



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

www.csccl.org.uk

Minutes of General Meeting - Saturday 18th February 2017

Approved 13 May 2017

1 Attendance

Voting Attendees

Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts Rep	AD	
Alan Gray	ACG	AG	Regional Registry Officer
Aubrey Newport	White Rabbit	AN	Webmaster
Dave Cooke	Cheddar Rep	DC	Treasurer
Dave King	MNRC	DK	
Graham Price	Cerberus	GP	
Hannah Bennett	BEC	HB	
Les Williams	WCC Rep	LW	C&A Officer
Jonathan Da'Casto	BDCC	JD	

Non Voting

Alan Butcher	SMCC Rep	AB	Chairman
Frank Tully	WCC Observer	FT	Secretary
Andy Eavis	BCA	AE	
Bob Mehew	BCA	BM	

2 Apologies for Absence

Barry Wilkinson	WCC/White Rabbit	BW	
Chris Binding	SPCC/ACI	CB	Training officer
Geoff Dommett	Buckfastleigh CG	GD	
Idris Williams	Shropshire Scouts Caving Team		
James Begley			

3 Approval of minutes from general meeting 26th November 2016

Minutes approved with amendments.

Proposed AB, Seconded LW, Passed Unanimous

4 Actions from previous minutes

None

5 Other matters arising from previous minutes

None

6 Chairman's report

Alan Butcher

It's a pity we didn't get a quorum for the EGM.



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7 Honorary secretary's report

Frank Tully

Nothing to report

8 Conservation & access officer's report

Les Williams

8.1 Report on caves

Box Quarries

No further news, repeat of November news

A fence has been erected around backdoor and CSCC would like to recommend to its members that they do not use this entrance to avoid upsetting the neighbors/landowners.

When approaching 'Backdoor' from the Quarryman's Arms, just before you reach the new fence you pass another entrance named 'Bat Grill'. This is secured in the same way as other entrances into the Box mines complex and brings you into the same approximate area as the Backdoor entrance does.

Viaduct Sink

Fitting gate, ongoing

Swildons

Repair of causeway leading to blockhouse, ongoing

Swildons Stile

Repair of stone stile on way to Swildons, awaiting dry weather, ongoing

Loxton Cavern Report from Graham Price to CSCC Meeting 18/2/17

Stabilisation works are ongoing and proving to be much more major than originally anticipated. The entrance shaft was completed some time ago with plastic pipes installed and a new gate fitted. The section immediately below the new pipe was stabilised by taking out the original wood and tin sheet shuttering and re-building with stone work and cement. This had to be done before it was safe to move further down where the situation has proved to be dire. The existing shuttering was discovered to be collapsing and there is a lot of run in blocking both routes on at the bottom. This is extremely unstable and difficult to deal with, but steady and careful progress is being made.

Hunters lodge inn sink

New gate is waiting to be fabricated. The November meeting allocated £600 for the materials for a new gate.

8.2 Ubley Warren Pot

Report from Graham Price to CSCC Meeting 18/2/17

The entrances to both Ubley Warren and Nettle Pot were completely overgrown until recently when the landowner cleared the area. It was possible to access the Ubley entrance because of the pipes, but the Nettle entrance could not be found.

Recently I was asked by some MCG members to blast a dig they had started in the cave. On this trip I discovered some extremely dangerous boulders weighing at least half a ton each. One is on the edge of the upper chamber and is delicately balanced. It rocks when touched and is only prevented from falling to the chamber below, which is the route out, by a tiny pinch point on the far wall.

The other you have to pass beneath but only notice it is almost floating in space when of the far side. MCG placed a couple of rocks under one corner, although this by no means makes it safe, and these cannot now be moved suggesting to me that the boulder has put weight on them. This is extremely dangerous and it is totally unsafe for anyone to visit the cave until they are secured. It is not practical, or probably safe, to bring either down as this will block



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the route to and from the end of the cave.

Due to the extreme danger to visitors I talked to the landowner and have fitted a non standard lock until the cave can be made safe. Would the CSCC be able to cover the cost of materials including an acrow prop, stone dust and cement.

