

COUNCIL OF NORTHERN CAVING CLUBS

British Caving Association

Agenda for Committee Meeting 2nd July 2016, Hellifield Village Institute, 9:30am

- (1) Apologies for absence
- (2) Acceptance of minutes from the January Committee meeting (these have already been through the one month review process before making public on the website).
- (3) Any matters arising or updates on action items from the January Committee meeting?

Reminder of action items from January meeting:

Individual(s)	Action item
Matt E.	Issue September meeting minutes as final.
Johnny L. and Pete B.	Johnny to speak with accountant colleague to see if the CNCC might be able to be removed from corporation tax now we no longer receiving money from rigging guide sales, and communicate findings to Pete. Pete to look into necessary process to take us out of corporation tax if possible.
Andrew H.	Confirm more specifics of costs for first aid training for CNCC volunteers to Pete B. and see if these costs may be recoverable from NE/YDLP.
Roy H.	Contact CRO, UWFRA and Swaledale MRT to remind them of the £500 funding on offer for communications equipment.
Andrew H./Tim A.	Look into possible press coverage of the IDLP partnership funding.
Pete B.	Arrange reimbursement of £120 for Fairy Holes agreement to Andrew H.
Andrew H./Johnny L.	Look into possibility of establishing CNCC agreement with Fairy Holes quarry owners.
Ray D.	Ray to come up with definitive list of fixed ropes in Ease Gill (or possibly elsewhere too if time allows) which it is felt important that the CNCC list on the website and which we should take action to replace when they are reported as defective.

(4) Reports (will be made available approx one week before meeting)

- a. Chairman's report – Roy Holmes
- b. Secretary's report – Matt Ewles
- c. Treasurer's report – Pete Bann
- d. Conservation Officer's report – Kay Easton
- e. Training Officer's report – Dan Irving
- f. Access Officer's report – Johnny Latimer
- g. Other representative reports (optional) - Various
- h. Meets secretary reports (optional) - Various

(5) Confirmation of co-opted positions and representatives

This agenda item is a discussion and vote on whether to endorse the continuation of each of these co-opted positions within the CNCC. Nobody has indicated any desire to step away from their role.

Ingleborough/Aygill permits – Geoff Whittaker

Leck Permits – Andrew Farrow

Penyghent Permits – Sam Allshorn

Casterton Permits – Hannah Walker

Stump Cross/ Robinson's/Birks Fell/Fairy Holes Permits – Ric Halliwell

Excalibur Permits – Matt Ewles

Bowland Permits – Tony Brown

Access Representative – Tim Allen

Webmaster – Gary Douthwaite

Representative to the BCA – Martell Baines

Representative to the BCA E&T – Simon Wilson

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

Tim Allen has suggested this as an agenda item for discussion (although some progress on this has already been made by Kay/Andrew).

Some background information provided by Tim to support this agenda item:

"I brought up the issue of old abandoned digs as it is a major area of conservation we can all do something about and it would be good to have the full support of the CNCC behind any initiative. Whilst old dig mess lies on the surface and underground it is difficult to suggest that cavers are very conservation minded. If we are seen to be tidying up the mess left by past generations that can demonstrate that cavers have taken on a new level of responsibility. A clean up of sites can have an immediate impact and it sends out a strong message. A message which in my experience is quickly adopted by others.

Often, surface digs in particular, are the one place where landowners and local authorities come across our exploration efforts. Recently unsightly and dangerous surface digs on Ingleborough have been mentioned by the landowner and landuser as an indication that cavers cannot be trusted. In South Wales abandoned surface digs have been reported to the National Park Authority as being a potential danger to the public.

Certain groups of cavers, many from the CNCC, are tackling the issue. The UKcaving initiative has helped to bring loads of crap out of caves as the photographs have shown. I was pleased to hear that ULSA have recently elected a conservation officer who has been active in encouraging the club to clean up old digs, etc. I wonder if the CNCC could encourage more of the big clubs to appoint conservation officers to do the same.

