

# COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN CAVING COMMUNITY

British Caving Association

## MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

VILLAGE HALL, CLAPHAM

21 June 2025

### 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	
Tom Calpin	TC	Kendal Caving Club	KCC	
Tony Brown	AB	Northern Boggarts	NB	
Sam Lieberman	SL	Red Rose CPC	RRCPC	
Raymond Bell	RJB	Ulster Speleological Society & Caving Club	USSCC	Zoom
Lyndon Easterbrook	LE	Univ of Leeds Speleological Assoc'n	ULSA	
Matt Ewles	ME	York Caving Club	YCC	
Asher Goodwin	AG	York Univ Cave & Pothole Club	YUCPC	Zoom
Aaron Smith	ASm	Yorkshire Subterranean Society	YSS	Zoom

#### OFFICERS

Todd Rye	TR	Chair		
Jill Bolton	JMB	Secretary		Zoom
Kath Davis	KD	Treasurer		
Kay Easton	KE	Conservation Officer		Zoom
James Alderson	JAA	Access Officer		
Gary Douthwaite	GD	Web Administrator		
Matt Ewles	ME	PR / Access Co-ordinator - Excalibur		
Alan Speight	ASp	Anchor Co-ordinator		
Tony Brown	AB	Bowland Access Co-ordinator		

#### NON-COMMITTEE CLUBS & OBSERVERS

Mike Appleton	MA	Access Team		Zoom
Chris Bolton	CJB	BCA Treasurer / CPC		Zoom
John Beavan	JJB			
Andrew Hinde	AH			
Ian Walker	IW	Anchor Team		

The meeting opened at 9:35am with a welcome from the new Chair.

### 1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ian Patrick Training Officer  
Mark Richards Equipment Rep / Assistant Training Officer  
Aila Taylor Y&D Rep  
Pete Monk Northern Boggarts  
Phil Parker White Rose  
Lynnette Cadamarteri White Rose

### 1.2 VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

12 of 14 committee clubs present at start of meeting, plus IC Rep  
Although present online, YSS were unable to vote due to technical issues.  
Absent: White Rose (with apologies) and NPC  
*(Minimum is 6 committee members, plus one officer)*

### 2.0 DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts declared

### 3.0 MINUTES FROM OCTOBER COMMITTEE MEETING

**VOTE** - to accept the January 2025 Committee Meeting minutes.

Proposed ME

Seconded TA

Voting: 9 votes in favour, 0 against, with 2 abstentions

**Carried**

### 4.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM JANUARY COMMITTEE MEETING

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	Done
Andrew H	To obtain indicative price for a batch of IC Anchors	Ongoing

## 5.0 REPORTS

### 5.1 Chair (TR)

TR confirmed that he has attended the BCA AGM, where work is ongoing to improve the general administrative functioning of the BCA.

### 5.2 Treasurer (KD)

KD added that the trainers are due for an increase. This needs to be discussed and the amount decided upon, as does the increase in course fees.

TA asked about the budget submitted to the BCA (by the previous CNCC Treasurer) and was concerned that the C&A budget was quite tight and doesn't allow any flexibility for unforeseen projects. KD felt in such situations we can still contact BCA to discuss, but TA questioned whether we could build more redundancy into our future budgets.

CJB (BCA Treasurer) explained that for this year, the BCA had no surplus funds. Regions were asked to forecast expected costs, plus a contingency for unexpected items, but to be as realistic as possible. Unlike other regions, CNCC did not ask for any contingency. All C&A project estimates and contingencies have been pooled and are managed by the C&A Working Group. Requests for project funds should be made to this group and would probably be granted unless all the contingency funds have been spent.

TA asked whether we have the flexibility to enable rapid work by an enthusiastic team to be funded without long delays. ME added that there is a £500 Treasurer discretion and higher amounts can be approved by Officers, or for contentious expenditure, by an online Committee vote, if waiting until the next meeting would jeopardise the opportunity, so there is ample scope to arrange funding in such situations.

SL commented on CNCC maintaining a minimum float for such expenditure. ME clarified that we had agreed this value a few years ago, and while the exact amount could not be recalled (in the region of £6-8K) this covers all annual expenditure prior to the BCA refund. As we currently have about £15K in funds (based on having just received the refund, so this is our peak value) then we are still some way off needing to worry about this.

