

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting, 11th June 2022, Hellifield Institute

Attendees:

Name	Abbr.	Affiliation	CNCC role?	Voting?
In Person				
Alistair Rollinson	AR	Northern Pennine Club		Yes
Alan Speight	AS	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	Anchor Coordinator	No
Chris Camm	CC	White Rose Pothole Club		Yes
Gary Douthwaite	GD	York Caving Club	Webmaster	No
Ian Cross	IC	Bradford Pothole Club		Yes
Ian Patrick	IP	Craven Pothole Club	Training Officer	No
Joshua Young	JY	York University Cave and Pothole Club	Secretary	Yes
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	University of Leeds Speleological Association		Yes
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	PR & Communications / Excalibur Access Coordinator	Yes
Pete Bann	PB	Northern Boggarts	Treasurer	No
Pat Halliwell	PH	Craven Pothole Club		Yes
Ric Halliwell	RH	Craven Pothole Club	Fairy Holes etc. Access Coordinator	No
Russel Myers	RM	British Caving Association		No
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club	Acting Chair	Yes
Stuart Whitmey	SW	Earby Pothole Club		Yes
Tim Allen	TA	n/a		No
Online				
Andy Gordon	AG	Kendal Caving Club		Yes
Adrian Howden	AHO	Yorkshire Subterranean Society		Yes
Kay Easton	KE	Bradford Pothole Club	Conservation Officer	No
Mark Richards	MR	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	BCA T&E Rep	No
Pete Monk	PM	Northern Boggarts		Yes

12 out of 13 Committee clubs present (Absent: GSG)

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

This meeting was chaired by SL.
The meeting opened at 09:34

1) Apologies for absence

Alan Jeffreys
John Holloway
Liv Golby-Kirk

2) Acceptance of minutes from the January Committee Meeting

No issues raised.

Vote to accept the January 2022 Committee meeting minutes.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: SW

11 votes for, 1 abstention

Action: JY to issue final minutes.

3) Matters arising from the January Committee Meeting

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise October Committee Minutes Done
Officers	Work towards securing access at High Birkwith. Updates on the slow progress at this site continue to be provided at meetings. As this looks to be a long-term project it is suggested that this action can be dropped. Action closed.
Ian P	<p>Discuss policy wording for adding non-CNCC resin anchors to topos. Done. Installers have mixed opinions so the matter is brought back to the committee.</p> <p>The key point agreed during the discussion was that cavers should be given all the information they may need for when rigging a cave, natural belays are already included on topos so other resin anchors should also be represented. This will be an especially useful asset for cavers in cases where there is a potentially confusing mix of CNCC and other resin anchors (e.g. Battleaxe Traverse in Lost Johns) or where a cave is only equipped with non-CNCC resin anchors (e.g. Dale Head Pot). However, to ensure cavers know what they are using, non-CNCC anchors should be clearly marked differently.</p> <p>It was agreed that the CNCC will include non-CNCC resin anchors on rigging topos. Action: IP/ME to develop an appropriate official wording for this CNCC policy.</p>
Matt E	Continue pursuing an improvement to access at Birks Fell. Since progress on this action reported at the AGM and in ME's report, the NT has not been in touch and there has been no pushback. Done
Josh Y	Organise the adoption of a conflict of interest policy. Done. (This was completed during discussion under agenda item 6).

Individual(s)	Action item
Gary D	Add winch meet info pages to the CNCC website. Ongoing
Matt E	Do some publicity for the Glover Report and the government's response. Not done, the consultation period for this report has ended. TA added that the government is unlikely to pursue any of the report's recommendations regarding countryside access. Action closed.
Access Officer	Arrange an access agreement for Fairy Holes. Done. With RH stepping down, our new access officer Adele Ward has been asked if she would consider being the new Fairy Holes access coordinator.
Access Officer	Renegotiate access arrangements with the Langcliffe Hall Estate following BCA insurance changes. Ongoing
Matt E	Change the access arrangements at Excalibur following BCA insurance changes. No formal changes yet as this isn't the right time to discuss it with the landowner. ME will no longer issue permits to those that don't fulfil the criteria for being covered by the BCA's landowner indemnity insurance. No-one has been refused so far, and ME is willing to act as a guide for any groups that otherwise wouldn't meet the criteria. Action closed.

- Under this agenda item, AS brought up the fact that the BCA are holding a large number of rejected anchors and asked what could be done with them. RM gave some background - the BCA ordered these anchors but the batch was made with the incorrect type of steel, which is vulnerable to corrosion in the cave environment. The manufacturers replaced these for free with a new batch to the correct specifications, but the BCA still owns the original batch. The BCA T&E working group policy is that these rejected anchors may be issued to groups who will use these outside of UK caves (expeditions, testing etc.).
- CC raised the concern that if these are sold as scrap, they could end up being sold to cavers for use as anchors. AS recommended that the anchors are destroyed to ensure there is no risk they will end up in circulation.