I have also cleared the Nettle Pot entrance and made the gate usable again. I had to cut the lock off and have replaced it with a new CSCC lock. Unfortunately the entrance is at ground level, in poor condition, and ideally needs raising with a new gate.

CSCC agreed to perform stabilisation work in Ubley Warren Pot

8.3 Heale Farm Cave

Report from Graham Price to CSCC Meeting 18/2/17

Some time ago I undertook to sort out access to Heale Farm Cave. When I approached the owners, Aggregate Industries, they said there was no access for the time being as they were in the process of selling the land but would let me know when the sale was completed. I checked periodically but they seemed to be making little progress, apparently there being some undefined problems.

It was then a surprise that I had a call from the owners of Green Farm to say they had purchased the land and were aware of the cave but did not have access to it. I agreed to obtain the keys from Aggregate Industries on their behalf. They agreed they would be willing to allow access but there had been complaints in the past from locals, about visiting cavers.

The only basis on which they would agree to access was that the key was held by ourselves and that we gave them 24 hours notice on any visits so they could notify local householders. I suspect the biggest problem is that local people are not used to cavers so it's all a bit unusual. Prior to the cave being made available for visits they wanted the entrance area cleared of all vegetation as it was very overgrown and an access route made from the road.

This work has been completed and it has been agreed that the cave can be opened at the end of February.

Heale Farm Cave - The basic rules for access are:

- Request for access via email to HealeFarmCave@cave.org.uk.

- Minimum five days notice required

- Max party size five

- Limited parking available so cars should be shared

- BCA insurance required

- Evening visitors have to be off site by 10pm

- Access via agreed route only

- Keys to be collected from and returned to Oakhill on day of visit

Need to purchase new lock, key box, and signs for parking and access. Cost approx £100.

The landowners are concerned about bats, and although I have dissuaded them at the moment, it is possible they may close the cave during the winter. They are consulting a local bat expert regarding this.

To retain access to the cave there is an ongoing liability to keep the entrance area cleared, and the access route from the road accessible.

The same landowner owns Bottlehead Slocker and Dairy House Slocker. There is no access to either at the present. Bottlehead is in the gardens of the farm and they are not keen on access



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being made available, but this may change. They may agree to access to Dairy House later in the year after an assessment has been made of the safety of the cave.

8.4 CSCC Locks

Report from Graham Price to CSCC Meeting 18/2/17

Les asked me to get new batch of locks several months ago. Papaiz is major Brazilian lock manufacturer. They were no longer available as wholesalers were unable to obtain supplies at reasonable cost following company being taken over by Abus. They were looking at having their own locks made to same specification - i.e. same key way - in Taiwan, so they could continue supply of different locks to same keys. This has been going on for over a year and according to them they have received a small batch but don't know when further supplies will be available. I have been told by our local suppliers that there are patent/copyright issues but this is unconfirmed.

Note that the brass Papaiz locks were originally only available with a hardened steel shackle and this has presented issues with rusting where the shackle enters the lock body, and locks therefore seizing. Over the years the cost of these locks has risen to over £17 per unit. The replacement locks, if they become available, will cost an estimated £16.80. They hope to make a version available with a stainless steel shackle for an additional £2.40. The wholesalers supply a Federal branded lock of approximately the same size and style with a stainless steel shackle, again made in Taiwan, for £18.50.

Under the circumstances, and considering we had a batch of Papaiz locks that didn't work correctly when our suppliers were no longer able to pin the locks themselves but had to order them directly from the wholesalers, combined with the supply issues, there seems little option but to change the locking system. This will get rid of the problem we currently have of some keys not operating some of the locks.

There are a number of weatherproof keyed alike locks available that would theoretically be suitable but most are very expensive or have small shackles.

The cheapest option for a lock with a similar opening to the Papaiz, other than the Federal, is the Abus. The disadvantage of the Abus (although not to us) is that there are only very limited key variations, but the advantage is they are all factory made so will all be guaranteed identical. The normal price for these is £21.14 but the cheapest I can source these for is:

1- 5 locks £17.98 (with stainless or £16.45 with hardened shackle)

6 - 20 £17.45 (£15.97)

21 - 50 £16.92 (£15.48)

51 - 100 £16.39 (£15.00)

101+ £15.85 (£14.52)

GP offered to assist with changing the locks if required.

