

National Caving Association

Draft Minutes of Training Committee Meeting 3rd April 2004
10.00 a.m. at Stafford County Council Sports and Social Club

Present

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| Idris Williams | NCA Training Officer |
| Nigel Ball | CIC Panel |
| Graham Mollard | NCP |
| Steve Holding | NAHMO |
| John Cliffe | Co-opted |
| Steve Tomalin | Co-opted |
| Jenny Potts | DCA |
| Eric Hoole | CCC |
| Tom Redfern | ACI |
| Paul Rafferty | BCRA |

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received from Paul Ramsden and Nigel Atkins but Jenny Potts had come in Nigel's place.

2. Minutes of meeting 27th September 2003

The minutes were taken as read.

3. Matters arising from the minutes.

Risk Participation Statement T.O. Reported that this had been discussed and agreed by NCA Council in October. J.P. stated that it now had to be agreed by the constituent bodies.

SRT Kits. T.O. reported that he had the new ones in his car and would hand to J.C. after the meeting. The old ones had last been seen at Hidden Earth 2002 but were not used and it had not been possible to trace them. NCA Treasurer had written them off.

T.O. suggested that a storage box with a lid should be purchased to assist with dispatching them around the country.

Scout Authorisation Scheme. This was reported to October NCA Council. They resolved

a) That council considers that CIC level is the basic qualification for someone to be assessing at a lower level.

b) The Scout Association should be referred to the AALA guidelines.

c) That Training Committee recommendations to lie on the table until Council 10th Jan to allow Council to seek further information.

No further info requested from SA or TO and when asked did not say what info was required. The Scout Association has since started a review of all activity authorisation schemes so the whole process is back into the melting pot. At Council 10th Jan agreed to leave it on the table.

4year plan T. O. thought something has been submitted. But he was not aware of the details except that an assessment course had been suggested. This could be open to CICs, and it could deal with the principles and soft skills of assessment for those involved with the site specific scheme and could be a useful addition alongside the apprenticeship scheme for future Trainer/assessors, to cover the theoretical aspects. It was agreed that NCP & CIC panel would discuss this with a view to drawing up a syllabus that would

help CIC holders not involved with the LCMLA scheme. The general opinion was that it was not necessary to add anything in to the existing Trainer/Assessor apprenticeship.

Also included was a suggestion that there should be an easier progression between LMCLA and CIC. It was felt that there was a big step between the Level 2 LCMLA holder and the CIC. T.O.'s thoughts were that there could be a case for a "Level 3" Leader who could be trained and authorised to lead perhaps nationally and to lead, although not teach SRT and ladder pitches exceeding 18metres.

J.C. expressed the opinion that there was a gulf between Level 2 LCMLA and suggested that whereas a CIC was expected to be able to practise and teach all variations of SRT there could be scope for a lower qualification teaching and leading a prescribed form of SRT with authorisation limited to specific routes/caves.

It was agreed that this matter should be discussed at NCP and CIC panel to sound out opinions together with the possibility of combining LCMLA and CIC registrations so that all candidates would register once to cover all levels.

Joint Services Awards and conversion to LCMLA/CIC. T.O. stated that there had been a few of these cropping up, in each case they had been dealt with on their individual merits. It would make sense if a comparison were to be made between the schemes so that standard routes to conversion could be made.

Insurance T.O. stated that matters had moved on somewhat since this with the NCA shutdown followed by re-insurance with other providers. A survey of insurance problems with Trainer/Assessors and CICs was done and fortunately very few real difficulties were found. Perkins Slade were still reinsuring multi activities and some people had switched to Jardine Lloyd Thompson. T.R. stated that the situation with Perkins Slade had eased following discussions on the professional side and P.S. were now insuring previous customers with up to 40% caving and taking new customers with up to 15%. The pricing structures were such that CICs with certain levels of turnover had found it advantageous to switch insurers.