Vote that the CNCC should recommend the BCA destroy the batch of rejected anchors.

Proposed: CC

Seconded: SW

11 votes for, 1 abstention

Action: AH/JY to put forward a statement to the BCA saying that the CNCC recommend the anchors are appropriately destroyed.

4) Reports

Chairman's report

- RM said that the blue plaque mentioned in the report has not yet been installed.
- RM gave an update on the CRoW situation. The legal case is at the end of the road, but Dave Rose has agreed to carry on the campaign in a different direction. No costs were awarded, so the BCA is paying all legal fees. TA says this should be considered a success. By putting up a fight, the Welsh Government (WG) cannot ignore caving in the future. They were offered the opportunity to have a judge decide on the matter, but the WG did everything they could to avoid this. As such, we can stand firm by our belief that the CRoW act does apply to caving, even if this has not been officially confirmed.
- TA proposed a vote of thanks for RH's 40 years of work for the CNCC.

Vote of thanks to Ric Halliwell.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: PM

12 votes for (unanimous)

Secretary's Report

- JY apologised for the delayed release of draft minutes for the January and AGM minutes.

Treasurer's Report

- TA asked whether meeting attendees are able to claim mileage for travel to and from meetings. Other regional councils offer this. SL said he believes that officers are able to claim mileage if they so wish, but that no one has claimed so far. After a short discussion, it was agreed that the BCA's policy should be used to decide which attendees are eligible to claim refunds. CC suggested using the HMRC recommended rate for mileage refunds. LE added that some trust would be necessary, as a mileage refund would be less appropriate for those also travelling to the Dales for leisure in addition to the meeting.

Action: JY to invite meeting attendees to claim mileage, using the HMRC rate and in accordance with the BCA's policy.

- Now that the payment to Settle Coal has been sorted, SL said that the next major expense for the CNCC will be the works at Wretched Rabbit, which may reach £1500 to £2000.

Conservation Officer's Report

- TA brought examples of signs he had made for Fing Hopeless Pot, to warn visitors of delicate formations. The committee agreed that he can claim back the cost of these signs from the CNCC.
- Work at White Scar Cave is almost complete. RH reported that they are just waiting for a flood to come through, to ensure everything is stable and holds up well. After that, they plan to open up access to visitors once again.
- ME brought up the following email from John Webb: *"I visited Robins Dub Cave, Deepdale, on Saturday after a roughly 10 year gap, and found the entrance crawl partly blocked by a chunk of rock that's come out of the roof. I think it's been there a few years by the look of it. A slim ferret of a caver could still pass it but that excludes most of us. I'd like to drill and cap it and open the cave up again for future visits if CNCC have no objection. It will be later this year as I've a lot on in summer, but it's a very rarely visited hole. One full day's work should shift it and I can already see the streamway crawl beyond ok so it's just the one obstacle to remove."*

Vote of approval for John Webb's suggested works at Robin's Dub Cave.

Proposed: ME

Seconded: PH

11 votes for, 1 abstention

Training Officer's Report

- IP has received requests from clubs that a workshop is organised for their members. He asked the committee how he should respond to such requests. SL said that if training is organised and funded through the CNCC, it must be open for all. If a club would like a workshop that is private for club members, it should be privately organised and funded. IP suggested giving the requesting club a certain time frame to sign up to a workshop, before opening it up for all to fill any remaining spaces. The committee agreed to trust IP to come up with a sensible solution.

Access Officer's Report

- AS said that both Old Ing and Neals Ing farms are up for sale. AS offered to find out whether the land cave entrances are on are included in the sale. ME pointed out that most caves on that land are approached from Dale Head, and it's only Magnetometer and a handful of other caves which require parking at the farm.

T&E Representative's Report

- Nothing raised.

PR & Communications Officer's Report

- ME still has a number of framed photos, which anyone is welcome to take and give to local businesses.

Webmaster's Report

- Nothing raised.

Excalibur Access Coordinator's Report

- Nothing raised

Vote to accept all reports.

Proposed: PH

Seconded: IC

12 votes for (unanimous)

- ME forwarded a message from our Y&D working group representative Liv Golby-Kirk. Josh White, who runs the Y&D group, is investigating the possibility of having a kit store in the north, paid for by the BCA. CHECC already have a store at Bull Pot Farm, but this is difficult to access for those not staying at the farm. They are asking whether any clubs with premises in the north would be willing to host some equipment for younger cavers. GD suggested the NPC may have space after their extension. When IC asked how much space would be needed, ME said it would likely just be a crate. IP worried about needing to maintain and clean the gear, but ME pointed out the advantages of having younger cavers calling at the hut who may consider joining in the future.

5) Confirmation of co-opted positions and representatives.

