



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

www.csccl.org.uk

Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

Approved

Recording of the meeting

The meeting is being recorded for the purpose of minute taking

1 Attendance

Voting Attendees **10 Voting reps**

Peter Burgess	Wealden CMS	PB	CSCC Comms
Judi Durber	EECC	JD	
Dave Cooke	Cheddar CC	DC	Acting Treasurer/Webmaster
Mark Tringham	GSS	MT	
Dave King	MNRC	DK	
Matt	Shepton	Matt	
Wayne Starsmore	WCC	WS	C&A
Alan Gray	Axbridge CG	AG	
Andrea	WCMS	AN	
Laura Benn	BEC	LB	
Tom Harrison	MCG	TH	
Aubrey Newport	WRCC Rep	AN	
Tony Radmall (Badger)	WSCC	TR	

Non Voting Attendees (Observers)

Linda Wilson	UBSS	LW	BCA Rep
Graham Mullan		GM	CCC Ltd rep
Andrew Atkinson		AA	Equipment
Dave K		DaK	Training
Stuart McManus (Mac)			

Apologies if you attended the meeting and are not listed here, Zoom only records those who spoke in the meeting and then only displaying the text you entered, I cannot necessarily identify you by your voice and definitely not if you did not speak..

If you attended but are not listed here please contact the secretary.

2 Apologies for Absence

Frank Tully	WCC	FT	Secretary
Martin McGowan	WSG		

3 Election of Meeting Chair

JD proposes DC as meeting Chair, Seconded Badger, Vote passed Unanimous

4 Approval of minutes from GM 13 Feb 2024

Minutes approved with correction of typos,
Vote passed Unanimous

4.1 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The request for Loxton Leaders has been overtaken by events. This will be discussed later.



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Clubs publishing details for caves they control, offer leaders for, or provide access Keys, on their websites, and forwarding links for this, to the CSCC publications officer.

PB The message went out to clubs months ago and I have not had any response.

DK This is an action on clubs to do this.

Could Clubs who, Control Access to caves, Provide leaders to caves, or hold cave keys which can be borrowed by members or guests, please describe these services on their website and how members and guests should go about accessing these services.

A link to this section of a clubs website should be forwarded to the CSCC publications officer.

5 Members and new members

DC 'Three Stags Moose Titan Caving Club' have applied for membership of CSCC, however we do not have any information beyond this.

TH They are BCA members, so have provided a constitution to BCA

Vote to accept the club into CSCC, Vote passed unanimous.

6 Chair's report

We do not have a chair in post

7 Secretary's report FT

Report to the meeting, circulated by email.

From the secretaries perspective the last year has been without incident, agendas and minutes have been produced and published on the website. Nothing much more interesting than this to report on.

Frank Tully Secretary CSCC

8 C&A Report

See 'Officer Reports' in <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/documents/start>

8.1 Longleat Estates

WS In addition, We are still in negotiation with the Longleat estates regarding caving access and hope to have an agreement in place before the 1 September in time for the new student year starting.

8.2 GB Waterfall

DK The flagging tape preventing access to the waterfall area of GB cavern have been removed because nothing has moved in a reasonable amount to time. However be aware that things may still be settling.

DC This needs to be on the CSCC news section of the website.

DK Could someone please circulate the CCC email regarding this.



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

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8.3 Loxton Cavern

Note by DC, Loxton Caves Access Agreement

There are three significant caves and several minor caves on Loxton Parish Council (LPC) land. These are Loxton Cave, Loxton Quarry Cave and Loxton Cavern. For many years CSCC has controlled access to these caves with the agreement of LPC. Loxton Cavern was rediscovered in 2005. It is particularly notable for its history and the mining artefacts it contains. It was entered by ochre miners in 1757 and described soon after by Dr. Alexander Catcott in his diaries. Loxton Quarry Cave and Loxton Cave are accessed via the standard CSCC key. Loxton Cavern is accessed via a leader system although for most of the time since its discovery it has been closed because the entrance has been unstable. CSCC organised the necessary stabilisation works installing a new entrance pipe and gate. The work is now complete. It has cost CSCC some £2118 to date with further expenses outstanding. This work was organised by the CSCC C&A Officer.

