



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

## General Meeting 05<sup>th</sup> Dec 2009, Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy

| PRESENT                                      | APOLOGIES                        |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Graham Price (Chair/Cerberus rep)            | Dave Cundy (Treasurer)           |
| Hayley Clark (Secretary/MCG obs)             | Chris Binding (Training Officer) |
| Les Williams (C&A/WCC rep)                   | Mike Richardson (MCG)            |
| Andrew Atkinson (Equipment Officer/UBSS rep) | Stu Gardiner (BEC)               |
| Mark Williams (BCA rep/MCG rep)              |                                  |
| David G Cooke (Webmaster/ ChCC rep)          |                                  |
| Alan Gray (ACG rep)                          |                                  |
| Alan Dempster (Avon Scouts rep)              |                                  |
| Aubrey Newport                               |                                  |

**Meeting started at 10.40am.**

**Request from GP that all Officers/Reps arrive on time to start meeting promptly.**

**1) Minutes of the previous meeting (12.09.09).**

**1.1 8C Wording to be changed to read: -**

BCA will be offering Clubs the option of allowing their members to upgrade their BCA membership to include the BCA and **BCRA** publications (Handbook, Speleology, Cave & Karst Science) via their club. This will be known as CIM+ (CIM Plus) membership.

**2) Actions from previous meeting: -**

**2.1** Item 1f DGC to update draft minutes from AGM May 09. Done.

**2.2** Item 5c LW to place temporary sign at Cuckoo Cleeves, notices on the caving forums and with key issuing points relating to the CO2 issues while arranging a permanent sign to be placed at Cuckoo Cleeves. Ongoing See Item 9.1.

**2.3** Item 6b AA and DGC to submit in writing to the next E&T Committee meeting CSCC's concerns. Done. See Item 10.

**2.4** Item 7a CB to provisionally book SRT training event and circulate details to Mendip Clubs. Ongoing.

**2.5** Item 9 All Officers and Reps to login and update their section of the Wiki page. Ongoing.

**2.6** Item 10 LW to check availability of Priddy Village Hall for Cavers Fayre. Village Hall Booked for June 12<sup>th</sup> 2010. LW to be coordinator. MCR have been approached to run the evening event. Happy to do this if published well. Agreed CSCC budget for promotion – leaflets, posters etc. LW to contact CB for ideas for training event at the fayre. GP to remind Cerberus to organise Chariot race and to confirm time and location of the race. **ACTION LW AND GP.**

**2.7** Item 11c SG reference the recently discovered mine on Draycott Sleights. SG not present carried over to next meeting.



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## 3) Other Matters arising from the previous meeting

None.

## 4) Minutes from AGM 16.05.09

Accepted as a true record (nem com).

## 5) Matters brought forward from AGM minutes

- 5.1 5a The Compton Martin Ochre Mine gate needs repairing – LW to action. Ongoing see Item 9.2.
- 5.2 5b Update on access info for Portland's Ariel and Blacknor caves – LW to liaise with NG. Nothing to Report.
- 5.3 5d Coral Cave Lock is rusted up and needs removing – CB Actioned – completed – Further reports of problems with the mechanism of this gate need following up. LW to liaise with BF. Ongoing see Item 9.3.
- 5.4 5h 2006, 2007 Accounts to be to be signed-off- CW - Outstanding. To be scrutinised by DGC and AN Other, possibly one of the un-elected Treasurer candidates. On-going. See Item 8.2.