The only difficulty being Dave Carlisle who was trying JLT and discussions had taken place between him, Nick Williams and TO with a view to mines inspections being done under NCA auspices and insurance.

A long discussion followed about various Insurance problems

4. Report from NCP.

A). LCMLA Handbook Reprint

The following amendments approved by NCP were agreed.

Add to 2.3.1.f

The rigging and use of securely anchored traverse lines for both protection and/or as a handrail. Such traverse lines in the context of the level 1 Scheme are purely to keep the novice on a good ledge system or away from a hazardous area (e.g. a drop or fast water) and to prevent the possibility of a fall. Novices may be attached by just a load bearing belt and karabiner or cowstails but a slip or fall must offer absolutely no possibility of suspension in free space or entrapment in fast water.

Add to 2.3.3.2

This includes the rigging and use of traverse lines to protect horizontal climbing moves in the cave/mine. A full sit harness should be worn and cowstails and/or karabiners used to connect the caver to the traverse rope. A slip or fall carries the possibility of the novice temporarily dangling in free space.

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Replace 4.3.3.3 with and add similar to 3.2.3.4

The course will have a "Training Course Director" who must be an N.C.A. Approved Trainer/Assessor. The Training Course Director is responsible for the overall delivery of the training and should play a full and active role in all aspects for the duration of the course.

A maximum ratio of 1:6 applies to LCMLA Level 1 training courses and 1:4 for Level 2 training courses. When these above ratios are exceeded then additional staff should be drawn only from one of the following.

- a) Other N.C.A. approved Trainers/Assessors.
- b) Prospective Trainer/ Assessors.
- c) C.I.C holders with experience of involvement in LCMLA training courses at the relevant level.
- d) An LCMLA Scheme Trainer/Assessor appointed as an expert with specialist knowledge in the exploration of abandoned mines.

Replace in Section 4.4 page 59 Vadose - corrosion should be corrasion.

The following had been suggested for inclusion, however Training Committee felt that the CIC handbook was a more sensible place for it. J.C. confirmed that it was already included.

* A section needs to be included to allow for the downgrading of C.I.C. to LCMLA level 1 or 2. It should read: C.I.C's wishing to downgrade must initially contact the Technical Training Advice Service Provider. If the C.I.C. is in date then they will be expected to attend a six-year re-validation. If the C.I.C. is out of date then the Technical Training Advice Service Provider will make a decision as to whether the downgrade can be accepted. All C.I.C.'s downgrading will be expected to register with the LCMLA Scheme.

Amend section 3.4.1.d to read

Once an assessment has been started it must be completed within one year. The validity of any assessment module will lapse after twelve months and any such module may have to be repeated.

Amend as necessary to ensure that prospective Trainer Assessors must comply with the obligations of appointed Trainer/Assessors

Add the new bibliography prepared by T.R. (Training Committee expressed its thanks to T.R. for doing this.)

NCP had suggested that the cover photo be changed. T.O. agreed but said he would not hold up the reprint while waiting for it.

Training Committee endorsed NCP proposal that:-Sections 4&5 (notes for trainers/assessors & notes for administration) do not need to go into the handbook that goes to the candidates.

B). Non Standard routes to Maintaining T/A Status.

The Committee discussed the remaining Trainer/Assessors who had not been dealt with at the July 2003 meeting. The Committee agreed the NCP proposals and instructed T.O. to inform the affected people. Since individuals are concerned these details are confidential.

C). Trainer Assessors who have not met the criteria to maintain their status.

There were a large number of Trainer Assessors who had not met with the criteria this year. The problem was compounded this year by the fact that panel meetings and workshops had not been held or had been cancelled due to the insurance problems.

T.O. Stated that there was a route for individuals to solve these problems by agreeing a remedial plan with TTASP. He had discussed this with TTASP and had suggested that in view of the problems last year a lenient approach be applied.

