

NATIONAL CAVING ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting on 13 July 2001 held at Staffordshire County Council Sports and Social Club, Stafford at 10.30 am

Present

John H Cliffe (Chair) JHC,
Bob Mehew (Secretary & Pro Tem Training Convenor) BM,
Dena Proctor (N Wales ALO) DP,
Duncan Morrison (Northern ALO) DM,
Greg Jones (Forest of Dean ALO) GJ
John Crowsley (Southern ALO) JCr,
Pat Ramsden (RAM Business Services) RAM BS

Preamble

BM proposed that the service providers of administration and technical training advice be co-opted onto NCP, though they were not expected to attend every meeting. This was accepted. BM also announced D Edwards and Associates (DE&A) had agreed to provide technical training advice, subject to contractual negotiations and also undertake the review of the CIC scheme.

1 Apologies for Absence

Eric Hoole (S Wales ALO), Dave Baines (Derbyshire ALO), Paul Ramsden

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were those contained at Section 10 of the joint meeting of Training Committee, NCP & CIC Panel on 19 May 2001. Agenda item 4 would covered meetings prior to that. Section 10 was accepted as a true record.

3 Matters Arising

Using the notation of 19 May Minutes

3.1 (10.2) re previous meeting minutes - see Item 4 below

3.2 (10.4) re LCMLA review - JCr had offered to undertake the review which covers both LCMLA and associated Trainer / Assessors (T/A) subject to contract negotiation. Action complete.

3.3 (10.6) re set up this meeting - done.

3.4 (10.7) re resetting valid until dates on Section 5 - The process had been adopted from June 2001 onwards. Action complete.

3.5 (10.7 repeated) re review of content of 6 year revalidation workshop - no progress. (NB the LCMLA review contract covers the production of a specification for the 6 year revalidation workshop.) Action NCP to discuss.

3.6 (10.8) re agreement on 3 & 9 year revalidation and 6 & 12 year revalidation processes being the same - JHC stated he had briefed RAM BS. Action complete.

3.7 (10.9) re issue reminder to T/As to send returns on training or assessment work done - yet to be done. Action BM to arrange.

3.8 (10.10a) re remind T/As who have not revalidated their CIC by end of 2001 they will be discontinued from being a T/A at the end of 2001 - yet to be done. Concern was expressed about whether this was reasonable in the light of previous problems. (See also item 11 below.) Action BM to arrange.

3.9 (10.10b) re remind T/As who have not undertaken a T/A revalidation workshop in the past 2 years will be discontinued from being a T/A at the end of 2001 - yet to be done. Concern was expressed about whether this was reasonable in the light of previous problems. (See also item 11 below.) Action BM to arrange.

3.10 (10.10c) re Public Liability Insurance cover for professional cavers - An E Mail was sent on 7 June to ALOs and others. The position is that the existing BCRA public liability policy does not cover caving as a financial business or any other activities of individuals whose specific or main objective is to provide income for themselves. However, consideration is being given to seeing whether some form of professional indemnity insurance cover can be provided for T/As in respect of the statements that they make on Section 7s assessing candidates for the various awards. (Comment was made that providers of training services should have not only public liability but also professional indemnity insurance.) BM intended to get draft agreed with D Judson (as BCRA Insurance Manager) circulate to Area Panels for comment and then presuming agreement, seek NCA Council endorsement. (NB mention was also made about a separate broker offering a policy for professional cavers. Discussion with that broker indicated they could not compete with National Coaching Foundation policy, see later.) Action BM to continue.

3.11 (10.11) re T Peacock & R Hill appointment as T/As for S Wales - Documentary evidence for both appointments was confirmed and have been accepted at level 1 T/As. Action complete.

3.12 (10.12) re C Jackson being erroneously charged a T/A registration fee- fee returned with explanation. Action complete.

3.13 (10.13) re merger of South East England and Mendip Area Panel with Devon and Cornwall Area Panel to form the Southern Area Panel - JHC stated that he had not formally advised them of the agreement to merge. JCr proposed this was not needed given his presence at the meeting. Action complete.

3.14 (10.14) re T Smith T/A application for Southern - JCr advised that T Smith was producing the information for JHC to review. There was a problem with providing originals and T Smith might have to reproduce information for JCr to confirm, prior to sending to JHC. JHC proposed that applications for approving T/A status at NCP should be accompanied by a written statement from the relevant ALO supporting application and following consideration by the relevant Area Panel. Approval could be taken by the Chair of NCP between meetings with retroactive confirmation by NCP and endorsement by Training Committee. The concept was accepted. Action JCr to incorporate in LCMLA work. Action JHC to review T Smith application when submitted.

3.15 (10.15) re J Whiteley T/A status for Southern - Discussion clarified that following the merger of panels, any prior appointed T/A for the pre-merged Area Panels would now be T/A for the whole of the Southern Area Panel. JCr agreed to

sort out competence of T/As re caves and advise RAM BS. Action JCr to advise RAM BS on which T/As covered which caves & mines within Southern Area Panel.

3.17 (10.16) re J Crowsley's T/A status for Pridamsleigh - confirmed as discussed above. Action complete.