## 6) Chairman's Report

- 6.1 CSCC are associate members of the AONB Partnership. No rep has attended a meeting in the last 5 years. GP attended the last meeting and will continue to represent CSCC at future meetings which are held locally on Mendip midweek.
- 6.2 UK Caving Conservation Emergency Fund. Since J-Rat passed away there has been a vacancy on the committee. Constitutionally reps are not elected on a regional basis however it has always been accepted that regional knowledge was essential. CSCC has therefore been asked to put forward someone to fill the vacancy. It was agreed that LW should be nominated. GP would pass this onto BCRA.
- 6.3 The proposed Geopark on Mendip was discussed. A Mendip Times article was circulated with the agenda. Further information is available on the websites mentioned. The matter was subject to a talk and discussion at the recent AONB Partnership meeting. There was much support for the idea but consensus was that it would need to include all of Mendip not just the AONB. A decision whether to pursue Geopark status would be made later but there were issues in that the lead was likely to be taken by the AONB and by default only include the area they covered. As Mendip is a karst landscape caves would feature highly and CSCC needed to decide if to support the proposal for Geopark status. It was agreed that reps should discuss with their respective clubs. It was noted that irrespective of whether we agreed with the proposal it may be better to be involved rather than not.

## 7) Secretary's Report

- 7.1 Letter received from Axbridge Cave Group for P-bolts to be placed in Axbridge Ochre Mine. Passed on to AA (Equipment Officer) to be discussed under Agenda Item 10.

## 8) Treasurer's Report:

- 8.1 "At present, I have done nothing since the AGM because I am still waiting for the previous accounts to be audited. Once that is done, I can get up and running with claiming money back from the BCA.

I shall be hawking a bank mandate around over the next week or two to relieve Chris of his duty to sign CSCC cheques. As I am likely to miss the



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December mtg, I may call on the Chairman and Secretary at home.

If anyone has any pressing financial issues, could they let me know by e-mail please - just in case !”

- 8.2** GP had collected all the Treasurers’ paperwork from Chris Whale. Current items had been passed to DC and the older material to DGC who would to scrutinise the past accounts. Aubrey Newport offered to check these. **ACTION DGC & AN.**
- 8.3** GP has been to Natwest to sort out signatories. Lots of forms to be filled out. It was noted that Steve King and Chris Whale were currently the only signatories on the account. It was agreed that they should be removed and GP, DC and HC added. It is unclear whether or not the CSCC can have Internet banking when 2 signatures are required for cheques. **ACTION GP TO CONTACT BANK AGAIN TO GET CONFIRMATION AS TO WHETHER INTERNET BANKING IS POSSIBLE**
- 8.4** The relevant forms had been obtained from the bank and it was resolved that:
- the Signing Rules in the current Mandate , for the Accounts detailed in section 2 be replaced in accordance with section 4 and
  - the Authorised Signatories in the current Mandate for the Accounts detailed in section 2 be changed in accordance with section 5.
- And the current Mandate will continue as amended.*
- 8.5** LW asked if CSCC have paid the dry stone waller for the works done to the wall near Swildons Hole. **ACTION DGC TO FIND OUT.**

## 9) Conservation & Access Officer’s Report

- 9.1** Temporary signs have not been placed at Cuckoo Cleaves. Permanent signs have been ordered but not yet received. AN reports that the CO2 levels have dropped to 2.2%. AN suggested that replacing the gates on the caves with the worst CO2 – Cuckoo, Tynings and White Pit with mesh to allow the CO2 to slowly leave the cave will help to stop build up of CO2 underground as in the summer with hot air on the outside, the caves blows outwards. It was decided to see how things went with Cuckoo before moving on to other caves. Also mentioned that access to White Pit was through other clubs and not the CSCC. The Cuckoo gate will need some sort of galvanised frame to fit over concrete pipe to make it more substantial. AN requests that people take an oil can for the lock when they visit Cuckoo. **ACTION LW /AN TO LIAISE AND SORT OUT BETTER GATE. ACTION AN TO UPDATE UKCAVING & DGC TO UPDATE WEBSITE TO SAY CUCKOO IS OPEN AGAIN.**
- 9.2** Gate at Compton Martin Ochre Mine still needs attention. Need new gate which is to be galvanised. **ACTION LW.**
- 9.3** Ongoing issues with Coral Cave Lock. **ACTION LW.**
- 9.4** Landowner for Tynings passed away recently, at present there are no changes to the access agreement. Situation will need to be monitored. **ACTION LW.**
- 9.5** Wall by the style near Swildons still needs to be repaired. Decided that it would be good to get cavers together with some who know how to dry stone wall (e.g Bob Smith / Rich Whitcombe were possibilities) to repair. CSCC to fund cement. **ACTION LW TO SPEAK TO LANDOWNER AND BS/RW.**
- 9.6** LW reports that Swildons entrance is fairly stable at the moment, although some rocks in the roof of Shower Bath Chamber look “interesting”. Robin Main is aware of the situation.
- 9.7** Engineering works at Withybrook have now been completed. Based on the last 18 months the silt traps are likely to catch approx 10 tonnes of material annually, which would otherwise be entering the cave system. A future maintenance regime for emptying the silts traps was still to be agreed with



