



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

Annual General Meeting 08 May 2010, Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy

PRESENT	APOLOGIES
Graham Price (Chair/Cerberus Obs) GP	Stu Gardiner (BEC Rep)
Hayley Clark (Secretary/MCG Obs) HC	Mike Richardson (MCG Rep)
Dave Cundy (Treasurer/SBSS Rep) DC	Chris Binding (Training Officer)
Alan Gray (ACG Rep) AG	
Alan Dempster (Avon Scouts Rep) AD	
Chrissy Price (Cerberus Rep) CP	
Alan Butcher (SMCC Rep) AB	
Les Williams (C&A Officer/WCC Rep) LW	
Mark Williams (BCA Officer/MCG Rep) MW	
David G Cooke (Webmaster/ ChCC Rep) DGC	
Faye Litherland (Equipment Officer/BEC Rep) FL	
Aubrey Newport (WCC Obs) AN	
Darrel Instrell (MNRC Rep) DI	

Meeting started at 10.03am.

1) Minutes of the previous meeting (13.02.10)

Point 1.5 DGC queried why the IPTD document was restricted due to the Data Protection Act as he was not present at the previous meeting and was unclear. FL explained that it was more to do with the implications on other BCA documents, in that it sets a precedence of having more open documents, which will cause problems with those that do have restricted information.

Point 1.7 Amended thus: -

- *Document 1 being sections 1-5: - guidance on how to install anchors. This information needs to go to those trained to place anchors but will not necessarily be of interest to the caving community*
- *Document 3 being sections 7-end :- anchor management, which CSCC need to know and be involved with but will not necessarily be of interest to the caving community*

Point 5.5 relating to Chelm's Coombe Quarry access, GP mentioned that a point he had raised at the previous meeting had been omitted from the minutes; this is as follows and has now been added.

"Rich Whitcombe had confirmed that access to the caves in the quarry was a private arrangement between Mark Lumley and the owner and nothing to do with ATLAS"

Minutes proposed by LW and seconded by AD accepted Nem Com.

2) Actions from previous meeting: -

Item 1.9 FL to draft new guidance for anchor installation and email to the secretary to circulate to the club reps and officers ASAP for further discussion at the May CSCC meeting. **Taken under item 11.**

Item 3 Actions carried forward from the meeting held on 13 February 2010



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- Item 8.2 DGC to scrutinise the past accounts and Aubrey Newport to check these.
Ongoing. **Taken under item 8.**
- Item 9.1 Cuckoo Cleeves. LW /AN to liaise and sort out better gate. AN to update UK Caving. LW to talk to landowner about the current gate as it was provided by the landowner. The gate is in good condition and there are many implications with replacing it with a new one and the landowner's permission is needed to continue. **Taken under item 7.** DGC to update website to say Cuckoo is open again, this was done December 2009.
- Item 9.2 LW to look into new galvanised gate at Compton Martin Ochre Mine.
Ongoing. **Taken under item 7.**
- Item 9.5 LW to speak to landowner and BS/RW about cavers repairing the wall near Swildons. Ongoing. LW has spoken to Robin Maine as the possible landowner, but there is uncertainty as to who is the actual landowner. Robin Maine is going to contact the other possible landowner and will get back to LW. **Taken under item 7.**

- Item 5.1** No feedback has been received by member clubs regarding the Geopark discussed at the December meeting. GP has requested that all member clubs do discuss the issues around the Geopark, see previous minutes for details for discussion at the next meeting on 8 May 2010. **Taken under item 6.**
- Item 8.4** Cooks Wood Quarry, Holcombe planning application to develop the site as a holiday retreat including the erection of 14 timber lodges, leisure and sport activities including a swimming pool, nature trails, car parks and access roads. The site concerns Browns Hole and several smaller caves. ACTION GP to talk to LW and check previous minutes for original comments made on the planning application and then formally submit comment to MDC.
Taken Under item 6
- Item 9.4** FL to contact NW regarding insurance and if ok to remove test dates from website and add note about standard inspection. FL to add column to website for dodgy bolts. **Taken under item 11.**
- Item 9.5** FL to create form to be added to CSCC website for applications by clubs to apply for the bolt placement in a cave. **Taken under Item 11**

3) Other Matters arising from the previous meeting

None.

