

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting, 10th June 2023, Clapham Village Hall

Attendees:

Name	Abbr.	Affiliation	CNCC role?	Voting?
In Person				
Jill Bolton	JB	Craven Pothole Club	Secretary	No
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group		Yes
John Cordingley	JC	Northern Pennine Club		Yes
Pete Bann	PB	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	No
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club		Yes
Alan Speight	AS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	Anchor Coordinator	No
Tim Allen	TA	n/a		No
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		Yes
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	PR & Communications	Yes
Gary Douthwaite	GD	York Caving Club	Webmaster	No
Ian Walker	IW	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club		No
Joshua Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Minute Secretary	Yes
Tom Calpin	TC	Kendal Caving Club		Yes
Andrew Hinde	AH	Gritstone Club	Chair	No
Jon Beavan	JJ	n/a		No
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Adele Ward	AW	WRPC, YCC, NYMCC, CDG	Access Officer	No
Online				
Adrian Howden	AHO	Yorkshire Subterranean Society		Yes
Alison Fuller-Shapcot	AF	Elysium Underground Group		No
Aila Taylor	AT		BCA Youth & Development Rep	No
Kay Easton	KE	Bradford Pothole Club	Conservation Officer	No

11 out of 13 Committee clubs present (Absent: EPC, ULSA, WRPC)

Numbering of sections in these minutes relates to agenda item numbering.
The meeting opened at 09:31

1) Apologies for absence

Stuart Whitmey (EPC)
Dinny Davies (Fairy Holes Access)
Ian Patrick (Training Officer)
Mark Richards (T&E Rep)
John Holloway (ULSA)

2) Conflicts of Interest

- AH is affiliated with Natural England, which may have implications relating to cave access.

3) Acceptance of minutes from the January Committee Meeting

- Minor issues were raised relating to spelling and section numbering, JY noted these for correction.

Vote to accept the January 2023 Committee meeting minutes pending corrections.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: IC

11 votes for (unanimous)

Action: JY to make corrections and issue final minutes.

4) Matters arising from the January Committee Meeting

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise October 2022 Committee meeting minutes. Done
Ian P / Gary D	Report on the numbers of people who have attended CNCC training workshops at the AGM. Done
Matt E	Amend and publish CNCC statement on ropes left in caves. Done
Matt E / Gary D	Look at where we can have clear warnings about ash dieback, especially where trees appear on rigging topos. Done
Adele W / Andrew H	Redraft Langcliffe access agreement to remove mention of landowner indemnity insurance. Done
Matt E / Josh Y	Contact mailing list & member clubs to encourage them to run “new to caving” events. Done, no clubs have come forward. SL says RRCPC are planning to run an event in early September.

- JB mentioned that AT would like to set up a “new to digging event”.

5) Reports

Chairman's report

- JJ reported that the National Park had a meeting the the High Birkwith landowner, but made no progress. Another meeting has been planned in about 6 months.

Secretary's Report

- Nothing raised.

Treasurer's Report

- Nothing raised.

Conservation Officer's Report

- AH expressed the CNCC's gratitude to the qualified volunteers dealing with dying trees at cave entrances.

Training Officer's Report

- Our training officer Ian Patrick suggested in absentia whether the committee should approve the installation of anchors to the traverse around South-East Pot in Gaping Gill. While it is an easy traverse, he suggested that a fall here could prove fatal. AS agreed with this assessment and promoted the idea.

Vote to approve anchor installations for the South-East Pot Traverse.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: IC

11 votes for (unanimous)

- ME had received a report, from a usually very reliable source, that Marilyn couldn't be rigged without leaving some rope rub. They said the natural anchor from the topo couldn't be located, but they did find an additional anchor, but it did not give a clear hang. ME plans to forward this to the installer team to have a look at.
- The committee expressed general agreement to having an "assistant training officer" co-opted position.

T&E Representative's Report

- Nothing raised.

Y&D Representative's Report

- JB introduced AT, who is keen to get involved in the CNCC's work and will soon be moving to the Dales.

Access Officer's Report

- Nothing raised.

PR & Communications Officer's Report

Vote of thanks to ME for producing the latest newsletter.

Proposed: PM

Seconded: PH

11 votes for (unanimous)

Webmaster's Report

- When asked, GD clarified that the "unique site visitor" statistic is not necessarily a number of people, but it can be useful as a comparison with previous time periods to see how web traffic is changing.

Vote to accept all reports.

Proposed: PH

Seconded: SL

11 votes for (unanimous)

6 & 7) Confirmation of co-opted positions and representatives.

- It was questioned whether we still needed an online booking coordinator. GD explained that it's useful to have this as a named role on the website so users of the booking system have a point of contact, but that GD is happy to continue doing it.
- TA suggested that AH be officially co-opted as representative to the BCA Council, which was agreed by the committee. As such, the following vote will also include appointing AH to this position.
- KE says she has never been the representative to the conservation & access committee, and that this was usually done by the access officer. AW said she does not attend these meetings. AH said he would put himself forward for this position, to be included in the following vote.

Vote to appoint all co-opted positions as per the agenda and the above noted modifications.

Proposed: IC

Seconded: ME

10 votes for, 1 abstention.

- TA reported that the Labour Party plan to change the CRoW act to improve access if they form the next government, and suggested that the BCA rep should implore the BCA to begin lobbying them and the government to improve access laws for caving. ME made a formal request on behalf of YCC that the committee instruct the BCA rep to do this.

