

# COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

## British Caving Association

### Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting, 15th January 2022, Hellifield Institute

Attendees:

| Name                   | Abbr. | Affiliation                                   | CNCC role?  | Voting? |
|------------------------|-------|---|---|---------|
| <b>In Person</b>       |       |   |   |         |
| Joshua Young           | JY    | York University Cave and Pothole Club         | Secretary   | No      |
| Pat Halliwell          | PH    | Craven Pothole Club                           |   | Yes     |
| Ric Halliwell          | RH    | Craven Pothole Club                           | Birks Fell etc.<br>Meets                              | No      |
| Ian Cross              | IC    | Bradford Pothole Club                         |   | No      |
| Pete Bann              | PB    | Northern Boggarts                             | Acting Treasurer                                      | No      |
| Liv Golby-Kirk         | LG    | York University Cave and Pothole Club         |   | Yes     |
| Sam Lieberman          | SL    | Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club                |   | Yes     |
| Chris Camm             | CC    | White Rose Pothole Club                       |   | Yes     |
| Andrew Hinde           | AH    | Gritstone Club                                | Chairman  | No      |
| Matt Ewles             | ME    | York Caving Club                              | PR &<br>Communications<br>Officer, Excalibur<br>Meets | Yes     |
| Gary Douthwaite        | GD    | Northern Pennine Club                         | Webmaster   | Yes     |
| Ian Patrick            | IP    | Craven Pothole Club                           | Training Officer                                      | No      |
| *Lyndon<br>Easterbrook | LE    | University of Leeds Speleological Association |   | Yes     |
| **Alan Jeffreys        | AJ    | Grampian Speleological Group                  |   | Yes     |
| <b>Online</b>          |       |   |   |         |
| John Holloway          | JH    | University of Leeds Speleological Association |   | No      |
| ***Kay Easton          | KE    | Bradford Pothole Club                         | Conservation<br>Officer                               | Yes     |
| Pete Monk              | PM    | Northern Boggarts                             |   | Yes     |
| Stuart Whitmey         | SW    | Earby Pothole Club                            |   | Yes     |

\* LE started online before joining in person.

\*\* Did not sign register, added from memory.

\*\*\* KE transferred the Bradford vote to IC partway through the meeting.

**11 out of 13 Committee clubs present (Absent: GSG, KCC, NPC, WRPC)**

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

The meeting opened at 09:31

1) Apologies for absence

Adele Ward

2) Acceptance of minutes from the October Committee Meeting

No issues raised.

**Vote to accept the October 2021 Committee meeting minutes.**

Proposed: SL

Seconded: PH

10 votes for, 1 abstention

**Action: JY to issue final minutes.**

3) Matters arising from the October Committee Meeting

| Individual(s)     | Action item   |
|-------------------|---|
| Josh Y            | Finalise June 2021 Committee meeting minutes. <b>Done</b>   |
| Officers          | Work towards securing access at High Birkwith. <b>Slow progress. AH has been slowly building a relationship with the landowner, agri environment schemes and access payments through farming and protected landscapes funding could provide a way to make progress. Ongoing</b>   |
| Matt E            | Get in touch with Tony B, and perhaps put together an article on Bowland. <b>Will be kept in mind for future, looking out for a potential link to conservation or access. Action closed.</b>  |
| Josh Y            | Once GD has formatted all of Simon Wilson's anchor content, JY to contact Simon to get his permission to publish it on the CNCC website. <b>GD has talked to Simon and obtained permission. Done.</b>   |
| Andrew H / Matt E | Use the CNCC's online presence to encourage cavers to take part in the upcoming Whernside SSSI review. <b>AH thinks cavers may not want to provide info to DEFRA while the CRow legal case is ongoing. There is no obligation to share this information. Action closed.</b>   |
| Ian P             | Discuss policy wording for adding non-CNCC resin anchors to topos. <b>IP believes all anchors should be added to rigging guides, without a need for inspection or testing, to ensure the topo is representative of the cave; this would be similar to how natural belays are included. ME agreed, some cavers are confused by this issue and have reported that they found more anchors in the cave than were on the topo. Ongoing.</b> |
| Matt E            | Continue pursuing an improvement to access at Birks Fell. <b>See report.</b>  |

