

COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

British Caving Association

DRAFT MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

VILLAGE HALL, CLAPHAM

22 June 2024

ATTENDEES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS (VOTING)

Tim Allen	TA	Individual Caver Rep	ICRep	
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club	BPC	
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club	CPC	
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club	EPC	
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group	GSG	
Ray McGarry	AG	Kendal Caving Club	KCC	
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts	NB	
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave & Pothole Club	RRCPC	
John Holloway	JH	Univ of Leeds Speleological Assoc'n	ULSA	
Phil Parker	PP	White Rose Pothole Club	WRPC	
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	YCC	
Adrian Turner	APT	York Univ Cave & Pothole Club	YUCPC	
Adrian Howden	AHo	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	YSS	Zoom

OFFICERS

Andrew Hinde	AH	Chair	
Jill Bolton	JMB	Secretary	
Pete Bann	PB	Treasurer	Zoom
Kay Easton	KE	Conservation Officer	Zoom
Kai Trusson	AW	Access Officer	Zoom
Gary Douthwaite	GD	Web Administrator	
Matt Ewles	ME	PR / Access Co-ordinator - Excalibur	
Aila Taylor	AMT	Youth & Development Rep	
Alan Speight	AS	Anchor Co-ordinator	
Josh Young	JY	Minute Secretary	
Tony Brown	TB	Bowland Access Co-ordinator	

NON-COMMITTEE CLUBS & OBSERVERS

Jonathan Lester	JL	BCA Y&D Convenor
Ric Halliwell	RH	Craven
Bernard Bond	BB	Burnley
Ray Duffy	RD	Red Rose
Jon Beavan	JJ	Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum

The meeting opened at 9:34 am.

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ian Patrick Mark Richards Raymond Bell

1.2 VERIFICATION OF QUORUM.

12 out of 14 committee clubs present at start of meeting, plus IC Rep
Northern Pennine Club and Ulster SSCC absent

2.0 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

AH - employed by Natural England, with implications re conservation and access
JMB - husband is current BCA Treasurer
GD - runs IT business, supplier to CNCC

3.0 MINUTES FROM JANUARY COMMITTEE MEETING

VOTE - to accept the January 2024 Committee Meeting minutes.

Proposed: IC Seconded: ME

Voting: 9 for, none against, 4 abstentions (as not present) **Carried**

4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM JANUARY COMMITTEE MEETING

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Jill B	Correct and finalise October committee minutes	Done
Jill B	Prepare and circulate January committee minutes	Done
Adele W / Matt E	Prepare letter to Langcliffe Hall Estate, withdrawing from existing Memorandum of Understanding.	See below
Jill B	Club membership applications: request letters from proposer (ULSA) and seconder (YCC)	Done
Josh W / Jill B	Establish Inclusivity working group	Done
Josh W & working group	Review website content for clarity for all users, particularly relating to the CNCC workshops	Ongoing
Matt E / Jill B	Draft motion for constitutional change regarding Independent Caver Representative	Done
Jill B	Write to BCA Insurance Manager for clarification on insurance cover if non-BCA member on committee	Done
Matt E / Jill B	Draft motion for CNCC name change, and prepare ballot on new name	Done

Just before KT joined the meeting, ME explained that KT had written to the Langcliffe Hall Estate, introducing himself as the new Access Officer. The next step is to send letter by recorded delivery to say we are withdrawing from the MoU.

TA recommended not withdrawing completely, just altering the MoU (including the new CNCC name). The agreement gives permissive access to caves on private land, and it's important not to get on the wrong side of a major landowner.

ME replied that this was the original intention, but as we have been unable to get any communication from them, withdrawing is the only option left to us.

AH suggested that KT try some other methods to contact the estate to amend the agreement. JJ and TA agreed to find some current contact details to pass on to KT.

5.0 REPORTS

5.1 Chair (AH)

Nothing raised on report

5.2 Secretary (JMB)

Clarified that YUCPC reimbursement came from BCA Y&D budget, rather than general funds, and thanked the Y&D Convenor.

5.3 Treasurer (PB)

Nothing raised on report

5.4 Conservation Officer (KE)

JMB apologised to KE for introducing an error into her report. To clarify, expenditure over £750 is classified as a "project" and requires prior approval from the C&A Working Group. Other minor works, to a total of £3000 per year, do not need such approval. TA explained that the approval process was mainly designed to provide advice and support for these large projects, rather than to control spending.

5.5 Access Officer (KT)

JMB said she was impressed with how KT was settling in, and thanked him for taking on the role with such enthusiasm.

