



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

www.csccl.org.uk

Minutes of Annual General Meeting - Saturday 19th May 2018

Approved 15 Sept 2018

1 Attendance

Voting Attendees

Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts	AD	
Alistair Smith	WSCC	AS	
Andrew McLeod	EUSS	AM	
Arran Cooper-Davis	EUSS	AC	
Aubrey Newport	White Rabbit	AN	
Babs Price	BEC	BP	
Dave Cooke	Cheddar	DC	Treasurer/Webmaster
Dave King	MNRC	DK	
Geoff Drommot	BCG	GD	
Graham Price	Cerberus SS	GP	Assistant C&A Officer
Jon DaCasto	B&DCC	JDC	
Les Williams	WCC	LW	C&A Officer
Linda Wilson	UBSS	LIW	
Tim Ball	SMCC	TB	

Non Voting

Alan Butcher	SMCC	AB	Chairman
Daniel Mathews	MCG	DM	
Frank Tully	WCC	FT	Secretary
Graham Mullan	UBSS	GM	

2 Apologies for Absence

Andrew Atkinson		AA	Equipment officer
Barry Wilkinson	White Rabbit	BW	

3 Approval of minutes from AGM 16th Sept 2017

Minutes approved with amendments.

Proposed AB, Seconded LW, Passed Unanimous

4 Chairman's report

Alan Butcher

Welcome to the meeting

5 Honorary secretary's report

Frank Tully

5.1 new members of CSCC

KURG

Rivendell Caving Club

SHARK

Slough Mountaineering Club

Southampton University Caving Club

All of the five new members joined by ticking the box on the BCA renewal form.

Vote to accept the new members of CSCC, For 8, Abstaining 6, Against 0

CSCC keys will not be issued by default to new clubs, if clubs apply they will be issued with a key.



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6 Conservation & access officer's report Les Williams

6.1 Access to caves on land owned by Longleat Enterprises Ltd.

A summary of the negotiations between CSCC and Longleat Estates was read out

This is included at the end of these minutes in Appendix 1.

The Agreement has been forwarded to the CSCC executive by email previously.

GM The current 'Agreement' is an agreement between the four named individuals and Longleat estates Ltd. It is not an agreement between CSCC and Longleat Estates Ltd.

AB The named individuals have taken legal advice and will not be signing the agreement because the agreement makes them and their estate personally liable.

AB CSCC therefore have two alternatives, to walk away and stop negotiating, or to go back to Longleat Estates and try and find a solution. The proposed solution is to ask Longleat estates if it would be possible to modify the agreement such that, the agreement would be between a 'limited company buy guarantee' and Longleat Estates The CSCC named individuals have taken legal advice and this was recommended as a way of making the named individuals, and members of CSCC, and their estates not personally liable.

AN Asked a question at this point: The climbers have an agreement which allows them to climb in the gorge. Why can the cavers not have a similar agreement?

AB CSCC does not know the details of the climbers agreement however is aware that climbers must be members of BMC and would therefore be insured through BMC.

AB To investigate the agreement which the climbers have made with Longleat estates.

AB Rather than forming a limited company by guarantee, why can Longleat not just make an agreement with CSCC which is an 'unincorporated organisation'.

LIW Some landowners have made access agreements with 'unincorporated organisation', for example, some local councils and the forestry commission. But this is a legal grey area and it depends how literal their solicitors are going to be when interpreting the law.

LW Longleat Estates have already discounted this option by, removing all mention of CSCC from the agreement and asking for an agreement between themselves and four named individuals.

GP Will BCA insurance not indemnify the individuals if they sign the agreement personally?

LW I have spoken to the BCA insurance officer and BCA will indemnify both the individuals or the limited company. However there is a limit on this insurance and costs exceed this, the named individuals and their estates will be liable. BCAs legal advice was to form a 'limited company by guarantee'.

GM What are the costs associated with this compared by forming a trust.

LW The 'limited company by guarantee' would have similar costs to setting up a trust but as the company is non-profit it could be dormant and file a zero return every year. Annual registration with companies house could be paid by a third party, namely CSCC.



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AB I would like to ask this meeting if we have agreement to, propose to Longleat estates that they modify the agreement such that the agreement is between Longleat Estates and a vehicle which is a 'limited company by guarantee'.

