



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Council Meeting, 10.00am, 17 July 2004, at Monyash Village Hall

PRESENT: Officers: Chairman DCA Bob Dearman [BD]
Secretary/Treasurer: Jenny Potts [JP]
Equipment Officer: Dave Cowley [DC]
Legal & Insurance Officer: Peter Mellors [PM]
Training Officer: Nigel Atkins [NA]
Assistant Secretary: Chris Broome [CB]
Clubs: Orpheus Caving Club Boyd Potts [BP], Mick Hogg [MH]
Individual Members: Terry Jackson [TJ] (Bob Dearman, Jenny Potts)

1. APOLOGIES / QUORUM:

- 1.1 Confirmed the meeting was quorate.
- 1.2 Apologies received from: Access Officer Iain Barker [IB], Conservation Officer Dave Webb [DW], Editor Paul Lydon [PL], Wayne Sheldon, John Barnatt.

2. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING OF 24TH. APRIL 2004: (Tabled)

"That these be accepted as a correct record." Prop. TJ, sec. BP. *Agreed unanimously.*

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 24 APRIL:

- 3.1 3.1 Countryside Stewardship Scheme: Defer to next meeting. **ACTION: IB, TJ**
- 3.2 3.2 DCA Rock Drill: Matter is in JP's hands. **ACTION: JP**
- 3.3 3.4 Otter Hole: BD noted that the application to build on the site was due to be re-submitted for higher density housing but this had not yet happened. He would maintain a watching brief and liaise with J.Taylor. **ACTION: BD**
- 3.4 6.3.a.4 Removal of 8mm spits: NA stated that the problem of abseiling accidents at Garlands Pot, Giants Hole, was under consideration by DCRO. It was accepted by all that the accidents did not appear to be due to bolt failure. DC had checked the positions of spits and Eco-anchors on Garlands and produced a plan of the placements for the meeting. Noted that there was one spit with a red plastic surround (near the pitch head between 2 eco-anchors) which is pre-1992 and which appeared to be unnecessary. NA said that the 2 spits well back from the pitch and before the step in the passage had been placed by persons unknown but were regularly used by centres as a backup to protect the traverse to the pitch head.
"That the 2 backup spits be left in place and developments awaited. The red-rim spit on the pitch should be removed."
Prop. BP, sec. NA. *Agreed unanimously.*
DC would deal with the red-rim spit. JP would contact PICA to inform them of the decision. **ACTION: DC, JP**
- 3.5 6.3.b.1 Ashford Marble Mine: PM noted that, before anything could be publicised, there needed to be a meeting between himself, JP and IB to sort out the necessary paperwork for the access change. **ACTION: PM, IB, JP**
A meeting would be arranged between DW, IB, PM and J.Barnatt to agree on which graffiti needed to be kept for historical or safety reasons. **ACTION: DW, IB, PM**
There was a need for re-taping with modern tape. **ACTION: PM, DW**
- 3.6 6.3.b.4 P8 Parking Area: TJ had been in contact with IB to try and obtain cooperation from the official department responsible for the work. Despite previous promises no work had been done on extending into the space at the back of the main parking area. Suggested some action was needed via the Countryside Services of Derbys. County Council. CB has some contacts which may help. BP suggested we contact the Local Area Access Forum and will check on this. **ACTION: TJ, IB, CB, BP**

4. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

No applications received.

5. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

5.1 Training Officer: (Written report tabled.)

- 5.1.a Garlands Pot: Suggested that there might be a need for extra eco-anchors on Garlands specifically for rescue purposes. DC and NA would co-ordinate eco-anchor installation at this site in conjunction with DCRO.
- 5.1.b *"That the Training Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. TJ, Sec. DC. *Agreed unanimously.*
NA was thanked for attending specially to present his report and then left the meeting.

5.2 Hon. Secretary/Treasurer's Report: (Written report tabled.)

- 5.2.a Use of Email/website: The meeting approved the idea of extending provision of minutes, reports and information circulars by email/website where possible to save on postage and paper.
- 5.2.b Overdue subscriptions: Noted that the following had not paid their subscriptions for 2004 and their membership had now lapsed: Dunstable C.C., Harston C.C., D.Baines, J.R.Thomas, J.Woodhead.
- 5.2.c Abseiling Licence: JP explained the potential problems of the draft "Abseiling Licence" being proposed by Derbyshire Dales District Council. She would continue to make representations in an effort to persuade DDDC to re-think the proposal.
- 5.2.d Noted that the financial situation was very healthy at present, due in good measure to the Greenwatch Award and grants received.
- 5.2.e *"That the Secretary/Treasurer's report be accepted."* Prop. TJ, Sec. DC. *Agreed unanimously.*