So the committee could offer support and encouragement to get our caves cleaned out and bring about a wider focus of the issue. Ask those clubs/groups who haven't yet done much

to be more aware and do more. It is only when you actually start to look for it that you find the rubbish that everyone has walked past for years. As an example you could scarcely believe the amount of stuff we have brought out from Ireby Fell Caverns over the last few months.”

In summary, is there anything more the CNCC Committee believes we should be doing to promote such conservation works? This is a discussion point, and all ideas are welcome.

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

This agenda item has been suggested by Matt Ewles.

Quote from September meeting minutes:

“Matt asked whether we should issue a list of which ropes are deemed ‘fixed’ and should be left in place and replaced when necessary. Andy Farrow said that Pete Knight did this for the DCA. Gary Douthwaite said a list could be published on the CNCC website and asked if we could come up with a quick list now to act as a starting point. Several were listed (including Fall Pot, Stake Pot Echo Pot, the Magic Roundabout, Notts II and Lyle Cavern) but this list was not exhaustive and further work would be needed.”

The CNCC currently does not have a policy on fixed aids. Other regional councils do:

<http://www.thedca.org.uk/home/dca-constitutions/12-equipment/33-policy-on-fixed-aids>

At the January meeting, Ray Duffy reported that he was producing a list of fixed aids in Ease Gill to allow a decision to be made as to which should be considered ‘CNCC documented’, or ‘CNCC funded’ or ‘CNCC maintained’ (terminology to be confirmed based on outcomes of this discussion).

I would like to suggest the CNCC Committee consider more precisely what role, if any, the CNCC should take moving forward with respect to fixed aids.

As the above quote from the September meeting suggests, should the CNCC provide a list of all known fixed aids across our region which we believe are worthy of being replaced once they are reported defective?

This raises issues of what constitutes a ‘worthy’ fixed aid? It is assumed that this should be related to safety benefit (e.g. escape routes), but may include others which are primarily for convenience. The fixed ropes in Ease Gill at Stake Pot and Fall Pot are hard to argue from a safety perspective, yet it is assumed... maybe incorrectly... that most cavers would probably support their existence from a convenience perspective based on the number of people who use them.

I believe we have two routes we could pursue:

(1) Provide information only

- a. We would document all fixed aids which are known to us (including any relevant information about their condition and date of installation if known), which we feel are justified in their placement on safety grounds or otherwise.
- b. We will document any reports of defects to any of these fixed aids on the website for others to see (and, if necessary in the interests of safety, communicate it more widely).
- c. We will actively seek out volunteers to replace any defective fixed aids (but will not specifically undertake the works ourselves).
- d. We will fund these replacement works by covering the cost of materials.

In the absence of any dedicated CNCC Officer to look after fixed aids (which would be a significant role), careful wording would need to be in place to say that the CNCC listing does not guarantee the integrity of any fixed aid, nor do we undertake any regular maintenance or testing.

Some consideration of insurance may be needed here; does this result in any liability on the CNCC relating to that fixed aid?

(2) Provide information and actively undertake works

Can we really justify listing fixed aids on our website if we are not willing to make a commitment as an organisation to regularly inspect them?

Would it be better to have a fixed aid Officer to undertake inspection and replacement in a way more similar to the DCA? Probably yes, in an ideal world, but is there anyone who would be willing to do this? We have struggled in recent years to fill other Officer roles.

Summary

I believe this is worthy of consideration, firstly as it links to a discussion point from our last meeting, but also as it could potentially be an excellent service that we could provide to cavers.

Committee discussion of this would be great. Please discuss this within your clubs and come up with thoughts/ideas. If we decide to proceed with either route 1 or 2 above, volunteers to catalogue fixed aids across our region will be required (Ray is already looking after Ease Gill), and if we wish to go down route 2, do we even need to create a new Officer or Co-opted Officer role and if so would anyone be interested?

(8) Date and time of next meeting

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

(9) Any other business?