COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

MINUTES OF JUNE 2026 COMMITTEE MEETING

VILLAGE HALL, CLAPHAM

13-June-2026

ATTENDEES

Name	*Committee or Role*	*Initials*	*Voting*	*Online?*
Matt Ewles	Secretary/PR and Comms	ME		
Gary Douthwaite	York Caving Club /Web Admin	GD	Y	
Nige Steel	Yorkshire Speleological Society	NS	Y	
Stuart Whitmey	Earby Pothole Club	SW	Y	
Philip Parker	White Rose Pothole Club	PP	Y	
Alan Jeffreys	Grampian Speleological Group	AJ	Y	
John Helm	Craven Pothole Club	JH	Y	
Andrew Hinde	Projects Coordinator	AH		
Tim Allen	Individual Caver (IC) Rep	TA	Y	
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club	SL	Y	
Scott Nixon	Kendal Caving Club	SN	Y	
Ian Walker	Anchor Coordinator	IW		
Jon Beavan	N/A	JB		
Chris Bolton	BCA Treasurer	CJB		Y
Martin McGowan	Northern Pennine Club	MM	Y	Y
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	TB	Y	Y
Mike Appleton	Access Officer	MA		Y
Alison Fuller-Shapcott	N/A	AFS		Y
Jill Bolton	Treasurer	JMB		Y
Mark Richards	E&T Rep/Assistant Training	MR		Y
Chris Holt	Y&D Rep (standing)	CH		Y
Todd Rye	Chair	TR		

1 HOUSEKEEPING

The meeting opened at 9:30am with a round of introductions.

Quorum:
Confirmed; 11 of 14 Committee (Absent: BPC/YUCPC/ULSA) and 4 of 6 elected Officers.

AOB items declaration:
JB wishes to discuss remediation work for Starting Handle Hole (Leck Fell).

Conflicts of interests:
GD declared that he runs an IT company which supplies services to CNCC.

2 ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY MEETING

No comments/questions. Acceptance:

Proposed SL (RRCPC) **Seconded** AJ (GSG)
9 votes in favour, 2 abstentions **Carried**

3 MATTERS ARISING OR UPDATES FROM JANUARY MEETING

Swan Dyke Pot:
AH confirmed that the shored entrance shaft could not be found; possible collapse? There is an effort ongoing to identify an upstream entrance which might be in a much better overall location. No action at present, remove from future action items.

CaveMaps:
GD confirmed that the new CaveMaps site is essentially finished, and provided a demo to all attendees, taking various questions about the overall functionality.

4 CONFIRMATION OF CO-OPTED POSITIONS

ME detailed a few new volunteers to roles, including CH as a newcomer to the CNCC team for the position of Y&D Representative. CH gave an introduction; he lives with TR and has been caving for around 15 years, generally northern-focused, and he works at White Scar and is hut warden at Bull Pot Farm. He has already been focusing on helping to resuscitate Lancaster University Speleo Society, and welcomes suggestions related to his role.

The CNCC Committee support appointment of the listed co-opted volunteers:

Proposed TA (IC Rep) **Seconded** SL (RRCPC)
11 votes in favour (unanimous) **Carried**

5 REPRESENTATION REVIEW

TR provided an update on progress; In particular how it is much simpler to widen our criteria for CNCC membership, and to avoid creating specific membership or committee roles just for groups (which in the context of this review, means non-caving clubs).

SL asked how large the Committee should be, for example if multiple groups stand for Committee positions , will they end up in competition with the regular clubs under current suggestions put forwards? IW felt that we have a limit for a reason (currently 14, but there is a suggestion to increase to 15 to make additional space for at least 1-2 groups). ME added that it was uncommon these days that all 14 club spaces on the Committee are taken, and this year we are operating with 13 clubs. IW felt we should welcome groups to apply for

Committee and allow the voting members to pick from the available options. TA did not believe we would be getting any sudden rush of groups to join CNCC's Committee, and there are already strong safeguards in place at membership and Committee joining levels to screen out any groups CNCC feel are not suitable for either. AH emphasised that the AGM papers show attendance at meetings from outgoing Committee over the last year to assist with the decision making with respect to re-standing Committee members.

SL asked why, in the current constitution, the IC-Rep is singled out, when under the current draft suggestions, groups would not be singled out from clubs. TA emphasised that it could be difficult if he, as the IC rep, had to declare himself a 'group' as he represents a wide number of cavers many of whom, by definition, are outside of clubs/groups. SW added that the IC Rep also provided a point of contact for any individual in a group/club who felt that their position was not reflected by their club/group stance, or any individual with something to raise. Therefore a guaranteed slot on CNCC Committee was needed for this. ME felt that we had spent several years building the IC Rep into the constitution, and looking to redefine or reshape this role was outside the scope of the current review process.