| Individual(s)   | Action item  |
|-----------------|--|
| Andrew H        | Follow up the issue with BCA landowner indemnity insurance with the BCA council. <b>Done. AH expressed frustration at the lack of detail in BCA minutes. The current insurance policy is the best that can be achieved, two of the five underwriters have pulled out. Explosives are only covered up to 5 million.</b><br><br><b>Vote to bring an issue to BCA council: The CNCC wishes that more detail of discussion is recorded in BCA minutes.</b><br><b>Proposed: PH</b><br><b>Seconded: ME</b><br><b>10 votes for, 1 abstention.</b> |
| Josh Y          | Organise the adoption of a conflict of interest policy. <b>Ongoing. JY clarified a couple of points with LE, as ULSA proposed this at the October meeting. Officers should be completing a declaration, but not voting club representatives. Declaration forms to be published on the CNCC website.</b>  |
| Josh Y/Andrew H | Inform DCA of our recent interactions with the National Trust. <b>Deferred until Birks Fell issue is resolved.</b>   |
| Gary D          | Add winch meet info pages to the CNCC website. <b>See webmaster's report.</b>  |

#### 4) Reports

##### **Chairman's report**

- The government recently responded to the Glover report on the effectiveness of National Parks. There was no major uptake of the recommendations. One recommendation was a mention of caving and access, so it will be interesting to see if this has been rejected.

**Action: ME to do some publicity for the Glover Report and the government's response.**

##### **Secretary's Report**

- Nothing raised.

##### **Conservation Officer's Report**

- KE is arranging a first aid course which will cost around £500. As this may be over the £500 limit, the committee gave approval for this expense to be covered by the CNCC.

##### **Training Officer's Report**

- AH asked if there was any capacity for more workshops. IP said it would be difficult over the summer, but there is scope to bring some more trainers on board. Workshop demand will plateau at some point, but not yet.
- IP is using customer feedback when deciding what the courses cover. He is currently considering running a midweek course.
- There have been attendees from around the country, as far as Cornwall, and has even had people attend the same course twice. GD added that all online feedback has been excellent. ME expressed the importance of continuing to put on these workshops due to the high

demand. Rescue workshops are sold out after 24 hours, and other types of courses are gone in 4-5 days.

- ME has been advertising courses to the CNCC mailing list before they go on social media.
- The next workshops are on the AGM weekend, and IP suggested inviting people to the Barn to take a look, like an “open day”. He will check if this is ok with the owners.

### **BCA Representative's Report**

- AH suggested it becomes an expectation for the chairman to be the BCA rep, and will continue doing this for the time being. This is the situation for several other regional councils. Reports will be brief, but the committee can contact AH for anything they want to be raised.

### **E&T Representative's Report**

- IP briefly explained the situation of merging the BCA Training working group with the E&T working group.

### **PR & Communications Officer's Report**

- It was agreed that the Birks Fell situation would be discussed after the other reports.

### **Webmaster's Report**

- It was suggested that accounts registered for the online booking system are periodically asked to update their details, so all info is up to date. AH expressed surprise at how many bookings were made by those who are not BCA members, and would be interested to know how many of these just aren't aware that they are BCA members through their club membership.

### **Birks Fell etc. Access Coordinator's Report**

- There was concern that as Robinson's Pot is on National Trust land, there is a concern that it could be affected by the Birks Fell situation. RH explained that this would not be the case as they are dealt with very separately.
- There have been very few permit requests for Birks Fell.
- AH reported that there is not yet an access agreement with Fairy Holes as it is due for annual renewal. Perhaps the potential new access officer could sort this as she has an excellent relationship with the landowner.

**Action: Access Officer to arrange an access agreement for Fairy Holes.**

### **Bowland Access Coordinator's Report**

- Nothing raised.

**Vote to accept all reports except PR & Communications, but including the request in the webmaster's report.**

Proposed: PH

Seconded: ME

11 votes for (unanimous)

- Returning to the Birks Fell situation, ME briefly explained the current negotiation. The National Trust (NT) worry that any agreement needs to cover their liability, so they need to speak with their legal team and the tenants at Redmire Farm. While the legal team is happy with the MoU

they were given, this was based on the old version of the BCA insurance which now only covers specific cavers, which can't be policed.

