

## **Reports to BCA Conservation & Access Group Meeting, 16 July 2019.**

### **Item 5.b.i: Access officer summary for the CNCC area. C&A meeting July 2019**

The CNCC region covers a large area which includes the Yorkshire Dales National Park, North York Moors, Lake District and Furness Peninsula, North Pennines Geopark and Scotland. The Northern Caves Guide books describe some 2500 caves which meet their criteria of 6m or more long and deep. Perhaps it is no surprise then that CNCC have split the role of Conservation and Access officer into two as there is such a lot to do. Kay Easton is our busy Conservation Officer whilst I hold the Access Officer position although as key officers we both try to contribute to all aspects of our organisation.

I am just starting my third year as access officer having volunteered as an assistant to my predecessor for a short time. My central task is to renegotiate all our access agreements to take into account the more modern outlook and direction the CNCC have adopted. This is something that the whole committee are firmly behind. It is CNCC policy to be more representative of the whole caving community where as once, as the name suggests, we mostly concerned ourselves with the interests of the northern clubs. The other significant point which drives my task is our position on CRoW. CNCC firmly support the BCA campaign on CRoW and agree with its policy which we find very helpful in our negotiations. Many of our caves (71%) are located on access land and we find that greater awareness of this issue is helping us to make large improvements to cave access. Our informative website resource has been updated to reflect the position on CRoW and to clearly demonstrate which caves are on access land and which are not.

#### **Recent access work:**

The Langcliffe Hall estate owns most of Penyghent. Since the 1970s CNCC administered an access agreement which required advance application for a paper permit. The estate was notoriously difficult to communicate with but diligent work has paid off with a Memorandum of Understanding which replaces the old agreement. This effectively gives free access to the caves on CRoW land and free permissive access to those elsewhere on the estate.

The caves of Fountains Fell also used to be controlled by an advance application permit system. A fresh approach to the farmers resulted in change where only a courtesy visit to the farm is now needed. This was good work by one of my CNCC colleague's but also reflected the changing attitude to outdoor activities by a younger generation of farmers.

The Ingleborough Estate is run by a board of trustees following the death of Dr Farrer a few years ago. Again, a permit system had been in operation for many years and following a number of discussions it was clear the board wished to maintain a managed access system. We negotiated towards a compromise position and proposed an on-line, calendar based cave booking system which would be open to all cavers who registered. CNCC's webmaster, Gary Douthwaite developed the system and following testing it has been successfully running for 8 months.

The caves of Leck fell are some of the best in the country but the access arrangements have been long out of date. Recently CNCC withdrew support and administration of the permit system leaving it to cavers to make their own judgement on how they access these caves. This situation has been developing for several years but we are hopeful of eventually achieving a better outcome. We are also working on improving access to the caves of Casterton Fell

Smaller improvements in access have been made to some of the outlying caves such as Fairy Holes and Excalibur.

Changes in ownership always cause some concerns, most recently at High Birkwith farm. Access to the caves has been maintained but parking at the farm is now forbidden and it is a long walk to the caves.

This issue is complicated by ‘three peakers’ but it is essential to maintain access to these very important novice caves.

One point to note is that CNCC does not see itself as an Access Controlling Body (ACB). We do not ‘control’ access but endeavour to facilitate the best access we can between a landowner and cavers. Neither do we police access systems, we don’t have the resources nor the inclination to do so. Our region does not have independent ACBs or other cave management groups who control access.

Scotland has the Land Reform Act (Scotland) which gives freedom of access to caves north of the border.

**Other related work:**

One of our ongoing PR exercises is to present copies of the wonderful Caves and Karst of the Yorkshire Dales book to as many cave owning landowners as possible. To date CNCC has purchased 40 copies from BCRA for this initiative.

CNCC continues to develop a good relationship with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority engaging with the Local Access Forum and Management Plan steering group to name a few. Our overall aim is to help promote the caves as one of the special qualities of the NP and encourage awareness of caves and caving to the non-caving public.