Vote that AH suggests the BCA should take action to try and get caving considered in potential changes to countryside access legislation.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: SL

11 votes for (unanimous)

Action: AH to suggest the BCA should take action to try and get caving considered in potential changes to countryside access legislation.

8) CNCC Equipment Store

- ME reported that the BCA Treasurer told him there's nothing in the rules against the BCA covering the cost of equipment storage, and that they already pay for storage of the artificial cave, approx £2-300 per year.
- AS pointed out that renting an industrial storage unit would likely be £5-6000 per year. TA said not to disregard this amount, it is still a small amount of money compared with the BCA's budget, and it would benefit everyone who caves in the Dales.
- AH said the ideal situation would be for us to find a friendly farmer in the 3-peaks area happy to take a payment in exchange for us to have some accessible storage (e.g. a shipping container) on their land. PH reported that CPC failed to find storage like this for their equipment. JJ volunteered to look into possible storage options, and would discuss the CNCC's specific requirements with AH.

Vote to take up JJ's offer of researching available options for CNCC equipment storage.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: SL

11 votes for (unanimous)

Action: JJ to research available options for CNCC equipment storage.

9) Exploration Grants

- The committee discussed the suggested policy wording, regarding providing funding for digging projects. It was agreed that the wording should refer those applying for the funding to the CNCC digging guidelines, to ensure conservation is taken into account.
- AT stressed how helpful this would be for younger cavers to get into digging, and would pair well with her proposed beginner digging skills course. ME agreed on the importance of tying these two initiatives together, he and AT will discuss separately to get the wording right and to ensure young people are not put off.
- AT said she knows some individuals who want to restore the entrance to Long Gour Cave. ME explained that this would likely count as conservation, for which funding is already available. He said that a PR push would be worthwhile to remind people that this money is available.

Action: ME to do a PR push to remind the community that funding is available for conservation projects.

10) CNCC Funds

- At the AGM, while discussing how to spend the CNCC's saved funds it became apparent that we would need to maintain a set amount of money as a float to cover expenditure before it could be reclaimed from the BCA. PB has now looked at previous years' accounts, and believes we would need around £5000 minimum. To ensure there is spare capacity, the committee agreed to maintain £8000.

11) Non-CNCC Aids

Vote to approve Ian Patrick's policy regarding the inclusion of non-approved anchors on CNCC topos, with Matt Ewles' wording.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: IC

11 votes for (unanimous)

- JB asked who would be doing the work of adding these to the topos. ME explained that he would do it, but that the plan is only to add aids if someone says it would be useful to add them, and that he would start with a handful of places where this has been suggested before such as the traverse in Bull Pot of the Witches.

Vote to approve all other wording changes to reflect the new inclusion of non-approved anchors.

Proposed: SL

Seconded: PM

10 votes in favour, 1 abstention.

12) CNCC Independent Caver Rep

- ME pointed out that this vote is just for committee endorsement, and the full change to the constitution would need to wait for the AGM. SL asked that this change be voted on at the AGM before the votes to elect officers, to ensure non-BCA members can stand for the IC rep position.

Vote to endorse constitutional changes to allow non-BCA members to be the IC representative.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: PH

11 votes for (unanimous)

13) Any Other Business

- TA suggested installing an info board at Yordas Cave. Permission was obtained to produce two of these a few years ago, but only one was produced and installed at Bull Pot Farm. Yordas is hydrologically the other end of the three-counties system, and is a popular tourist spot with many members of the public visiting who may have no knowledge of caving or the system. The previous board had a 50:50 funding model, and TA suggested asking for the same arrangement for this one.

Vote to approve TA beginning the process of producing a display board for Yordas Cave.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: IC

10 votes in favour, 1 abstention.

- JJ suggested CNCC changes its name to "Council of Northern Cavers & Clubs". ME agreed, the name affects the impression we give when dealing with other bodies, and this name avoids all the work of changing all CNCC branding. It was suggested that this is discussed further at the October committee meeting, and possibly bring the community into the discussion.
- GD asked for approval of spending an additional £35 per year on an email service for mailing lists. The committee gave general approval.
- Regarding the recent installation of ground anchors at Death's Head following the removal of the tree there, IW asked whether it's right to use materials which will slowly corrode over the years and eventually fail. SL suggested it would be ok if a management plan was in place.

Action: AS / Anchor team to discuss a long term solution for managing steel ground anchors.

- JC asked whether any progress has been made on clearing the blocked entrance of Beck Head Stream Cave. KE explained that JC should organise the work, and liaise with KE regarding costing and how many CNCC volunteers might be needed.

- AH informed the committee that the CDG has asked for £500 towards a lid at Malham Cove rising, and that the officers agreed for this to be paid.
- SL said the RRCPC are looking into hosting an Easegill open event, similar to Gaping Gill winch meets in that all entrances are rigged. GD said to email him regarding blocking out the booking system for these entrances.

14) Details of next meeting

- JY said he was not available for the next meeting; ME offered to take minutes.

Meeting closed at 11:39

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Correct and finalise January Committee Minutes
Andrew H	Suggest to BCA council that they should take action to try and get caving considered in potential changes to countryside access legislation.
Jon B	Research available options for CNCC equipment storage.
Matt E	Do a PR push to remind the community that funding is available for conservation projects.
Alan S / Anchor Team	Discuss a long term solution for managing steel ground anchors.