Letter from Graham Price to the CSCC C&A Officer

Sent by email, 08 March 2024 09:59

Dear Wayne,

I noted an email from you when I was away but didn't get a chance to read anything as we have internet problems in Cornwall. When returning home I would normally download everything but for various reasons it didn't happen and now I can't find many emails.

Anyway, here is an update on the Loxton situation

Cerberus has now entered into a formal agreement for access to all the cave and mines on land owned by the Parish Council.

We attended meetings of the PC and provided them with a comprehensive photographic record of Loxton Cavern including a survey and information on the features and historical importance of the site.

Generally, the PC, with the exception of one individual, was not aware of any of the caves; and they certainly were not aware of the importance of Loxton Cavern. The existence of the caves in general was highlighted when persons unknown tried to break into Loxton Cave by digging a hole to the side of the upper entrance, leaving it in a dangerous state being beside a footpath. We rebuilt the entrance, and this raised awareness of the existence of the caves, which in turn led to meetings with the PC. The locking and access arrangements for the caves was explained and this resulted in some concern in that there was no record of any access agreement, or the PC being approached by the CSCC about controlling access. Additionally, they had no record of anyone approaching them about excavations which led to the discovery of Loxton Cavern. I don't doubt that at some point someone representing CSCC talked to someone about access to Loxton Cave and Loxton Quarry Cave but as far as the Parish Council was concerned there were no permissions in place for digging or access.

There was a few month gap when they had meetings and were deciding on a course of action, following which they asked Cerberus to control access under a formal written agreement. Our status as a Registered Charity apparently has some influence on this decision. We suggested that access to Loxton Cave and Loxton Quarry Cave might continue under an arrangement with CSCC but they were not happy with this. Consequently, all the caves are included in the agreement, however, even though Cerberus is ultimately



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

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responsible, we would like the CSCC to continue to be responsible for Loxton Cave and Loxton Quarry Cave and access thereto.

Under the agreement the conditions for access to Loxton Cave and Loxton Quarry Cave are as follows:

1. All visitors must be members of the British Caving Association or have equivalent liability insurance cover.
2. The entrances to the caves must be kept in a safe and secure condition.
3. Access to the caves is via the Council of Southern Caving Clubs (CSCC) master key system. Keys are held by all member clubs of the CSCC.
4. Visitors may park in the old quarry at the top of Hillview Road. The road is narrow and steep. The number of vehicles should be kept to a minimum. Park neatly and avoid churning up the grass.
5. Visitors must act in a responsible and polite manner and the site should be vacated by 10pm at the latest.
6. Fires, BBQs or camping is not permitted.
7. Excavations to find any undiscovered caves will be subject to approval.
8. Visits to the caves that involve any element of commercial gain are not permitted.

A couple of primary requirements by the Council is that all visitors to any of the caves have public liability insurance and there no trips involving commercial gain.

It has also been stressed that failure to keep the entrances in a 'safe and secure condition' will be a breach in the terms of the agreement and may result in loss of access.

The agreement requires access to Loxton Cavern to be via a Warden System along similar lines to that we have been planning to implement. The number of wardens is limited. When we have finalised how the system is to be administered to comply with the conditions of the access agreement, we will update you.

Regards, Graham

Letter from Rick Gledhill - Chair CSS, to the CSCC Chair and C&A Officer

Sent by email, On 09/05/2024 14:01,

Dear David.

It is unfortunate that due to work and personal commitments there will be no representative from Cerberus at the CSCC AGM.

I have spoken at length with Graham and have read all email communication that is available between himself, the Parish Council and CSCC C&A Officer.

It would seem that there has clearly been a misunderstanding and the phrase 'appropriation' of Loxton access is not correct.

Following a considerable amount of work to re-open the cave, stabilisation and conservation work, the subject of access was raised. It seems that the Parish Council (bar 1 member) were not even aware of the existence of the caves and their historic



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

Approved

importance. Graham attended a Parish Council meeting and gave a presentation on the caves for the interest of those attending.

The Parish Council was not aware that CSCC was controlling access and had no record of there being any agreement.

A formal access agreement was required by the Parish Council as they were concerned with liability/insurance and other matters.

It was explained that this could be set up with CSCC or with CSS (following a question at the meeting) as it was understood by the Parish Council that there was no current formal access agreement in place with anyone. It was made clear to them that this was their decision.