Our chairman, Andrew Hinde, has been instrumental in establishing a collaboration with the Northern Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark, which has already borne fruit in assembling information on the hypogenic caves of the area and a joint BCRA/Geopark field meet based at Nenthead.

At this year’s AGM we adopted a mission statement which sets out clearly who we are and what we do and this is aimed principally at external bodies and other organisations. We try hard to communicate with cavers too through our excellent website and our CNCC newsletter. Probably like all regional councils we still struggle to find volunteers to fill Committee and Officer roles.

*Tim Allen*

*Access Officer – Council of Northern Caving Clubs*

## **Item 5.b.ii.a: Conservation & Access Report to CSCC AGM 18 May 2019**

I have dealt with / am dealing with the following (numbers refer to agenda items)

### **6.2 Stoke Lane / Brownes Hole Access**

I am still trying to determine land ownership boundaries. No recent reports of cavers having problems with security people but there have been reports of walker/locals being challenged when parking above Brownes’ Hole. In meantime it is still advised to refrain from visiting Brownes’ Hole.

### **6.3 Maesbury Swallet**

Cerberus Spelaeological Society have fitted the new gate. There is some surface work remaining to seal a hole that opened near the entrance causing a collapse, which occurred due to the old gate being blocked and not permitting the stream to enter the pipes. Although the owner remains the same, the woodland is now being managed by a forestry company and a number of ‘private - no access’ signs have been erected with new fencing. Contact is being made to confirm the route to cave and other sites remains unchanged.

### **6.4 Loxton Cavern**

Good progress has been made with reconstructing and cementing the boulder slope below the new entrance pipe, and both passages at the bottom are now accessible. It is expected that one, or possibly two more days should see all the work completed. Thanks need to be extended to members of Cerberus Spelaeological Society who have put in many hours of work reopening and stabilising the entrance. In preparation for reopening all the clubs with leaders will be contacted soon and access arrangements published in due course.

### **6.5 Ubley Warren**

Stabilisation work in Foot & Crutch Series has been completed. Work on the roof of the main chamber is pending confirmation from the Treasurer that the £400 approved at the February meeting is available from the BCA. Materials can then be purchased and the work progressed.

### **6.7 Cow Hole**

Hazel Manor Estate has been purchased by Yeo Valley. I have been in contact with the new landowners and access to the cave has been agreed subject to a safety inspection. A visit a while ago reported that the top of the first pitch was unstable and dangerous. As previously discussed and agreed I will install bolts as necessary on the pitches when the cave is reopened.

### **6.9 Elm Cave**

As requested I have talked to Paul Stillman about this. The existing gate on the cave has been forced open and is completely rusted. They are planning to clear the cave of abandoned digging equipment and then construct a new gate. Paul was unable to confirm who the landowner is but it is likely to be Hanson and it may well be that if contact with them is made access may be denied. I offered CSCC assistance if necessary and to provide a CSCC lock when the gate has been reinstated.

### **6.10 CSCC Locks**

The new locks have now been fitted to a large proportion of the listed 'CSCC caves', however I recently ran out and an additional batch of 20 locks had to be ordered at a cost of £313.80. I need to check on a couple of sites where locks have been supplied but I am told they have not been fitted. Standard locks have been fitted on some caves not on the list where there are specific access restrictions. I have also discovered or been made aware of a number of other sites which have had CSCC locks fitted in the past, some of which were not even updated to the last key change. It seems it has previously been the case that locks have been supplied for a number of sites that have not been recorded. If the system is properly administered and all sites recorded properly it is advantageous to supply standard locks for restricted access sites or digs etc so that in the future it should still be possible to gain access, even if those administering the sites have lost interest or where owners may have changed.

### **6.13**

Contact has been made with the AONB (see below) and approaches made to put us in contact with the new NE officer.

### **Heale Farm Cave**

A party recently visiting the cave could not get in due to the key not fitting the lock. The landowner had not changed the lock and was unaware of the problem. It is unknown who removed the lock and fitted one of their own but this doesn't give a good impression to the landowners. A new lock has been fitted but the cave has been closed by the landowner directly resulting from the lock being changed with their knowledge or ours. It is likely that this is only temporary and the access procedure can soon revert to that as previously published.