- 5.3 **Secretary** (JMB) )
- 5.4 **Conservation Officer** (KE) )
- 5.5 **Training Officer** (IP) )
- 5.6 **Access Officer** (JAA) )
- 5.7 **Access Co-ordinators** (AB, ME, DD) ) Nothing raised on reports
- 5.8 **Training & Equipment Rep** (MR) )
- 5.9 **Youth & Development Rep** (AMT) )
- 5.10 **BCA Council Representative** (AH) )
- 5.11 **Individual Caver Representative** (TA) )

## 5.12 Anchor Team Co-ordinator (ASp/IW)

TR handed over to IW to introduce his report. IW felt his report was very comprehensive.

SA asked IW to highlight the areas of deficiency in our anchor scheme in more detail. IW said that there were deficiencies in several areas including:

- Location and use of anchors, with many installations not meeting current policy
- Annual review of installers not happening
- Sharing data with BCA not happening
- Approval of installers
- Inaccuracies of omissions in record keeping, citing some IC anchors in Jingling Pot which are not on our records
- Failure to respond to defective anchor reports in a timely way

There may be other issues. IW emphasised that it is the CNCC Committee's responsibility to ensure our Anchor Policy is working and that we are compliant with it, and with the requirements of the BCA Anchor Policy.

SA asked IW what his plan was to fix these issues. IW said he doesn't feel the need to significantly change the scheme, but we need to ensure our policy remains compliant with the BCA scheme in order for CNCC as an organisation to be covered by BCA's insurance.

We need to consider the processes for:

- approving anchors
- instigating a three-yearly review of installers
- engaging more with installers to ensure accurate records are received
- reviewing our list of unsatisfactory anchors and prioritise these over new installations
- look at trends in anchor issues (eg resin shrinkage)

TA urged IW to consider volunteer resource in his plans, and the risk of alienating that resource or dampening volunteer enthusiasm, and to avoid creating 'rules' (eg nominal time limits for assessing a reported anchor) which could lead to more non-compliance. GD supported this point, and ASp felt it would not be feasible to prioritise loose/defective anchors if volunteers weren't willing.

SL emphasised that we will always have some non-compliance, and that anchor users also have some responsibility, but IW felt that people don't inspect anchors, and our scheme needs to account for that and mitigate that risk.

GD felt that IW's report is important as it highlights issues which have not been considered.



## OTHER AGENDA ITEMS

### 8.0 AMENDED 2024 ACCOUNTS

Acceptance proposed by TA, seconded by ME  
11 votes in favour, 0 against with 1 abstention

**Carried**

### 9.0 REVIEW OF PROCEDURES FOR CNCC EXPENDITURE

KD explained that the BCA will only pay mileage for C&A projects and for elected officers to attend meetings. PH thought that Committee rep mileage was also covered, but KD confirmed it was not, despite such payments being made in previous years.

SA asked whether those who have claimed in the past who were not Officers should be asked to return the money. KD believed this was not appropriate and we should draw a line at this meeting.

ME emphasised that there may be specific cases where we do want to offer travel expenses to non-elected Officers (at CNCC's own cost). Hence, ME proposed, and SW seconded:

*" We follow BCA policy on who can claim travel expenses.  
However, CNCC can cover travel expenses for other individuals  
or purposes, with prior agreement, on a case-by-case basis."*

10 votes in favour, 0 against with 2 abstentions

**Carried**

In regard to other types of expense, it was generally felt that we should not decide on the funding merit of a project based on whether the money would be reclaimable from BCA or would need to be footed by CNCC funds. KD confirmed that the accounts will be clear on which costs were reclaimable. ME believed that our procedures should not change and projects should be judged on their value to northern caving. With general agreement, no vote was needed as this retains the status quo.

### 10.0 EXPLORATION GRANT APPLICATION

ASp felt that claiming for a battery was not a proper use of the Exploration Grant scheme, as this is personal item. There was some general agreement, however ME emphasised that this is only the second claim in the scheme's history (the previous application was also for a battery), and while he understood it was contentious, batteries are not listed as a non-allowable item. If we turned down batteries, there would not have been a single application under the scheme, undermining the purpose of its existence.

ME said a revisit to the scheme in future to specifically disallow certain items, or add greater clarity, could be some benefit to avoid this happening again, but he didn't think we should refuse this application. It has been made under a scheme which does not disallow batteries and for which there is already a precedent. He believed this is a good project worth supporting, for which CNCC will receive credit and a newsletter article.