Following a period of consideration and discussion, with which we had no involvement, the Parish Council asked CSS to enter into an agreement. We were not party to this decision but presumably some influencing factors may be historical, the extensive work carried out by CSS, the Society's charitable status, and being more familiar with CSS!

A draft agreement was circulated to the CSS Committee with the background explained and the Committee unanimously agreed to take on this responsibility.

At no stage was there an intent to 'appropriate' access, after all, no-one was aware there was anything in place to appropriate.

If the CSCC can forward to CSS Sec any existing access agreement between CSCC and the Parish Council then CSS would be more than happy to sort any discrepancies between the two agreements and suggest a way forward to a final updated document acceptable to all parties, including control. As mentioned the Parish Council aren't aware of any past agreement.

It is important to note that regardless which body is in control of access, that access will continue to be available and the Parish Council are happy, otherwise this could be detrimental to access in the future.

Yours Rick Gledhill Chair. CSS

DC In summary,

The CSS have renegotiated the access to the LPC caves without consulting with CSCC nor informing CSCC that they had entered into direct discussion with LPC. This is despite CSS knowing that CSCC had a prior access agreement and fully expected to reinstate the leader system on Loxton Cavern once the entrance stabilisation work had been completed.

The CSCC has written to LPC who have confirmed that they wish access to be controlled by CSS.



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

Approved

This presents CSCC with some decisions which are set out as proposals below. Given the short time before the next meeting it is unlikely that the Reps. will feel they are in a position to vote on these proposals but they are there to aid and focus the discussion.

1. It is proposed that CSCC accept the CSS offer and administer the access to Loxton Cave and Loxton

Quarry Cave as per the terms of the access agreement with LPC.

2. Should proposal 1 fail it is proposed that CSCC will provide CSS with CSCC's keys and padlocks at cost.

3. It is proposed that the CSCC negotiate with the CSS in order to restore the status-quo, i.e. that the LPC access agreement is restored to the CSCC.

The CSCC Officers have met to discuss the above. Their recommendation is to turn down proposal 1 and accept proposals 2 and 3.

David Cooke, Chairman (acting), 9 May 2024

WS I have been in contact with Loxton Parish council informing them that CSCC have a earlier access agreement however the current parish council do not have any memory or retained records of this agreement. They have stated that they are happy with the agreement with the CSS and have no intention of changing this.

WS Graham Price of the Cerberus has informally asked CSCC if they are willing to administer access to Loxton cave, and Loxton quarry cave on behalf of the Cerberus.

Action on all clubs who are members of CSCC that if they are thinking of negotiating an access agreement with a landowner that they involve CSCC at the beginning of the process.

AG Access to the two smaller caves Loxton Cave, Loxton Quarry Cave, was negotiated in 1995 by John Dobson Secretary of CSCC. John Dobson attended at least one of the parish council meeting to agree this so this should be minuted in their records. In addition the gating and entrance stabilisation of these cave was organised by, and paid for by CSCC, both in the 1990s and more recently.

LB From the BEC meeting minutes 2004, Nick Richards and Nick Harding did quite a lot of the original work negotiating access with Loxton Parish Council.

LB The last BEC committee meeting asked if the parish council is acting on behalf of the landowner or is the landowner?

WS Unfortunately the land ownership is not registered on the land registry, which is not unusual. This has only been mandatory since 2004, we assume it is the parish council who own the land.

DC From the discussion the feeling of the meeting is that CSCC would like CSS to realise that they have entered into this agreement in error.

DC The meeting feels that WS should continue talking to the Cerberus Caving Club regarding sorting out these issues. This answers question 3.



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

Approved

DC Question 1, from the summary above

It is proposed that CSCC accept the CSS offer to administer the access agreement to Loxton cave, and Loxton quarry cave, as per the arrangements detailed in the email sent to the CSCC Dated 08 March 2024 09:59. (Email attached at beginning of this section of the minutes)

Proposed by DC, Seconded Alan Grey, Vote In Favour 0, Abstentions, WRCC, Shepton, Against ACG, EECC, WCC, MNRC, WSCC, GSS, UBSS, BEC, MCG, WCMS.

