

# COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

British Caving Association

## MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

VILLAGE HALL, CLAPHAM

18 January 2025

### ATTENDEES

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS (VOTING)

Jon (JJ) Beavan	JJB	Individual Caver Rep (sub)	ICRep	
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club	BPC	
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club	CPC	
Alan Jeffreys	AJ	Grampian Speleological Group	GSG	
Andy Gordon	AG	Kendal Caving Club	KCC	
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts	NB	
Chris Curry	CC	Northern Pennine Club	NPC	
Raymond Bell	RJB	Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Zoom
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	
Elliot MacInnes	EM	York Univ Cave & Pothole Club	YUCPC	Zoom
Nigel Steel	NS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	YSS	

#### OFFICERS

Andrew Hinde	AH	Chair		
Jill Bolton	JMB	Secretary		
Pete Bann	PB	Treasurer		
Kay Easton	KE	Conservation Officer		Zoom
Kai Trusson	KT	Access Officer		
Mark Richards	MR	Equipment Rep / Asst Training Officer		
Josh White	JW	Inclusivity Co-ordinator		
Gary Douthwaite	GD	Web Administrator		
Matt Ewles	ME	PR / Access Co-ordinator - Excalibur		
Alan Speight	AS	Anchor Co-ordinator		
Tony Brown	AB	Bowland Access Co-ordinator		
Josh Young	JY	Minute Secretary		

#### NON-COMMITTEE CLUBS & OBSERVERS

James Alderson	JAA	YSS / CDG		
Mike Appleton	MA	Red Rose CPC		
Emma Appleton	EA	-		
Chris Bolton	CJB	BCA Treasurer / CPC		
Les Brown	LB	SUI Chair		Zoom
Kath Davis	KD	CNCC Accounts Scrutineer		
Todd Rye	TR	BPC / Red Rose CPC		
Aaron Smith	ANS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society		Zoom

The meeting opened at 9:33am.

The Chair shared the sad news that Bob Jarman, of Ingleborough Show Cave, passed away last week. The funeral will be in Clapham on January 27.

#### 1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Tim Allen, Ben Blackburn, Bernard Bond, John Cordingley, Dinny Davies, Ian Patrick, Aila Taylor, Adrian Turner, Stuart Whitmey, Peter Wilson

#### 1.2 VERIFICATION OF QUORUM.

12 of 14 committee clubs present at start of meeting, plus IC Rep (substitute)

Absent: Earby PC (apologies), Red Rose CPC

*(Minimum is 6 committee members, plus one officer)*

#### 2.0 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

AH - employed by Natural England, with implications re conservation and access

JMB - husband is BCA Treasurer

GD - runs IT business, supplier to CNCC

MR - CNCC Workshop trainer

JW - employee of Bendrigg Trust (outdoor centre)

#### 3.0 MINUTES FROM OCTOBER COMMITTEE MEETING

**VOTE** - to accept the October 2024 Committee Meeting minutes.

Proposed AJ Seconded IC

Voting: 11 in favour, 0 against, with 2 abstentions (as not present)

**Carried**

#### 4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM OCTOBER COMMITTEE MEETING

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Jill B	Finalise June committee minutes	Done
Jill B	Prepare and circulate October committee minutes	Done
Jill B & others	Constitution Working Group - prepare draft	Done
Jill / Kai T	Obtain precise wording of KT's email to Langcliffe Hall Estate, re Memorandum of Understanding.	Done
Tony B / Kai T	Contact Duchy of Lancaster re access to Bowland caves	Done
Matt E/ Ray B	To discuss hosting topos and surveys for Northern Ireland caves	Ongoing
Andrew H	To establish lead time for manufacture of IC Anchors, directly with manufacturer, or via BCA E&T team	Done

Northern Ireland cave topos - ME has received these excellent resources from RJB, and will continue (with GD) to format them for the CNCC website.

IC Anchors - AH has discussed with the manufacturer (Johnny Latimer) obtaining a new batch of anchors. The lead time would be 6 weeks, with a batch size of 650 anchors.

## 5.0 **REPORTS**

### 5.1 **Chair (AH)**

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has purchased land at Park Gill which includes the entrance to Dow Cave, and plan to open the area for public access. There are safety concerns about an unfenced mine entrance, and a stream crossing which might require a footbridge.

AH suggested that the CNCC might cover the cost of securing the mine entrance, which would be good for relations with the new landowners.

AJ asked about parking by Dow Cave and if there are plans to improve this as more visitors are expected. AH felt this was something to be considered in the future.