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the Council. Natural England would be having an input into this. A number of screens had been installed as part of the scheme and these would require regular cleaning. It seems unlikely that the Council will do this and it will be the responsibility of the landowner and cavers if the system is to work as intended. GP said the longer term maintenance of the system was of some concern and options to deal with this would be considered. Although the figures are unconfirmed the Council have estimated that the final cost of the scheme is likely to be in the region of £500,000.

- 9.8** Chelms Combe Quarry. The situation had been discussed at previous meetings and had been minuted as follows:

*“13 Dec 2008*

*“Concerns from CSCC members about plans to turn Chelms Combe Quarry into a residential and outdoor pursuits centre. It was hoped that comments could be received on the suitability of these sites for novice caving activities, with respect to preserving the fine formations in the caves there. This will be discussed at the next meeting.”*

*14 Feb 2009*

*“There were concerns that Reynolds Rift in Chelmscombe Quarry had had its entrance bulldozed over possibly inadvertently whilst refurbishment of the site takes place. The site is not an SSSI and is privately owned. Action AG to find out.”*

*16 May 2009*

*“Reynold’s Rift is only blocked by a couple of large boulders so re-opening will only require a minimum effort. The vulnerability of the three caves in the quarry was discussed since none of the caves are gated and they contained some good formations. It was agreed that these caves should be gated and funding for this, by the CSCC, would be dependent upon access via the CSCC key. Actions – Alan to determine if the new quarry owners would allow access via the CSCC key and also Alan to determine a cost to supply and fit the three gates.”*

This was the latest information available.

Whilst discussing other non-cave related matters with the landowner, Kevin Newton, GP had queried the situation with respect to access to the caves. KN said that at present access was only available through Mark Lumley as a representative of the cave rescue organisation as an informal arrangement. He had not heard of Atlas and believed that he was covered in respect of landowner indemnity. He seemed more than willing to talk about (although not necessarily agree) a wider access agreement but that it would necessarily have to be limited due to security issues and he required indemnity insurance. This matter had generated a number of email exchanges and there was much conflicting information in circulation.

AG said that access was through ATLAS and that visitors would have insurance through BCA. He said that this information had been published in Descent but no one present at the meeting was aware of this nor had the information been provided to CSCC. LW explained the insurance situation clarifying that ATLAS could not provide landowner indemnity as it was not a member club of BCA or an ‘access controlling body’ which required payment of an additional premium. AG would pass this information to ATLAS. GP would be meeting KN to discuss the other matters and if appropriate would arrange a joint meeting with ML to clarify the cave access situation.

- 9.9** Reports have been received that the connection between Hillers and Hillwithy is now open.



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## 10) Equipment Officer's Report.

- 10.1 "The E+T meeting mainly dealt with the CSCC submission to the committee. With 5 people in attendance, each point was taken in turn and voted on, in each case the CSCC point was in the minority (usually of one) although some changes have been made to clarify the documents. The outcomes are well summarised in the reply that has already been circulated.