A.L.O.s were adamant that they did not feel it was part of their role to "police the system" in respect of Trainer assessors. T.O. stated that they had an important part to play in organising Panel Meetings and workshops and distributing minutes and attendance lists.

NCP felt that the system at present was unfair in that whilst some made an effort to comply there were others who made no effort and that in those cases there should be some penalty.

A long discussion followed about how the requirements could be enforced the general opinion was that firm leadership was required from the Training Officer. T.O. said that he agreed but he was not confident that he would have the backing of the committee should enforcement be required.

T.O. asked if NCP should consider if there was a long term need to relax some, or any of the criteria. G.M stated that NCP's opinion was that they should stand but be enforced.

Various dates had been agreed by Area Panels and NCP for workshops and Area Panel meetings.

NCP proposed a change to the aspirant trainer assessor form where by the applicant should be proposed and seconded by any members of the relevant panel. The ALO would then countersign the form and forward to TASP recording the panels decision.. Training Committee ratified this change.

D.) New ALO Southern Panel.

Training Committee welcomed the appointment of Tony Smith as the new Southern Area Liaison Officer.

E). Andy Lewington.

He is a prospective trainer/assessor in S.Wales. NCP should have considered, and approved his appointment at the last meeting, however, this was not possible. The Training Committee agreed that his appointment should proceed.

5. Report from CIC Panel.

A). Welcome new Chairman

T.O. welcomed Nigel Ball who had taken on this role and the Committee expressed its thanks and appreciation of all the efforts put in by Paul Ramsden in the past.

B). CIC Handbook publishing

N.B. Detailed the work that had been done on the handbook by Dave Edwards, John Cliffe and himself together with the CIC panel. John Cliffe said that the Handbook was, subject to a few minor points which he hoped to clear up with N.B. & T.O., immediately after this meeting, now in a form which could be published for comment. The Panel requested that the Handbook be now placed on the Website for use, in this draft form, with a request for comments from interested persons to the Training Officer. The Committee agreed this and T.O. said that the handbook would require final amendment for 2005 when the Training function was planned to transfer to BCA.

C). Ratification of CIC Trainer/Assessors.

The committee ratified the appointment of Paul Rafferty, Julliette Parker-Smith and Tony Flannagan as CIC Trainer/Assessors.

6. NCA Council matters arising.

New Draft Cave Conservation Code.

J.P. explained that as many of the regions had not discussed this and the December Training Committee meeting had been cancelled, this subject had come around again.

The Committee agreed that the Cave Conservation Code was acceptable as it included the phrase "keep party size appropriate to the particular cave you are visiting".

However the Minimum Impact Caving Code as proposed still contained the arbitrary figure of six for party size. The Committee did not agree the Conservation and Access committees new wording but suggested the following "In general the party size should be appropriate to the cave, or route within the cave, site specific management/conservation plans may stipulate in greater detail the requirements for a site and their stipulations must be followed"

Technical advice to cavers.

T.O. explained that there was no funding available to pay for the production of any publication of this nature. If it were to proceed it would have to be carried out by volunteers. He had collected the information which Des Marshall had accumulated in preparation for a caving "Langmuir". He had had difficulty in opening some of the discs but the paper stuff and that which he had opened seemed to be excellent and would only need polishing and pulling together before it could be used, with the permission of the authors being needed.

J.P. was able to show that a booklet similar to the 40page BCA handbook could be printed for less than £1 per copy for print runs in the hundreds.

It was agreed that the best route would be single publications on separate topics.

P.R. & N.B. volunteered to prepare a draft for the first of this (hopefully) series on the subject of vertical caving. T.O. promised to send by post all the information that he had collected from Des Marshall.