### **Ubley Warren Reserve**

I received a report that some of the mines fitted with a CSCC lock on the Ubley Warren Nature Reserve were inaccessible. On investigation I found three sites with CSCC locks and a number with locks that had been fitted by MCG. None of the locks were operational and some had completely rusted. I have been going round all the entrances and removing the locks - in some cases with great difficulty and modification to some of the gates was necessary. So far eight entrances have new CSCC locks fitted and there are probably another four to do, although the total number is confused as some are difficult to find. I have informed SWT. For information, MCG recently relocated, and are currently digging Charnel Shaft which was discovered in 1963 and subsequently 'lost'.

### **Blackmoor Reserve**

The reserve is owned by Somerset County Council and leased to the South West Heritage Trust which was set up in 2014 to look after all Somerset Museums, the Records Centre and the various County Nature Reserves. They have concentrated on the museums and Records Centre and rather neglected the nature reserves, presumably as these don't provide an income. Conveniently, as the AONB Unit is based at Charterhouse the Trust is contracting them to take over management of the reserve and delivery of the Countryside Stewardship agreement. The past situation where CSCC locks were fitted to Stainsby's Shaft and Waterwheel Swallet was unofficial. I have been in discussion with the AONB Unit and this is now an official arrangement. They have been supplied with a CSCC key. There will be unrestricted access to both sites. A meeting is planned to discuss future maintenance of entrances etc. The Outdoor Centre has not had any interest or involvement with the Reserve for many years and they do not want to be a key holder, although I have provided them with a copy as the current edition of Mendip Underground says they control access however they are likely to say it is nothing to do with them if approached.

### **Access Database**

I have been going through the access database updating entries as necessary. Many sites had inaccurate information and were considerably out of date. Many caves are missing altogether and need to be added. Currently I am not able to add additional caves to the database and I need this facility. Now I have access to the database I will endeavour to keep it up to date so that it is a useful resource. A number of access entries in the current Mendip Underground are out of date and I would suggest that MCRA is asked not to include access information in the next edition. The availability of the CSCC access database needs to be more widely publicised.

*Graham Price*

*May 2019*

(Updated following meeting)

### **Item 5.b.ii.b: CSCC Report to BCA C&A Meeting 16th July 2019**

A considerable number of C&A projects are undertaken/ being undertaken in the CSCC region. Please refer to the meeting Minutes which are publicly posted on the CSCC website. See <http://csc.org.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=documents:start>

On the subject of Minutes we notice that the BCA C&A Minutes are not up to date on the BCA website and ask that they be brought up to date. See [https://britishcaving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=conservation\\_access:meetings](https://britishcaving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=conservation_access:meetings)

Regarding the CNCC Funding Proposal. This has been discussed at the BCA Finance Committee. We draw your attention to the Minutes of that meeting (Dec 2018) and in particular Appendix 1 of those Minutes which is reproduced below. The BCA Funding of Regional Councils (FoRC) (April 2019) document is also essential homework. Both are downloadable from <https://britishcaving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=about:documents:accounts:start>

The CSCC are in favour of any positive steps to raise the standards in conservation and access. We prefer the carrot approach to developing a radical new agenda to move the techniques and implementation of C&A forward. For example seminars to share experiences and knowledge, meetings to review projects, developing mutually agreed policies and guidelines, developing, publishing and disseminating best practice, competitions to raise awareness, etc.

CSCC is not in favour of the stick approach which is what the CNCC proposal could all too easily become. There is endless scope for argument and disagreement which the C&A Committee will become embroiled in. "If your C&A work doesn't meet our standards, you won't be funded." "You can't gate that cave for access reasons" – "but we need it for conservation reasons!"