- 5.3 Conservation Officer:** (Not present but his written report was tabled.)
- 5.3.a *"That a vote of thanks be accorded to the Conservation Officer for his success in obtaining the Greenwatch Award for DCA, coupled with thanks to those who had done the work which resulted in the Award."*
Prop. JP, sec. CB. *Passed unanimously.*
- 5.3.b Sidetrack Cave: noted this was mentioned in 3 tabled reports. Agreed to deal with it separately later in the meeting.
- 5.3.c Shaft capping: PM commented that DCA had a good working relationship with local authorities and landowners which had been developed over many years. He was pleased that this was continuing under DW's leadership.
- 5.3.d Yatestooop Sough: Noted that the Handbook was still correct in stating access permission should be sought from the Works Manager at Enthoven Ltd. for Yatestooop Sough and Millclose Mine; however it appeared that permission might no longer be given. IB would be asked to check whether it is now closed for all access or whether permission may be given to holders of P.L. insurance.
ACTION: IB, DW
- 5.3.e Speedwell Cavern Graffiti: Disappointing that it was felt necessary to install a notice to prevent damage to the historic "Miners' Toast" inscription. DW's comments were noted and accepted.
- 5.3.f *"That the Conservation Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. PM, Sec. TJ. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.4 Access Officer's report:** (Not present but his written report was tabled.)
- 5.4.a *"That the Access Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. DC, Sec. CB. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.5 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report:** (Tabled.)
- 5.5.a CRoW: Noted that CRoW legislation would take effect in the Peak National Park Area from September this year. Other areas would not be affected till later.
- 5.5.b Sidetrack Cave: Noted that it was for a DCA Council Meeting to decide if any formal access agreement was required for Sidetrack Cave and that, in any case, no decision could be taken by DCA without consultation with the original discoverers of the cave and at the request of the landowner. Not clear whether it is alleged that damage is being done and, if so, by whom, since access is physically difficult and the cave has already been taped and other protective measures taken. JP noted that DW had told her that he had not himself been into the cave.
Noted that the SSSI monitoring scheme should record the situation so this could be checked. Some other SSSI caves in the region were not covered by a formal access agreement and this did not seem to cause problems. Noted also that the Sidetrack discovery had received extensive publicity in print and that a video of the cave was on sale.
PM reminded members of the potential expense and "hassle" if DCA were to control access since this would almost certainly require that a locked gate be installed together with all the rigmarole of permits, issuing keys, insurance requirements, etc.
Agreed: that we should maintain the position stated at the DCA AGM; that for the moment DCA does not take action unless a formal request is received that we take over control of access to Sidetrack Cave.
Agreed: that DCA would provide PM with a copy of the Sidetrack video.
- 5.5.c Liability Insurance: PM reported that he had received an offer of cover for 2004/5 from Perkins Slade: £500 for DCA itself plus £15 per head for members insured but as yet he had not received details of any conditions attached to this offer as regards minimum number to be covered. It was not known whether BCA had yet received an offer of cover from its insurers for 2005.
The potential financial implications for DCA and its insured members of continuing with Perkins Slade or switching to BCA were discussed in detail. Confirmed that in principle DCA wished to support a national insurance scheme through BCA but had a responsibility to its insured members not to refuse the Perkins Slade offer until we were certain that a viable alternative was in place. It was felt we did not have sufficient information to make a final decision at this meeting. However, a decision must be made not later than September in order to give adequate notice to those currently insured with DCA and it was not reasonable to expect PM to make the decision entirely on his own before the next scheduled DCA Council meeting on 27th. November.
"That DCA Officers be given the power to make a final decision on insurance provision at a meeting in September."
Prop. BP, sec. TJ. *Agreed unanimously.*
"That a meeting of DCA Officers be called on Wed. 22nd. September at 8pm. Venue to be Orpheus C.C. Cottage."
Prop. JP, sec. PM. *Agreed unanimously.*
DCA members would be notified of the officers' meeting and were welcome to attend if they wished.
Agreed: that PM would liaise closely with Nick Williams in seeking the best solution.
- 5.5.d *"That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. TJ, Sec. JP. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.6 Newsletter Editor / Publications Officer's Report:** (Not present but his written report was tabled.)
"That the Newsletter Editor / Publications Officer's report be accepted." Prop. TJ, Sec. MH. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.7 Equipment Officer's Report:** (Verbal report.)
- 5.7.a Eco-anchor installation course: DC was in touch with Les Sykes to arrange a training course for 6 DCA installers. Les Sykes is applying to NCA/BCA for funding. Orpheus C.C. Cottage was offered as a suitable venue for the course with nearby surface rocks for practical sessions. Drills, etc. would need to be organised and help was offered to provide these.
- 5.7.b Giants Hole: Eco-anchor and spit situation at Garlands pot already dealt with under items 3.4 and 5.1.a above.
- 5.7.c DCA Bolt Records: The paperwork has already been transferred from JP to DC. There was a delay in transferring the database due to incompatibility of systems. TJ offered his help in this.
ACTION: TJ, JP, DC
- 5.7.d *"That the Equipment Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. TJ, Sec. CB. *Agreed unanimously*
- 6. NCA / BCA MATTERS:**
- 6.1 Report on NCA/BCRA consolidation process: JP gave a summary report on meetings held by the "Hub" group, mainly to deal with financial matters and how the system was to work in 2005 when BCA came into operation fully and NCA would formally wind up. She felt that progress was good and that there was a willingness all round to work to ensure that BCA would be a success.

