



Council of Southern Caving Clubs

A constituent member of the British Caving Association

www.csccl.org.uk

Minutes of General Meeting – 19:00 Monday 13 Nov 2023

Zoom Meeting **Draft 20 Dec 2023**

Please note, the meeting has been recorded for note taking purposes.

1 Attendance

Voting Attendees 9 Voting reps

Alan Gray	AG	ACG	
David Cooke	DC	Cheddar	IT Officer
Judi Durber	JD	EECC	
Mark Tringham	MT	Gloucester Spelo Society	
Tom Harrison	TH	MCG	Treasurer
Dave King	DK	MNRC	
Matt Doolan	MD	SMCC	
Frank Tully	FT	WCC	Secretary
Peter Burgess	PB	Wealden CMS	Communications
Barry Wilkinson	BW	White Rabbit Caving Group	
Martin McGowan	MM	WSG	

Non Voting Attendees (Observers)

Wayne Starsmore	WS	WCC	C&A
Tim Barter	TB	WSG	
Dave Keegan	DK		Training Officer

Apologies for Absence

Linda Wilson	LW	UBSS	BCA Rep
Graham Mullan	GM		CCC Ltd

Voting in Chair for meeting

Proposal to vote Dave Cooke as meeting chair, JD, vote passed Unanimous.

2 Approval of minutes from GM 11 Nov 2022

Approval of minutes with corrections proposed by JD.

Proposal that the minutes are a true record. Proposed Chair

Vote passed Unanimous.

3 New Members **Tom Harrison**

TH We have two new applications for membership.

- Cross-Regional Ensemble of Speleological Hooligans
- Cardiff University Caving and Canyoning Club,

These applications have come through BCA, they are BCA members.

Proposed CRESH for membership, Proposed DC, Seconded JD, Passed Unanimous

Proposed CUCCC, for membership, Proposed DC, Seconded PB, Passed Unanimous.

4 Chair report

DC I have been elected as chair for this meeting, so there is no chairman's report.



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5 Treasurer's report

TH The accounts are looking reasonably healthy. We have £6608 in the main account and 138 in the reserve account.

TH I have been in touch with Graham Price, he is getting together the details of what he believes is outstanding, and will be forwarding these to myself by the end of the year.

TH I reimbursed WS £36 for stainless Maillions, these were for the Land of Hope and Glory climb in Wookey hole. In doing so I did not realise that I should have received permission before paying this. I have looked through the constitution and the information pack which I received when I started the job, these documents only state that I should pay expenses when they occur. I am now aware that there have been issues with this in the recent past. Could I make a proposal that the the treasurer is allowed to pay up to £100 for expenses, using his discretion.

WS The maintenance of the Land of Hope and Glory anchors in Wookey hole were part of the access agreement and hence purchased by CSCC. The old anchors had significant wear.

DC When I was treasurer, for small amounts I would contact the Chair or the Secretary just to make sure it was OK, the meeting never had a problem with any of these payments. The recommendation came about because if is a very good principle that all transactions are minuted and agreed at the meetings, either in advance or retrospectively. This helps hugely with later debates.

The meeting tried to draft the proposal, but this proved difficult using zoom. The meeting was broadly in favour of this.

DC Can we move this proposal to the next meeting so we get the wording right.

Action on TH to bring a draft proposal to the next meeting.

DC Can the meeting agree that it was OK to spend the £36 on Maillions for the Land of Hope and Glory climb in Wookey hole.

FT The meeting generally agreed.

Proposal regarding a time limit on expenses

DC I am proposing that all expense must be claimed, using the appropriate form, within 1 year of being incurred. Failure to do so may result in non-payment. The Council may extend the deadline in exceptional circumstances.

Proposed TH, Seconded MT, Passed Unanimously.

6 Secretary's report **Frank Tully**

Nothing significant to report.

7 C&A Report **Wayne Starsmore**

Report to the meeting published in the newsletter.

WS Changes since the newsletter



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Work has started on the Swildons Barn, the old floor is out but many of the beams are in a poor state and need to be replaced, so it will take a little longer than planned. We are currently planning what happens next and will contact the clubs for volunteers in due course.

