



# COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CAVING CLUBS

A constituent member of the National Caving Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Southern Caving Clubs held on 10th May 2003 at 10:30am.

## 1. ATTENDANCE

1.1. Tyrone Bevan (Frome CG), Chris Binding (Secretary/CHCC), Alan Butcher (SMCC), David Cooke (NCA Rep/WCC), John Dobson (Chairman/ACG), John Flanagan (ISG inc. WAYA), Martin Grass (Conservation & Access/BEC), Alan Gray (ACG obs.), Doug Harris (ACG), Steve King (SBSS obs./SMCC obs.), Tony Littler (MNRC), Melanie Lloyd (CHCC obs.), Rob Norcross (Moles), Jonathan Roberts (Treasurer/MCG), Andy Sparrow (Training Officer), Les Williams (WCC/Equipment).

1.2. APOLOGIES: Mick Hawkins (Frome CG), Bob Mehew (SMCC), Chris Whale (SBSS).

## 2. READING OF THE MINUTES

2.1. 2002 AGM: Done & None.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING:

3.1. 8th FEB MEETING: Les Williams said that there was no change with regard to the bolting issue and that a suitable, convenient date will be organised.

3.2. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF 22nd FEB: Jonathan Roberts said there were some important points to mention but they should be dealt with later on under the relevant agenda heading (6.1).

## 4. OFFICER REPORTS

### 4.1. CHAIRMAN:

4.1.1. John Dobson said he was hesitant to stand for the position again; he has served in the post for nine years but if no-one else was prepared to take on the post he would continue in the role.

### 4.2. SECRETARY

4.2.1. The secretary is getting a computer and this should save on admin costs considerably.

4.2.2. CSCC holds no stock of prepaid envelopes but the Secretary holds his own private stock which are reimbursed at cost as and when they are used.

4.2.3. The secretary is happy to continue in the role and will stand again.

### 4.3. TREASURER

4.3.1. See enclosed report (not included in email, only sent out as hardcopy: check with CSCC Treasurer for further details).

4.3.2. The most up-to-date account balances are: current a/c £51.67, reserve a/c £3,724.89.

4.3.3. Jonathan Roberts is prepared to stand for the position of Treasurer for the coming year but needs to consider his availability thereafter.

### 4.4. NCA REPRESENTATIVE

4.4.1. See enclosed report.

4.4.2. David Cooke is prepared to stand again.

### 4.5. EQUIPMENT

4.5.1. Nothing has happened since the last meeting and it has been a long time since the last meeting took place.

4.5.2. Les Williams would prefer that meetings happened more frequently but understands that the convenor is busy with other concerns and he doesn't wish to pressurise anyone but thinks that a letter expressing mild disquiet at the dormancy of the Equipment Committee should be sent.

4.5.3. Les Williams is prepared to stand again.

### 4.6. TRAINING

4.6.1. A first aid course was organised during the last year which went ahead despite a shortfall in numbers attending; it appears that NCA is not able to fund core training and unfortunately this course fell foul of that categorisation since it gained its attendees a certificate.

- 4.6.2. MENDIP 2003 is six weeks away; the website will be updated today; the weekend introduces a new element, SpeleoVideo; a mini film festival on the Saturday afternoon and the Sunday morning - so far two new premier films are on the line up, Gavin Newman's Wookey film and Andy Sparrow's Fairy Quarry film. The high quality projector required will be underwritten by Third Eye Films if the £5 entry fee fails to cover the £500 hiring cost.
- 4.6.3. MENDIP 2003 TRAINING: It is hoped that Marcus Taylor may be persuaded to help out since AS will be heavily involved over the weekend already.
- 4.6.4. MENDIP 2003: An informal meeting during lunch was suggested to cover the various other points such as bar, stomp etc..
- 4.6.5. Andy Sparrow is prepared to stand again.

#### 4.7. CONSERVATION AND ACCESS

- 4.8. Not a lot to report this year. No new sites have been closed which has been good but I have been unsuccessful in reopening Sludge Pit, Nine Barrows and Lamb Leer; negotiations are still ongoing.
- 4.9. Overall the number of people caving on Mendip has declined compared with pre-F&M. This has also been the trend in other caving regions. Good for conservation but maybe not so good for the future of the sport.
- 4.10. Various clubs have used the CSCC tape for new sites and for re-taping old ones. When a new site is found the tape is presently being donated but the tape is charged for when re-taping established caves, such as St. Cuthbert's.
- 4.11. The major concern during summer 2002 was the alarming build up of CO2 in some Mendip caves including sites that have not been affected before. Derbyshire has taken the decision to put up warning signs at the entrance of particularly bad caves but we decided not to do this on Mendip as it has been found that the situation can change daily. Teams from UBSS, SBSS & SMCC have used monitors to record CO2 levels throughout the summer and our thanks go to them. With the cold weather and rain in October, sites had gone back to normal but cavers should be vigilant with summer coming up. One site that did not clear completely during the winter was Tynings Barrow Swallet and as this cave needs a bit of exertion to get out of, parties should proceed with caution. MRO is also drawing up plans in case of a rescue from a site high in CO2.
- 4.12. Frome CG have kindly installed a gate on Hilliers.
- 4.13. Fencing Star Mine incurred the majority C&A expense during the year.
- 4.14. SSSI logging: English Nature are keen to monitor sites but their main interest is in sediments and hydrology, not stal or bats; an informal meeting is being scheduled with EN.
- 4.15. If required, I am prepared to stand as CSCC C&A officer for 2003-04.

