

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Final Approved Minutes of Committee Meeting 2nd July 2016 Hellifield Institute, Hellifield

Attendees in order of signature on attendance sheets:

Name	Club	CNCC officer/co-opted role?	Committee voting?
Matt Ewles	York CC	Secretary, taking minutes	
Roy Holmes	Dent House SS	Chairman	
Steve Kirk	Craven PC		Yes
Peter Hambly	Northern PC		Yes
John Holloway	ULSA		Yes
Rachel Findlay	York Uni CPC		Yes
Maureen Blair	Earby PC		Yes
Martell Baines	Bradford PC	BCA representative	
Kay Easton	Bradford PC	Conservation Officer	Yes
Tony Brown	Northern Boggarts	Bowland meets	
Pete Monk	Northern Boggarts		Yes
Gary Douthwaite	York CC	Webmaster	
Sam Lieberman	Red Rose CPC		Yes
Ray Duffy	Red Rose CPC		
Simon Wilson	N/A (BCA DIM)	BCA E&T Rep/IC anchors	
Fiona Durham	Yorkshire SS		Yes
Tim Allen	N/A	Access representative	
Andrew Hinde	Gritstone Club		Yes

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

Committee clubs not present (3/13):

Over and Under Caving Club
Burnley Caving Club
White Rose Pothole Club

(1) Apologies for absence

Ric and Pat Halliwell (Craven Pothole Club)
Ian Cross (Bradford Pothole Club)
Bernard Bond (Burnley Caving Club)
Pete Bann (Treasurer, Northern Boggarts)
Andy Farrow (Leck meets, Northern Boggarts)
Geoff Whittaker (Th'Owd Skool Caving Club/Ingleborough meets)
Johnny Latimer (Access Officer)

The meeting opened at 9:30am with a welcome from the Chairman.

(2) Acceptance of January Committee meeting minutes

No matters were raised so the meeting proceeded straight to a vote.

Acceptance of minutes:

Proposed: Pete Monk

Seconded: Maureen Blair

Votes: 9 votes for (The Yorkshire Subterranean Society representative arrived just after this vote).

Action: Matt Ewles issue the final minutes.

(3) Matters arising from the September Committee meeting

- Sam Lieberman asked about the meeting between Tim Allen and the Estates of Leck and Casterton Fell. Tim had not joined the meeting at this point, however, Matt Ewles explained that a meeting had taken place between Tim and the landowners of Leck and Casterton Fells and Ingleborough Estate to discuss access, with a view to establishing communications with these landowners, clarify aspects of the current agreements they were not necessarily aware of, and to start discussions on bringing these agreements up to date.
- Matt said that he understood it to have been a productive and useful meeting. However, the landowners were clear that there is no desire or willingness on their side to move away from the permit system of managed access for now.
- Andrew Hinde, who was also at the meeting, commented that they had however indicated a willingness to allow the agreements to cover individual (non-club) cavers, and a new and more up to date access agreement document was required to cover this.

Action: Johnny/Tim to work towards drafting new access agreements for Leck and Casterton Fells.

- Andrew Hinde, with respect to the costs of the first aid course, said that because the supplier of the training did not want to be added to Natural England's supplier list, the cost could not be recovered from NE/Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership (IDLDP).

- Roy Holmes said that UWFRA had accepted £500 from the CNCC towards underground communication equipment. Nothing has been heard yet from CRO/Swaledale MRT. The Nicola 3 radio has been finalised and is being distributed to the rescue teams (4x each).
- Regarding publicity for the IDLP, Andrew Hinde said that nothing had been done as all public relations material relating to this needs to be signed off by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Therefore nothing could appear in the printed press without approval.
- Andrew confirmed that he has been reimbursed the money for the Fairy Holes agreement.
- Andrew then went on to comment about difficulties encountered in tracking down the actual owners of Fairy Holes with a view to establishing a CNCC access agreement. The owners have changed from Lafarge to a small property management company, and there is some uncertainty about whether the London address Andrew has for them is correct. Some people on recent trips have been confronted by the gamekeeper. Andrew has written to the London address but no reply. The solicitor who drew up the present agreement has left, and Andrew cannot get any contact with the landowner. It was suggested that Andrew might tag along on the next trip, to meet the gamekeeper and speak to him as a way to communicate with the landowners and to try to get them to sign up to a CNCC access agreement. Sam Lieberman asked if it was worth Andrew getting in touch with the people who have been filming up there lately. A report on progress will be made to the next meeting.