4) Chairman's Report

- 4.1** "I have not been in post for a full year but it has been very busy time and involved considerably more work than anticipated. However thanks to an excellent team much has been achieved and we are making progress on a number of issues. Thanks to Andy Atkinson for his work as Equipment Officer and to Faye for taking on the role. Continuity is important and I am pleased that all officers are willing to continue in their present roles. Chris Binding is willing to continue but would like to step down if someone else would like to take on Training Officer role"
- 4.2** Geopark (Agenda Item 4 (5.1), still no comments have been received prior to the AGM regarding the proposed Geopark as discussed at previous meetings (12th December, item 6.3 and 13 February item 5.1).

Wessex Cave Club rep (LW) commented that the club still needed more information to be able to fully comment on the proposal and at present felt it difficult to comment either for or against the Geopark, although they expressed the view that if it were to go ahead it needed to cover all of Mendip and not just select areas. It was noted by LW that some of the most important geological sites were in the eastern part of Mendip and outside the AONB.



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Shepton Mallet Caving Club rep (AB) commented that they had many concerns and could not support the proposal at the present time due to the implications on future relations with landowners and the possible effects on cave access.

There were many points discussed such as:

- Implications on access.
- Other locations in the world with similar areas to the Geopark have enforcement in place and are controlled by bodies with more power to enforce and protect the area thus creating conflict with landowners.
- AB stated CSCC need to support landowners, as the AONB in the past have not listened to people who have not supported their views.
- Affect on landowners with regard to the planning system. AONB's have a big impact on Permitted Development Rights for landowners. If the Geopark Status means that planning will be looked at in a similar way with similar constraints as AONB's then landowners particularly in agriculture will potentially lose freedom for erecting buildings under permitted development.
- Geoparks will be advertised /promoted and encourage more tourists to visit and enjoy the area. The increase in numbers of tourists may have many implications in itself.

The meeting concluded that the CSCC need to proceed with caution regarding the Geopark, we need to follow a course that won't upset landowners. We need to be involved with the consultation, wait for more information and keep an eye on the situation. Although we don't wish to fully support the idea of the Geopark at this stage it is better to be involved than not. It was agreed that there are several questions we need answering before we precede any further. These include:

- How are Geoparks in other areas dealing with the caves within the area and how this might be affecting access?
- Need to know what the impact on the landowner will be and the impact on the planning system and what restrictions will be imposed?
- the Geopark affect CSCC e.g. would it take over some of our responsibilities ?
- What are the landowners opinions at present, need to speak to CLA, NFU, BCA's C&A and Legal Officers (Elsie Little, Dave Judson)?
- How will the Geopark affect professional cavers?

4.3 Cooks Wood Quarry (Agenda Item 4 (8.4)). GP spoke to LW and CB regarding the previous planning submission and it appears no comments were previously submitted by the CSCC with regards to the planning application. It was decided to keep a low profile and not comment unless there are specific proposals that would affect the caves. Comments have been made by a bat group saying that the caves are used by bats and should be grinded. GP has spoken to the planning officer dealing with application who said that he had requested comments from the caving community. GP to speak to the planning officer involved with the above application again in the next week. **ACTION GP.**

4.4 Cavers Fayre. The Wessex Challenge has been organised by Paul Hadfield and the Cerberus. Promotional posters about the event to be held on Saturday 12th June at 17.30pm starting at Priddy Village Hall have been put up in various places including many caving huts and the Hunters. A copy of the poster needs to be sent out with the minutes of the AGM. **Post meeting note, poster sent to Reps and Officers Monday 10th May 1010.**

Paul Hadfield has been liaising with the MCR regarding the timing of the food after the chariot race.

