



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

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

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting – Friday 14 May 2021

Draft 2 Sept 2021

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### 1 Attendance

#### Voting Attendees

#### 13 Voting reps

Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts	AD	
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	
Howard Walden	WCMS	HW	
Ian Milden	ACG	IM	
Judi Durber	EECC	JD	
Zac Woodford	UBSS rep	ZW	

#### Non Voting Attendees (Observers)

Andrew Atkinson		AA	Equipment Officer
Aubrey Newport	Observer		
Bill Chadwick	MCG Observer		
Chris Binding	Observer	CB	
Dave Keegan		DK	Training Officer
Ed Waters		EW	Chair
Graham Mullan		GM	CCC Ltd rep
Jake Baynes	Observer	JB	
Jan Walker	UBSS Observer		
Linda Wilson	UBSS	LJW	BCA Rep
Nathan Cubitt	UBSS Observer		
Pete Hall	Observer		

### 2 Apologies for Absence

None

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

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



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### 4 Chairman's report Ed Waters

Thanks to all the reps for holding CSCC together through a difficult year, I'm looking forward to meeting people face to face over the summer. Unfortunately I'm losing my voice today so Graham Price will be chairing the meeting.

Chairman's report published in the newsletter which was circulated before the meeting and is published on the website.

[https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/\\_media/documents/csccl\\_newsletter\\_-\\_may\\_2021.pdf](https://csccl.org.uk/wiki/_media/documents/csccl_newsletter_-_may_2021.pdf)

Vote to accept EW Report Passed Unanimous

#### 4.1 Letter to CSCC from Tim and Jane Allen.

The letter has been received and noted, UK Caving have had their say on the matters discussed at the meeting. Letter is published on website.

Vote to accept this, passed unanimous.

### 5 Secretary's report Frank Tully

#### 5.1 New Members

New members Cavefest UK, are in the process of applying to BCA and are awaiting confirmation.

BW It is not necessary for a club to join BCA if it wants to join CSCC.

DC However if a club wants to join CSCC and not join BCA they will have to pay CSCC a fee Cavefest UK have informed us they are joining BCA and not paid us a fee. They have supplied CSCC with a constitution and are a representative body.

Vote to accept 'Cavefest UK' into CSCC, subject to their formal acceptance into BCA; Vote Against 0, Abstention 1, For remainder, vote passed Nem Con

#### 5.2 Officer Roles

Officer roles have been published on the website with a link to it in the new newsletter.

HW Thanks to everyone for producing this I believe it is excellent.

EW I think it great that CSCC now have descriptions for officer roles, however we must remember that this a first stab at this and the roles and descriptions will develop in time. If anyone had any thoughts on the role description, good or bad please contact the chair and we will get things sorted out.



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### 6 C&A Report

Report is published on Website alongside the minutes.

JD You have mentioned the theft of the gates in your report, have the police closed the case?

GP Effectively yes, I have spoken to a senior officer and they had sent a PSCO to the local scrap yard.

JD Are the pressure washers available and who has them?

GP They are very nearly ready, when they are ready this will be announced to the members of CSCC. The pressure washers are in cases and laminated instructions have been produced, just got to sort out the deposits etc.

JD Has the lock been fitted to Thrupe Lane?

DK Not yet, although the gate currently needs digging out following the winter floods, so soon. Check CSCC website for any announcements.

JD You are working on a lot of fronts, Stoke lane Slocker, Shipham, and Manor farm.

GP If anyone wants to help please contact me directly outside the meeting

Vote to accept the report, Passed Unanimous

#### 6.1 Approval of C&A Expenditure

Gate for Yah cave at Blakes Farm, originally the old Hunters Lodge Inn Sink gate was to be fitted however this was stolen the replacement is budgeted at a £1000.

The three Pondsmead gates (Stout, Slim & Lady of the Lake) have budget for all three is £2000. I am a digger for all of these so am declaring a conflict of interest and will not be voting. The cheddar however gave me a mandate, with the question that the costs are quite high.

GP I must make it clear that the budgets are intended to be maximum expected costs and the actual costs claimed from BCA should be less than this.

