

Minutes of BCA Conservation & Access Group Meeting held at 7.30pm on 25th June by Zoom

Victoria Kocher (VK) chaired the meeting. Linda Wilson (LJW) took the minutes.

1. Introductions and Apologies

Present: Victoria Kocher (VK) (Chair) (DCA)

Voting members: Victoria Kocher (VC) [DCA Conservation Officer] John Hine (JH) [NAMHO & FoDCCAG],

In attendance (non-voting): Linda Wilson [CCC Ltd Conservation Officer, Observer], Jenny Potts (JP) [UK Cave Conservation Emergency Fund, Observer]

Apologies received from: David Rose [CroW Working Group], Tim Nicholls [FoDCCAG]

2. Regional reports:

CNCC

The following request has been received by email from Kay Easton.

Limley Mine in Nidderdale is associated with the caves of Nidderdale, so the Black Sheep Diggers (BSD), who have done immense work in extending the Nidderdale cave systems, were keen to reopen the entrance which has been blocked for 110 years. They say: "BSD have almost reopened Limley Mine in Nidderdale after 110 years. We have had some difficult times shoring our entrance shaft and to be fair, it has reduced in diameter as we descended! We have spent loads of our cash (around £1800k) and resources on it and with 6m of 110cm double wall pipe now on site we are almost there but the bottom 3m f shaft is too tight for that pipe. We have found a source for 750mm that could protect the base of the shaft but it's another £400. We have committed to very cautious exploration, to check for air quality and archaeology as we would proceed. With 2 months since breakthrough no-one has entered the mine as our cautionary procedures are very robust. Please could CNCC consider funding this last double wall pipe to allow us to progress further."

Given that they have already contributed £1800, I feel this request for the final £400 to be reasonable.

This was agreed.

DCA

There is a new owner at Great Masson Mine. DCA are working on maintaining good relations and retaining access. They are considering the feasibility of a grill/gate. DCA Officers have a meeting at Great Masson on July 16th to look at the preservation of the conservation areas.

DCUC

No report received

Caving Wales

No report received.

CSCC [given by LJW]

After a long time and a lot of sustained effort, CSCC's C&A Officer, Wayne Starsmore has reached the stage of agreeing an access agreement with Longleat Estates. To obtain authority to sign this, CSCC are calling an EGM (at short notice). This will then need to be ratified at the subsequent general meeting in August. This is thought to be the best way to proceed as to delay until the general meeting risks losing momentum with Longleat and this dropping off their Board's agenda. This agreement will cover Reservoir Hole, Spider Hole and Gough's Cave. Once the agreement is signed there will still be further work to be done in selecting and training leaders, and some further policies are also being worked on.

3. Any other reports:

None

4. Major Project Proposals

Tim Nicholls [FoDCCAG] has circulated an emailing raising the following:

- 1. An application for funding for conservation works to Marble River in Redhouse Lane Swallet – something that we have spoken about previously. I attach a summary document plus 4 appendices detailing photographs, surveys, etc. plus links to videos taken. Note that final costs are yet to be determined (but an upper end has been estimated at £3k) and we reach out to others to assist in ideas for best/most cost effective measures.*
- 2. On 18th October 2024 I wrote to Stuart, as requested, detailing conservation costs incurred in taping Slaughter Stream Cave (Long Round Trip) and Redhouse Lane Swallet to the end of the 2024 exploration season. The costs applied for were summarised with receipts totalling £1,136. We estimated a further £300 required for Redhouse Lane, increasing the application to £1,500. We weren't expecting to find another 4km + this season. However, I believe (other than Marble River which is a separate application), that the £300 provision will cover the works to date and planned completion thereof (assuming we don't find another 4km of stunning passage!).*

Attached to the email was a funding application and several appendices. This had not been received by VK for JP would circulate after the meeting. This was deferred for further consideration.

JP said she had responded to Tim with a suggestion that they could apply for a loan to the UKCCEF and then pay this back later when grant funding or other funding was procured. They could also apply for a grant from UKCCEF up to a maximum of £1000. Loans have a maximum of £3,000.

5. Cleaning in caves

Adam Russell (in Derbyshire) has worked out a method of removing new graffiti without damaging the underlying historic graffiti. JP will send his contact details to VK who will contact him for details. All agreed this is an important development that deserves to be more widely known.

Cleaning is required at Suicide Cave/Horseshoe Cave. VK is also working on gating here.

6. Any Other Business

None.

7. Date of next meeting

17th September 2025 at 7.30pm by Zoom