- ME presented two options. We could be honest about the situation, and if they are not happy there will be no agreement in place, with cavers doing their own thing. Alternatively, we could put forward an MoU which is clear that only those participating in the insurance are able to participate in the MoU; ME shared an updated version of the MoU from his report. The issue with the second option is that the CNCC pledged to fight for access for all cavers, so it may be against our principles to enter into an agreement that non-BCA members can't participate in.
- There followed a discussion of these options. There was hope that CRoW would provide indemnity, but this would only be the case if caving is accepted to be included and the NT won't accept our interpretation without a court decision. The need to maintain a positive relationship with the NT was highlighted, particularly as they own a lot of land with caves around the country. Eventually a course of action was agreed and voted upon.

**Vote to withdraw from the permit system at Birks Fell.**

Proposed: ME

Seconded: IC

10 votes for, 1 abstention.

**Vote to offer the National Trust an MoU that allows freedom of access to all cavers, but makes no offers of landowner indemnity as part of this. The wording of this MoU will be circulated to the committee for approval.**

Proposed: ME

Seconded: LE

11 votes for (unanimous)

5) Confirmation of Coopted Y&D Rep

- LG introduced herself. She is a former YUCPC president and maintains strong links to student caving. She is in touch with Josh White and considering ideas for what she will do in the role.

**Vote to coopt Liv Golby-Kirk as CNCC representative to the BCA Y&D working group.**

Proposed: ME

Seconded: PH

11 votes for (unanimous)

6) Date and time of next meeting

- Nothing raised

7) Any other business

- IP asked how we could facilitate instructed caving on Leck Fell, as currently all instructors need to talk to the estate individually for permission. It was agreed that it's not our remit, and that business arrangements do need to be made separately with Henry Bowring or his agents as there will be money involved. IP will respond to instructors with advice on who to contact and to be courteous. Communication with the CNCC is to be encouraged. GD pointed out that we don't want instructed groups to have preferential access over individuals.
- We currently have some access agreements which mention the BCA landowner indemnity. As this is no longer covered by BCA insurance, are we currently carrying some uninsured liability? We need to be upfront with the landowners, but also reassure them that little has changed. ME agreed, saying that the Langcliffe MoU can no longer be covered, so needs to be terminated or renegotiated; this could be a job for Adele Ward once she becomes Access Officer, Tim Allen has contacts. Excalibur is also in this situation, so it may now only be possible to issue permits to BCA members.

**Action: Access Officer to renegotiate access arrangements with the Langcliffe Hall Estate following BCA insurance changes.**

**Action: ME to change the access arrangements at Excalibur following BCA insurance changes.**

- LE gave some feedback on the Zoom attendance experience. GD will explore some options for future meetings.
- SL updated the committee with the current plan for work to stabilise the Wretched Rabbit entrance. AH reminded him that the CNCC has plenty of money and manpower available to help. He also suggested paying for a caver working at Spanset to come and assess the area.
- KE asked about a treasurer's report. ME said that Ben Wright has been doing payments, with ME approving, but Ben is just caretaking at the moment. It is hard to get a report as Pete Bann isn't on the account yet.

Meeting closed at 11:27

Summary of specific action items:

| <b>Individual(s)</b> | <b>Action item</b>   |
|----------------------|--|
| JY                   | Finalise October 2021 Committee meeting minutes.   |
| Officers             | Work towards securing access at High Birkwith.   |
| Ian P                | Discuss policy wording for adding non-CNCC resin anchors to topos.                               |
| Matt E               | Continue pursuing an improvement to access at Birks Fell.  |
| Josh Y               | Organise the adoption of a conflict of interest policy.  |
| Gary D               | Add winch meet info pages to the CNCC website.   |
| Matt E               | Do some publicity for the Glover Report and the government's response.                           |
| Access Officer       | Arrange an access agreement for Fairy Holes.   |
| Access Officer       | Renegotiate access arrangements with the Langcliffe Hall Estate following BCA insurance changes. |
| Matt E               | Change the access arrangements at Excalibur following BCA insurance changes.                     |