



# Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

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

## General Meeting - Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014

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### 1 Attendance

Start of Meeting 10:11

#### Voting Attendees

Alan Dempster	Avon Scouts Rep	AD	
Alan Gray	ACG Rep	AG	Regional Registry Officer
Dave Cooke	Cheddar Rep	DC	Treasurer
Dave King	MNRC Rep	DK	
Faye Litherland	BEC Rep	FL	Equipment Officer
Graham Mullan	UBSS Rep	GM	
Graham Price	Cerberus Rep	GP	
Keith Batten	SMCC Rep	KB	
Les Williams	WCC Rep	LW	C&A Officer
Tim Francis	MCG Rep	TF	

#### Non Voting

Kate Lawrence	BEC	KL	Chair
Frank Tully	WCC	FT	Secretary
Alan Butcher	SMCC	AB	Training Officer
James Begley	SMCC	JB	BCA Rep
Aubrey Newport	WCC	AN	Webmaster
Barry Wilkinson	WCC	BW	Observer
Chris Binding	SCG	CB	Observer
Linda Wilson	CCC Ltd Conservation Officer	LiW	Observer
Stuart McManus	BEC	SM	Observer
Hayley Clark	MCG	HC	Observer

### 2 Apologies for Absence

Jeremy Gilson	Ashford SS
Geoff Dommett	BCG Rep
Idris Williams	Shropshire Scouts Caving Team
Andy Watson	Hants Scouts

### 3 Approval of minutes from AGM 10 May 2014

The minutes were approved subject to the one amendment

Amendment to previous minutes of the AGM,

2.1 said to remove the item from the Agenda, however AG requested that it remain a fixed item on the Agenda so that it is a constant reminder

### 4 Actions from previous minutes

None

### 5 Other matters arising from previous minutes

None



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### 12 BCA Rep report (Brought forward from later in meeting)

#### **CRoW and its application to caving**

JB Attended BCA AGM on behalf of CSCC

Wide ranging discussion took place regarding the CRoW act and the Opinion by Dinah Rose QC.

CSCC policy has been up to the present that the CRoW act does not apply to recreational caving.

GM raised the issue that the 'Opinion by Dinah Rose QC' is the result of a question put to Dinah Rose by various independent parties. This original question has not as yet been made public. This original question bounds Dinah Roses Opinion and without it the opinion should be considered biased to an unknown degree.

CSCC believe that BCA should not consider Dinah Rose's Opinion unless they can also see the brief.

The meeting then developed the CSCC response to the BCA Conservation & Access Committee:

1. The BCA guiding principles set out in the BCA Constitution;

#### Section 4.6b

"The owners and tenants of property containing caves have the right to grant or withhold access. Where caving bodies have control of access delegated to them by the owners, such access should be obtained and granted as freely as possible for all responsible cavers, within the terms of those agreements. When obliged to make new agreements, the appropriate body should endeavor to ensure that this freedom is maintained or improved."

CSCC does not wish BCA to pursue or endorse any course of action that would result in any change of that guiding principle, irrespective of any opinions that have been expressed to the contrary by those seeking to argue for the application of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 to apply to caves.

2. CSCC would encourage all cavers to respect established access procedures and not take any action which would jeopardize such arrangements between cavers and landowners.
3. The 'Opinion by Dinah Rose QC' is the result of a question put to Dinah Rose by various independent parties. This original question has not as yet been made public. This original question bounds 'Dinah Roses Opinion' and without it, the opinion should be considered biased to an unknown degree.

CSCC believe that BCA should not consider Dinah Rose's Opinion unless they can also see the brief.

FL (BEC) proposed a vote for point 1, seconded by GP (Cerberus).

For 9 Against 0 Abstentions 1 Passed Nem Con

KB (SMCC) proposed a vote for point 2, seconded by LW (WCC)

For 10 Against 0 Abstentions 0 Passed Unanimous

GM then raised the point that BCA should not change its constitution without considering all the ramifications of that change.



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### Negative issues that should be considered:

1. Conservation of caves by restriction access will be much more difficult.
2. Digging will not be allowed under CRoW and therefore permission will be required from the landowners.
3. CRoW could potentially affect access to non-CRoW sites
4. Access for commercial caving is not covered by CRoW and therefore permission will be required from the landowners.
5. If land owners take offence they have the right under CRoW to remove access and close the land for up to 28 days a year, whilst giving only 24 hours' notice of this closure. This closure does not have to be continuous and could be broken into 28 separate days.