9 Honorary treasurer's report

Dave Cooke

No report presented.

10 Training officer's report

Chris Binding

A brief interim Training Officer's report could be summarised as follows:

Having attended online meeting(s) with BCA Training Committee since the last CSCC meeting I am happy to confirm that all seems well with recreational caver training and would ask the various club secretaries to provide a contact list for their training officers so that some calendar events can be organised. Training the Trainers is an obvious candidate topic which could be informal and



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practical and based anywhere suitable. I look forward to hearing from club committees in due course.

Chris Binding

10.1 Discussions regarding guidance for novice cavers

The links to cave conservation and access guidelines have been attached to the CSCC website. The meeting believes that it would be useful if clubs linked to this document on their own websites and circulated printed copies to new members.

BCA has published guides for digging which addresses cave conservation.

AB The CSCC needs to take a more proactive stance with caver training and conservation and access. Proposals for how CSCC can get the cave conservation message across to the member clubs.

GP offered to produce some digging guidelines

10.2 AB report on the BCA meeting where the Training / Qualifications Management Committee was discussed

AB attended the recent BCA meeting

The purchase of bespoke software to manage the accounts of the commercial caver training was not agreed but deferred to the next meeting awaiting review.

No significant news regarding recreational caver training. Changes to the structure have not yet been agreed.

11 Equipment officer's report

Faye Litherland

Report sent by email

Went to Eastwater Saturday, and well some of the anchors are well, not good, the naturals are better. Granted in lots of places anchors are not really needed, but that is not the modern way, and if something is not done reasonably quickly we will lose the rock as more people add cheap not suitable anchors.

So met Mrs Gibbons while getting changed and asked her if it would be okay for the CSCC to install and replace anchors in Eastwater. As expected, she was very happy with this, and has even made a note, confirming this, attached, Frank could you please file this in the appropriate place.

In the meeting on the 18th could approval for Chris and I to undertake this as soon as anchors are available. (although I have not actually asked Chris as yet, but he is usually keen/willing)

While I am here, after the poor test results from the BP anchors, I intend to redo the tests, two possible problems have been identified, the degreaser may not have been the right one

Andrew Atkinson 31/1/2017

Discussion resulting from letter; regarding the request from Andrew Atkinson and Chris Binding to place new anchors in Eastwater. The owner of the cave has been approached and is happy with the re-bolting. Andrew has indicated that he will require re-imburement for drill bits. BM said that drill bits should be reimbursable from BCA as are glue and anchors.

The meeting agrees in principle to the bolting of Eastwater but requests Andrew Atkinson make it clear which routes are going to be bolted and which anchors are going to be placed.

BM raised an issue with the records of anchors placed and any inspection. The meeting generally agreed that this needs to be addressed in the coming year.



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12 BCA rep report

Training

AB attended the recent BCA meeting. One of the main topics discussed involved the separating of the training committee into two committees; one dealing with the requirements of the professional sector and one dealing with recreational cavers.

The proposal has not yet been agreed and will be presented to the AGM in June.

This should be circulated to the CSCC members when the proposal is more finalised.

BCA Constitutional Changes

Andy Eavis handed out copies of the proposed changes to the BCA constitution and copies of the current BCA constitution. The intention is that CSCC members can see the constitutional changes in advance and have the opportunity to discuss and comment upon them.

The discussion was based on a proposed list of changes and as such has not been minuted.

The draft proposals and accompanying notes have been supplied by Bob Mehew and will be included with the minutes of this meeting.

Draft Proposed_Constitution_Changes_v3.pdf

Proxy_Voting_v1.pdf

Procedural_Motions_v1.pdf

Other_proposed_changes_v1.pdf

Section_4.6_v6.pdf

13 Webmasters report

Aubrey Newport

No issues

14 Regional registry officer's report

Alan Gray

Nothing to report

15 Forthcoming events

Hidden Earth - Churchill 29th September to 1st October 2017

16 Date of next meetings:

Saturday 13th May 2017

(AGM) 10:00 Hunters

17 Any other business

Meeting duration 1h54m