ME believed that the AGM was broadly against the concept of individual Officers having a Committee vote, but there remained strong feeling amongst some in the working group on the importance of this in some form. Alternatives suggested included an 'organisation' vote delivered by one Officer on behalf of the Officer team, or giving the Chair a casting vote to be used only in the rare event of a tied vote. The team will explore these options.

Action: Refine constitutional changes for draft presentation to October meeting.

6 INSURANCE FOR CNCC TRAINING WORKSHOPS

CJB commented that himself and Katie Eavis (BCA Insurance Manager) have, since the CNCC's meeting agenda was published, met the Insurance Broker. In summary, there is now an email confirmation that the CNCC will be covered by BCA Public Liability Insurance for all actions related to it organising training workshops, including our new-to-caving events. The professional trainers are not covered but generally have their own insurance. Payment of 'goodwill fees' to non-professional trainers in supporting subjects (for who training is not a major source of income) has been a little more challenging, but it has now been confirmed that BCA's insurance will cover the trainer. Further confirmations to follow. ME summarised the situation by saying that the status quo can be continued unless we hear otherwise.

7 REPORTS

All reports had been available online for at least one week ahead of the meeting.

TR called for questions/additions/comments on any of the reports, noting a number of questions in the Anchor Coordinator report which would be addressed separately.

Projects Coordinator:
AH said that currently Leck Fell Estates have Natural England staff on-site and were concerned about historic, open digs which could present a hazard. SL felt that the issue is not just unique to Leck Fell, and Casterton Fell too also has some sites which could benefit from making safe, however, no action taken at the moment due to an ongoing insurance claim by a farmer against BCA's insurance for dead cow found in a hole on the fell, and not wanting to compromise this process. CJB was under the impression that BCA's insurers had already told the farmer they were not accepting the claim. This is understood to have been because there is no access agreement in place for Leck/Casterton Fells.

JB added that Starting Handle Hole on Leck Fell, the entrance to which is in the side of the public road, is also in need of making safe. There was a feeling that CNCC would be covered for liability providing remediation work was done in agreement with the landowner, despite potentially being part of a public highway, but these details need to be confirmed.

TA has identified a number of previously dug holes on Leck Fell and around the Leck/ Casterton borders that would benefit from work to make safe, e.g. removing rotten timber coverings. These have been raised increasingly over recent years in conversations with the farmers and owners, and in particular Leck Fell owner Tom Shuttleworth has mentioned wanting historic sites addressed before any new digs are commenced.

JB felt CNCC should be asking clubs to take a look at historic dig sites in the area and emphasising the message to look after your digs and make them safe.

Action: Appeal to all cavers to report historic/unsafe old digs.

AH, JB and Nick Bairstow are able to go around the area with the farmer to try to pinpoint locations that need attention. AH can then coordinate funding and delivery of materials. TA emphasised that we need to extend this initiative to Casterton Fell too.

AH said he is looking for a local manufacturer of long pig-tail risers for conservation tape.

Accept all reports EXCEPT Anchor Coordinator (to be discussed separately):

Proposed JH (CPC) **Seconded** SL (RRCPC)
11 votes in favour (unanimous) **Carried**

Anchor Coordinator:
IW added that in addition to Ian Patrick (IP), he would also like CNCC to approve Sam Allshorn (SA) as Anchor Installation Assessors, to (along with existing assessor, GD) create three active assessors to better enable new installers to get involved. ME felt this was a no-brainer approval given the extensive amount of work IP and SA have done in recent years and the generally respected quality of their work and their level of experience.

Acceptance of SA and IP as anchor assessors:

Proposed TA (IC Rep) **Seconded** PP (WRPC)
11 votes in favour (unanimous) **Carried**

SL asked what the criteria are for being an assessor? IW replied that there used to be BCA documents defining this which have become lost as the BCA's scheme has evolved, so the idea of how to 'assess and assessor' has become lost. ME felt that as the process was for CNCC Committee to approve new assessors, in essence our Committee are assessing the assessors, based on known experience as an installer and quality of their work.