Vote; For 12, Against 2, Abstentions 0

AB to contact Longleat Estates Ltd and ask if they would consider modify the agreement such that the agreement is between Longleat Estates and a vehicle which is a 'limited company by guarantee'.

If Longleat Estates Ltd is amenable: AB to investigate in detail the setting up a limited company by guarantee.

Proposed timescales; An Extraordinary General Meeting will take place in September to ratify any agreement with the members. This agreement may then be signed with Longleat Estates Ltd.

6.2 / 6.3 Stoke Lane Slocker Graham Price (Assistant C&A officer)

Ongoing,

GP has provided Linda with a map of the area.

6.4 Loxton Cavern Graham Price (Assistant C&A officer)

Work has been progressing

6.5 Maesbury Swallet Graham Price (Assistant C&A officer)

The gate has been made and it ready to be fitted. As there is also a considerable amount of surface work to be done the high flow in the stream currently makes this impossible so work is unlikely before the summer.

Stream not dry yet.

Additional costs for materials to stabilise entrance, proposed cost &200, Approved Nem Con

6.6 Ubley Warren Swallet Graham Price (Assistant C&A officer)

Gate has been fitted to the Nettle entrance. CSCC lock has not been fitted yet.

6.7 Windsor Hill Flood Sink 1 Graham Price (Assistant C&A officer)

Dave Speed has looked at the gate and fitted a hasp.

It appears that the area containing the caves is being managed by Shepton Mallet community woodland management group.

6.8 CSCC Locks Graham Price (Assistant C&A officer)

Making progress with changing the locks over.

There are 9 clubs which hold CSCC keys with which we have not been able to get into contact. We are using the BCA contact details.

6.9 Browns Folly quarry

No new news, ongoing.

6.10 Swildons Causeway

Ongoing

6.11 Swildons Stile

Ongoing



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6.12 Hunters lodge inn sink

Gate was fitted after the meeting, and ladder removed.

6.13 CDG Somerset Section – Wookey Access Works

Access works to replace;

- Ladder in Wookey 23, existing ladder is 23 years old and one leg is snapped at the bottom.
- 30m of handlines, existing rope is over 12 years old and frayed.
- Some hangers and bolts.

Estimated cost £128

BCA treasurer was contacted and although CDG is a constituent body of BCA and therefore can claim for funding directly to BCA, the treasurer thinks it will be more efficient if they apply for small amounts of money through CSCC. Funding approved Nem Con

Bolts to be replaced with stainless resin hangers, contact equipment Officer.

6.14 Singing River Mine

The current land owner has died and whilst changes are taking place CSCC requests that cavers avoid the mine for the time being, so as not to upset the family.

7 Honorary treasurer's report

Dave Cooke

The signed and approved 2016 accounts have been published on the website.

8 Training officer's report

8.1 Report on BCA council meeting and run-up.

There is a proposal for the BCA AGM, to change the name of the 'training committee' to the 'recreational training committee'.

9 Equipment officer's report

Andrew Atkinson

There has been a video conference meeting of the E&T with the new convener. Hopefully moving to most things been done by email and then short evening video conference if discussion is needed. Yay, catching up with the modern world.

There will be no more IC anchors, looking into others. So still no anchors available. Still waiting for the puller, that is at least fixed now.

Clarification on bolts placed in Ubley Warren Swallet

These need to be brought into the CSCC bolt database.

GP Two bolts have been placed on Nettle pitch and two bolts have been placed on the Urgh. Bolts were supplied by AA.

This information needs to be updated on the website, action on AA.

Clarification on bolts placed on Ariel hole, Portland

There are four original P hangers installed on the cliff face above Ariel hole entrance to the Ariel – Blacknor cave system. These bolts were placed by CSCC and the list needs to be updated accordingly. Action on AA.



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10 BCA rep report

There is a BCA AGM on the 3rd June 2018. There are a number of proposals.

10.1 Agenda item 24: Working group to establish BCA future vision and strategy

BCA has struggled to attract new officers and particularly to inspire a new generation of cavers to get involved with the organisation. Some major reforms are needed if BCA is to thrive in the future.