The CNCC Access Officer in his report says “There is no scrutiny of the C&A projects” This is totally false and the CNCC Access Officer knows this because he attended the Finance Committee meeting, mentioned above, where the scrutiny was set out and described to him. It is also set out in the BCA Funding of Regional Councils document, which we presume he has studied. The scrutiny consists of:

- Discussion and approval by the RC members’ and Officers at their council meetings. Those members are virtually all BCA members.
- A requirement for the RC Accounts to be externally scrutinised (FoRC Sec 4.2, Sec 6.2)
- The Scrutiny must establish that the money has been spent and is allocated under the appropriate heading. (FoRC Sec 4.2a, Sec 6.2a)
- The Finance Committee reserves the right to request to see the supporting documentation to the Scrutinised Accounts (cash book, receipts etc.) (FoRC Sec 6.4).
- A link from the relevant section of the BCA website to the regions website should show the latest set of accounts available (FoRC Sec 6.6).
- To authorise a project it should be presented to the Finance Committee. The information will include a brief description and a detailed estimate or quote giving the costs (FoRC Sec 8.3).

It should be noted that the FoRC document also states at 8.4.b “If appropriate the Finance Committee will consult the relevant BCA Committee for advice.”

There is already a high degree of transparency. All the RCs have agreed to publicly publish their accounts and Minutes on their respective websites. Other than publishing receipts, invoices and bank statements, which the CSCC is not willing to do, what more can be done?

C&A projects do need a different funding mechanism from those projects that are approved by other BCA Committees. Those Committees are distributing and sharing out a predetermined grant where the Committees expertise is required to choose between potentially competing requests. C&A is different in that it is the RCs’ core task and should not be capped by a pre-determined amount whilst at the same time BCA needs to be able to budget, hence the need for this particular funding mechanism. So far BCA has been well funded and all legitimate C&A claims have been paid. If that was to change and the RC’s were competing for limited funds then the Finance Committee would hand the task of choosing between the relative merits of projects to the C&A Committee (FoRC Sec 8.4.b).

The E&T Committee’s oversight of RC funding is a hangover from when there was a national BCA hanger placement program. That has now been devolved back to the regions and thus the E&T Committee’s roll in this respect is redundant.

CSCC approves of tools and PPE being added to the list of allowable C&A expenses. In fact we thought that tools had been discussed and approved at a previous Finance Committee meeting however this decision seems to have been lost. The other allowable expenses mentioned in the CNCC Proposed Funding Document are covered already. Travel expenses for volunteers (but not RC Officers) is specifically excluded. We believe the Finance Committee would welcome any suggestions or clarifications to the approved list.

CSCC July 2019

*David Cooke*

## **Appendix 1 :**

### **THE ROLE OF C&A COMMITTEE IN FUNDING REGIONAL COUNCILS**

Prepared for Finance Committee meeting 11/12/2018 by David Cooke

The Regional Caving Councils (RCC) are independent organisations with their own funds in addition to the core funding from BCA.

C&A in a region is handled by that RCC and BCA can't get involved unless invited to do so (BCA Constitution 2.1):

- A C&A Committee making value judgements about the work of the RCCs might be seen as contradicting this.

The Finance Committees (FC) role is to fund any C&A project subject to having the funds available. C&A funding is to be encouraged since this is a direct tangible benefit to members. A large C&A expenditure is a good thing. Hopefully we will remain in the position where the number of volunteers is the limiting factor rather than the funds available.

However the FC does need to budget ahead which the reason funding is set up as per the Funding Document with C&A work being submitted as costed projects.

To fund a C&A project the FC needs to establish that:

- That the project is a legitimate C&A project.
  - This is a role of the Scrutiniser.
- The money has been spent and spent on the project in question.
- The money has been spent for the benefit of BCA members.
- That, as a minimum, access is available to all BCA member clubs.

The question is what role does C&A having in answering those questions. I'd suggest none.

If funds were tight then the FC might be put in a position of assigning a priority to projects. At which point you are more in the position of apportioning a grant. The FC would then consult the C&A Committee as set out at 8.4b in the Funding Document.

As things stand at the moment, with BCA well funded, a RCC needs only interact with one committee to be paid. Only in exceptional circumstances would two committees be needed.