GP was CSCC representative to BCA, for the original CRoW act negotiations between BCA and Natural England. GP was tasked by the meeting to go through his notes from that period to shed light on the decision making process that led to BCA's current position.

### 6 Chairman's report

**Kate Lawrence**

Nothing specific to report

### 7 Honorary secretary's report

**Frank Tully**

Nothing specific to report

#### 7.1 Report on Digfest

**Faye Litherland**

Digfest was Awesome, Surplus was £558.54

#### 7.2 Report on Wells Big Day Out

**Aubrey Newport**

Thanks to all those who turned up and helped. Thanks especially to Nick Williams who supplied the BCA cave.

The event was successful for promoting caving to the general public but the event was mainly aimed at small kids and less at the teenagers. The benefits to caving are intangible however this is not a reason not to do this in the future.

This would probably benefit in being an event we do every two years.

### 8 Honorary treasurer's report

**Dave Cooke**

#### 8.1 Signatories on bank account

Forms handed to signatories, forms need to be filled in and handed into the bank.

#### 8.2 Approval of Accounts 2013

Deferred to next meeting



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### 9 Conservation & access officer's report

**Les Williams**

- **Dinder Estates** Windsor hill flood sink 1 & NASAH dig from the 1970s need to be gated urgently. Dave King is progressing this. The meeting increases the budget to £300 per gate.
- **Rhino** The cave is currently closed, don't go there until the remediation is completed.
- **Sludge pit** Loose rock in entrance pitch has been moved down the pitch.
- **White Pit** Access has been returned to previous arrangement, See CSCC Website.
- **Box Quarries** CSCC to allocate £100 to assist Dark Places with repairing gate.
- **Cerberus** LW to look at Oak Hill farm ST2 to determine if CSCC can assist with gating.
- **Compton Martin Ochre Mine** Needs a volunteer to remove the gate for remediation. In progress.
- **Viaduct Sink** In progress
- **Axbridge Hill Cavern** In Progress

Whilst discussing the list of outstanding access works the Conservation & Access officer Les Williams stated he might need help. Chairman Kate Lawrence commented he could ask anyone to help with the work.

GP volunteered to assist LW with the task, he is already dealing with Dinder Estates, Loxton Cavern and is a member of the Mendip Society so has a personal relationship with many of the land owners.

### 10 Training officer's report

**Alan Butcher**

Attended the training committee last week.

Awaiting the report from the Training and Techniques committee.

### 11 Equipment officer's report

**Faye Litherland**

Nothing to report

### 12 BCA rep report

**James Begley**

CRoW issue dealt with earlier in meeting.

### 13 Webmasters report

**Aubrey Newport**

I have updated the CSCC mailing lists and several areas of the CSCC web site, including the officers list and the list of member clubs. I have also posted meeting minutes etc.

Eleven clubs were added to the membership list on the web site and 4 listed clubs are no longer current members. I have left these clubs (Cotham, Croydon, SCG, and Surrey Scouts) listed for the time being but have indicated their status. A future job is to include web links for the newly listed clubs and any missing web site information will be welcomed.

The CSCC Diary is currently incomplete and in need of updating. The equipment area is also out of date.

I have been refused access to one of the CSCC passwords and therefore have no control over part of the council's website. The council should define who has access to the web site. It is not clear who can (or should) update different areas.

Aubrey Newport



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DC is still working on the 'Conservation and Access' database and had not passed on the password to this part of the website. DC to forward on password. Both DC and AN to be Administrators for this part of the Website.

A comment was made that the website diary does not reflect CSCC activities. DC the diary is a copy of the BCA diary. DC to organize that FT and AN to be given write access to this diary.

### 14 Regional registry officer's report

**Alan Gray**

Nothing to report

### 15 Forthcoming events

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September

MCR Stomp

Weekend 26-28 September

Hidden Earth

### 16 Any other business

Full planning permission has been given for the hunt hound kennels on Eastwater Drove, above Priddy.

This is in the catchment for Swildons.

The planning committee does not appear to have taken into account Natural England's recommendations regarding sewerage disposal for the site.

CSCC to express our concerns to Mendip District Council and natural England with this issue. Specifically as to how sewerage collection and disposal will be enforced.

Passed Unanimously.

KL tasked with drafting letter

### 17 Date of next meetings:

Saturday 6th September 2014 10:00 Hunters - EGM to discuss results of BCA C&A Meeting

Saturday 8th November 2014 10:00 Hunters

Saturday 31st January 2015 10:00 Hunters

Saturday 9th May 2015 (AGM) 10:00 Hunters