Longleat News

WS There is some positive news, Tom Chapman has been talking to them whilst performing other work. The news is they have a new CEO who appears to be a lot more caver friendly which is good news for access. Lord Bath has also shown an interest into any commercial opportunities with Reservoir Hole and the Frozen Deep, to that end I have arranged to take the Show cave Manager and the Facilities Manager on a visit to the Frozen Deep on the 23rd November, which is before the MCR rescue practise on the 25th.

Unfortunately on a recent weekend, a local caver decided to visit Reservoir Hole and took ten university cavers with him. The facilities manager then discovered them getting changed in the car park before entering the cave. Unfortunately rather than being apologetic and leaving he was quite confrontational. The Secretary of the club concerned has written to the cheddar show caves managers apologising for the actions of one of their members, this has gone some way to placating and hopefully it has not derailed any access negotiations.

Loxton Cavern

WS The cave entrance is reportedly nearly finished. The cave is not a long cave but is to be protected by a leader system, this is primevally to protect the mining artifices which are still in place. The original clubs with leaders are Cerberus, SBSS, Axbridge, MCG, Cheddar, SMCC, Wessex, BEC, could clubs let me know who their leaders are and I will get the training organised and we can open the cave.

Action of Club Reps to forward the names of their proposed Loxton leaders to WS

Singing River Mine

DC Cheddar visited Singing River Mine last weekend, obviously we are not allowed to use the fences, could we have a look fitting a ground Anchor to make belaying safer.

WS Andrew Atkinson is looking at this.

CK I believe the old ladder is still in place, when I last looked at it was in poor condintion.

WS I will look at removing this ladder later this week.

8 Equipment Officer

No report presented to the meeting.

9 Communications Officer

PB The November newsletter was distributed last weekend using the Website, MailChimp, and UK Caving. More urgent items of news when they arise can go out on the website, UK Caving and Darkness Below, please contact me with these articles or news. Thanks for Cookie for his technical help and thanks to Judy and Mark for their contributions and help with the last newsletter.

PB Apologies for not addressing access to caves issues raised at the August meeting. This needs focus on the caves which have access controlled by a specific club. This is likely most relevant for member clubs which are out of the immediate Mendip region, for example



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Portland or Windrush Quarry or even the South East of England. I believe we are reasonably up to date with caves which CSCC control access to.

PB Action on clubs which control access to caves, to forward the access details to those caves and some short descriptions for including in future newsletter articles. If information is already published on the clubs own website a link to that website and an article would be excellent.

DK It would also be useful to know which clubs hold keys to caves to for instance the Charterhouse caves and if those keys are, and how many are, available for guests to borrow.

JD Could we also have a club contact on the CSCC website.

DK Most clubs have a contact email address on their website for their caving secretary, we do not really want to duplicate this in case it changes. However CSCC could put a link on its web page which links to the club contact web page, with a description as to who to make contact with.

JD What about clubs wanting CSCC keys? Could we have an article on the CSCC website and in the news letter which informs members how to apply for CSCC keys.

Action on PB to write an article on how CSCC members can apply for CSCC keys.

DC We really only want information in one place because information quickly goes out of date and the website of the club controlling access is the best place for access information to those caves. It is best to avoid duplicating information on the CSCC website however we can list the caves their location and have a link to the relevant club's website.

DC We need to write a letter to the clubs, requesting a list of the caves which they control access to, with a link to where CSCC members could find details of how to access those caves. It would also be worth asking member clubs which control access to clubs to check that their websites are up to date and accessible to CSCC members. Action on JD to draft letter and DC and FT to check it.

Facebook

As an admin I can see the viewing figures. We have 500 Facebook members subscribing to the CSCC page but only 100 actually see our posts, so the algorithm is not displaying our posts. One way to get Facebook to move our posts up the ranking is for members to like and share the CSCC posts. So could the CSCC clubs reps share the Facebook page to disseminate information better.