Under the CNCC proposal RCCs:

- would face increased bureaucracy and have to interact with two committees in all circumstances.
- the C&A Committee would be making the fund or not fund decision. That is a budgeting decision for and the role of the FC.
- the C&A Committee tying funding to "standards" would be seen as intrusive meddling.
  - what tape are you using? Red. You won't get funded unless you use orange.
- there are better ways to raise standards.
- from a political point of view it is better not to have a system where one group of people have to make value judgements about another group of people's work.

### **Item 5.b.iii: DCA report for the Conservation and Access Meeting - 16th July 2019**

As many regional bodies, we struggle for volunteers to do posts. We have no Conservation or access Officer at the moment, these roles are being picked up by the rest of the officers.

#### **Report from Underground Conservation Forum Meeting:**

The UCF meeting on 24 April was not as well attended as it could have been, in particular Dan Abrahams (Natural England) did not attend or send a report. Phil Wolstenholme contacted him after the meeting to ask whether we will get the monitoring funding this year; Dan was unable to secure any but might be able to get some money towards the end of the year.

Future access for Longcliffe Mine was discussed, Paul Mortimer and Phil Wostenholme will liaise to agree how it will be managed in future. The lack of progress on the Eldon Hole was raised and to try and

get this unblocked, Adam Russell agreed to contact Historic England and Natural England, and involve John Gunn and Andrew Chamberlain in this discussion. The meeting felt that it was important for the statutory bodies not to be seen by the wider caving community as an impediment to digging, as this would prejudice future cooperation, hence the importance of getting the dig restarted.

Water Icicle Mine is going to be studied as part of a PhD project looking at cryogenic calcite, while the BCRA's cave monitoring centre at Poole's Cavern is getting more interest from academics. Paul Mortimer is still looking to move forward on Odin Mine access, but he has been having trouble arranging an inspection visit with Les Riley, he hopes to get this sorted out in the near future. Approaches to the owner of Masson Quarry have not yielded any response, Adam Russell is intending to ask the Heights of Abraham about the possibility of reopening Gentlewoman's Engine Shaft as a means of access.

Following the UCF meeting, a successful and very positive meeting was had with the National Trust about local access issues where they have a vested interest in it, this shows the good relationship with have with them.

**Updates on key sites:**

Odin Mine – as reported above, after several years of no access, we are making good progress and before too long, we should see access granted again.

Longcliffe Mine and Son of Longcliffe - access for these will be forthcoming in the future, we are just awaiting a few underground issues sorting and suitable access arrangements put in place.

Christmas and Snelsnow Swallet - these sites have been on the DCA agenda for many years now, this has comeback to fruition, and we have begun work with the landowner to allow official access once again. Watch this space.

Lathkill Dale - the entrances to Mandale Mine are on a Derbyshire key, these are being left unlocked on a regular basis. Natural England want them secure, as these sites are next to a public right of ways. If this carries on, these sites could be permanently blocked.

Wardlow Sough - the unblocking of this Sough will be happening at some point this summer, the required paperwork is currently being put in place by the team.

*Wayne Sheldon  
DCA Hon Chairman  
10th July 2019*

**Item 5.c.ii: NAMHO Report to BCA C & A Meeting, 16-7-19**

Conservation & Access concerns within NAMHO are left to the areas concerned.

If needed, NAMHO will assist.

NAMHO Guidelines for recreational access to abandoned mines have recently been updated, in view of the new Mines Regulations 2014, but yet to be published. They will be available on the NAMHO web page when ready.

It should be noted that mines are exempt from the CROW Act.

*John Hine,  
NAMHO C&A rep.*

### **Item 5.d.ii: Radon Working Group Report. C&A Committee meeting, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

The Radon WG was set up following a recognition of a need to update the Radon Underground booklet as a consequence of the new Ionising Radiation Regulations which changed the threshold at which it became applicable to radon in workplace atmospheres. Work is in hand to update the booklet to provide more guidance to professional cavers and others who work underground. Also of significance is the possibility that the conversion factor between exposure in terms of Becquerels hours per metre cubed and milli Sieverts may be increased by a factor of five. This could possibly have an impact on bodies which control access to mines and possibly caves with moderate levels of radon. The Radon WG is monitoring the situation and will advise when the situation becomes clearer.

