



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Council Meeting, 10.00am, 27 November 2004, at Monyash Village Hall

PRESENT:	<u>Officers:</u>	Chairman DCA	Bob Dearman [BD]
		Secretary/Treasurer:	Jenny Potts [JP]
		Access Officer:	Iain Barker [IB]
		Conservation Officer:	David Webb [DW]
		Assistant Secretary:	Chris Broome [CB]
	<u>Clubs:</u>	T. S. G.	Nigel Kinge [NK]
		Eldon Pothole Club	Mike Salt [MS], Jason Rider [JR]
		Orpheus Caving Club	(Jenny Potts)
		Masson Caving Group	(David Webb, Chris Broome)
	<u>Individual Members:</u>		Terry Jackson [TJ] (Bob Dearman, Jenny Potts, Iain Barker)

1. APOLOGIES / QUORUM:

- 1.1 Confirmed the meeting was quorate.
- 1.2 Apologies received from: L&I Officer - Peter Mellors, Equipment Officer - Dave Cowley, Training Officer - Nigel Atkins, Publications Officer - Paul Lydon, Dave Jones, Heather Lomas & Boyd Potts - Orpheus C.C., Tim Webber, Wayne Sheldon, Wild Track - Mick Earle. Apologies had also been received from BCA Treasurer - Bob Mehew.

2. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING OF 17TH. JULY 2004: (Previously circulated & on website) *"That these be accepted as a correct record."* Prop. TJ, sec. IB. *Agreed unanimously.*

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 17 JULY:

- 3.1 3.1 Countryside Stewardship Scheme: TJ reported that there were not many sites in the region since it depended upon the site being on agricultural land covered under the scheme and this will be under review in the next few years. It depends on the site being used for "educational visits" and the owner or tenant may apply for grant under the scheme. Noted that the goodwill of farmers is important to cavers and also that P.I.C.A. may be able to help. TJ and IB would liaise to see what progress can be made.
- 3.2 3.3 Otter Hole: BD reported no developments as yet but he is keeping a watching brief.
- 3.3 3.4 Giants Hole Spits: Referred to later in Training Officer's report. (See 5.5.2.)
- 3.4 3.5 Ashford Black Marble Mine: Referred to later in Access Officer's report. (See 5.3.5.)
- 3.5 3.6 P.8. Parking Area: TJ reported no progress in dealing with the works team and noted that work on the Pennine Bridleway in the area was currently suspended due to a problem with land ownership. Noted that the police could direct parking to the site in the case of a rescue. TJ & IB would continue to seek solutions if the situation became a problem.
- 3.6 5.2.c Abseiling Licence in Matlock Bath area: Referred to later in Secretary's report.
- 3.7 5.5.b Sidetrack Cave: Referred to later in Legal & Insurance Officer's report. (See 5.4.1.)
- 3.8 8.1 Thorswood Mine: Referred to later in Access Officer's report. (See 5.3.2.)
- 3.9 5.5.c Officers' Meeting: JP reported that the Officers' Meeting to deal with P.L. Insurance and other matters had taken place on 22nd. September. (See Legal & Insurance Officer's report.) A copy of that section of the meeting notes which dealt specifically with P.L. Insurance had been sent by JP to the BCA Treasurer and the BCA Insurance Manager, who had expressed their thanks.

4. ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

Individual Members: **John S. Bates** - prop. I.Barker, sec. Dave Webb; and **David Whitehouse** - proposed J.Potts, sec. P.Mellors were both accepted as Individual Members.

5. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

5.1 CONSERVATION OFFICER: (Written report tabled.)

- 5.1.1 Gautries Hole Cleanup: Noted that DCA needs to fund nearly £1000 expenses up front before grant can be reclaimed from E.N. JP noted there are sufficient funds in DCA accounts to be able to do this and the net result should be a gain for DCA. DW expressed his thanks to the Masson C.G. and T.S.G. members who had done the work. The DCA Chairman would write to each person concerned to thank them. Noted that DW had produced a CD on Cave Conservation and this was available from him.
- 5.1.2 Underground Conservation Forum: DW noted that EN were pulling out of their involvement in this group on grounds of cost but that he hoped to maintain contact with the new combined body for countryside conservation, etc. (which would take the place of E.N. and others) due to come into being in April 2005.
- 5.1.3 Pic Tor Mines: DW reported that he had been approached for advice on the mines at Pic Tor by Derbyshire Dales District Council. The mines were not currently open and were not listed in "Caves or the Peak District" or the DCA Handbook. JP noted that Pic Tor was one of the areas referred to in the "DDDC Abseiling Licence".
- 5.1.4 Winstor Mineral Extraction: TJ reported that there had been a planning application for mineral extraction in the Winstor area. DW would follow this up.
- 5.1.5 Youds Level: DW reported that the situation re. pollution had now improved and that there was also improvement at Long Tor Grotto.
- 5.1.6 *"That the Conservation Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. I.Barker, sec. C.Broome. *Agreed unanimously.*