AH asked about Hudgill Burn. KT has been attempting to make contact with the Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining Heritage Society (CATMHS) about access. Radon levels are a concern, as the still air causes a build up

5.6 Training Officer (IP)

Nothing raised on report

5.7 Web Administrator (GD)

Nothing raised on report

5.8 PR & Communications (ME)

Hidden Earth - see AOB below for details

5.9 BCA Council Representative

JMB - Election of BCA Council ends tomorrow night. If the voting email has not been received (and not in spam), she can pass on details to a BCA Officer able to arrange a further email with a voting code.

AH does not wish to continue as BCA rep next year

5.10 Training & Equipment Rep (MR)

The committee noted that the combined Training and Equipment Working Group does not appear to be functioning adequately. JMB speculated that the BCA could decide to split it into separate groups, for Recreational Training and for Equipment & Techniques, as before.

JMB commented that it made no sense to compare the overall spending of the different regions, as they all have different needs. It would be better to have a national budget for training (which CNCC would obviously deserve most of).

TA briefed that the BCA used to have a separate budget for recreational training through the Training Committee, something which hasn't been carried over into the Working Group. Our BCA rep could push for a review of this, if the BCA wish to control budgeting better.

5.11 Youth & Development Rep (AMT)

AMT explained that she was working with Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association (UWFRA) to provide some SRT and rescue training for students, necessary because of the long delay before the next Northern CHECC.

SL raised the issue of groups getting lost in Easegill. AMT replied that they are looking into running some training on general navigation, but could perhaps focus on Easegill. ME added that he could request help from volunteers familiar with this cave system.

5.12 Anchor Co-ordinator (AS)

AS confirmed that the box of 77 anchors sent to South Wales were from the batch owned by BCA, not those owned by CNCC.

AH queried why a BCA finance report suggested that the DCA will be purchasing new anchors, when the BCA already owns a stock of IC anchors? ME responded that the DCA has very specific requirements for anchors, so it is possible the IC anchor doesn't meet their standards.

ME highlighted the new section on the CNCC website, listing pending approved anchor projects. There is also a comprehensive list on the admin area of the website, showing additional approvals.

5.13 Access Co-ordinators

Robinsons & Fairy Holes (DD)	Nothing raised on report
Excalibur (ME)	Nothing raised on report
Bowland (AB)	See below

AB explained that, whilst there had been no requests for permits for some time, there are potential digging projects on the fell. Also, since there is no more shooting on Duchy of Lancaster land, there are now fewer game keepers.

ME asked whether we might make Bowland caves more accessible by altering the access agreements, to include individual cavers (not just clubs).

AB replied that they may be open to this, and agreed to accompany KT to the Estate Office in Clitheroe to discuss the possibility.

Vote to approve all the Officer Reports

Proposed APT Seconded AJ 13 votes in favour **Carried**

6.0 CONFIRMATION OF CO-OPTED POSITIONS

Vote to approve the following positions:

Proposed TA Seconded PH 12 votes in favour, 1 abstention **Carried**

Access Co-ordinators

Bowland	Tony Brown
Excalibur	Matt Ewles
Robinsons & Fairy Holes	Dinny Davies
Web Administrator	Gary Douthwaite
Anchor Co-ordinator	Alan Speight
PR & Communications Officer	Matt Ewles
Inclusivity Co-ordinator	Josh White
Minute Secretary	Josh Young
Assistant Training Officer	Mark Richards
Online Booking Co-ordinator	Gary Douthwaite

7.0 CONFIRMATION OF BCA REPRESENTATIVES

Vote to approve the following positions:

Proposed ME Seconded SL 13 votes in favour **Carried**

BCA Council	Andrew Hinde
Conservation & Access Working Group	Kai Trusson
Youth & Development Working Group	Aila Taylor
Equipment & Training Working Group	Mark Richards & Ian Patrick

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

8.0 YORK UNIVERSITY SRT FACILITY (Appendix 1)

JMB pointed out the article in the new CNCC Newsletter, with photos of the first SRT session using the new girder clamps.

APT gave an update with good news about the SRT wall, which is currently out-of-bounds. The university has agreed to pay for the old anchors to be removed and replaced with anchors that can be axially tested, as these are cheaper to test. Other clubs or groups are invited to use this excellent training facility, and should contact YUCPC to arrange it.

9.0 CONSTITUTION (Appendix 2)

ME explained that we haven't fully reviewed the constitution for ten years. There have been a few amendments but not a full re-write. It would be worth having a comprehensive review by a few volunteers who could recommend changes. JMB offered to organise this, with volunteers TA, KE, ME, PP and APT.