BCA find it difficult to fill officer positions as they become vacant and officers are forced to sit in those positions longer than they would like or is good for the organisation. Attracting young or new blood into the roles has proven very difficult. There may be a number of reasons for this, disinterest, a dominance of the old guard, a distinct lack of vision and some criticism that the BCA is dysfunctional. Whatever it is there are few positive aspects of involvement with BCA and these all contribute to the BCA being seen in a very negative light by those who could get more involved.

BCA never appears to be leading, the tail always seems to be wagging the dog. Reacting to issues dominates business where a proactive agenda would be more attractive. There is no vision that cavers can identify with and get behind. Moving forward in a positive direction would encourage participation in the organisation by a new generation.

Setting a new simple mission statement and vision should be a first step. Developing a strategy of how to get there, reviewing the cumbersome BCA structure to see if it is fit for the future and finally rewriting parts of the constitution where needed should follow. Tinkering with the edges will not inspire new interest in BCA. Positive reform will. Therefore I propose the following motion:

“BCA to establish a ‘working group’ to determine a new mission and vision for the organisation. To outline a strategy to achieve this vision and make recommendations for any changes to the organisations structure and constitution. The group should be made up of a majority of younger cavers from the constituent bodies, regions and membership under an established convener agreed by council. The group should aim to be established within six months (by the January council meeting) and should report on recommendations to the 2020 AGM.”

Proposed by: Tim Allen, not seconded.

The CSCC are not happy that there are proposals put to the AGM which are not seconded and therefore un-constitutional. We realize that in the past un-seconded proposals have been seconded from the floor however we believe this is lazy.

Item 24 Vote to mandate our representative For 0, Against 8, Abstention 5.

10.2 Agenda item 25: Appointment of a technical adviser to set up remote access to meetings

Improving participation, engagement and fairness are key factors in motion (1) and the objective of this motion (2). Travelling for six hours in a car for a BCA council meeting does not encourage engagement with the organisation, especially as meetings can take all day and, let’s face it, be pretty dull. In the past choosing a fixed central location for a national meeting made the best of a bad job. This is fine for those who live relatively close but deters those who live further away. Travel from the Peak, Mendip, London, S Wales involves up to two hours travel each way. It is over three hours each way from Plymouth for the Devon & Cornwall representatives.

The country’s largest caving region is underrepresented at BCA and yet it has a thriving regional council. It is over three hours each way to travel from Ingleton or York. Five to eight hours from the Scottish areas which CNCC also represent. Who would want to engage with BCA from Scotland?

The cumbersome structure of BCA has over forty representatives with a role on council. These should come from across the national area and it is important that everything is done to facilitate attendance of all representatives at meetings.



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Technology is obviously the answer here offering a wide variety of possible solutions. Many cavers, probably in their working lives, will have come across these systems in action. Attendance from home or local hubs via an audio or video link would solve the problem and lead to improved participation and better representation in BCA council meetings. When technology allows council members to attend meetings remotely then the physical location of that meeting is less important and it can move from a central location. Once established the council meetings could rotate around the regions and be better synchronised with regional meetings. This could create improvements in the relationship between the national body and regional councils. Therefore I propose the following motion:

“BCA to appoint or employ a technical advisor with a specific mandate to introduce an audio/visual technological solution which allows council members remote access to meetings. This access should allow members to participate at a similar level to those attending in person. A working system should be in place within one year.”

Proposed by: Tim Allen, not seconded.

DC there are at least two examples where BCA has used Webex in its meetings.

Item 25 Vote to mandate our representative For 0, Against 10, Abstention 3.

10.3 Agenda item 26: Electronic voting

The BCA AGM is an important part of the governance of the organisation. In line with motion (1&2) improving engagement and participation of the membership is key to a healthy organisation.

In the past the BCA AGM was held in the same central location as council meetings. Unfortunately the only people who attended were the council members. Six years ago it was decided to move the AGM around the regions which hosted a ‘party weekend’ in the hope that it would encourage a wider attendance. On some occasions this has worked but numbers are still very limited. Usually you get the same 20-25 council members who normally attend meetings and then perhaps another 20-25 cavers mostly from the local region. These small numbers mean that out of a membership approaching 6000 an unhealthy influence can be had on policy from just a few, perhaps regionally biased, cavers. This is not good for the organisation’s democracy especially when the AGM has only been to the north once in six years!