CaveClimb.com have asked for a stand at the event, this has been agreed.



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LW has all the organising in hand and everything is coming together, CB is not available to do training at the event, LW is looking for a.n.other to take this on.

LW has asked that all clubs provide cave leaders for the day for caves that are leader led such as St Cuthbert's, Charterhouse and Upper Flood.

- 4.5** Pollution in Swildons (item 8.2 of previous minutes). There are currently 2 issues regarding the ongoing problem in Swildons, these are the diesel/oil and the white growth.

GP recently organised sample bottles from Wessex Water, Alison Moody (AM) collected these from the lab at Saltford and went down Swildons to collect samples and take photos. These were given back to GP to take to the lab for an opinion. Unfortunately due to the high costs, it was not possible to get them properly tested.

AM has been investigating possible source of diesel/oil pollution in village but has drawn a blank. AM spoke to a BP scientist who reported that he did not consider the white growth could not be associated with the diesel/oil. LW and DGC felt the coincidence was too great and that an Internet search showed that bacteria can live on diesel quite happily

Need to ascertain if the white growth/deposits are mineral or biological. Opinion from lab is that it is fungal possibly spores carried in on clothing and spreading due to draught.

Natural England has offered to get samples of the white deposit tested for diagnosis as to origins and potential toxicity. The area needs to be monitored to check it is still there and to see if it is spreading. If it is growing one would expect the spots to gradually coalesce until the substrate is completely covered. AM to monitor and revisit the area over the next week or so and to take more samples.

LW has spoken informally with the Environment Agency who do not consider it harmful if no one is being made ill.

The white growth has been known to have occurred in the past in other caves such as Banwell Bone Cave, mines in the Peak District and also mines in Surrey

- 4.6** The AONB Partnership had a meeting on the 18th March 2010, which GP attended. At the Meeting the final report on Partnership Review was considered and pretty much adopted as proposed by Consultant. The issue that caused most problems was the representation on the new committee, which was to be dramatically reduced in size. Recommendations were put forward that there is only one place for a representative of both local business interests and/or user groups. Consultant suggested this place should be taken by Active Mendip. GP maintained (with a little support from others), that both parties should be represented but unfortunately did not appear to make much headway so there is great danger that user groups will not be represented. This matter is to be discussed further at next meeting on 1st July where Active Mendip have been asked to put a case to meeting as to why they should be appointed to the committee. At present we are Associate Members and it is the intention that the role of Associate Members will remain unchanged.

The CSCC needs to make representations to the individual members of the partnership to lobby for 2 places on the committee, one to represent local business interests and one for user groups to ensure both are fairly represented at future meetings. GP to circulate a list of people to whom representations need to be made.

ACTION ALL



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- 4.7** Somerset County Council are currently undertaking a review of their minerals policy. The consultation has been split into three parts. Peat extraction was considered at the end of last year. The current consultation is on aggregates and the final one later in the year will concern building stone. Unfortunately CSCC have not been on the formal consultation list and this has been rectified. The deadline for comments on the current paper is 17 May 2010. Comments, primarily although not exclusively, in the form of answers to the questions on pages 19 and 20 in the consultation paper should be sent to GP by 16 May 2010 and . A 'PDF' of the issues consultation paper will be circulated to CSCC club reps and Officers. **Post meeting note, SCC Minerals Core Strategy consultation document circulated to all Reps and Officers Monday 10th May 2010.**

- 4.8** GP updated the Constitution on the website to include amendments made at the AGM in May 2007.

- 4.9** An issue was raised by AB concerning the use by Officers of their official position in private correspondence. The meeting resolved that Officers and Club Representatives should take care not to appear to be representing the CSCC in non-CSCC business or private matters.

5) Secretary's Report

- 5.1** Request to rejoin CSCC by Ashford Speleological Society. Clarification was required as to how a club joined the CSCC, either a club can join through their BCA membership or if not through the BCA then pay £15 to CSCC in both cases membership requires approval by a CSCC meeting. LW proposed acceptance of their membership on receipt of confirmation of their BCA membership or a cheque.