Action: Andrew to follow up and report to next meeting

- Ray Duffy said he has been working on the list of fixed aids in Ease Gill Caverns, but this is a long job as there are many ropes around the place, in areas that nobody ever visits. New ropes are also appearing in unusual places (e.g. County Pot). It will be difficult to decide which should be maintained/removed etc. Work ongoing.

Action: Ray to continue this work

(4) Officers reports

Chairman's report:

No questions.

Secretary's report:

Andrew Hinde reminded the Secretary to avoid conflicts when dealing with a private archaeology company. Matt explained the situation (that Nigel Steel has volunteered to be an expert personal point of contact for the CNCC in relation to cave archaeology and provide some information for the website, and that this was a matter between the CNCC and Nigel and has nothing to do with his employers). Matt said he would be careful to ensure to avoid conflicts of interests or any kind of advertising that might accidentally come about.

Treasurer's report:

No questions.

Conservation Officer's report:

No questions.

Training Officer's Report:

No report received and no questions.

Access officer's report:

No report received and no questions.

Tim Allen arrived to the meeting at 9:50am (having come straight from the airport). Tim said that he has been in touch with the BCA insurers and confirmed that landowner indemnity is covered for the purposes of anyone going on the land for the purposes of caving (i.e. no issues for individual cavers). However, Perkins Slade (the BCA's new insurance company) are expecting a greater duty of care, which may in the future necessitate risk assessments for access controlling bodies. Matt Ewles asked if these risk assessments would need to be communicated to cavers whenever they apply for a permit (i.e. would it be for us to ensure that cavers have access to these). Tim said probably not however he needs to discuss with Nick Williams to see what we will need to do to satisfy Perkins Slade's requirements.

Action: Tim to keep CNCC Officers/Committee informed of any developments on this.

Tim then raised the matter of the extension to the National Park boundary, and the pro-caving opinions expressed during his recent meetings with the National Parks authorities. The Lancashire Local Access Forum and Cumbria Local Access Forum may come together. The Lancashire Local Access Forum chairman is a caver, and they are overall very supportive of cavers.

IC anchor report:

A report on IC anchors and the BCA E&T was submitted by Simon Wilson but too late for inclusion in the documents. Paper copies were circulated at the meeting. This can be found in Appendix 1.

- Simon raised a report of an in-situ handline in Dismal Hill. He has been asked about the possibility of installing resin anchors here and wondered whether this could be justified on conservation grounds. He has asked this question to the original enquirer but no reply yet. Simon will look into this further.
- Andrew Hinde raised concerns about the permanent rigging of Cupcake on Leck Fell. This requires further discussion with Sam Allshorn.
- Simon reported that a resin anchor has appeared in Lost Johns' Cave on the waterfall climb at the start of the Monastery route. This is not an approved anchor and the identity of the installer is unknown. Roy Holmes confirmed he had no knowledge of this from CRO. This section of the cave is one of the limiting factors of this route in wet weather and so this may explain the placement, as it would allow a drier descent at this point. Simon will consider further whether replacement of this with an approved anchor is necessary.

BCA update:

Martell Baines (BCA/CNCC representative) provided a verbal update on matters of relevance to northern caving from the BCA Annual General Meeting. A summary of the key outcomes of the meeting that were mentioned in the verbal report is shown in Appendix 2.

