers of the CNCC made contact with the Secretary of SHCC to inform them that their letter of complaint had been read out at the AGM and of the plan to take their request for disciplinary action to a SGM. The SHCC Secretary then made contact with the CNCC Officers to state that, as their complaint has been read out at the AGM and heard by all attending full member clubs, they wish now to withdraw the request for disciplinary action. Instead they have specifically requested that their letter of complaint be placed on record, and a letter sent to the EPC to advise them of the nature of the complaint.

The Special General Meeting had been proposed as a venue to discuss the upfront request for disciplinary action, as an alternative to discussing it at the AGM. As this request for disciplinary action has now been withdrawn, the CNCC Officers do not believe there is now any mandate to call the SGM through the original proposal.

Additionally, it is acknowledged by the CNCC Officers that there is ambiguity in the CNCC constitution, which states that a SGM shall be called if ten full member clubs request so in writing. It is unclear from the constitution whether this should be the only mechanism by which an SGM can be called, or just one specific example.

This ambiguous constitution wording has been acknowledged and will be addressed by the 2015 AGM.

As the original request for disciplinary action has now been withdrawn, and therefore the mandate for this SGM has expired, and given the uncertainty of the wording of the Constitution, the CNCC officers believe that the SGM as proposed at the AGM should not now be organised, unless they are now requested to do so by at least ten full member clubs in writing. The CNCC Officers believe, based on feedback received, that that an SGM on this matter (regardless of outcome) could create division within the caving community which could have a negative impact on Northern Caving, and therefore any decision by a club to now request an SGM in writing should only be taken after careful consultation with those members who they represent.

The original complaint has been acknowledged and, as requested, the CNCC Secretary will be contacting the EPC to advise them of the nature of the complaint and to communicate that the forum posts have been deemed to be unacceptable by another full member club, and to offer advice on how best to avoid this situation occurring in the future. It should be noted that since this matter has not been considered by a meeting of the CNCC Committee, no breach of constitution has been proven.