GP There are an additional two gates which require funding, mentioned in my report: Ubley Hill Pot; The original gate is falling apart and the land owner has asked us to replace it, the budget is £700.

Manor Farm mineshaft, is a new mineshaft which had opened up near Manor Farm. The farmer has asked for it to be raised above ground level so the tractor driver can see it and will not fall down it again. A rough estimate for gate and materials is £750.

Vote to put these costs to BCA, Proposer BW, Second AD, Passed Unanimous.



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### 7 Treasurer

Report published in CSCC newsletter May 2021

Accounts have been published on the website. Thanks to AN for checking the accounts at very short notice. And thanks to Pete Glanville for a £200 donation.

EW I am aware that you are standing down this year, thanks for everything you have done over the years.

Vote to accept treasurers report, passed unanimous

### 8 Equipment Officer

Report published in CSCC newsletter May 2021

AA In addition to my report, I have had a look at Approach passage in Swildons, and the rock looks fine for bolting.

Vote accept report, Passed unanimous

#### 8.1 Bolting of Approach passage in Swildons cave

GM Having read in your report that we are intending to bolt approach passage I would like to speak against this proposal, I don't think it is necessary and I don't think it is sensible either, this risks becoming a trade route. In the Swildons book it is described as a trip for connoisseurs lets keep it that way.

JB I would like to counter GM's argument by saying that a lot of people go down Swildons for fun and it is not a particularly conserved cave.

GM I have done that trip many years ago in both directions and it was fun without any additional protection.

JB The introduction of resin anchors is to make caves safer

Vote to install p hangers in Approach passage, Proposed DC Second JD; Against 0; Abstentions WR BCG Avon Scouts UBSS BEC; Vote passed.

AA I currently do not have any hangers, this will start as sone as I get some.

### 9 Communications Officer

We do not have a communications officer at this point in time.

Thanks for Linda for getting out the first news letter.

### 10 Training Officer

Report published in CSCC newsletter May 2021

DK The CSCC training plan has been published in the newsletter and on the website.

DK A training proposal has been put together and put to BCA Council, so that we can start paying suitably competent of experienced persons to deliver training. Nigel Atkins has volunteered his services. This is unlikely to take place before mid June, but more likely July.



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EW Please note that training can include Photography or Surveying and is not necessarily limited to technical caving.

Vote to accept Training officers report, Passed Unanimous

### 11 BCA Representative

Report published in CSCC newsletter May 2021

Linda Wilson BCA Rep

Vote to accept BCA Representative's report, Passed Unanimous

#### 11.1 BCA Constitutional change to Clause 10.1 of the BCA Constitution

LJW In the news letter there is a re-cap on the proposed changes to section 10.1 of the BCA constitution. I advise all clubs to read the proposed changes and to consider it in the club context and a regional context, consult your members.

It is not yet clear when the deadline for submissions closes, and it must be made clear that both LJW and EW are on the constitutional change working group, and we do not know. So can all members get your thoughts together and send off as soon as possible.

LJW I believe that CSCC as a regional council should make some sort of response.

EW It is clear that the current wording of 10.1 does not scan properly, especially in response to individual members.

DK This consultation requires careful reading but the gist of it seems that it intends to water down what the regional bodies and caving bodies can do.

CB This sounds like a power grab.

DC This is a very important clause in the BCA constitution. It is the clause that makes BCA a 'Representative Body' and not a 'Governing Body'.

This seems to be confused over the control that BCA has over regional councils, the way to think about that is to read clause 10.1 as it stands, but remember that the regional councils gave power over funding back to BCA as described in the regional funding document.

It is also worth remembering that the regional funding document was unanimously agreed by all the regional councils. The most recent changes to the regional funding document were not unanimously agreed and CSCC disagreed with the changes which were imposed upon us. This is much more the actions of a governing body.

Training is very different from the amateur side of caving. From training's perspective BCA is a governing body.

GD My thoughts on reading it, this very political. I agree with CB, this is a power grab. I do not see any need for it to change. However CSCC must respond because it will be pushed through without debate if we do not comment. Personally I think this is a very dangerous change.