5.2 SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT: (Written report tabled.)

- 5.2.1 Sheffield University Spel. Soc.: JP explained the situation in which SUSS found themselves. Members expressed disgust that this should have happened to a respected university caving club. It was accepted that nothing further could be done by DCA to help SUSS.
- 5.2.2 DDDC Abseiling Licence: JP explained the conditions attaching to the "abseiling licence". It should not affect caving clubs and it

- had been established that only the three named sites: Pic Tor, Lovers Walk and High Tor, were to be covered by the requirement.
- 5.2.3 DCA Funds: Noted that DCA funds were in good shape, due in no small way to the money received in grant from EN for the conservation work carried out under DW's supervision.
- 5.2.4 DCA Individual Member Subscriptions for 2005: TJ proposed that JP's proposal be taken in two parts, the first dealing with the sub. for 2005; the second dealing with the possibility of a discount for BCA Direct Individual Members. JP agreed to this.
1. *"That The DCA Individual Member subscription should remain at £10 for 2005."* Prop. TJ, sec. JP. *Agreed unanimously.*
 2. *"That the DCA AGM should be asked to consider whether a discount could be brought in for 2006 on DCA Individual Member subscription for those who are also BCA Direct Individual Members ."* Prop. TJ, sec. JP. *Agreed unanimously.*
- Noted that Club and Associate Member subscriptions for 2005 would be dealt with later under item 7.1 of the Agenda.
- 5.2.5 Abbotsholme School Letter: JP read out a letter received from the Head of Outdoor Activities at Abbotsholme School seeking sponsorship to finance a team from the school to represent Britain at an international competition: the Karrimor Adventure Challenge for Schools, in South Africa in December 2004. The team from the school would be the only one from Britain at the event. JP noted that Abbotsholme School had been members of DCA for over 20 years and that this was an exceptional request. It was agreed that DCA should support the school.
- "That a donation of £50 be made to support Abbotsholme School team at the Karrimor Adventure Challenge for Schools."*
Prop. I.Barker, sec. D.Webb. *Agreed unanimously.*
- JP would send the £50 and write to the School expressing DCA's best wishes for success in the challenge.
- 5.2.6 *"That the Secretary/Treasurer's report be accepted."* Prop. N. Kinge, sec. I.Barker. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.3 ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT:** (Written report tabled.)
- 5.3.1 Ashford Black Marble Mine - safety & conservation inspections: Noted that this was now being inspected by Dave Carlisle for P.I.C.A. for use by instructed groups. BD noted that the inspection by himself and IB disclosed a need for re-taping some areas on conservation grounds. New tell-tales were needed but none of the existing ones showed any sign of movement. The damaged gate had been repaired and returned to place within 24 hours.
- 5.3.2 Thorswood Mine: MS reported that, following completion of work, it was now possible to negotiate access. Pete Mellors and IB would approach Staffs. Wildlife Trust and would liaise with MS.
- 5.3.3 Waterways Swallet: Noted that the potential problem had been sorted to DCA's satisfaction and that no precedent had been set.
- 5.3.4 Giants Hole - bridge on path: This had been sorted following discussions between IB, the landowner and the PICA Chairman.
- 5.3.5 Ashford Black Marble Mine - new access procedure: IB had now sorted the new access procedure and he noted that the "green card holders" would now have to provide a copy of their insurance certificate to him each year before their card would be renewed to allow them to collect the key. Others seeking access for one-off trips would now write to IB (instead of to Pete Mellors) and would be required to provide proof of insurance in order to obtain a new-style "white card permit" to collect the key. JP raised certain practical details with regard to ensuring that a key was available at the shop for callers and these were noted by IB. IB said he had two more requests for a "green card" for frequent access and would deal with these as appropriate. One request related to a study of bats and JP pointed out that bat studies required a licence and that Derbyshire Wildlife Trust had members who were holders of such a licence and were already involved in a bat survey. Anyone seeking to do similar work should be referred to DWT. JP would ensure access changes were notified to DCA members; there would also need to be amendments to the DCA Handbook.
- 5.3.6 Lathkill Head Cave, Garden Path Entrance - new access procedure: Following inspection of bolts in the shaft by BD and Dave Cowley the new system for access applications was now set up and ready to go. JP would supply IB with copies of the leaflets "Do You Dig Caves ... In SSSI's" and "Minimum Impact Caving Code" to be sent to applicants. DW and IB would liaise on specific conservation issues re. Garden Path. JP would ensure access changes were notified to DCA members; there would also need to be amendments to the DCA Handbook.
- 5.3.7 *"That the Access Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. T.Jackson, sec. C.Broome. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.4 LEGAL & INSURANCE OFFICER'S REPORT:** (Not present but his written report was tabled.)
- 5.4.1 Sidetrack Cave: Suggested that DW could set up a conservation plan for it without anyone having any formal access control. Noted that DCA remained opposed to negotiating any formal access agreement.
- 5.4.2 Bat Conservation Trust Insurance: JP noted that the Bat Conservation Trust would provide a P.L. Insurance at a cost of £18 per person to allow licensed bat workers to operate underground .
- 5.4.3 *"That the Legal & Insurance Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. C.Broome, sec. I.Barker *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.5 TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT:** (Not present but his written report was tabled.)
- 5.5.1 Cavers Workshop: JP proposed that we ensure that this goes ahead, even without NCA/BCA grant. DCA itself could subsidise it if necessary but we must try to ensure that it is financially self-supporting.
- 5.5.2 Giants Hole spits: Noted that Dave Cowley and Nigel Atkins were liaising on investigation of existing spits and/or need for Eco-anchor replacement of these spits.
- 5.5.3 Training Facility: BD reported that Mark Wright had offered the use of his specialised rope access training facility in Rotherham for advanced SRT work. Thanks were expressed for this generous offer. It was suggested that Nigel Atkins liaise directly with Mark Wright on this.
- 5.5.4 *"That the Training Officer's report be accepted."* Prop. I.Barker, Sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*
- 5.6 EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT:** (Not present but verbal report given on his behalf.)
- 5.6.1 Bolt Tester: JP reported that Bob Mehew had delivered a new bolt tester from NCA for DCA's use. This was now in Dave Cowley's possession. BD suggested that it required a strong case to allow it to be taken underground and it was agreed that a Peli Case be bought for this purpose.
- 5.6.2 Bolt Installation Records: Following assistance from TJ it was now possible to transfer the database of Bolt Installation Records onto