After the report the following matters were discussed:

- Gary Douthwaite said that conservation is mentioned on the York University CPC website.
- Martell said that the BCA endorse Tim Allen's approach and the campaign to change DEFRA's interpretation of the CRow act to cover caving. They have allowed him a budget to pursue this campaign as their appointed CRow Liaison Officer.
- The BCA felt that there were no legal/insurance issues with regard to access agreements and disagreed with concerns raised by Tim on the matter.
- With respect to Proxy voting, this has been deferred to next year when more wording can be put together to cover this.
- With respect to the constitutional amendment regarding the CRow campaign, the BCA wish to focus on landowner liaison and conservation as a part of the campaign. Tim said he has been working with Andrew Hinde to try to ensure access goes hand in hand with conservation.
- Tim said that concerns had been raised by the British and Irish Showcaves Association with respect to CRow and the BCA is putting together a reply to this.
- Martell emphasised that her report was a summary from her position as CNCC representative and not a comprehensive report.

Acceptance of all Officers reports:

Proposed: Sam Lieberman

Seconded: Pete Monk

Votes: 10 votes for (unanimous)

Meets Secretary's reports:

No comments/questions. Roy thanked Kay with her efforts to deal with the recent issues at Skirwith Cave. Kay emphasised the importance of not publishing on the internet trip reports or photos of the cave in the interested of maintaining landowner relations here.

Acceptance of all meets secretary reports:

Proposed: Maureen Blair

Seconded: Pete Monk

Votes: 10 votes for (unanimous)

(5) Confirmation of co-opted positions and representatives

Matt Ewles said that he had asked, and heard nothing to suggest any of our co-opted officers or representatives wished to step down from their role, therefore the Committee should either vote to accept them again for another year or raise any concerns. No concerns were raised so a vote.

Acceptance of incumbent co-opted officers and representatives for another year

Proposed: Maureen Blair

Seconded: Kay Easton

Votes: 10 votes for (unanimous)

(6) Discussion about cleaning up of old digs (surface and underground)

- Matt Ewles provided an overview and said that the reason this was on the agenda was to see if the Committee had any thoughts of additional ways the CNCC could help deal with old and abandoned digs.
- Ray Duffy asked if any money was available for making abandoned digs stock-proof. Andrew Hinde said that in the past they have been capped with concrete lintels. Matt Ewles said that if the cost came to <£500 the Treasurer (with advice from the Conservation Officer) would have discretion for the CNCC to fund this with minimum hassle.
- Ray said that there were some long abandoned digs near Cow Pot that could benefit from being capped off.
- Matt Ewles emphasised that we want to limit this to long abandoned digs and not to create the impression to clubs that they can simply abandon their digs and the CNCC would clean up after them.
- A reporting tool for the CNCC website was suggested.

Action: Gary/Matt to look into some website content for this and a reporting tool.

- John Holloway said that ULSA's Conservation Officer asked if we have any generic presentations on cave conservation that could be used for their university freshers. Andrew Hinde said he had some material and suggested John email him.
- Matt Ewles raised an email from Jason Mallinson on behalf of the Cave Diving Group. Jason had expressed concerns about the 'if in doubt bring it out' slogan (as used by UK Caving) and that this could lead to some diving gear being removed. Diving gear is often left in situ for long durations but is still in use. Matt said that he did not expect that any CNCC initiative would cause a problem, as our initiative is primarily surface works at the moment, and we would seek to absolutely confirm a dig is abandoned before performing any work. Matt said that while the 'if in doubt bring it out' slogan had no doubt encouraged many people towards cave conservation, it was not a slogan the CNCC were using.
- Kay Easton suggested that anyone leaving any gear in a cave should be responsible for labelling it appropriately to avoid it being mistaken as abandoned. Simon Wilson agreed that it should be the responsibility of the person leaving the gear to remove the doubt as to whether the gear is abandoned or not.

(7) Fixed aids in caves: What role (if any) should the CNCC take?

Matt Ewles provided a verbal overview on this item (see agenda for details)

- Simon Wilson suggested that as the BCA E&T had tried to write a policy on fixed aids, and failed, we should take a lesson from this.