PH I agree that this does come across as a power grab, but I would like to highlight the issue which triggered this change, which was that the CCC Ltd age restriction changes and the youth and development committees disagreement with this. The Y&D committee perceived it as an access controlling body imposing access restrictions on BCA members without a good reason. The Y&D committee wanted to investigate this issue but it was seen that element 10.1 of the constitution prevented that.



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GM This an example of the problem with British caving, an awful lot of rumour and miss-information has been spread around about events surrounding the issue. This is a complicated issue the details of which I will not go into here. But one case like this should drive a massive change in the direction of the constitution of the national body.

In the case concerned the officers of BCA went beyond the boundaries the constitution and broke the trust which the membership puts in them. They should not make constitutional change to grab more power when they are already not trusted to use it properly.

CB There is a risk we are being played, using a trigger event so that all access controlling bodies can be made subservient to a governing body. CCC Ltd is a private limited company and had good reason for doing what it did. I see this as a push by certain vocal members of BCA to have open access to all caves. Cavers will vote for it because it is a jam today issue but for cave conservation this is really bad.

GD To add to what CB and GM have said, it is not the access controlling bodies which control access to caves. It is the landowners, and if the national body pushes against landowners they will simply close the caves.

EW Lets be realistic here, this is a consultation and is a long way from change to the constitution. Clause 10.1 needs a tweak because it no longer sits well with individual members.

Andrew, the convener of the constitutional change committee is trying very hard to take into account the views of all parties concerned and we need to be constructive and not confrontational.

It is worth being aware that the BCA already has a sanction to deal with any member or body who is not toing the line can be expelled by calling a vote.

We need to be constructive, there are lots of people working hard and trying hard to be reasonable. BCA has had lots of change over the last few years and we need to get back well thought through changes.

LJW Trust does have to be earned and BCA has had three chairs in a year and changed a huge part of its constitution recently. As Phil said when he started as chair, BCA was a deeply toxic organisation and I feel that some of the proposals we are currently discussing is politically motivated and is a hangover from the problems which hopefully are now in the past. Phil achieved a lot of change in the direction of BCA and Russel is continuing this, I feel BCA lost a lot of trust over the last two years but is trying hard to earn it back again, to this end I think this change should be parked until things have calmed down for a bit.

DC Is this not constitutional navel gazing, I do not believe that 10.1 is in conflict with the rest of the constitution.

DC I would like it clear that the issue which kicked off this change has largely been resolved, by the normal negotiating processes. The age limit has been changed back to 16 the numbers of supervising adults required has been reduced.

LJW Can I suggest that CSCC's officers take this away and develop a response which represents the majority view of the meeting. This is a consultation and not a vote, and we do have representation of the committee.

Proposal that CSCC council develop comment on proposed changes to the BCA constitution. Passed Unanimous



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### 11.2 Post meeting addition 2 June 2021

CSCC Response to Consultation on Changes to BCA Constitution Section 10.1, Developed by the CSCC officers.

Dear Andrew,

I hope this message finds you well, and that its contents are of some use in the work to reassess the wording of Clause 10.1 of the BCA constitution. CSCC welcomes your initiative to obtain input from the caving community on this matter, and this message provides feedback from discussions on this topic at our recent AGM where I was instructed to respond to your consultation with the views expressed in that meeting. I apologise for not using the online response form as I felt that I would not be able to provide as much nuance there as in a written submission.

The essence of the views expressed was that there is considerable support for the principle of autonomy as stated in Section 1 of the BCA constitution and as such CSCC is generally in agreement with the spirit of the current wording of Section 10.1 which prevents the BCA from interfering in the affairs of members. It is however suggested that there is considerable scope to improve the current situation by providing better guidelines for the interpretation of Section 10.1 in the manual of operations as well as or instead of rewording of the constitution.

It is recognised that the current situation is far from ideal in cases where the only action available to the BCA in the case where a member is acting against the interests of the organisation or the members is expulsion. In particular noting that expulsion for an individual member would have a significant impact upon that member's ability to continue their hobby (loss of insurance, club membership and in many cases access). Equally the current situation leaves BCA powerless to intervene in any dispute between constituent bodies that may be causing issues to the BCA or other constituent bodies.