10 Training Officer

Dave Keegan

Please see the newsletter

We have been providing training.

UBSS have received some above ground training and this will be continuing in the new year.

Various university clubs have been asking for first down underground. Various contacts for this were discussed.



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Claiming funding for training.

Spoke to Steve Grey at BCA regarding how funding works. Steve would like all the regions to claim money in the same way.

CSCC will pay an instructor up to £150 per day, and charge the participants a fee. If the training course makes a loss this can be claimed back from BCA.

For technical training the going rate is around £250 per day. Technical training may present issues for CSCC because the demand has not been enough to fill the courses.

DC Could we have some written details of how claims should be processed and any recommendations.

Training area in Gloucestershire

MT Gloucester Cave Rescue is in the process of upgrading its training facilities. This is undercover and located in Cinderford.

11 BCA Rep

Linda Wilson

See report in the newsletter

DC The most important issue is BCA does not have enough officers. They need a treasurer and an IT officer.

BCA charitable donations

BCA CHARITABLE AND SIMILAR PAYMENTS

There was a circumstance in 2020 where a charitable donation of several hundred pounds was paid for by BCA with only the approval of the BCA Executive rather than the full Council. Other ad-hoc appeals have come before BCA Council requesting many thousands of pounds. For example equipment for a new start-up club or repairing an existing club SRT facility. Whilst these requests are no doubt worthy it does raise the question of transparency, fairness and budgetary control. There currently don't seem to be any guidelines or process around these appeals.

The issue was raised with BCA via the Finance Committee in December 2021 but never progressed. CSCC would like to see a process and guidelines be put in place. Below are some initial ideas for BCA's consideration.

1. It would apply to expenditure that has not already been approved by BCA Council or been included in officer/working group budgets. These are donations where BCA doesn't receive services or goods in return.
2. That there be a formal proposal put to Council to approve the expenditure.
3. That the proposal with any supporting documentation be circulated to the Council members and any other interested parties in good time.
4. That the proposal with any supporting documentation is Minuted.



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5. That an annual budget for such an appeals fund be set.
6. That the fund is well advertised and applications invited.
7. That funds be dispersed once or twice a year so that all applications can be considered together rather than paying out to the first applicant that comes along.

Reason for each point:

1. Definition of what payments the guidelines apply to.
2. Transparency. Council should approve these expenditures. It should be clear to the members that the expenditure has been approved.
3. Council members need good time to consider the appeals.
4. Transparency. The members need to see what has been approved.
5. Budgetary control.
6. Fairness. Access to the fund should be open to all.
7. Fairness. Funds shouldn't be on a first come first served basis.

David Cooke

Nov 2023

JD I feel that in section 3, the phrase 'good time' is a little open ended.

JD proposed that the BCA officers report on charitable and similar donations be commended to BCA, seconded DC, passed unanimous.

12 Webmasters Report

See report in the newsletter

The BCA Server

DC The BCA IT officer is standing down because he cannot give the server the attention it deserves. The BCA server has been down on a number of occasions in the past few months. I am recommending that we move the CSCC service provider.

See full proposal in the officers report. The initial cost will be £110 per year. Costs will be met by BCA.

Proposed DC, Seconded BW, Vote passed Unanimous

13 Forthcoming events

Southern CHECC February Next year

NAMHO Fri 28 to Sun 30 June, Redruth Cornwall

14 AOB

DC Items for the next meeting - DC will be in India for the next meeting.



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15 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 associated 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.

Monday 15 August 2022 19:00 GM Zoom

Friday 11 Nov 2022 19:00 GM Zoom

Wednesday 1 Feb 2023 23:59 Notification to members of upcoming AGM,
This is the notification.

Monday 13 Feb 2023 19:00 GM Zoom

Wednesday 15 March 2023 23:59 Deadline for AGM nominations

Friday 17 March 2023 19:00 Deadline for AGM constitutional amendments

Saturday 1 April 2023 23:59 Notification to members of AGM nominations

Friday 12 May 2023 19:00 AGM Zoom

16 AOB

None

Meeting duration 1h 50min

Corrections