AH has been in discussion with Mike Appleton (Grants Officer at Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust), with a view to applying for a community grant to fund conservation and access work, similar to the previous "Stories in Stone" project. This would help with BCA finances in the current lean period.

### 5.2 **Treasurer (PB)**

PB introduced Kath Davis, the current CNCC Accounts Scrutineer, who has kindly volunteered to take over as Treasurer when PB stands down at the AGM.

### 5.3 **Secretary (JMB)**

JMB thanked all the members of the working group, who collectively produced the draft Constitution. She pointed out that the Manual of Operations now needs reviewing, with a view to transferring some sections from the Constitution to the Manual (as highlighted by White Rose).

JMB highlighted the number of different names mentioned in the various committee reports, demonstrating how many volunteers were working quietly "behind the scenes" on behalf of the CNCC.

### 5.4 **Conservation Officer (KE)**

Nothing raised on report

### **5.5 Training Officer (IP)**

Nothing raised on report

### **5.6 Access Officer (KT)**

Nothing raised on report

### **5.7 Access Co-ordinators**

Bowland - AB has received one request for a permit, for February

Fairy Holes - Licence needs renewing

### **5.8 Training & Equipment Rep (MR)**

MR raised the issue of who could train anchor installers, because SUI have asked for a batch of IC anchors, plus training to install them. CJB (as member of BCA Exec) explained this is complicated by BCA Policy requiring installation to fall under a region. SUI is not a BCA region, although it is a BCA member club.

LB (SUI Chair) is concerned about having different anchor policies and different topos for the same caves in Northern Ireland. SA said that all regions (plus SUI) can set their own anchor policy.

MR added that for IC anchors to be covered by BCA insurance, their policy must still align with the BCA Anchor Policy.

SUI and USSCC agreed to continue discussions, in order to resolve the situation.

### **5.9 Inclusivity Co-ordinator (JW)**

AH congratulated JW on his article in "Northern Caving", the CNCC Newsletter.

JMB highlighted Bendrigg's "Caving Festival" in March, for cavers with disabilities.

### **5.10 Youth & Development Rep (AMT)**

Nothing raised on report

### **5.11 BCA Council Representative (AH)**

Nothing raised on report

### **5.12 Individual Caver Representative (TA)**

The Secretary confirmed that there would be a discussion paper at the AGM, on widening CNCC membership, with a proposal to establish a working group.

### 5.13 **Anchor Team Co-ordinator (AS)**

AS and AH both thanked Ian Walker (IW) for preparing such a detailed and enlightening report. AS offered to resign at the AGM, as he didn't want to take credit for someone else's hard work (but subsequently agreed to continue until a replacement could be found).

ME added that IW had also done a lot of work on updating various topics. JH asked whether, in future, anchor placements could take account of shorter cavers. JMB added that Aila had forwarded the same request from the Speleo Sisters group.

CJB queried the price of a batch of anchors, so AH agreed to contact the manufacturer for an indication of likely costs.

The suggestion about updating the CNCC Anchor Policy was supported, and ME thought that IW may be prepared to take a lead on this. MR agreed that any update should be overseen by the Anchor Team Co-ordinator, and was not the responsibility of the CNCC Equipment Rep.

MR pointed out that policy should not dictate what installers did underground, but conversely the policy should reflect good practice.

AH was concerned about the number of Defective Anchors Reports, but SA commented that many do not relate to anchors, and might be loose boulders. ME explained that all reports are triaged, to ensure that serious issues are dealt with quickly.

### 5.14 **Web Administrator (GD)**

Nothing raised on report

### 5.15 **PR & Communications (ME)**

The next newsletter will be published in the summer, so please start sending any contributions to ME.

JW thanked ME for his assistance with recent articles on Inclusivity.

**VOTE** to approve all the Officer Reports

Proposed ME    Seconded PH    13 votes in favour (unanimous)    **Carried**

## OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

### 6.0 ANCHORING PROJECTS

**Vote** To approve all projects as listed in the agenda

Proposed ME Seconded PP

12 votes in favour, 1 abstentions

**Carried**

### 7.0 FAR COUNTRY LADDER

JMB read out an email from John Cordingley, advising that the ladder is actually in "Hensler's Passage", rather than "Far Country", as described in one of the BSA "Caves & Caving" editions, produced by Eli Simpson in the 1930s.

AH recommends replacing the ladder with a pull-up system for installing a rope.

JH asked if the cost could be reclaimed from the BCA, to which CJB replied that in principle it should be fine, depending on the timing. The 2025 budget would cover small amounts, but not £2200.