- It was suggested that we could however have some guiding principles rather than a policy as such and that each fixed aid should be reviewed individually rather than trying to create an all-encompassing policy. A policy could result in increased liability.
- Ray Duffy agreed and said that any kind of policy/guide should be kept really simple.
- Martell Baines said that the Bradford Pothole Club had not had the opportunity to discuss this properly yet. A few other representatives said that they too might need longer to consider this matter.
- John Holloway said that liability for fixed aids isn't something we should be taking on. The size of our region and the number of fixed aids mean it would be too big a task.
- Ray Duffy asked if this perhaps could be rolled into the Descent 'adopt a cave' scheme, but said that unfortunately this scheme was not up to date.
- Simon Wilson asked Ray Duffy if RRCPC had taken on responsibility for fixed aids in Ease Gill. Ray said not officially.
- Gary Douthwaite said that it is better to have fixed aids on the major trade routes rather than see the inevitable proliferation of tat if no official fixed aid is placed.
- Simon pointed out that we already have responsibility for many fixed aids, if you count anchors as fixed aids. Matt Ewles said that we have also funded several of the fixed aids in Ease Gill recently (ropes on Fall Pot/Stake Pot).
- Andrew Hinde asked if there was any problem with the status quo. Do we have a history of incidents that warrant a policy? Matt Ewles said that this was an interesting perspective on the matter and emphasised that the aim from his perspective was to enhance the system we have now and make it more useful to cavers, and not to tackle any specific issues being faced at the moment.
- Ray Duffy suggested that our policy, if any, should be that only anchors are CNCC related, and that everything else is not, and is used at your own risk. Martell Baines agreed that a guiding principle should be that every fixed aid you use in a cave you do so at your own risk.
- Gary Douthwaite suggested that there would be no harm in presenting a list of known fixed aids on the CNCC website, however, with no responsibility presented to remove/replace/inspect them.
- Matt Ewles asked which ones we should agree to replace if reported defective and which we should not.
- Tony Brown asked if we needed to actually define what a fixed aid is.
- Sam Lieberman suggested that in some cases ropes/ladders could be funded by the CNCC on safety or conservation grounds.

The general outcome from these discussions was that the Committee wished for longer to consider this. Matt Ewles is to write up the minutes and send round, and make this an agenda item for the next Committee meeting. Also involve all full members too.

Action: Matt Ewles to write up this discussion and schedule this for further discussion at the next Committee meeting. Aim to encourage input from all Committee clubs, and also full members.

(8) Date and time of next meeting

Saturday 8th October 2016 9:30am, Hellifield Village Institute.

(9) Any Other Business

We have been asked by Fiona Durham on behalf of Eurospeleo if we should sponsor a prize for the event. Pete Monk said definitely, yes. Maureen Blair agreed as this is a one-off event. General agreement from all in the room, approximate budget £50. Matt Ewles to investigate options.

Action: Matt Ewles to investigate possible prizes for Eurospeleo from CNCC.

Meeting closed 11:10am

Summary of action items dictated or inferred from this meeting:

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E.	Issue January meeting minutes as final.
Johnny L./Tim A.	Start the process of drafting new Casterton/Leck access agreements, to include access for individual cavers.
Andrew H.	Report back at next meeting on progress regarding Fairy Holes access agreement.
Ray D.	Continue work to list all fixed aids in Ease Gill Caverns.
Tim A.	Keep CNCC informed of any feedback regarding our access agreements and any related legal/insurance matters.
Pete B.	Arrange reimbursement of £120 for Fairy Holes agreement to Andrew H.
Gary D./Matt E.	Look into some website content on our initiative to clean up abandoned surface digs and create a reporting tool for people to use.
Matt E.	Write up discussions on fixed aids, schedule for next Committee meeting and try to get input from all Committee and full member clubs.
Matt E.	Look into possible suitable prizes for Eurospeleo from CNCC.

Appendix 1: Supplementary report on Leck Fell (Andrew Farrow) as supplied at the meeting

Report to the CNCC on the IC Resin Anchor Project - June 2016.

In March 2016 Russell Brooks was trained as an installer.