After this a further discussion was held on the remit of the E+T committee, and setting its priorities. I have drafted a document on this which is planned to be discussed at the next meeting.

Glenn had chaired the meeting as the previous chair had resigned between meetings. There was reluctance on anyone's part to take on the chair (I personally would not be able to spare the time the role would require.) Les Sykes volunteered."

- 10.2 The CSCC continues to be concerned that the Permanent Resin Bonded Anchors - Installation Procedure, Training and Documentation (IPTD document) remains restricted. It is not possible to consult on a document whilst those who are legitimately part of the consultation are not allowed to see it. The CSCC wishes to see the IPTD document de-restricted followed by a resumption of the consultation process. To that end the BCA Rep will take the resolution passed last meeting (Minute Item 6.c) and a request to de-restrict the IPTD document to the next BCA National Council meeting. **ACTION MW**
- 10.3 As requested by the E&T Committee the CSCC submitted its concerns to them in writing. The meeting considered the E&T's reply (See Appendix 1). We were pleased to see that the E&T accepted our request at items F & G. We accept their explanation at Item D. However we do not accept that the explanations given for the remaining items are sufficiently persuasive.
- 10.4 The view was expressed that the E&T Committee are "Gold Plating" the scheme and that it is becoming overly bureaucratic, in particular the new requirement to assess the installers SRT competence. Formerly it was the Regional Council's responsibility to select competent people. The meeting considered pulling out of the equipment scheme. DGC said whilst there is still a chance to amend the scheme to our satisfaction we should remain in the scheme.
- 10.5 Notwithstanding the above, the CSCC have no trained installers and anchors that need placing. It was agreed that AA is to remain the Regional Coordinator. It was agreed we needed a minimum of 3 people on Mendip who are trained including AA and Ali Moody. It was suggested that Elaine Tucker may be willing to be a third. This was agreed. AA would approach her and sort out training as necessary. It was believed that an underground venue was required for the training. The rift in Axbridge Ochre Mine was proposed. **ACTION AA TO SEEK AM AND ET'S AGREEMENT AND TO CONTACT THE E&T COMMITTEE TO ARRANGE A DATE FOR TRAINING IN AXBRIDGE OCHRE MINE.**
- 10.6 Requests were received for bolts to be placed in Cuthberts and Axbridge Ochre Mine. Axbridge Ochre Mine was approved (nem com). Insufficient details of Cuthbert's was provided in order to make a decision.

## 11) Training Officer's Report

- 11.1 "Not much to report other than the apparent good news that Wessex CC Tower is available for use for BCA Training Events; this is welcome news as it coincides with the sad situation at Wells Blue School where the indoor climbing & caving facility looks like being on the verge of being scrapped as "out of certification" and the cost of recertifying exceeds any expected revenues from them. "



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I have received no requests for training events since May.”

It was disagreed that the WCC tower was available, the Wessex Committee have yet to formally agree this.

## 12) **BCA Rep's Report**

**12.1** BCA approved the British Caving Library proposal; £10,000 per annum will be contributed towards the running costs, the balance to be funded by BCRA, fees and other such schemes that can be devised.

**12.2** Club Individuals Members (CIM) of BCA can now upgrade their membership to include the BCA and/or BCRA publications and other benefits of being a Direct Member (DIM). Such members will be known as CIM plus (CIM+). The scheme is optional and clubs need not offer it to their members. BCA will be circulating details to Club Membership Secretaries.

## 13) **Webmaster's Report**

**13.1** Officers and reps to continue to login and update their section of the WIKI pages

## 14) **Forthcoming Events.**

**14.1** BCA National Council Meeting 09/01/19

## 15) **A O B**

**15.1** Request from treasurer to change next meeting date. It was agreed to move it forward a week and start at 10am instead of 10.30am

**Next Meeting: 13 February 2010 at 10am Hunters Lodge Priddy**

**Meeting Closed: 13:35pm**