CC and AG reported that NPC and KCC members were in support of a replacement ladder.

JJB compared it to the situation in Lyle Cavern (Lost Johns' Cave), where there is just an in-situ rope. SA believed that with a pull-up system, cavers are likely to leave a rope anyway. JH suggested this would be a better solution than a ladder.

AJ asked why a ladder would be so expensive (£2200 quoted in report). SA responded that a stainless steel ladder would be more durable, as any other material would corrode. AG commented that the existing ladder had lasted many years, so a similar ladder could be expected to last a similar length of time.

GD and PM both felt that neither stainless steel or galvanising was needed, citing examples of other plain steel ladders in our region which have been in service for fifty years. Standard steel would likely suffice for a generation.

ME emphasised that this would not be a CNCC installed or maintained ladder. We are simply discussing whether we support the concept of a ladder here (in place of other options) and are willing to cover the cost should a volunteer wish to buy one.

JMB suggested that we initially install anchors for a rope, leaving the option to add a ladder in a couple of years.

**Proposal** We install IC anchors appropriate to protecting the top of the pitch, and to approve the purchase of a steel ladder, as outlined in Option D.

**Vote** Proposed ME Seconded PM

9 votes in favour, 2 against (NPC, WRPC), 2 abstentions (NB, ICR)

**Carried**

## 8.0 CONSTITUTION

The Secretary explained that volunteers had worked hard to a tight deadline on updating the Constitution, although there were still plenty of improvements to be made next year. White Rose is keen to be involved in next year's review.

SA suggested waiting until next year for this major change, rather than spreading it over two years. JMB disagreed, as the current draft is a big improvement on the current version, and will be fairly straightforward to update. ME pointed out there is likely to be a substantial overhaul of membership and representation next year, and it made sense to keep them as two separate changes.

A couple of very minor changes will be made to the current draft, ready for approval at the 2025 AGM:

- Missing word in Section 11.4 - replace "must" with "must be" (CPC)
- Replace "officer" with "authorised representative" in Section 12.2 (BPC)

**Vote** The committee endorses this revision to the constitution, subject to the changes to Sections 11.4 and 12.2 above.

Proposed ME

Seconded AJ

11 votes in favour, 2 abstentions (ULSA, WRPC)

**Carried**

## 9.0 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

JMB highlighted vacancies for the CNCC Chair, Treasurer, Access Officer and Minute Secretary roles (although people are very welcome to stand for other roles as well). Minute Secretary would provide a good apprenticeship for anyone considering becoming Secretary at some point

JJB queried whether a CNCC Officer needs to be a member of a CNCC club. JMB explained the current constitution was rather vague, with the phrase "if at all possible". This has been removed from the latest draft, so club membership is definitely not a requirement.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 10.0 ANCHORING REQUEST - DALE HEAD POT

This item was withdrawn, at the request of ME.

### 11.0 ADVENTURE ACADEMY

JMB explained that this report was compiled entirely from information in the public domain, and had been sent to Yorkshire Dales Guides for comment. Mike Bottomley was happy to provide further details, if requested. The confidential report had been seen by a small number of BCA Officers (previous Chair and Treasurer, current Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) who were all satisfied the project delivered good value for money.

## 12.0 BCA FINANCES

CJB took questions on the report, explaining that the BCA now has much less money than previously. The membership fees were raised for 2025 to cover the 2024 deficit. It now looks like there will be a small deficit in the current year, and a bigger one in 2026. Options are to increase membership fees again, or to cut expenditure.

Items such as the Insurance Premium are outside the BCA's control so cuts would be focussed on the regions and working groups. For example, the budget for the regions would need to be reduced by 30% to make an impact, and that would significantly affect what they could do.

This year, the level of reserves will be reviewed to ensure they are adequate, but not excessive. JJB asked why such a large reserve was required for insurance, so CJB explained it was in case of a large claim forcing a big rise in the insurance premium. JW (BCA Insurance Manager) said this might happen following a claim in any of the "adventurous activities", not just caving.

ME recommended that the BCA advertises all the important work they fund, to help members understand where their money is going. This would potentially result in members being more understanding when fees increase.

## 13.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING

Annual General Meeting to be held on 22 March at 10:00am  
Venue: Clapham Village Hall (Postcode LA2 8DZ )

Meeting closed at 12:01am

## SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Jill B	Finalise October committee minutes	Done
Jill B	Prepare and circulate January committee minutes	Done
Matt E/ Ray B	To discuss hosting topos and surveys for Northern Ireland caves	
Andrew H	To obtain indicative price for a batch of IC Anchors	