10.0 FINANCE & BUDGETS (Appendix 3)

JMB read out an email from the BCA treasurer, who intends to ask each region for an approximate budget for 2024. We have not been asked to reduce spending, but the BCA needs to be able to predict and budget for these costs.

TA briefed that prior to the establishment of the BCA in 2004, the CNCC were self-funded through a subscription of over one hundred clubs. It was the BCA who persuaded the regions to be centrally funded under the proposed 'One Stop Shop'.

TA added that BCA money is actually all members money with a large contingent based or caving in the north. We should not feel guilty about spending that money regionally to the benefit of cavers. Budget forecasting is very difficult when you don't know what future problems might arise, but overall it is unlikely to be much greater than last years spend.

AH reminded the committee that the CNCC has also received a large amount of external funding since 2010, including from Natural England and the "Stories in Stone" project. AJ added that Grampian has also received funding from Scottish national bodies for reporting on cave conditions. AH asked if anyone has any ideas for other sources of external funding, please get in touch.

ME referred to the subsidised training workshops being the main reason for the increase in spending. Now that the programme is fully up and running, it is unlikely to keep rising, so last year's spending will probably be representative of the next few years.

11.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 ANCHORING PROJECTS

The following projects were approved for IC anchors:

Proposed TA	Seconded ME	13 votes in favour	Carried
Yockenthwaite Pot, Langstrothdale			
Jingling Pot, Kingsdale			
OBJ Hole, Gaping Gill			
Gaping Gill, Lost River Series, SE Pot			
Gaping Gill, Stream Passage Pot, last pitch			

There was also a late item to install anchors in Marble Pot, during the Gaping Gill winch meet in August. Approval is not needed for temporary anchors during the digging phase, and approval for permanent anchors might be premature. ME suggested approving it now, then leaving it to IP, as a trusted anchor installer, to decide when it is appropriate to install them.

Vote to approve Marble Pot for anchoring:

Proposed TA	Seconded ME	12 votes in favour, 1 abstention	Carried
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11.2 OTHER PROJECTS

TA gave some background to a dig in North End Pot, with advance notice of a possible project to re-establish access to St Georges Hall in the original part of the cave, first opened up by Earby Pothole Club.

The predicted total cost would be £500-600 for materials, which would last about fifty years. ME emphasised the importance of TA letting us know as soon as possible if costs are expected to rise above £750, as this would require an additional level of approval from BCA as a single project.

Vote to approve funding for the project:

Proposed ME	Seconded APT	13 votes in favour	Carried
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11.3 HIDDEN EARTH

ME announced that Hidden Earth will be held in Llangollen on September 20-22. We will need new publicity material to reflect the new CNCC name, which will cost approx £200-300. ME also requested volunteers to assist on the CNCC stall during the weekend.

Vote to approve the purchase of publicity material:

Proposed PM	Seconded APT	12 votes in favour, 1 abstention	Carried
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11.4 BCA YOUTH & DEVELOPMENT

Jonathan Lester, the BCA Y&D Working Group Convenor introduced his new Development Plan. He outlined various roles that need to be filled, and appealed for volunteers. He also outlined his ambitions for getting more young people involved in caving, especially those who do not go to university.

PH and SL described how they needed to review and update their clubs' safeguarding policies regarding children in caving.

JJ mentioned that lots of people are introduced to caving through show caves or outdoor centres, but there is little follow-up to these experiences.

TA said that children of cavers tend to do very well, so there must be many other children who could get heavily involved in caving. Yorkshire Dales Guides tried to set up a regional hub, the Adventure Academy, using professional instructors and some BCA funding. The project didn't last, but is an excellent idea and is probably the way forward, although it needs people to drive it.

ME stated that the BCA provided £5600 to buy equipment for this initiative, on the understanding that it would be returned to the BCA at the end of the project. There may well be a large amount of leftover equipment available to use.

12.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING

Committee Meeting to be held on 26 October at 9:30am

Venue: Clapham Village Hall (Postcode LA2 8DZ)

Meeting closed at 11:54 am

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Jill B	Finalise January committee minutes	Done
Jill B	Prepare and circulate June committee minutes	
Matt E	Update website with approved anchoring projects (in admin area)	Done
Jill B	Set up Constitution Working Group	
Kai T / Tim A	Contact Langcliffe Hall Estate, re amending Memorandum of Understanding.	
Kai T/ Tony B	Contact Duchy of Lancaster re access to Bowland caves	
Josh W & working group	Review website content for clarity for all users, particularly relating to the CNCC workshops	Ongoing
Matt E / Gary D	Hidden Earth - new publicity materials - stand at exhibition	