As such CSCC can see potential for measures that would allow BCA to intervene, but only in exceptional circumstances. For instance, acting as a mediator between members if and when disputes escalate to the point where they are harming the BCA. However, any such mechanism should be provided with strong safeguards to prevent the erosion of the principle of autonomy. The aim should always be to achieve a negotiated solution to any dispute rather than seeking to impose an end result or use sanctions. There appears to be general consensus within the CSCC that the BCA remains a representative body and does not cross the line to become a governing or regulatory body beyond the role that it currently plays for professional caving qualifications.

Finally, CSCC has some concern with the timeline for the proposed changes to the wording of Section 10.1 required by the motion carried at last year's AGM. This requires the wording of a new Section 10.1 to be put forward for a vote at this year's AGM. Given that tumultuous nature of the last year or so for the BCA, CSCC is not convinced that there is now sufficient time to fully consider the potential consequences of the proposed wording (which have yet to be formulated). There is also concern that BCA currently needs some stability after a period of unprecedented upheaval and that changes to such a fundamental part of the constitution will hinder efforts to achieve that.



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In summary CSCC is not averse to carefully thought out changes to the wording or interpretation of the current Section 10.1 of the BCA constitution as long as the spirit of autonomy is retained. This would require that any mechanism for intervention by BCA in the affairs of a member would have to be under the most exceptional circumstances only and require significant safeguards to ensure this. There is also concern with the timing of the proposed changes due to the wider situation that the BCA has found itself in over the last year.

I hope the above comments are both constructive and of some use to you, and I would like to offer my thanks for you taking on this most difficult task of rationalizing the BCA Constitution.

All the best,

Ed Waters (CSCC Chair)

### 12 Webmasters Report

DC Report published on website.

Update on the newsletter: Thanks to LJW for bringing together the newsletter. The distribution did not go quite as well as we hoped. We relied on email but did not synchronise the distribution with Facebook and the CSCC website. Obviously the new comms officer will no doubt have some suggestions on what we can do better.

GP I find it easier to read a print out and it lost all its formatting when printed out, is it possible to fix this?

DC We used MailChimp to format the newsletter, to make it easy to print you would have to convert it to a pdf which is more work.

EW This is one for the new comms officer.

ES One of the issues is it was published on the forums before it was distributed to the member clubs. The BEC didn't receive it until a few days later. Basically we need a communications strategy which puts CSCC members as number one. I accept we are having teething problems but we need a strategy.

PH As the nominated communications officer, if I am elected I intend to develop a more coherent strategy to the distribution of information to the members.

LJW In my experience a comms strategy needs some thought to develop, the executive needs to get together and develop this in the future.

JD I liked the newsletter but was it the right place for the AGM reports.

EW In the future yes

GD I like the newsletter but I would like the officer reports sent out to the members by email.

Vote to accept the webmasters report, Passed Unanimous





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### 13 AOB

#### 13.1 Representation of individual cavers

EW I raised this in my personal report on the newsletter; can CSCC do more to represent cavers who do not operate as part of the club scene? I propose that we form a sub-committee to look into how CSCC can represent individual cavers who are not members of a club.

GP I think we do represent all cavers and the clubs, obviously the clubs get a vote but anyone can come along to a CSCC meeting and put their point of view forward.

GD BCA have DIMS so it is possible to be a caver who is independent of a club. Potentially they should be representative in our region. I support forming a sub committee to look into this.

AN We are a council of southern caving clubs, anyone can form a club you don't need any more than two or three members.

GP Perhaps instead of forming a sub-committee the officers could discuss this at the next committee meeting.

EW When I put the proposal together I foresaw this sub-committee being formed not from the officers but from reps. I fully understand AN's point but it was CSCC way before BCA existed, but I think it is something we should take on board. If we can draw in individual cavers who are not part of the club scene would be to our benefit as well as theirs. But how we would go about this is the issue.

DC EW has identified a democratic deficit, but there is the phrase no taxation without representation but this phrase works the other way around too. We should not be putting too much effort into including cavers who aren't putting anything into the system, they are befitting as a side effect of all the work that our represented members are doing. This is not necessarily the case for BCA DIMS who do pay their way so we should look into them being represented.