*Bob Mehew*

### **Item 6.c: Minera - Note to BCA C&A July 2019**

The entrances to the northern end of the Minera cave system, specifically the caves of Ogof Dydd Byraf and Ogof Llyn Ddu, lie within an abandoned quarry, until recently owned by Lafarge Aggregates. In the 80s and 90s the North Wales Caving Club (NWCC) led a successful campaign to get the nearby SSSI designation extended to protect the caves and prevent their destruction by further quarrying activity.

In 2003 the North Wales Caving Club (NWCC) established legitimate access to the system following an agreement with Lafarge. The first priority was to re-tape the caves and excavate a choke near the entrance to Ogof Dydd Byraf that required visitors to crawl through a quagmire of orange mud to access the cave. It was clear that this mud had been carried into the cave in the past on clothing and deposited wherever a caver had touched a wall, leaving a multitude of orange stains. This work took over six months to complete and NWCC were fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Countryside Council for Wales to pay for the large quantity of steel work that was required to secure the choke.

Since then, the NWCC has managed access to these caves for all bone fide cavers and BCA members. Many clubs have visited the main caves in the former quarry, and many have assisted with further exploration and surveying. This is especially true for the dry connection from Ogof Dydd Byraf to Ogof Llyn Ddu II that was made 2013 that with assistance from the NPC, RRCPC, CPC, CUCC and Dudley CC to name but a few. This connection created a 4km long system which was further pushed to connect to the Parc Mine caverns which are accessed from mine working to the south. Further work here may result in a connection with Ogof Llyn Parc to the south and result in a 10km + cave system.

In more recent times the quarry has been acquired by the North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) who immediately stopped access to the caves whilst they produced a management plan for the entire site. NWCC has been working closely with NWWT trying to re-establish access to the caves from the day they took control. Before starting negotiation with NWWT we contacted other clubs in the area and got support from the Wirral Caving Club and UCET for our approach, we did not receive any reply from the Grosvenor Caving Club.

Negotiations have been slow as it appears that nearly all NWWT decisions must be agreed with their board of trustees, who only appear to meet infrequently. This has taken several years, but it finally looks likely that agreement has been reached, apart from one outstanding issue. The NWWT insurers are now requesting £10m public liability cover which is twice that provided by the existing BCA policy.

When we started this negotiation it was clear that NWWT were extremely nervous about liability. We assured them that it would virtually be a continuation of the previous agreement that we had with Lafarge with some minor updating due to changes in the law, the provision of access to under 18s, which had been strictly forbidden by Lafarge and removal of the no publicity clause. This original agreement was

identical to one written by lawyers for the Grosvenor Estate in the 1990s which had been presented to NWCC on a take it or leave it basis for access to another cave in the area. These changes to the original licence were made, on behalf of NWCC, by a lawyer familiar with other cave access agreements in the UK and is also a member of BCA. This seemed to appease them to a certain extent, but it was clear they were still anxious as they had no previous experience of caving access. As with the previous licence they require that all entrances be locked to prevent access by uninsured individuals and that the previous arrangement for leaders for Ogof Dydd Byraf be continued. This cave contains the finest formations in North Wales, most of which are in the easily accessible first chamber of the cave. After the initial discovery in the 1960s, when there was no management of access, extensive, irreparable damage occurred to other parts of this cave which only stopped when access was prevented entirely in the 1970s by the quarrying company of the time who secured access with concrete.

At the moment we seem to have only three possible ways forward:

- 1) Convince NWWT to reduce the insurance requirement to match the existing BCA cover.
- 2) Purchase a “top up” policy for £700 per year, which greatly exceeds NWCC finances.
- 3) Hope that BCA increase their cover to £10m at some point.

NWCC are currently working on option 1 but we have yet to receive a reply from the trust and it could take several weeks before we get one.