Dave Cowley's computer. The process would now get under way.

- 5.6.3 Cave Log Books: Noted the need for suitable waterproof boxes in which to install cave log books, such as we would now be installing in Garden Path, Ashford Black Marble Mine. Experience from Lathkill Head Upper Entrance, Knotlow, etc. showed that the ammunition boxes currently installed were not the best solution as the books suffered badly from damp and quickly became illegible. IB suggested a possible solution and would investigate.
- 5.6.4 *"That the Equipment Officer's verbal report be accepted."* Prop. I.Barker, Sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed unanimously.*

6. CAVE DISCOVERY FUND AWARD:

- 6.1 Award proposed for Orpheus C. C. for work in Owl Hole: The Cave Discovery Fund Panel had met and considered an application by Orpheus Caving Club in respect of discoveries made in Owl Hole and had proposed maximum grant allowable, 50% of expenses incurred - in this case it would be £67.00. Details of the discovery, survey and photos were displayed at the meeting and it was confirmed that an article would appear in the next DCA N/L.
- "That the maximum award of £67 be given to Orpheus Caving Club to defray expenses incurred in the discoveries in Owl Hole."*
- Prop. N.Kinge, sec. T.Jackson. *Agreed Unanimously.*
- 6.2 Amount remaining in Cave Discovery Fund: JP reported that the amount to be carried forward for 2005 was £445.27.