The total number of IC anchors installed is now 215. Cupcake has been completed. A pitch in Link Pot which is an alternative to Echo Aven has been equipped with anchors. In Lost Johns anchors have been installed on The Dome Pitch Alternative, on Lyle Cavern and on the traverse above the Last Pitch. Anchors have been installed in the Big Rift Route which completes Gingling Hole. Anchors have been installed in Birks Fell Cave but it is not yet complete. Three anchors have been installed in Rift Pot (Masongill). In Stream Passage Pot the removal of PECO anchors has been completed. Eight PECO anchors were removed using the removal tool and have been replaced with IC anchors in the same holes.

Disappointment Pot and Marilyn have both been inspected with a view to replacing PECO anchors but it is difficult to distinguish between DMM anchors and PECO anchors. I have not yet found out who installed the PECO anchors to ask them about the locations. Loose anchors have been reported in Alum Pot, Hardrawkin, Diccan, Swinsto and Notts Pot. There appears to be a problem which affects only the anchors installed using the earliest type of resin. If the CNCC want to investigate loose anchors then it would be helpful if the people doing the investigation had access to the records of anchor installations.

I have had a request from the manager of an outdoor centre to replace Spits on a traverse line in Dismal Hill Cave with resin anchors. 21 Spits were installed by the manager of another cave guiding business and they are now in poor condition. The first manager has told me that he has maintained traverse lines in Dismal Hill which are used by outdoor centres. After several emails I said that any installation would have to be justified to the CNCC on the grounds of both safety and conservation and asked him to provide justification. He has not yet replied.

A new Petzl Colinox has been installed in Lost Johns. The purpose appears to be to provide a Y hang with the existing DMM anchor on a pitch to by-pass the waterfall climb at the start of Monastery Route. I would like to know who placed it and why. Was it placed for rescue use? It is a useful and necessary anchor but it will have to be removed because it is not an approved installation. It would be far better if anybody installing anchors did it within the approved anchor scheme.

Report to the CNCC on the BCA E&T Committee

The planned Spring meeting was not held because it was not quorate and I apologise for being one of the non-attenders.

Simon Wilson.

Appendix 2: Supplementary report on the BCA AGM (attended by Martell Baines on behalf of CNCC).

Please note that these are abbreviated notes taken for the benefit of updating the CNCC, and for more detailed info the official minutes on the BCA website should be consulted.

1. Conservation & Access: Minimum Impact Caving guidelines and leaflets circulated by Andrew Hinde for Eurospeleo, pubs and caving club huts. The Caving Code, reduced from 16 points to 6 are with the printer. Point raised from floor that no club mentions conservation on their website.
2. Bob Mehew has posted 6-7 years of rope tests and research on Roperesearch.co.uk. The BPC were thanked by Bob for the use of the Brackenbottom garage for the rope testing rig.
3. Training: there are training grants available for clubs.
4. Additional underground Conservation training for cave leaders.
5. Weils disease advice card: will be circulated at next BCA membership renewal.
6. Legal & insurance: it was stated that caving insurance was in a good position with no obvious threats to access agreements. There have been no claims to date.
7. Youth development: discussion on the missed generation of pre-university cavers, supported looking at demographics of age across the BCA membership.
8. Media Liaison. Hellie Adams stepped down; role for liaison sits with Chair Andy Eavis.
9. British Caving Library: There will be a BCL stand at Eurospeleo 2016.

Elections:

Secretary: Simon Brookes

Legal & Insurance: Bob Mehew

There were no opposing nominations.

Motions:

1. Proxy voting. Council tasked to discuss the principle, consider the detail and to develop words for a constitutional amendment to present at a General Meeting.

Individual votes: 11 for, 8 against, 2 abstentions

Group votes: 6 for, 5 against, 3 abstentions

2. Constitutional Amendment re CROW: The BCA to make a robust statement against causing damage to caves. 'If CROW seen to apply that it is done hand in hand with other measures'. Council to present properly worded and amended text to constitution next year meanwhile campaign focus to concentrate on conservation and Landowner relations.

Individual votes: 22 for, 2 abstentions.

Group votes: 14 for, 1 abstention.

Next BCA AGM 11th June 2017, Castleton Rotary Centre.