



Minutes for Training and Equipment Working Group Meeting

Wednesday the 27th of August

Held via Zoom

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1.0 Apologies for Absence

Pete Knight, Jo White, Vince Allkins, Chris Boardman, Richard Vooght

Note: Pete K states he will be moving to the Anchor working group. DCA are currently recruiting a new equipment officer who will replace him at these meetings.

2.0 Persons present

Aidan Kuhlmann, Rostam Namaghi, Rich Hill, Mark Richards, Ian Patrick, Kai Trusson

Minutes compiled by Katie Eavis (not present at the meeting) using the zoom recording.

No quorate number required.

3.0 Current Composition of the Working Group

	Position	Name	Initials
Convenor		(VACANT)	
Regional Training Officers	CNCC	Ian Patrick	IP
(Assistant)	CNCC	Mark Richards	MR
	CSCC	Dave Keegan	DK
	CW/OC	Rich Hill	RH
	DCA	Aiden Lumb	AL
	DCUC	Olly Rees	OR
Regional Equipment Officers	CNCC	Mark Richards	MR
(Anchor Coordinator)	CNCC	Ian Walker	IW
	CSCC	Andrew Atkinson	AA
	CW/OC	Vince Allkins	VA
	DCA	Pete Knight	PK
	DCUC	Richard Vooght	RV
	DCUC	Stephan Natynczuk	SN
Other Members	ACI	Chris Boardman	CB
	CDG	David Brock	DB
	CHECC	Kai Trusson	KT
	NAMHO	Steve Holding	SH
	NSCSU	Tony Radmall	TR
	QMC	George Plant	GP
		Bob Mehew	BM
		Jo White	JW
		Martyn Grayson	MG
		Steve Gray	SG

4.0 Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes

Proposer: AK, Seconder: KT

Favour; AK, MR, IP, KT

Abstain: RN, RH

5.0 Reports from Regional Councils

Nothing new to report from either CNCC or CW/ OC

AK introduces KT. Whilst not representing a specific region he is involved as the training officer for the Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs (CHECC) He will disseminate information to the students and also represent student interests.

6.0 Matters arising from the previous Council Meeting

6.1 The resolution of the Situation Regarding SUI

Aidan Kuhlmann & Chris Bolton to report on the arrangement the BCA has come to with SUI.

AK reports that himself and RN had two meetings with their counterparts at the Speleological Union of Ireland (SUI) that covered various topics, including

anchors. Going forward the BCA and SUI will support each other as much as possible but SUI will have their own anchor scheme, in which they will acquire, place and be responsible for their own anchors. BCA will share anchor information with SUI.

N.B: Because the Anchor Working Group has not technically been split from this group (the meeting was held one week prior to the inaugural meeting of the Anchor Working Group) this report will be made to both groups.

7.0 Items for Discussion

7.1 The New Terms of Reference & Separation of the Anchor Working Group.

The new Terms of Reference (ToR) were approved at the last Council Meeting on 22nd of July 2025. They were updated to fit a more standard format for all Terms of Reference. It will provide the basis for the current meeting, but it should be noted that it can be amended by Council at any time. Consequently, members are invited to comment on and discuss any changes they may wish to make to the ToR.

The new ToR should be read in conjunction with the new Anchor Groups ToR because the goal was to provide both groups different spaces to discuss their issues which vary quite differently. However, it should be noted that membership of one Working Group does not exclude an individual from the other working group.

- Aidan Kuhlmann

New Anchor Group

AK clarifies that now the anchor group has been formed the focus of equipment in this group will be non in-situ equipment such as SRT kits, ropes and pulleys etc. Please let AK know if you wish to be move to the Anchor group and/or be removed from this group and mailing list. However, everyone is welcome to stay on both.

Fixed aids such as bolts will be under the remit of the new Anchor WG.

Terms of Reference and Convenor

RN states the new terms of reference are in place but are deliberately quite flexible. They are intended to help information flow between the separate groups.

MR raises 2.A. which states the group is run by the training and equipment officer, however the document also mentions a convenor. MR would like clarification of the title.

AK clarifies that they will be the same person, but that the two titles are needed. Convenor as they will be the person who convenes the working group, and officer as they report to council and communicate with external agencies.

At this point there is some discussion about the various titles that could be used for this role – officer, co-ordinator, chair, convenor etc. There are pros and cons to most of these. There was also some discussion about the skills needed for the convenor/ officer role. IT proficiency, administrative skills, humility and initiative were all qualities discussed.