- 5.2** HC has been trying to establish exactly which groups/clubs are members of the CSCC to get an up to date contact list. An email to Glenn Jones of the BCA asking for the most recent list of clubs in the BCA and CSCC has yet to be answered. DGC in his role of BCA treasurer emailed this list to the HC. HC needs to spend time collating the clubs, names and contact details and amending the contact list that is currently being used.

Post meeting note, contact made with Glenn Jones and list is on its way (although should be the same as the one provided by DGC). ACTION HC.

6) Treasurer's Report.

- 6.1** DC received a letter from Natwest at his home address but addressed to Chris Whale (CW previous CSCC treasurer) saying that his (Chris Whale) signature does not match the signature on record, as we have filled in forms to change signatures this is probably why, DC to go back to Natwest to sort the situation out. DC to look into possibility of changing banks. **ACTION DC. Post meeting note, DC went to Natwest who appear to have lost all trace of the mandate and the change of detail forms that were completed (although they must have had them to have been able to send a letter to DC home address). They can't explain what has happened and have filled in an urgent concern with their head office to get back to DC or CW.**

- 6.2** Currently missing the most recent bank statements and can't proceed in looking at the 2009 accounts without these. DC to chase the bank to find out where they sent them. **ACTION DC.**

- 6.3** DGC has scrutinised the accounts from 2005-2008 and passed the folder to AN for him to scrutinise them as well. DGC asked for item to be put on the Agenda for the next meeting for the accounts to be fully discussed then. **ACTION AN and HC.**

- 6.4** Some of the back up paperwork (receipts etc.) from 2005-2008 is missing. DC to check to see if he has any of these and pass to DGC/AN. **ACTION DC.**

- 6.5** CSCC finances at present, current account £125.27, reserve account £1101.75. However, finances are actually better than they look on paper with approximately £1549.34 being owed to the CSCC from the BCA up to the end of 2008 with more to come for 2009.



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6.6 Need to think about possible fund raising events, need to be careful not to end up in a position where there is no money in the bank, need to try to get to a position where we are not totally reliant on BCA

6.7 DC to look at the BCA Regional Council funding document as projects over £500 need to be applied for separately.

7) Conservation & Access Officer's Report

7.1 Cuckoo Cleeves (item 4 (9.1) on agenda), AN has arranged with Hugh Tucker to move a pipe from the Wessex to Cuckoo, awaiting landowners permission to drive the tractor over his land. LW spoke to landowner who does not want holes cut in the gate, he put in a lot of effort to provide the gate and wants it to remain where it is. Signs regarding the CO₂ are in hand and will be ready soon.

7.2 Compton Martin Ochre Mine (item 4 (9.2) on agenda), LW has organised for a temporary repair to the broken bar in the gate. LW to measure up for replacement gate in near future. **ACTION LW**.

7.3 There have been a few cases of stone mines being closed in Wiltshire, some to do with MOD business, although this is a concern, it is hoped that they will reopen soon, LW to monitor situation.

7.4 Big thanks to Darkplaces who have been working hard on clearing out the well in The Cathedral in Box Mines.

7.5 Issue on the wall near Swildons (item 4 (9.5) on agenda) seems to be sorted; LW has had no feedback from Robin Maine. AB says the wall has been repaired, a stile and fence erected, don't know who by but it looks a lot tidier. AB says there is no chance that cavers will be blamed for the situation.

08) Training Officer's Report

8.1 See Appendix 1

8.2 Cavers are not claiming training grants from BCA that are available for amateur groups, the main reason for this is lack of knowledge, and very few people know these grants are available. See www.british-caving.org.uk/?page=36.

8.3 CB as mentioned in item 4.1 of these minutes, is wishing to stand down but will carry on in the role until a replacement is found. The role is to administer training schemes, attend National Training Committee meetings (which we have not had a presence at for a while, partly due to the meetings being held mid week in Stafford) and to organise training events. The person needs to be proactive and enthusiastic. Darrel Instrell expressed an interest in taking on the role; this was then carried on to item 12 on the agenda – election of officers.