The tedium of a meeting and the distance of travel are not conducive to encouraging engagement. However the proposed technological solutions for council meetings are not suitable to encourage several hundred members to engage with the AGM. The key business of the AGM is electing officers and voting on motions and it is voting which needs to be made more accessible for all the members.

Last year a motion on proxy voting failed. That motion had little support from council and the exec and no attempt was made to improve the motion to better suit the organisation. It was, at least, an attempt to address this issue and should be applauded. A better solution is electronic voting similar to that already used in the 2017 ballot. If motions and nominations were received by the council meeting prior to the AGM then there is a minimum of six weeks to run an electronic vote and count. This would make AGMs far more efficient and as this becomes a formal annual process preparations can be made well in advance. Therefore I propose the following motion:

“The BCA to investigate a process of electronic voting on motions and nominations properly presented to the Annual General Meetings. This process to be founded upon that used for the 2017 ballot but with greater use of professional help. The process, and any constitutional changes required to implement it, to be presented to the 2019 AGM with a view to full implementation at the 2020 AGM.”

Proposed by: Tim Allen, not seconded.

DC The work required to perform the 2017 required an awful lot of work for two volunteers. This could have been handed over to an external company but the BCA data privacy notice did not allow this. This is now allowed so outsourcing the work is now an option. The costs of outsourcing the ballot is estimated to be between 3 and 6 thousand. Now we are aware of the processes which



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are required to perform a ballot we could outsource part of the process and perform it much more cheaply. All of this is in hand and is happening anyway.

Item 26 Vote to mandate our representative For 0, Against 13, Abstention 0.

The meeting believes that this is already happening and is unnecessary.

10.4 Agenda item 27: Rename Training Committee and Training Officer

That Training Committee is re-named as 'Recreational Training Committee' and the officer post is renamed to 'Recreational Training Officer'.

Proposed: National Council

The structure of the caver training system needs to be addressed. Changing the name is unnecessary and counterproductive.

Item 27 Meeting mandates our representative to argue the structure of the caver training system needs to be addressed before names are changed. The meeting supports our representatives judgment in this matter depending on the outcome of the discussion.

10.5 Agenda item 28: Training Committee terms of reference

That the Training Committee be responsible for:

- *All matters relating to recreational caver training including the administration of recreational caver training grants.*
- *The provision of non-mandatory training guidelines for use by caving clubs, recreational cavers and groups.*
- *All other training related matters excluding those associated with the BCA award schemes and the QMC.*
- *An overview of BCA training policy, in conjunction with the QMC and the BCA National Council.*

The detail of responsibilities and operations shall be confirmed by BCA National Council.

Proposed: Alan Butcher, seconded Nick Williams

Item 28 Meeting mandates our representative to argue that the structure needs to be properly sorted-out because the current situation is not good for the organisation. The meeting supports our representatives judgment in this matter depending on the outcome of the discussion.

10.6 Agenda item 29. Establishment of Youth and Development Standing Committee

That the BCA form a standing committee, known as the 'Youth and Development' committee, or abbreviated to Y&D Committee. This shall replace the existing co-opted position of Youth and Development officer, and take on the role and members of the Youth and Development working party. The new committee will be headed by the Youth and Development Officer (abbrv. Y&D Officer). The budget of the Y&D Committee shall be rolled over from the existing youth and development budget.

This committee shall work to represent the interests of all young cavers, including both student cavers, and those under the age of 18 (such as those in scout teams). Aims of the committee will include (but are not limited to): assisting the formation of new university clubs and scout caving teams; improving access for under 18s; liaising with university unions and guilds; and generally improving the lot of younger cavers.

Proposed: David Botcherby, seconded: Les Williams

Replacing the Y&D working party with a standing committee gives a more permanent nature to the work being done by its members, and gives a voting position on the national council to the Y&D Officer. As a standing committee, the Y&D Committee will be open to representatives from each Regional Caving Council and National



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Body of the BCA. The Y&D Committee will also have the ability to co-opt experts at their discretion, their business being their own to conduct. Forming a Y&D Committee would reaffirm the BCA's commitment to their younger members, recognising their specific needs, which differ from those of the general membership. Working to represent younger cavers is an imperative of the BCA, and continuing the good work of the youth and development working group into the future will ensure this.