- 6.2 Proposals related to NCA/BCRA consolidation and BCA working: It had been generally accepted that DCA would have to change some aspects of the way it worked in order to fit in with BCA. JP wished formally to put forward 5 proposals which were designed to facilitate this; a brief explanation of each proposal had been printed on the agenda paper. She had brought copies of the DCA and BCA Constitutions to the meeting for members to consult.
- 6.2.a *"That DCA adopts for its own use the definition of a 'constitutionally established caving club' already agreed and in use by BCA."*
Noted that, although the DCA Constitution currently referred to "constitutionally established caving clubs" as being eligible to become Full Member Clubs of DCA, there was no formal definition of this and, in practice, this was not checked by DCA at the time of election. Noted that that only properly constituted clubs would be eligible for BCA P.L. Insurance. BCA had agreed that the eligibility of clubs to be full members of BCA be checked by the end of 2004 and it therefore seemed reasonable that DCA check its member clubs for compatibility by the same standard. It was accepted that the BCA definition was a reasonable minimum requirement for a club constitution.
The motion was proposed by JP, seconded by PM. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 6.2.b *"That DCA seeks to confirm that the constitutions of its current Member Clubs agree with this definition."*
JP suggested that this could be done by asking every member club of DCA to supply a copy of its current constitution. She and the DCA Chairman would then scrutinise these and confirm that they complied. If not, and if the organisation wished to be considered a "club", then advice could be offered on possible constitutional amendments to bring it in line with the definition. Approved Club Constitutions would be forwarded on to BCA.
The motion was proposed by JP, seconded by TJ. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 6.2.c *"That, in the light of BCA subscription arrangements which will require that from 2005 all caving clubs pay the same amount of tithe to their chosen regional council, regardless of club membership numbers, DCA reassesses its current system of variable voting rights for clubs with a view to changing its Constitution."*
It was generally agreed that the DCA voting system needed reform and that this could be discussed during the next few months so that suitable proposals for Constitutional amendments could be made to the 2005 DCA AGM.
The motion was proposed by JP, seconded by PM. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 6.2.d *"That DCA recommends to BCA that all Associate Member Organisations of BCA involved in active caving should pay a tithe equivalent to that of a club to the regional council in whose area they are active."*
The meeting agreed that there was value in encouraging membership of Associate Members of BCA, in particular that of outdoor activity providers. Since such groups made use of the services provided by the regional councils, it was only reasonable that they should contribute towards the cost of this.
The motion was proposed by JP, seconded by TJ. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 6.2.e *"That DCA continues to accept individuals as Full Individual Members of DCA, whether or not they are Direct Individual Members of BCA."*
JP noted that the exact status of BCA Direct Individual Members in relation to the regional councils was still under discussion. It was likely to be discussed at the Hub meeting on 25th. July and she sought guidance on DCA's views. The general feeling was that individuals became members of DCA for a variety of reasons, in some cases these related to services which were provided by DCA and which would not be subsidised by BCA in the future. With this in mind, it was felt that it should not be a requirement that DCA Individual Members should also have to be Direct Individual Members of BCA. Noted that DCA would continue to require that all Club and Associate members of DCA be also members of BCA.
The motion was proposed by JP, seconded by DC. *Agreed unanimously.*

7. DATE & VENUE OF NEXT DCA MEETINGS:

DCA Council Meeting on 27th. November 2004; DCA AGM 2005 on 19th. February 2005. Both confirmed.
Both already booked at Monyash Village Hall at 10am.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- 8.1 Access agreement at Thorswood Mine: Negotiations still in the hands of IB and Mike Salt. It was hoped they would liaise with PM to achieve a "minimum hassle" agreement. **ACTION: IB, MIKE SALT, PM**
- 8.2 Local Area Access Forum for Derby & South Derbyshire: BP reported that, as a member of the Forum, he had been asked to provide written comments re. access by motor vehicles in the countryside. Members were welcome to pass on their views to him for him to put forward.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.15 p.m.

J.E.Potts, Recorder.

APPENDED TO THESE MINUTES AND FORMING PART OF THEM IS THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT:

Officers' Reports to the DCA Council Meeting, 17 July 2004:

- a. Item 5.1 Training Officer's Report
- b. Item 5.2 Hon. Secretary/Treasurer's Report
- c. Item 5.3 Conservation Officer's Report
- d. Item 5.4 Access Officer's report
- e. Item 5.5 Legal & Insurance Officer's Report
- f. Item 5.6 Newsletter Editor / Publications Officer's Report.