7. Training Grants.

Summary of 2003

T.O. Stated that a spreadsheet showing the end of year position had been circulated. In October 2003 he had been concerned that all the money would not be spent. The full budget had been allocated, however, no report had been received from Imperial College or Devon Speleological Society and it was not apparent that the events had taken place. He had chased these up with a view to reallocation of funds to other applicants if possible. Imperial College produced a report and the grant was paid. However, the DSS contact did not respond to several letters and 'phone messages. T.O. then wrote to them giving a deadline to claim. In the event the money could not be reallocated due to the insurance shut down, but was lost at year-end when the 2003 books were closed. Towards the end of February T.O. had received a phone call from Jon Whitely asking for payment of the grant. This was followed up by report, which showed some changes from the original application. T.O. had informed Jon that the funds had now been lost but told him that he would report the matter to Training Committee. After some discussion the Committee resolved that should there be any remaining funds at the end of 2004 then a sum up to DSS grant would be paid to them, as a conciliatory gesture.

2004 Progress

T.O. Reported that two DCA events had taken place so far this year and that grants had been paid out on these. (SRT rig & rescue £110. Workshop, grant allocated £600, claimed £420 due to lack of take up). There had been an SRT basic training event by West Lancs. Scouts, which had recently taken place, however a report had not been received. (Grant promised £180). It appeared that there had been some criticism, from some quarters, of the West Lancs. Scout course being grant aided by NCA. The Committee agreed that there were no genuine grounds for criticism as a CIC holder ran the course, and the organising body was an NCA member in addition to being a BCRA and CNCC member.

Proposed Changes to Guidance Notes

T.O. explained that under the NCA constitution members of the Training Committee were barred from receiving payment for carrying out training aided by training grants from NCA. It emerged from discussion that under the BCA constitution they would be able to do this provided they did not vote on the relevant grant allocation. Since members of the Training Committee should be aware of this difficulty it was agreed that it was unnecessary to alter the Guidance Notes for grant applications for the short time that this problem was to continue.

T.O. stated that following on from the difficulties encountered at the end of 2003 with late or non-existent claims he proposed adding a note stating that the allocation would be withdrawn if a report had not been received within one month of the proposed date of the event. The Committee agreed this amendment.

8. Work at Height. Report on current position.

T.R. reported that a constructive meeting had just taken place with HSE, and there was no doubt that the political pressure they had been put under was paying results. The regulations were now not going to Parliament in July but would be deferred to the end of the year due to the affect on adventurous activities. HSE had appointed a new head of the team dealing with this matter, and had issued a statement, which indicated that they believed that the adventurous activities sector had an exemplary safety record and that they had no wish to undermine this. It appeared that they would now be satisfied that this sector could work within NGB best practice guidelines. Work would need to

continue with HSE in providing documentary evidence, generic risk assessments etc.

9. Any other Business.

J.P. showed the BCA handbook, which had just been printed and said that she was alarmed that Training had been omitted. T.O. said that at present Training was still an NCA function but would move over in the future. J.P. added that there were a number of other problems with the handbook.

Child Protection Policy. It had been requested by Bob Mehew that the NCA Child Protection Policy be included in the LCMLA & CIC Handbooks. However, the form of words he produced differed from the form agreed by this committee in July 2003 and subsequently endorsed by NCA Council. The Committee was not prepared to accept these further changes and it was not clear if all the constituent bodies of NCA had approved any form of wording certainly not this latest form. The Committee agreed that rather than write in this policy and any other policy into the Handbook at various points an item should be placed in the introduction drawing attention to all the policies and that the agreed introductory statement be added to clause 3.5.5. of the LCMLA Handbook and the appropriate point in the CIC Handbook.

Porth-yr-Ogof. This matter was brought up, however, T.O. pointed out that this was still sub-judice pending an inquest. The instructor concerned had been acquitted of one charge and the other was dropped. After the inquest there was a possibility that the charge might be made again. C.R. stated that the instructor concerned had military qualifications to do the trip; T.O. added that whilst someone of the same name was registered with the NCA scheme there was no record of his training or any assessment.

10. Dates of next meetings. 25th Sept. 2004, 18th December 2004. Had been agreed. It was decided that there was no need for a July meeting. April 9th 2005 was agreed.