*Dewi Lloyd*

### **Item 8: Draft CNCC regional funding proposal – June 2019**

Following discussions in January and some agreement on changes to regional funding rules one item was deferred to a future meeting. That item concerned who should scrutinise C&A funding to regional councils. Already BCA allow, paid according to the account, a sum aimed at reducing bureaucracy on day to day C&A work. This sum was increased from £500 to £750 in January. It is spending above this limit which is the subject of this proposal.

BCA regional funding rules state that, C&A expenditure above £750 should be presented as projects and that projects are ‘identifiable parcels of work’.

At present it is the finance committee who consider and approve this spending. However, they have stated that their main consideration is whether there is the budget available. There is no scrutiny of the C&A projects and because of this process there is very little record of what the money is spent on.

This process is at odds with the other main sub-committees of BCA who manage their own sector and approve spending. The finance committee does not approve spending requests for Training, Equipment & Technique or Youth & Development so why are they involved in this way on C&A?

C&A is one of the most active and well represented of all the BCA sub committees and should be involved in approving spending on C&A projects for two reasons. First, it will ensure that this spending is properly recorded and therefore accessible to BCA members. Secondly, the C&A committee are the BCA ‘experts’ on C&A matters. C&A may be able to offer advice on projects, share information between regions and ensure BCA principles are met.

*Proposal: That regional C&A funding for projects above the £750 limit should be placed before the C&A committee and not the Finance committee for scrutiny and approval.*

How this is budgeted in future should be discussed.

If this proposal is successful then C&A should review what BCA will fund especially regarding conservation. The guidance on which is very limited in the current document. See below;

C&A - Allowable - negotiating access to caves and mines, gating of entrances, stabilising entrances, working with landowner to maintain access, payment of peppercorn rents for access, other liaison and PR work related to maintaining access and promoting conservation.

C&A - not allowable - digging as part of new exploration.

Modern cave conservation work, in the Dales anyway, often requires funding for materials, tools, equipment, maintenance, training, PPE, consumables, volunteer travel, etc. Should the BCA be considering their funding policy on this.

*Tim Allen*  
*CNCC representative to BCA*

### **Additional Report - CNCC Conservation Officer's Report July 2019**

*(Not given at the meeting because it had gone astray en route.)*

CNCC Conservation and Access is split between two posts, currently held by Tim Allen (Access) and Kay Easton (Conservation).

Conservation work is instigated largely by cavers, and covers various categories, including clearing of historic waste from shakeholes, stock-proofing entrances to facilitate access for cavers, making safe collapsed entrances, cleaning graffiti. As an example, work in the last three months has included: stabilisation of the old dig near Christmas Pot, with a twin wall pipe fitted to the entrance shaft and a stock proof lid fitted; stabilisation of the entrance rocks at Pay Sank with a scaffold frame, and a wooden gate has been fitted. The Pot Noodle abandoned dig in Clapham Bottoms has been backfilled, and waste fencing removed from site. Degraded conservation tape has been removed from Old East passage in Gaping Gill, and been replaced with conservation pins and orange nylon tape. Formations have been cleaned in Crackpot, and conservation tape used to create a route through the Turnip Field and protect the cleaned formations from trampling.

Some projects are carried out by an individual club or small group, with support from CNCC. Others draw on volunteers from a list of around 70 people who have expressed their interest in being involved. CNCC has purchased equipment for the volunteers, most recently a capstan winch, and has provided training, for example, in use of the capstan and other winches, use of abrasive wheels, first aid training. The group has received support from Natural England, and in recent years from the Lottery funded Stories in Stone Project (now in its last year), which has paid for materials for cave conservation and a mileage allowance for volunteers.

Completed projects are publicised in the CNCC newsletter and elsewhere.

The existence of a volunteer group drawn from many different clubs, and the publicity given to completed work, has, I believe, raised the profile of cave conservation, and an acceptance that it is a concern of all of us, not something to be left to "someone else" to do.

*Kay Easton*  
*CNCC Conservation Officer.*