ME proposed supporting the application, which was seconded by LE  
10 votes in favour, 1 against with 1 abstention

**Carried**

### 11.0 CNCC ANCHOR POLICY

ME withdrew this item, which was submitted at a time the Anchor Policy needed some reconsideration, but does not want to interfere with IW's work.

### 12.0 REVIEW OF REPRESENTATION & DEMOCRACY

TA gave a verbal summary of the subject, the potential challenges, and the need to set up a working group to address these challenges and find solutions. TA would like to see a diverse working group, not just club cavers. SA believes that the current issues are not insurmountable and that individuals have often taken a major role in previous CNCC discussions.

TR has offered to chair the working group, with involvement from TA, JJB, SL, AH, plus JMB has a list of other volunteers. SA suggested someone from the CDG should be involved, and AH felt the instructed caving sector should attend.

ME offered to help if asked on specific matters, but felt that after so many years in the CNCC, he was probably not the right person to be bringing new ideas. A fairly diverse group has been identified to move forwards.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 13.0 ANCHORING PROJECTS

The following projects were approved:

- North End Pot (original EPC route, recently stabilised).
- Wizard's Chasm - Two pitches currently from very poor non-CNCC anchors.
- Thunder Pot (current dig likely to yield 70m pitch to Brown Hill Streamway)
- Bull Pot of the Witches - replacing non-CNCC anchors to top of Chimney Route
- Providence/Dowbergill - replacing non-CNCC anchors which are absolutely required with no addition of any further non-essential anchors. SA to inspect site

Proposed ME  
12 votes in favour (unanimous)

Seconded AJ

**Carried**

#### 14.0 NEW CO-OPTED OFFICER ROLES

The meeting considered the suggested new co-opted roles:

- Assistant Access Officer Mike Appleton
- Projects Officer Andrew Hinde
- Archaeology Coordinator Tony Brown

SA expressed some concern about the growing list of co-opted positions and titles, feeling that soon everyone will have a title of some kind. GD felt this was not an issue, and having so many roles was a good entry point into volunteering. JAA added that a title added to the weight of roles in areas such as access.

ME acknowledged SA's concern, but felt it was good that so many people were getting involved and taking on roles. A title was important for transparency of who is doing what, and also to help our own teams keep track of this, and for northern cavers to know who the right point of contact might be.

TA felt that many of these roles might be considered transient and should be allowed to come and go with the volunteer if needed, to avoid a constant accumulation of roles which could be empty in future. However, it is nonetheless useful to keep a behind-the-scenes list of historic roles for future inspiration.

The three new roles and volunteers were proposed by SL, seconded by AJ  
12 votes in favour (unanimous) **Carried**

#### 15.0 GRANT APPLICATION – YORKSHIRE DALES MILLENIUM TRUST

*(This item was not discussed in the meeting, but AH subsequently confirmed that the CNCC have been offered a grant of £2000.)*

#### 16.0 DARTMOOR WILD CAMPING

TA asked if the CNCC would be happy for him to speak on their behalf with respect to leveraging the recent Dartmoor wild camping court victory for improving cave/countryside access. ME felt this was a no-brainer, and supported by JAA (Access Officer). No vote was taken since there was general acceptance with no objections.

TA added that the BCA is currently re-invigorating its CRoW Working Group. ME proposed supporting TA to join on behalf of the CNCC. This was seconded by SW.  
12 votes in favour (unanimous) **Carried**

## 17.0 LECK FELL DIG

AH said that Richard Bendall has a dig on Leck Fell requiring some pipe. The CNCC has an offcut available, and there was general agreement to donating this.

## 18.0 DETAILS OF NEXT MEETING

Committee Meeting to be held on 25 October at 9:30am  
Venue: Clapham Village Hall (Postcode LA2 8DZ )

Meeting closed at 11:35am

## SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS

OFFICER	ACTION	UPDATE
Jill B	Finalise January committee minutes	Done
Jill B	Prepare and circulate June committee minutes	Done
Jill B	Update Manual of Operations re mileage funding	Done
Todd R	Set up representation and democracy Working Group (including CDG and instructed caving community)	Done
Ian W	Initiate discussions re concerns about Anchor Scheme	Done
Gary D	Update website with new co-opted volunteers	Done