LIW and GM It needs to be made explicit that this committee cannot interfere with a university club in any way unless it is invited to do so by the university club.

DC This is already in the BCA constitution

GM this needs to be absolutely clear

Item 29 Meeting mandates our representative to support item 29 with the explicit instruction that the standing committee cannot interfere with a university club in any way unless it is invited to do so by the university club.

10.7 Agenda item 30: Disbanding of the Legal and Insurance standing committee

The L&I standing committee is a throwback to the days of the NCA. There has never been a formal meeting of the L&I Committee since the creation of BCA. Insurance matters have been dealt with almost exclusively by myself acting in the Council appointed role of PL Scheme Manager and legal matters have been dealt with by an individual officer with little reference to Council or the Executive.

The October Council meeting agreed a motion "To delete the post of 'Legal & Insurance Officer' & split the role into two posts" and the January 2018 Council meeting agreed "As required, the Executive seek the opinion of one, or more, currently practising legal professional for legal matters, as they arise". However, as a standing committee, it is not in the gift of Council to appoint (or remove) the L&I Officer who heads the L&I Committee, this is a matter for the AGM.

Disbanding the L&I Committee will simply regularise the situation agreed by Council and reduce the bureaucracy surrounding the appointment of officers to deal with insurance and legal matters. Council can then deal with these matters as and when they need to.

I therefore propose that:

The Legal and Insurance Standing Committee be disbanded and Council be empowered to appoint officers to deal with legal and insurance matters as they arise.

NB: the status and operation of standing committees is defined in the constitution but the actual creation of standing committees is a matter for the AGM, and hence this is not a proposal to amend the constitution.

Proposed: Nick Williams.

LIW Clubs need a clear pathway for getting legal advice. The contact does not need to be a legal professional but their role should be to point clubs and individuals in the right direction.

DC Separating the roles makes sense but there needs to be a point of contact.

Item 30 Meeting mandates our representative to not support item 30 until BCA institutes a legal officer.

10.8 Statement to AGM

Meeting mandates our representative to make a formal complaint to the AGM, that the majority of these proposals are not properly mandated.



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11 Webmasters report

Dave Cooke

GDPR, CSCC holds very little personal data. We do need a privacy notice on the website and this is in hand.

A note to members of CSCC

When sending personal data over the internet encrypt the data and send the encryption key or password via a different medium, for instance a phone text or personal phone call.

DC to update website

DC to provide GP access to the 'cave access' section of the website

12 Regional registry officer's report

Alan Gray

Nothing to report

13 Amendment to the constitution

Amendment to section 4c of the CSCC constitution, proposed by the CSCC committee. As published on the CSCC website:

The Annual General Meeting shall be called for May. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called at the request of at least six member clubs. A quorum for the Annual General Meeting and the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be twenty five percent of the paid up member clubs of the Council

To be amended to:

The Annual General Meeting shall be called for May. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called at the request of at least six member clubs. A quorum for the Annual General Meeting and the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be twenty five percent of the paid up member clubs of the Council or 10 members whichever is the lower.

DC I believe the quorum limit of 10 is a little high. The number of voting members at previous AGMs in the past has been; starting with this meeting 13, 9, 15, 10, 12, 12, 9, 10, 10, 10, 8, 10, 9, 9, 10, 11, 11. Most of the time we hit the number, but there have been quite a few where we didn't.

Proposal to amend the amendment to:

The Annual General Meeting shall be called for May. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called at the request of at least six member clubs. A quorum for the Annual General Meeting and the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be twenty five percent of the paid up member clubs of the Council or 8 members whichever is the lower.

Amendment Proposed DC, Seconded LIW, For 13, Passed Unanimous.

Vote to approve the amended amendment, For 13, Passed Unanimous.