DC Question 2, from the summary above

CSCC will provide CSS with CSCC's keys and padlocks

The general meeting consensus is that this issue is taken back to the members respective clubs and bring their thoughts back to the next meeting.

9 Treasurer

1h18

Report published in newsletter and draft accounts published on website, <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/documents/start>

We have 33 member clubs this year.

10 Equipment Officer

10.1 CSCC Guidance on placing anchors in digs and exploration.

AA There is a 'Exploratory Anchors Guidance – Draft' on the website, <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/documents/start>

Please take this guidance back to the clubs for approval at the next meeting.

Action on clubs to review this guidance document.

11 Communications Officer

PB I have produced a newsletter for this meeting, however it is a little short on news.

My wish is to use the newsletter as a channel for distributing core CSCC news, which is its primary purpose. In addition I wish to use the newsletter to inform Southern cavers about other issues which I think might interest them, however that depends on people forwarding content to me. Thanks to Judy and Mark of the Gloucester for their contributions however I am not getting many other contributions. I am not only looking for long articles, short news items are fine, perhaps items from your own clubs newsletters as long as appropriate permissions have been granted.

12 Training Officer

DaK We have done some SRT training with UBSS in the last 3 months. Please let me know if you want training.



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

Approved

DC CNCC are putting on courses which are well attended, it is a pity that courses we putting on are not as well attended.

DK I suspect most of the training is SRT, a lot of the issue is Southern cavers do not need SRT until they are travelling to other areas where SRT is necessary.



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

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13 BCA Representative

There is a full report in the newsletter, <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/documents/start>

LW I would like to bring to your attention that the new BCA treasurer is recommending that subs are increased, BCA subs have not increased since before Covid. This has been well thought out and has been discussed for quite a while.

The main increase is due to insurance issues, there are few suppliers and following an accident at a climbing wall we have had to increase the amount we cover from £5 to £10 million, and premiums have gone up with inflation.

LB My committee has raised the question, Have further future increases been discussed?

LW No, however I cannot guarantee another increase if costs increase again.

LB The BCA insurance is still good value when compared with for example climbing insurance. However few members appear to understand what the insurance covers, its not just landowner indemnification.

LW BCA have not has a publications officer in post, hopefully when we elect a new one at the next AGM this will be one of the first things they publicise.

JD There is a good section of UKCaving where the BCA treasurer has answered a lot of question regarding BCA funding and insurance.

Proposal that CSCC mandates our rep to accept the proposed increase in BCA funding, Proposed JD Seconded MT, Passed Nem-Con with one abstention from the BEC.

Mandate fo LW our BCA rep, that she vote to accept the BCA increase in subs.

14 IT Officer's Report

Webmasters report is in the newsletter. <https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/documents/start>

I have done some small changes to the website.

There is a new access panel on the front page, There is a link to the weather forecast for Mendip and the BCA newsfeed.

Moving the website away from the BCA server is a work in progress.

Vote to accept the officers reports

Vote passed Unanimous

15 Forthcoming events

DK In June there will be a weekend of activities to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the breakthrough discovery into Thrupe Lane Swallet. This will include clearing the depression and a BBQ.

NAMHO is happening in Cornwall in June



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Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 10 May 2024

Approved

18 CSCC Significant dates

Note. This is a list of important dates around 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 latest copy of the minutes or the agenda on the website.

Please note Meetings have been spaced evenly throughout the year, following the AGM which is fixed in the constitution and is traditionally the second Saturday in May.

Proposed Future meeting Dates

Friday	10 May 2024	19:00	AGM	Zoom
Monday	19 August 2024	19:00	GM	Zoom
Monday	11 Nov 2024	19:00	GM	Zoom
Monday	03 Feb 2025	23:59	Notification to of upcoming AGM, <u>This is the notification for the AGM.</u>	
Monday	10 Feb 2025	19:00	GM	Zoom
Friday	14 March 2025	23:59	Deadline for AGM nominations	
Friday	14 March 2025	19:00	Deadline for AGM constitutional amendments	
Tuesday	1 April 2025	23:59	Notification to members of AGM nominations	
Friday	9 May 2025	19:00	AGM	Zoom

19 Any other Business

None

Meeting duration 2h05

Corrections

Mac corrected to Stuart McManus