8.4 The meeting proposed a vote of thanks to CB.

9) Equipment Officer's Report.

9.1 FL created a draft new guidance for anchor installation (item 4 (1.9) on agenda), which was circulated to the club reps and officers asking for comments. Comments were received from CB and LW, these were mainly typos and amendments to the wording, and these have been incorporated into the document. DC passed his comments to FL during the meeting, which she will read and incorporate, as necessary. **ACTION FL**

AN queried why there was nothing in the document about expanding bolts, FL said because she knows nothing about them but is very happy to add details to the document if someone were to provide her with the information.

DGC spoke to Cambrian Caving Council who have accepted the BCA documents but with conditions e.g. does not apply to ladder pitches or pitches rigged from the bottom.

DGC concerned that a large amount of the CSCC anchor replacement scheme is borrowed from the BCA scheme. FL said she had spoken to Nick Williams who was aware of the CSCC document, and that it is only a stopgap measure to get to a



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harmonised standard. It may only be in use for 6 months or may be longer. DGC asked if FL could get BCA formal permission to use their document as the basis for ours.

ACTION FL.

FL to collate list of people who are likely to be able to install anchors, these are people who have already had training in the past. LW has list of names up until Andrew Atkinson (AA) took on role of Equipment Officer, AA has list of names since then.

Proposal of accepting the CSCC anchor installation documents as a working draft proposed by AB and seconded by DC. Accepted Nem Com.

An updated copy of the document is to be circulated to clubs who will have a further opportunity to comment prior to the next meeting. This will enable clubs who have not yet had time to fully consider the document prior to this meeting to do so. **ACTION FL**

- 9.2** Item 9.4 of previous minutes, FL to contact NW regarding insurance and if ok to remove test dates from website and add note about standard inspection. FL to add column to website for dodgy bolts. **DONE**

- 9.3** Item 9.5 of previous minutes, FL to create form to be added to CSCC website. for applications by clubs to apply for the bolt placement in a cave. **ONGOING.**

9.4 Next Equipment and Techniques Committee is on 17th July 2010.

10) BCA Rep's Report

- 10.1** "Since taking on the role of BCA Rep, I have attended 2 BCA meetings, one general and one AGM, the other meeting in February was cancelled. At the AGM the chair reinforced that landowners must be respected and cavers should never forget this."

- 10.2** At the AGM, the Equipment and Techniques report, Bob Dearman (BD) DCA Rep proposed

"that the current IPTD issue 4 updated on 23rd March 2009 is accepted as the standard BCA document on eco anchor installation".

Nick Williams (NW) put forward an alternative proposal

"BCA formally confirms that issue 4 of the Installation Procedure, Training & Documentation is accepted as the standard BCA procedure for Eco-Anchor installation and requests the Equipment and Techniques Committee to continue to develop the Association's activities in the field of anchor placement with due regard to the need to avoid rogue bolting, recognise the current state of art and any future technical developments, and in the light of practical experience."

BD withdrew his proposal, NW proposal was accepted although was not unanimous. NW proposal means that the IPTD will be seen as work in progress.

NW was then proposed and accepted as the new E&T Officer for one year.

- 10.3** At recent BCA meeting, MW dropped the CSCC proposal regarding the IPTD document temporarily. The proposal will be reintroduced at the October meeting after talks with Nick Williams and Andy Eavis on the best way forward, it is likely the wording of the proposal will change.

- 10.4** BCA now has a Media Liaison Officer – Chris Jewell.

- 10.5** The Manchester Hole court case regarding the schoolboy who died whilst on a trip led by an outdoor centre is underway at the moment and is likely to raise a fair amount of media interest. If any Officer or Rep is approached by the media regarding Manchester Hole or any other potentially controversial cases they should simply reply "no comment" and refer them to Chris Jewell.