- RH will still stand as access coordinator, but is still looking to handover the role to someone else soon.
- There is no longer a BCA Training committee, so this co-opted role can be removed. Both IP and MR will stand as representatives to the T&E working group.
- The BCA Y&D and Conservation committees have both been replaced by working groups, so the names of the co-opted representative roles will be changed appropriately.
- Following a suggestion by MR, it was agreed to rename the role of Webmaster to "Web Administrator".

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

Proposed: ME

Seconded: LE

12 votes for (unanimous)

6) Conflict of Interest Policy

- ME opened discussion by saying that he and LE had discussed this matter over a beer the previous night and has identified a clear misunderstanding in the way this matter has been dealt with. ME said that ULSA presented the BCA policy (and declaration form) at the October 2021 meeting as an example, but never intended for this to be adopted exactly, nor did they have any particular wish for an annual declaration; simply for the CNCC Officers to go away and come up with a Conflict of Interest policy for a future meeting. ME feels the meeting may have understandably, but mistakenly assumed they were voting on the example policy and disclosure form in ULSA's proposal, which was then implemented, and it was only when Officers were asked to disclose a number of details about their personal lives that this issue became apparent and several Officers expressed concern.
- ME and LE agree that the wish of ULSA was simply for CNCC to adopt some kind of policy on conflicts of interests, and that there was absolutely no other agenda or personal conflict behind this proposal. LE said that ULSA have been waiting for the CNCC to come up with a suggested policy to vote on, and were equally surprised that their example from the agenda has been implemented following the meeting. ME concluded by saying that this has been a simple misunderstanding.
- A lengthy discussion ensued about how the CNCC should approach a Conflict of Interest policy where several options and viewpoints were expressed, including support for the suggestion ME had included in his proposal, and various amendments thereof. However, in the end, the suggestion of including an agenda item at the start of each meeting to encourage all attendees to disclose conflicts of interests with any agenda items was agreed as the most sensible solution.

Vote that the CNCC's Conflict of Interest Policy is that all attendees declare any perceived conflicts of interest at the start of every meeting.

Proposed: CC

Seconded: IC

12 votes for (unanimous)

7) Vote of Confidence in CNCC Training

- Following the discussion under the previous agenda item, ME, with agreement from IP, felt that there were no longer any concerns about confidence in CNCC Training and therefore this agenda item could be withdrawn.

8) Approval of Anchor Installation at Fing Hopeless Pot on Leck Fell

- TA added that he would also like to seek approval for installing anchors at Five Ways Pot.

Vote to approve anchor installation at Fing Hopeless Pot and Five Ways Pot

Proposed: ME

Seconded: CC

12 votes for (unanimous)

9) Date and time of next meeting

- Several remote attendees had complained of poor sound quality, despite the implementation of new equipment at this meeting. GD said this was not helped by the large size of the room, and suggested moving to the Yorke room next time to improve the experience of remote attendees. JY responded that this will be required anyway, as the village hall will be beginning to hold coffee mornings in the main hall.

10) Any other business

- JY received the following email from Chris Boardman regarding a request to add anchors in Simpson's Pot: *"The bit I am concerned about is the traverse shortly after the duck. The one I mean is where the lower route is the wrong way, and everyone needs to take the higher route which goes on for about 5 metres, then there is a short climb down to a pitch head. What bothers me is that a slip from that high part of the traverse, into the lower part, seems quite possible. There isn't an easy way then to provide any help if someone is struggling to get out of that lower section having fallen in. It would be really handy if there could be a hanger at the start of the traverse, which would connect to the hanger that is already in place at the end of the traverse. The other possible location for hangers might be on the climb that avoids the squeeze just before the chamber that leads into the big pitch. I don't mean the big pitch itself - that already has hangers in place for a climb to avoid that squeeze. It's the narrowing before that chamber. This traverse is less of a worry than the first one I mentioned though."*
- IP reminded the committee that some installers are of the opinion that caves should only be equipped with the minimum number of anchors to allow access. MR said that novice cavers and guided groups are now attempting pull-through trips in a variety of caves within the Dales, in particular Simpson's, which are not necessarily equipped for pull-throughs. It would be good to explore the options for more user friendly and potentially safer anchoring with pull-throughs in mind, as these types of trips provide many people with their first caving experience, making it valuable to the sport. IP offered to go and have a look at the anchor situation in Simpson's and report back to the next meeting.

Action: IP to visit and review the anchor situation in Simpson's Pot and report back to the October Committee meeting.

Meeting closed at 12:11

Summary of specific action items:

Individual(s)	Action item
Josh Y	Finalise January Committee Minutes
Gary D	Add winch meet info pages to the CNCC website.
Adele W	Renegotiate access arrangements with the Langcliffe Hall Estate following BCA insurance changes.
Andrew H / Josh Y	Put forward a statement to the BCA saying that the CNCC recommend the anchors are appropriately destroyed.
Josh Y	Invite meeting attendees to claim mileage, using the HMRC rate and in accordance with the BCA's policy.

Individual(s)	Action item
Ian P	Visit and review the anchor situation in Simpson's Pot and report back to the October Committee meeting.