DC Previously CSCC created the post of individual member to represent these people however since it was created no one has held this post. We have never had any interest in this so we probably don't need to do much about it.

JD With Covid a lot of people have gone online and found UKCaving and through that gone looking for caves and mines. And in fact there have been cases of people going into caves and mines and spray painting etc. I doubt that they even know that we exist, if we bring them into the fold we can educate them and they'd be much safer and more useful. I am for this approach.

Proposal to form a sub-committee to look into how CSCC can better represent individual cavers who are not members of a club.

Proposed JD, Seconded GD, Against ACG, Abstaining, Cerbrus, BEC, For Remainder.

EW I would be looking for four of five people in the group. EW (Lead), GP, JD, DC, if anyone else wants to take part contact EW.



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### 13.2 CCC Ltd News.

JD We have a CCC rep on the council is there any news on what is going on.

LJW News of what is happening with CCC Ltd is published on the CSCC website & the CSCC Facebook page.

CSCC website is currently up to date, the rock fall in GB cave is unchanged, it is still unstable and the taped off areas should be avoided.

The Longwood lock has been replaced and Longwood is open again.

### 13.3 Rhino Rift Right Hand Route Re-bolting

CB I haven't been there but who do we thank for the re-bolting of the Rhino right hand route re-bolting? I'm very happy about this I assume it was AA, why has this not been published on the website.

AA I haven't re-bolted it, I have replaced some worn out bolts about a year ago, but nothing more than that.

GP Clearly no one in CCC Ltd is aware of any change and will have to investigate.

## 14 Amendments to CSCC Constitution

FT There have been no amendments to the CSCC constitution presented to the secretary before the closing deadline of this meeting.

## 15 Election of Officers

GP As mentioned in EW's report we have a vacancy for treasurer.

EW We have been relying on DC's goodwill for many years and he has been trying to give this job up for a while. Is there anyone who could take on this job, I'm sure Cookie will give you all the help you need to get started in the role.

EW It looks like we will have to operate without a treasurer for the time being.

EW Could everyone at this meeting take an action to canvas their members for someone to take on the role of treasurer? Contact DC to find out exactly what the role entails.

EW I would like to apologise to the members but the 'Notification to members of AGM nominations' went out a day or two later than required in the new constitution. If anyone is upset about this please raise this issue now

AN There is not a problem with this because the constitution allows nominations from the floor of the AGM. So even though the proposals were published late they can be taken as if they came from the floor of the AGM now.

EW From what AN just said, is there anyone else at the meeting who would like to stand for a position.

No response from the meeting

GP Are there any objections to taking list of nominations and voting on them on block.

Votes against 0, Abstentions 0, Passed, Unanimous.



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Chairman	Ed Waters
Honorary secretary	Frank Tully
Honorary treasurer	##### Post Vacant #####
Conservation and access	Graham Price
Training officer	Dave Keegan
Equipment officer	Andrew Atkinson
Communications officer	Peter Hall
BCA Rep	Linda Wilson
Webmaster	Dave Cooke

GP AN are you happy to act Scrutineer for the accounts this coming year.

AN I am happy to do the job.

The meeting wishes to thanks Dave Cook for all the work he has done in the past.

### Corrections

Corrections suggested by Reita Fisher, email 15 July 2021 23:28, applied.

Corrections of some general typos by Frank Tully 2 Sept 2021



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### 16 Forthcoming events

None

### 17 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.

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Monday	6 Sept 2021	19:00	GM	Zoom
Friday	19 Nov 2021	19:00	GM	Zoom
Tuesday	1 Feb 2022	23:59	Notification to members of upcoming AGM <u>This is the notification</u>	
Monday	14 Feb 2022	10:30	GM	Zoom
Tuesday	15 March 2022	23:59	Deadline for AGM nominations	
Friday	18 March 2022	19:00	Deadline for AGM constitutional amendments	
Friday	1 April 2022	23:59	Notification to members of AGM nominations	
Friday	13 May 2022	19:00	AGM	Zoom

Meeting duration 2:07