



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

[www.csccl.org.uk](http://www.csccl.org.uk)

## Minutes of General Meeting – Monday 15 Feb 2021

Approved

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### 1 Attendance

#### Voting Attendees

Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts	AD	
Alan Grey	ACG	AG	
Barry Wilkinson	WRCG	BW	
Dave Cooke	Cheddar CC	DC	Treasurer/Webmaster
Dave King	MNRC	DK	
Estelle Sandford	BEC	ES	
Frank Tully	WCC	FT	Secretary
Geoff Dommett	Buckfastleigh CG	GD	
Graham Price	Cerberus	GP	C&A Officer
Hayley Clark	MCG	HC	
Judi Durber	EECC	JD	
Linda Wilson	UBSS	LJW	BCA Rep
Peter Burgess	WCMS	PB	
Tim Ball	SMCC	TB	

#### Non Voting Attendees (Observers)

Andrew Atkinson	AA	Equipment
Babs Price	BP	Observer
Chris Binding	CB	Observer
Dave Keegan	DK	Training Officer
Ed Waters	EW	Chair
Graham Mullan	GM	CCC Ltd.

### 2 Apologies for Absence

Aubrey Newport

### 3 Approval of minutes from meeting - 20 Nov 2020

Minutes approved with corrections, Proposed JD. Seconded LJW, Vote passed Unanimous



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### 4 Chairman's report      Ed Waters

Ed Waters      Apologies for not circulating a report before the meeting but there is not a lot to report, mostly because it is all the other officers who do all the hard work.

Firstly, I would like to point out is that this is the last meeting before the AGM and going by our new constitution we have already missed the deadline to request nominations for officers for the AGM. This should have been done by 1st February, but I hope the membership will forgive us on this occasion and that this meeting provides that notification, albeit two weeks late. The deadline for nominations is 15 March. Could officers make a verbal indication in their reports whether they wish to stand again next year. If anyone wants to stand for a role please come forward, having contested elections is the best way of ensuring we get a high quality council. I will be delighted for somebody to stand against me, which you can also take as my intention to stand for chair next year.

Please note that the deadline for nominations and AGM proposals is 19 March.

People do not need a seconder to stand for office.

I have been asked on several occasions since the last meeting to put out a statement regarding what cavers can and cannot do during lockdown. I am aware of the debate surrounding this issue, specifically the ambiguity between what the law says you cannot do and what the guidance says you cannot do. The most contentious debate is around the minutiae of 'you are not allowed to leave your house without a reasonable excuse and exercise is stated as a reasonable excuse', however the guidance states you should not travel outside your local area but the legislation doesn't. I am seeing on social media a significant number of people travelling significant distances to go caving. I am less concerned about cavers getting into legal trouble, this is their choice, however I am very concerned about potential to upset the local community, especially landowners, with whom we have spent many years fostering a close relationship. I appeal to members to not just consider the legal aspects of going caving, but the potential harm to the image of caving and with this future access.

I would like to draft a proposal regarding this issue for circulation to the members. FT to circulate to officers and add as post meeting note to the minutes.

And finally, I have reached out to the chairs of the other regional councils with an aim to foster good relations between the councils and learn from each other, without all the incumbent politics of BCA. We have all agreed that this is a good idea but have not had our first meeting yet.



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### 4.1 Post Meeting Note,

Statement to be circulated to CSCC members regarding caving and COVID lockdown.

Dear Southern Cavers,

Well it looks like there may be light at the end of the lockdown tunnel as the vaccination programme proceeds at pace and warmer weather is on the way. I know we have all been frustrated with most of us stranded above ground for the best part of a year, but I am sure we can look forward to greater flexibility to get underground in the not too far distant future.

The crisis is still far from being over, and I would like to encourage us all to continue to follow the government guidance on travel and exercise. I am aware that there is a great deal of debate about the minutiae of the wording and differences between the guidance supplied by government and the legislation covering the COVID lockdown. I am also aware that this argument has been used by some cavers to justify travelling significant distances to go caving. It should be noted that there have been cases of police fining people who have travelled to Mendip and Portland, any arguments over whether this action is legal or not will have to be taken up with the Justice system and at the very least will result in a great deal of hassle for anyone involved. Possibly more significant however is the potential impact upon the close relationships that have been built up over the decades with the local community who may well take a dim view if they regularly see cavers who have obviously travelled some distance. This will especially be the case if a COVID outbreak occurs in a caving area. It also goes without saying that a rescue would both provide great practical difficulties to MCR as well as being detrimental to the standing of cavers with the local communities.