RN suggests people contact him or AK with people that might be appropriate to get involved with, or to run this group. BCA can provide support and mentoring for anyone looking to step into the role.

RN suggests the title isn't changed at this time, but that the issue be revisited once a person has been found to fill the role. All agreed this is a good way forward.

7.2 Looking forward – what structure and form do we want to recreational training from a national perspective to look like?

How is involvement in regional council training changing? What is working, what isn't? What does the working group want to focus on to adapt to these changes and where does it want to end up in 5 years' time?

This is a follow on from the previous point and is a chance to take a more philosophical look at training provision.

Personally, I'd like to see training evolve to facilitate and develop in cavers both a deeper and broader interest in cave science and expedition skills.

- Aidan Kuhlmann

RH asks for clarity about the kind of training needed. AK says there is scope for a large range of training in the regions. There was then some discussion about the differences between the regions, and to what extent this group should be driving the training and equipment in each region, vs each region driving its own scheme.

RN states the group needs to recruit strategically and needs a person to promote the group, but also to keep the good work the group is already doing going forward. IP would like to see two or so interested engaged people from each region attending these meetings and using these meeting for discussion and to share ideas.

IP also raised the importance of IT support. He suggests BCA should look at providing an easy-to-use IT platform that regions can use to promote their training provision. AK and RN states this can be looked at further by the BCA. RH would be keen to see more IT support for CW/ OC

AK observed the use of modern style bookings systems and social media is a trend that we need to assist regions to develop and move to. Unfortunately, it is a trend of the modern age and cannot be avoided. Email style mailing lists work but will/are steadily going to be increasingly outdated.

7.3

What can be done to support regions to facilitate a wider range of recreational caver training?

Currently, the CNCC is doing an excellent job providing recreational training for cavers at a low cost for cavers to book onto and benefit from. Other regions used to have large and successful schemes like the CNCC does but have unfortunately declined in recent years – what support is desired/can be given to assist regions to facilitate such training.

Recreational training can be more than SRT, hauling, and leadership skills. Geology, specific hazards, flora and fauna, speleogenesis, and surveying are all topics cavers may be interested in. Additionally, it does not need to be of the exact same style as the CNCC model, however my main observation is that recreational training efforts need to be more visible online and on social media for them to be successful.

- Aidan Kuhlmann

AK would like to see more training in more niche areas, e.g. expedition skills, surveying, geology, hydrology. Developing a passion and interest among cavers, as well as traditional skills like SRT.

MR asks if as an interim step, regions' training events could be displayed on a central BCA page and badged as by that specific region in conjunction the BCA T&E group. AK clarifies he would like this group to facilitate the regions in setting up and managing their own digital systems but took onboard the suggestion. He suggests good trainers might be persuaded to run training in several regions. RH says this has been done in the past, but most trainers are only willing to run a few.

RN points out that different skills need a different approach to training. He gives the example that surveying is a practical skill that needs practical teaching. He has observed in the past that mentoring has worked better in producing surveyors than large workshops. RN likes the idea of using CNCC as a guinea pig for new courses and then supporting other regions to provide training in their areas.

KT points out the need to ensure universities don't see regional training courses as necessary or compulsory and end up adversely affecting the student caving clubs.

AK is keen to make sure this all stays in the realm of recreational caving and being careful to keep it there – voluntary training, rather than anything required.

MR lists the extensive training CNCC currently provide and asks what else attendees can think of that CNCC could try. AK suggested talking to the BCRA about training for fauna and flora.

KT talked about how CHECC are providing training at their CHECC forums and how they have also been involved in setting up specific bespoke training to support university clubs. He gives the example a student union who wanted to be sure the club was able to inspect their caving equipment properly. Training was arranged with competent persons who looked at setting up a log, inspecting gear, expiry dates etc. This was presented to the university to show adequate training had been completed.

IP states CNCC would always be happy to have student trainers attend their trainings, to shadow and learn from CNCC. RN suggested the arrangement could work both ways, with regional trainers shadowing CHECC training. The high turnover of cavers in university clubs, and CHECC events leads to many capable, experienced trainers. These trainers often provide training in adverse conditions, in a variety of locations so develop resilience and adaptability. However, these appear to disappear when they leave CHECC. Getting these trainers involved in training at a regional level would be a good thing to investigate.

8.0 Any Other Business

None raised.

9.0 Details of the Next Meeting

To be decided at the meeting. Note there must be three meetings a year as per the Terms of Reference. Consequently, the second half of December or first half of January would be the suggested period in which it should take place.

It was decided at the meeting that the next meeting would be **Wednesday 10th December 7:30 via Zoom**