#### 5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5.1. Post	Person	Proposer	Seconded	Passed
Chairman	Alan Gray	Les Williams	Doug Harris	Nem. Con.
Secretary	Chris Binding	John Dobson	Tyrone Bevan	Nem. Con.
Treasurer	Jonathan Roberts	John Dobson	Les Williams	Nem. Con.
Training Officer	Andy Sparrow	Alan Butcher	Chris Binding	Nem. Con.
NCA Rep.	David Cooke	John Dobson	Chris Binding	Nem. Con.
C&A Officer	Martin Grass	Les Williams	Chris Binding	Nem. Con.
Equipment Officer	Les Williams	John Dobson	Tony Littler	Nem. Con.

- 5.2. On behalf of everyone present Alan Butcher expressed a vote of thanks for John Dobson for all his help and involvement over the previous nine years.
- 5.3. N.B. Andy Sparrow declared a possible conflict of interest with his cave training business.

#### 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

##### 6.1. BCA Considerations:

- 6.1.1. Concern was expressed that there could end up being a two tier system in British caving with one group having "official" access while others were denied due to lack of membership of BCA; Alan Butcher did not want to see a situation where in, say, three years time there was effectively a "certificates for caving" mindset since the world of caving is all about independence and this spirit needs to be kept alive but he did concede that perhaps this could be outside the hands of the CSCC. Alan Butcher proposed **that CSCC retains directly affiliated groups who may not wish to be**

**members of a national body;** seconded - Martin Grass. Vote - unanimous. Jonathan Roberts added that this was effectively voting for the status quo since CSCC already has non-BCRA members within its membership.

6.1.2. The Treasurer's report includes a "Looking Ahead" section, consideration of which lead to the following proposals:

- If BCA were delayed or didn't proceed the Treasurer **proposes that as a precaution the CSCC subscription is raised to £15 with effect from January 2004.** Seconded by Les Williams. Passed by majority vote.
- If BCA does proceed the Treasurer proposes **that CSCC supports individual membership within its region.** Seconded by Martin Grass. Passed by majority vote.
- The Treasurer proposes **that, whether BCA proceeds or not, CSCC supports individual membership within its region.** Seconded by Martin Grass. Passed by majority vote.
- Alan Butcher proposed **that a working party be set up to organise any changes to the CSCC constitution which may be required as a result of the new BCA structure.** Seconded by John Dobson. Passed by majority vote.
- Voting structure: **It was proposed by Alan Butcher that CSCC should pursue One Caver, One Vote;** seconded by Les Williams. Vote - majority in favour with one abstention.
- The meeting supported the view of the NCA rep that there was no proven necessity for Officers of BCA to be members of BCA.
- Alan Butcher expressed concern that the regional councils' veto is possibly to be removed and believes that CSCC should retain the right to vote to maintain its own interests, even if the vote is rarely, if ever, used.
- Trustees: There was some debate over the proposal that BCRA acts as trustee to hold BCA assets in place of the current four trustees; David Cooke is to find out why this is proposed.
- The meeting noted that access details in the BCA prospectus appear misleading and in the scheme of things the topic is regarded as a red herring.

6.2. Bolting/Anchor Placement issues

Dealt with under 3.1 above.

6.3. CSCC Meeting times

A brief discussion covering the pros and cons of morning versus afternoon or evening meetings. Alan Butcher proposed that CSCC meetings should continue as they are, i.e. morning meetings. Seconded by Les Williams. A majority vote carried the proposal with one against and no abstentions.

6.4. WEB FACILITIES FOR CLUBS:

Les Williams asks that if any club wishes to have a presence on the cavers' web please contact him - there is an offer of superb facilities at a competitive price (around £25 p.a., which includes everything) and he needs to get an idea of numbers who may be interested. Contact 07941 029707.

6.5. HIDDEN EARTH: CHANGES

A NEW VENUE - near Worcester - the event is being held on the weekend of 3rd-5th October 2003. Further details available from Les Williams (see 6.4 above for contact number).

7. CONFIRMATION OF THE DATES OF MEETINGS 2003-2004

6th September 2003, 6th December 2003, 7th February 2004, AGM: 8th May 2004. A Special General Meeting will be convened to discuss constitutional alterations as a consequence of BCA developments.

All meetings convene in the back bar of the Hunters Lodge, Priddy, and begin at 10:30am, unless otherwise notified.

Chris Binding, Secretary.