CSCC is not in the business of deciding who can and cannot go caving, but please think carefully about the potential wider implications of your actions. It appears that there is not much longer to wait, we have done pretty well up to now and a little patience may have great benefits in the future.

All the best, and hope to see you underground before much longer,

Ed Waters (CSCC Chair)

### 5 Secretary's report      Frank Tully

New members      None

#### 5.1 Role Specifications

Most of the officers have drafted and circulated descriptions of their roles. However, they were only circulated just before the meeting so now is not the time to vote on them because we need a little time to read and digest them. The drafts will be published on the website after this meeting, could members take these to their clubs for comment.

FT      I am happy to stand as secretary in the coming year.



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### 6 C&A Report

Report is published on Website alongside these minutes.

#### Expenses

6.8 Star Shaft needs a new lid, the lid is more complicated than normal so I estimate it will cost £1000. Proposed Dave Cooke, Seconded Alan Grey. Vote passed Unanimous.

GP to forward request for funds to BCA C&A committee and DC for chasing.

GP I am planning to stand again in the coming year.

### 7 Treasurer

We are almost up to date with the expenses, so a lot of money has recently gone out. We have for just over 2k in the bank, so we have to keep on top of the claims for C&A work.

DC I am not intending to stand for treasurer in the coming year.

EW Could everyone at this meeting have a think, do you know someone who might want to perform the treasurer's job? New blood would be very welcome on the committee.

### 8 Equipment

AA Not a lot to report because there has not been a lot of caving taking place. However, it looks like CNCC are about to take a delivery of 250 anchors and it has been agreed that the regions can ask for 25 of those. So when we need some, I can ask for some.

AA We have an agreement in principle with the other regional councils that the requirement for 'SRT competence' when placing ladder only bolts will be re-worded in such a way that it will suit our needs. So this sticking point may soon be removed.

AA I am happy to stand for Equipment Officer because I may soon have some anchors to place.



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### 9 BCA Representative

Report published on website end of last week.

One update on the report:

I mentioned that there had been no update on the Crow Judicial Review; David Rose has recently circulated a letter indicating that the BCA has won its appeal against the refusal of the High Court to grant permission for us to bring a Judicial Review of the Welsh Government's decision to exclude caving from its Access Reform Group - on the grounds that caving is not covered by the provisions of the CROW Act 2000. See BCA website for details.

So BCA are continuing with the substantive case.

EW Linda is setting the standard for officer reports. The first thing to note is there has been significant changes to BCA executive, with Phil Rowsell standing down, Russell Myers standing up to become chair, and Alan Richardson taking on the secretary's role. These changes have now been confirmed by the last council meeting. My view is that BCA needs stability in the coming months and would like to ask someone from the floor to propose that CSCC fully supports the new BCA Executive.

JD I propose that CSCC fully supports the BCA Executive. Seconded Dave King, Vote passed Unanimous

EW Russell has proposed that as soon as Covid is out of the way, the BCA organises a full traverse of the Three Counties system. The plan is to go from Large Pot through to Top Sink. This will involve at least three underground camps and the involvement of many cavers from many different clubs and regions. BCA proposed spending £4000 on rope and other equipment. This was discussed at length at the last council meeting. My personal view is that this would be an inspirational event to draw people into caving and bring cavers from the regions together. One of the things which drew me into caving was watching the Underground Eiger in the late seventies and this has that potential and will show what the BCA can do after what has been a pretty miserable 12 months.

JD I had read the description and thought that £4000 was a lot for this event but this it has the potential to be really inspirational.

LJW I also thought that £4k was a lot of money but some of that could be recouped by selling off equipment after the event, etc. But realistically is small beer considering the 60k being spend on the court case. This has the potential of being a really inspirational event.