Discussion moved onto IW's request for CNCC to vote to disapprove Fischer FIS V resin, which has higher shrinkage than FIS EM Plus resin. Both are currently approved. GD was of the understanding that FIS V was still considered acceptable for smaller holes (12mm), and the issue was mainly larger holes (18 mm) e.g. as left behind after removing an original P-type anchor. ME asked does FIS V offer any benefits under any situations; IW felt no, we should always be using FIS EM Plus moving forwards.

Remove FIS V resin from approved resins (leaving only FIS EM Plus approved for use):

Proposed GD (YCC) **Seconded** JH (CPC)
11 votes in favour (unanimous) **Carried**

IW discussed the 'gloopyness' challenges of EM Plus resin and investigations are ongoing to provide a plastic 'washer' to help prevent resin flowing out of filled holes. Alternative epoxy based resins are also being actively investigated for suitability.

IW moved on to discussing defective anchors. It is anticipated that the BCA will soon be publishing guidance that any anchor showing any visible movement will be considered to be defective/unsatisfactory. We have a large number of these that have been reported in our region. This new guidance will remove all acceptance of small amounts of movement. IW feels we need to change the focus of our anchor installers more towards anchor replacement or inspection projects rather than new routes/caves.

TR asked what resource the anchor team needed to shift towards more remedial work on existing anchors? GD felt that we ultimately needed more people and a generally greater emphasis on the importance of this for existing installers.

ME acknowledged that performing anchor remedial work is often not as exciting or 'glamorous' as anchoring a new route/cave, but we do need to start prioritising it. He suggested that moving forwards there should be an expectation of all active installers to take on at least one anchor replacement/remediation project each year. He emphasised that installers should not be 'struck off' if they don't, but a program of encouragement would hopefully see greater engagement. New installers should be made aware of this expectation from the start to ensure expectations are clear.

NS asked why not disallow all new installations until existing reported issues have been resolved? GD felt this could discourage some installers getting involved in the first place as many get involved for a specific new project and then go on to assist with others, and IW

was concerned that this would encourage installation of non-CNCC anchors at sites, in particular new discoveries, if CNCC was not able to support new anchor locations.

CJB highlighted that many new placements are in caves with failing and dangerous spits, so in terms of improving safety for cavers, these might actually be as important in some cases as replacing defective resin bonded anchors.

AH questioned whether we are now past the 'high point' for receiving reports of defective anchors through our website? IW felt no, they are increasing, so the need for maintenance of existing anchors is going to increase over time rather than decline.

With respect to IW's questions to Committee, he is happy with the suggested course of action moving forward, specifically, a move to bring in more installers and ensure greater emphasis to all installers to do more remedial projects (at least one per year).

There were no objections to removing Craftsman's Pot and Greenwood Pot from the list of approved sites for anchor installation; Craftsman's Pot has collapsed, and Greenwood Pot has some sensitivity with White Scar Caves and no installers have shown interest.

Regarding the request for an additional deviation anchor in Hensler's High Aven; No specific objection was raised, however there was a general feeling that insufficient information has been provided here about why this is needed. Given the wish to have installers focus more on anchor replacement/remediation projects, it is not desirable to continue to add more new anchors to the worklist currently without clear information about the purpose. This could be resubmitted to the next meeting with more information.

TA was uncomfortable with accepting the report containing the statement *"having so many anchors awaiting inspection is unacceptable to the community"* . ME echoed this, saying that the word 'unacceptable' is quite strong and perhaps disproportionate to the immediacy of the actions we are taking, and felt that 'undesirable' would have been a better word.

Acceptance of Anchor Coordinator's report minus the above statement:

Proposed SL (RRCPC)
9 votes in favour, 1 abstention
(Note, MM has already left)

Seconded PP (WRPC)
Carried

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JB's matter of Starting Handle Hole already discussed earlier. No other items raised.

The meeting closed at 11:50 am

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS

These action items are not fully exhaustive and do not detail all ongoing activities CNCC volunteers are currently engaged in; They simply report the direct actions arising from matters discussed in this meeting.

INDIVIDUAL	ACTION
Matt E	Finalise January 2026 Committee minutes.
Representation team	Prepare a draft constitution to implement representation changes for consideration at the October meeting.
Matt E	Prepare PR piece to appeal to cavers to report old digs.
Andrew H et al.	Visit Leck/Casterton Fell to scope out old digs for remedial work; bearing in mind to consider costs as may require bespoke prior approval as a project via BCA for funding.
Jon B	Investigate permissions for repairs to Starting Handle Hole; advise of any costs/CNCC input required.
Ian W and anchor team	Consider/enact ways to bring in more installers and encourage a greater focus on remedial work moving forwards.
Gary D	Launch CaveMaps.