7. NCA/BCA MATTERS:

- 7.1 Club and Associate BCA/DCA Member Subscriptions for 2005:
- a. JP had indicated briefly in today's agenda the current situation arising from the BCA/NCA Council Meeting on 9th. October which was to have formally approved the subscription levels proposed by BCA Treasurer following agreement by the "Hub" meeting. It appeared that CSCC members at their own Council Meeting on 26th. September had objected to the subscriptions proposed. They had also objected to the agreement reached by the NCA SGM in November 2003 and accepted by the "hub" (which included a CSCC representative) during 2004 that individual club cavers should also contribute to subscriptions. The Council Meeting had rejected the BCA Treasurer's proposals in favour of an alternative proposed by CSCC.
- b. During the week prior to today's DCA Council Meeting JP had asked for the Minutes of that BCA/NCA Council Meeting in October, however the BCA/NCA Secretary said they were not yet available. Hence she knew nothing more than was reported in BCA Newsletter article (written by the BCA Treasurer) which set out the subscriptions agreed by BCA/NCA Council on 9th. October but did not detail the objections raised by CSCC. (Owing to prior commitments, neither she nor Chris Broome, Masson C.G. representative, had been able to attend the meeting, so there had been no-one present to represent DCA's interests or to report back to DCA.) JP had supplied all DCA Officers with photocopies of the BCA N/L article prior to our meeting as they would otherwise have known nothing about it. All DCA club and associate members would also have copies but not DCA individual members.
- c. The combined BCA/regional subscription for club and associate members now proposed was a flat £45 per organisation, regardless of size. Some clubs who had read this in BCA N/L had already made strong objections to officers of their regional councils, (including CSCC) and to the BCA/NCA Treasurer. Some smaller DCA clubs had already contacted JP to express their great concern. The DCA meeting agreed that it was quite unacceptable that a club of less than 10 members should pay the same subscription as a club of well over 100. JP expressed great concern that DCA should be put in such a position - she had attended all the "Hub" meetings which had discussed subscriptions, finances, etc. during the past year (pointing out that she had incurred considerable expenditure and given up a great deal of her time) and was astounded by this reversal of what had been agreed in good faith.
- d. A meeting of regional Treasurers together with the BCA Treasurer and the newly appointed BCA Auditor had been called for tomorrow, 28th. November, in order to discuss the matter further and to come up with a more acceptable solution. The suggestion had been floated that "banded subscriptions" might be acceptable and JP asked the meeting's views on this and sought guidance for the meeting tomorrow. DCA members present agreed banded subscriptions might be acceptable since we had used such a system for club members ourselves for many years. They felt, owing to the lack of information on the nature of CSCC objections, they could offer no other guidance. The Chairman expressed confidence that JP would act in DCA's best interests.
- 7.2 NCA/BCA Consolidation Process - Club Individual Member Status: JP reported that, during the recent discussions on subscriptions it had become apparent that there was a disagreement re. the nature of "Club Individual Member" status, which conferred voting rights, first agreed in outline by the NCA SGM in November 2003 and endorsed by the subsequent ballot. It appeared that it was now to be limited solely to members of those clubs which took out BCA P. L. insurance for their members; there appeared otherwise to be no provision for paying any kind of club individual member subscription by those not insured through BCA. This was not what DCA members had understood was intended and they were concerned that such a limitation effectively disenfranchised members of clubs such as university, scout and school groups, (who had no need of separate P.L. insurance) and DCA members who for this year were insured with DCA, as well as those clubs who did not take out insurance for their members at all. JP said that she had attempted, without success, to raise this matter with the BCA Treasurer but would attempt to raise it again at the Treasurer's Meeting on 28th. Nov.
- 7.3 Retirement of BCA/NCA Treasurer: JP asked members to note that Bob Mehew was retiring as BCA/NCA Treasurer. Agreed that the DCA Chairman would write to him expressing our appreciation for all the work he had done on behalf of cavers.

8. NEXT DCA MEETING:

Confirmed as AGM on 19th. February, 10am. at Monyash.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.30pm.

J. E. Potts, Recorder

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

Officers' Reports to the DCA Council Meeting, 27 November 2004:

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| a. Item 5.1 | Conservation Officer's Report | d. Item 5.4 | Legal & Insurance Officer's Report |
| b. Item 5.2 | Secretary/Treasurer's Report | e. Item 5.5 | Training Officer's Report |
| c. Item 5.3 | Access Officer's Report | | |