CB This has the potential to be a very good bit of marketing for British caving and sounds fantastic.

DC Although £4k sounds like a lot there will be many ways to recoup those costs like euro-spelo and this amount is in part to underwrite the planning of the event.

DK Proposal that CSCC fully supports the Three Counties Traverse, Seconded AG, Vote passed Unanimous,

EW I would hope that many CSCC members will put themselves forward and be involved with this event.

LJW I am happy to stand for CSCC BCA Representative in the coming year.



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### 10 Communications Officer

LJW In the absence of a comms officer, I am hoping to get a newsletter out before the AGM. LJW to discuss with EW.

### 11 Training Officer

DK Proposals for changes to the BCA training committee, no change from last time this was discussed.

DK Regarding the CSCC Training program.

The program was circulated to the members of CSCC last month.

I have received comments on the program from one of the member clubs and a lot 'talk' regarding the need for openness if people are being paid with BCA money. The bidding process is intended to make this clear and transparent. If individuals want to run club training voluntarily the bidding process will obviously not be required.

I want to make it clear, this is not me dictating how training should be done, it is a proposal for a schedule. If clubs want to put on their own training they still can, just let me know and I will be happy to help. I as far as I see it, I am here to facilitate caving.

EW My view is that having the flexibility to choose between voluntary or professional is the right thing to do. It is really refreshing to see an ambitious proposal for caver training in the south. This is a really good move.

DC There used to be a BCA recreational caver training grant, process for training for amateur caving. How does this dovetail into that?

PB The BCA recreational caver training grant (RCTG) still exists and is administered by Nigel Atkins. Any club can apply for this as long as the training is open to other clubs. It is onerous in that it needs to be organised before the training and the recipient has to write a short report after the event. The Wealdon tried to use the RCTG recently and in the end paid for the training individually themselves.

CB This proposal with allowing volunteers to do training gets around one of the difficulties of the BCA requirements on training. BCA instructors must offer only best practice or good practice techniques. This allows clubs to teach fit-for-purpose techniques, for example A BCA instructor can only recommend climbing a ladder with a harness while a club could recommend using a belay belt for a short ladder.

DK I am intending to stand again at the next AGM

EW The meeting supports the proposal, no vote is required as the training officer has the responsibility to organise training.

### 12 Webmaster

DC I have been slowly re-vamping the website. I have stolen the idea of using the google calendar from BCRA. If you use google calendar it is easy to bring the CSCC calendar into yours.

DC I am planning to stand as webmaster for the next year



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### 13 Forthcoming Events

EW Obviously not a lot of caving going on for the next month or so.

LJW Speaking as BCRA publicity officer we are running some interesting online seminars.  
<https://bcra.org.uk/seminars2021.html>

JD NAMHO are also planning a mining seminar, in Shropshire this year, they are asking for names so than can gauge interest for the event.

DC This is also the international year of cave and karst and they are putting on a number of interesting lectures. Some of these are also on the BCRA calendar.

EW Subterranea Britannica have also presented some great online talks called 'In The Dark' and these are published on YouTube.

### 14 CSCC Significant dates

Note. This is a list of important dates in the current CSCC year, which runs AGM to AGM. The dates of the AGM, notifications and deadlines are defined in the constitution, this is a reminder. Dates of meetings are initially decided at the AGM however they can be changed. Please consult the website diary.

Saturday	26 Sept 2020	19:00	EGM/AGM	Zoom
Friday	20 Nov 2020	19:00	GM	Zoom
Monday	1 Feb 2021	-	Notification to members of upcoming AGM	
Monday	15 Feb 2021	10:30	GM	Zoom
Monday	15 March 2021	23:59	Deadline for AGM Nominations	
Friday	19 March 2021	19:00	Deadline for AGM constitutional amendments	
Thursday	1 April 2021	-	Notification of members of AGM nominations	
Friday	14 May 2021	19:00	AGM	Zoom

### 15 AOB

CB Should we plan for the AGM being a physical meeting and have a zoom meeting if we cannot do it physically?

The meeting discussed the details of this.

EW We should plan for the AGM begin a zoom meeting. We will look at having physical or partially physical meetings in the future.