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14 Election of officers

Post	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded	
Chairman	Alan Butcher	LIW	LW	Duly elected unopposed
Honorary secretary	Frank Tully	LW	DC	Duly elected unopposed
Honorary treasurer	Dave Cooke	JDC	AB	Duly elected unopposed
Conservation and access	Les Williams	AN	JDC	Duly elected unopposed
Training officer	Position Vacant, Chairman to coopt representative as required.			
Equipment officer	Andrew Atkinson	LW	LIW	Duly elected unopposed
BCA Rep	Alan Butcher	LW	LIW	Duly elected unopposed
Webmaster	Dave Cooke	LW	FT	Duly elected unopposed
Regional Registry Officer	Alan Grey	DC	JDC	Duly elected unopposed
Scrutineer (Not an officer post)	Aubrey Newport	GK	GD	Duly elected unopposed

15 Forthcoming events

- Sat 4th August - Wessex challenge, Anniversary of the grate flood - chariot race.

16 Date of next meetings:

Note Time has been changed to 10:30

- Saturday 15th September 2018 (GM) 10:30 Hunters
- Saturday 24th November 2018 (GM) 10:30 Hunters
- Saturday 16th February 2019 (GM) 10:30 Hunters
- Saturday 18th May 2019 (AGM) 10:30 Hunters

17 Any other business

None

Meeting duration 2h25m

APPENDIX 1

ACCESS AGREEMENT WITH LONGLEAT RE: CAVES ON LONGLEAT LAND IN CHEDDAR GORGE AREA.

Before we discuss the agreement and what the current state of play is, it is worth going back to this time last year.

On 26th May 2017 Longleat's agent, Anne Strong, sent an email to eleven clubs and four individuals setting out the requirement for them to sign a "Waiver" to allow them continuing access to caves in Cheddar Gorge under the existing arrangements for a limited time (6-8 months) until a "Review" had been completed and new arrangements put in place. The email further stated that it was the intention to grant permissions after the termination of the existing arrangements and continued "however, it is likely that this new arrangement will incorporate new terms emanating from the Review."



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So, the waiver sent around to the limited number of clubs was, as Longleat have subsequently indicated, an interim arrangement before the introduction of the new agreement. It is not the case, in my view, that had the CSCC done nothing the whole matter would have resulted in a lesser situation than we have now as has been suggested. There was always going to be some form of “legals” involved.

I wrote as CSCC Chairman to Anne Strong on 2nd June introducing the CSCC as the regional access body representing 42 clubs. Meetings were arranged to discuss the matter of an access agreement and the first draft of this brought to the CSCC meeting on 12th September 2017. This situation had developed formally (although there was talk of it before May) after the CSCC AGM on 13th May 2017. The minutes of the meeting of 12th September read as follows:

Access to caves on land owned by Longleat Estates.

Currently to go caving or digging on land owned by Longleat Estates cavers must sign a copy of the 'Waiver'. This is believed to be an interim document until an agreement for access is agreed. AB, LW, There have been three meetings so far between Longleat Estates and CSCC regarding access to caves. Longleat Estates wish CSCC to control access to caves on their behalf. Longleat estates lawyers have produced a 'Heads of Terms' document which is being looked at. BCA have been contacted regarding issues of insurance and have produced a response. The CSCC meeting is happy for LW and AB to continue negotiating with Longleat Estates regarding access on behalf of cavers. Noting that any agreement needs to be circulated to the CSCC member clubs once the text is finalised and voted on before it is ratified. Vote to proceed with negotiations passed unanimous.

As it turned out the Longleat “Heads of Terms” document was not acceptable to the CSCC and a simple access agreement was produced in response by the CSCC. This was discussed and amended at the meeting on 25th November 2017. It was then presented to Longleat and they were happy with the content, however, they still felt they needed to turn it into a legal document. This was disappointing and we indicated such at a meeting on 16th January 2018 suggesting that this was a perfectly suitable agreement and similar to others used in other regions. Longleat, however, insisted that they prepare and send us their legal interpretation which we reluctantly requested before the meeting on 17th February. Unfortunately, it did not arrive until after the meeting had taken place and, subsequently, Anne Strong has left for pastures new leaving Leon Troake, the operations manager, to complete the agreement.

What you have in front of you is the latest draft of the agreement which Longleat say is their final offer. Our legal people have indicated that there are significant items left out of the latest document and we will need to re-address this with Longleat if we decide to carry on and endeavour to enter into this access agreement.

Alan Butcher
19th May 2018