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- 10.6** BCA needs a Child Protection Officer. This position needs to be filled by someone experienced with the legislation and working with children. They will need to be able to advise clubs on their child protection policies. The BCA are going to advertise this position but if anyone knows a good candidate please make them aware.
 - 10.7** CSCC completed the previous round of SSSI monitoring in the Mendip caves for Natural England. This information was not acted upon and was lost by NE. A copy has been passed to NE to work on.
 - 10.8** There were some constitutional amendments made, these were changing the AGM date to June and other procedural stuff. In due course there will be a ballot of all BCA members on this.
 - 10.9** BCA now have 6 CIM plus members.
 - 10.10** Consultation on the legislation regarding Coastal Access has now been finalised. This has benefits for the landowner in the reduction of liability and greater protection; therefore benefitting the caving community with happier landowners allowing access to caves and mines on their land to continue.
 - 10.11** Legislation regarding Access to Inland Waters is the next to be looked at. Anyone interested in being involved with this should contact the BCA's C&A Officer, Elsie Little.

11) Webmaster's Report

- 11.1** Reminder to all Officers to update the website and that training can be given to those who need it.

11.2 DI to put information on the website regarding training grants. **ACTION DI**

12) Election of Officers for 2010/11

Chairman GP, Secretary HC, Treasurer DC, C & A Officer LW, Equipment Officer FL, BCA Rep MW, Webmaster DGC all stated they were willing to stand again, as there were no other nominations, all were re-elected unopposed.

Training Officer DI proposed by FL, seconded by DGC accepted Nem Com.

13) Forthcoming Events.

June 2nd Karst Science Field Meeting near Buxton Derbyshire
June 4th– 6th NAMHO Coalpit Heath Near Bristol
June 11th – 13th Mendip Cavers Fayre
September 8th Cave Biology Field Meeting Scoska Cave Yorkshire
September 24th – 26th Hidden Earth Leek Staffordshire

14) Meeting dates for the next year all to be held at 10 am at the Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy.

Saturday 31 July 2010
Saturday 06 November 2010
Saturday 12 February 2011
Saturday 14 May 2011

15) A O B

Spar pot is now 30 feet longer.

Meeting Closed: 13:07



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APPENDIX 1

Training Officer's Report, May 2010

A few things to report:

Firstly I have had no communication whatsoever from any member clubs seeking training; however, I did join up with several other Instructors in the Cambrian region earlier this year to help deliver SRT training at the Llangorse Climbing Centre in Brecon to a combined group of over 20 cavers; Llangorse is an excellent venue for SRT training and after this event my thoughts turned to the possibility of hosting a similarly popular event for our local region, but the same sticking point of a suitable venue crops up – the only venue which springs to mind as being able to host more than a handful of trainees at the same time is Split Rock Quarry which is not an all-weather venue and lacks the necessary pitch head belays which are a feature of caves.

My present understanding of SRT training venues available locally is:

Venue	Cost	Number of people	Status
Wells Blue School Indoor wall	£150/day	10+	decommissioned
Split Rock Quarry	free	10+	available weather dependent lacks relevant belays
Wessex Tower	free	4+	available weather dependent
Bristol Undercover Rock, indoor wall	£50/day	3-4	weekdays only

Thus it can be seen that we are unable to host similar (large) planned events to the Llangorse one, *unless* we were to also use Llangorse but it is easy to imagine that would be considered too far for people to journey for a day's training.

All this is academic, though, as there seems little or no point in going to the effort of organising an event when there appears to be no demand from within our clubs' memberships for training. One almost gets the impression that there is something of an entrenched aversion to training and that it does not have a place within clubs' progression/philosophy; however, another way of looking at it is that during my tenure in this role, no-one has required any training to such an extent that they felt the need to go to the trouble of asking for it!

So, there you have it; despite training masses of people in SRT while holding this position, none of it was done in an "official" capacity. Therefore I conclude that my presence is entirely superfluous.