3.18 (10.16 repeat) re standing down of T/A - DM advised the meeting that R Gregory has retired from Northern Area Panel.

3.19 (13) re National Trust guidance on caving material - DM said Northern Panel had expressed concerns over the draft guidance. JHC indicated he had forwarded some reservations to G Price (C&A Convenor) and asked DM do likewise, in case they could be incorporated. BM raised point of other material being received between meetings being circulated if dead lines were short. This was accepted. A short discussion on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act raised the point about a need for a link between Area Panels and Regional Caving Councils.

4 Review of any Important Matters Outstanding from the Meeting on 31 March 2000

JHC reported that no trace has been found of official minutes for this meeting. DP had provided her personal notes of the meeting to JHC. JHC had reviewed them and not identified anything of significance which was not being dealt. The meeting agreed to not pursue any further the availability of minutes for the 31 March 2000 meeting.

5 Matters relating to Area Panels

5.1 Southern

5.1.1 JCr raised the question of whether the LCMLA 1 was pitched at too high a level for many users. The evidence is that many leaders used by Training Centres were being appointed by the Centre's Technical Adviser and thus were not within the national scheme. One possible answer was to have a site specific award offered by NCA. It would be based on the LCMLA scheme with the training requirement broadly the same, but the assessment could be reduced to a single day and focusing purely on the specific cave. A separate approach would be select some simple caves across the nation, which have effectively no site specific features and hence could be safely used by a LCMLA holder from another region without prior demonstration of site specific competence. Concern was expressed on a range of features, including conservation, the commitment of the individual the desirability of introducing a lower level award. JCr agreed to a proposal to produce a discussion document for consideration by Area Panels. Action JCr produce discussion document on pros and cons of a lower level award and also providing a national set of caves for use by LCMLA holders.

5.1.2 JCr raised the question of running LCMLA courses outside of Great Britain. NCP agreed to the running of training courses and assessments abroad, but the local vetting would have to remain focused on caves and mines in England, Scotland and Wales. A query was raised over the validity of the CIC award abroad. It arose from an EU directive on freedom of work which provided for exemptions where the work required local knowledge such as ski instructors and mountain guides. BM agreed to make enquiries with NCA's International representative as to views across the EU. Action BM to seek views of other EU Speleological National Governing Bodies via NCA's International Rep.

5.2 Forest Of Dean

GJ reported that they had lost one member and that J Wright of Clearwell Caves had been ill.

5.3 North Wales

DP reported that due to loss of access to local mines a course was cancelled in May. However, access was improving with the reduction in Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD). Pen Ultha mine entrance had collapsed. DP indicated that they would probably hold a LCMLA T/A workshop in December.

5.4 Northern

5.4.1 DM noted that their Panel had meet on 21 February. FMD had stopped all work in the north. DM noted the existence of the National Coaching Foundation (NCF) insurance scheme and sought advice on its cover. Information on NCF is on the web site. BM offered to seek the NCA's L&I Officer's help in reviewing the policy if DM would forward a copy. Action DM to forward copy of policy for BM to get view.

5.4.2 DM indicated that the Panel had felt a need to draft a constitution. JHC asked for a copy which he would circulate to all for information. Action JHC circulate copy of Panel Constitution for comment back to DM.

5.5 South Wales

No report provided. However, advice had been received that S Wales were unlikely to run a LCMLA T/A workshop in November

5.6 Derbyshire

JHC reported that D Baines indicated he would ask the Derbyshire Panel to set a December date for a T/A workshop at its next meeting in September.

5.7 LCMLA Trainer / Assessor workshop

5.7.1 In discussion, it was agreed that although the LCMLA T/A workshop should cover two days, only the first day would be mandatory with the workshop session whilst the second day would be voluntary and involve an underground trip.

5.7.2 In response to an enquiry, it was stated that the contract with DE&A only required a competent person to attend part of each LCMLA T/A workshop to make presentations and undertake a question and answer session. The contract did not require DE&A to organise workshops. This was a result of the need to reduce the anticipated work load required by the contract to a reasonable level to match the contract fee which could be afforded. As a consequence, the Area Panel would have to organise and run the workshop on a voluntary basis.

5.7.3 It was noted that the contract to formalise the LCMLA scheme did require the production of a specification for the organising and running the workshop, including a specimen agenda. It was agreed that themes should be feed into NCP for use by all workshops. NCP should then give guidance to workshops on themes to be discussed on a two year basis. The content of the workshop would thus be made up of NCP identified topics, a contribution from DE&A and locally raised topics / issues. Action All provide suggested topics for LCMLA T/A workshop.

5.7.4 It was also agreed that a T/A can attend any LCMLA T/A workshop throughout Great Britain to revalidate their approval.

6 Report of Relevant Matters from NCA AGM

6.1 BM noted that an E Mail had been circulated dated 29 June. The AGM discussed the question of conditions associated with the Sport Councils grants impacting on recreational cavers whilst approximately £17000 went to training / "professional" cavers but only approximately £8000 went to recreational cavers. (It was confirmed that a further approximately £3 to 4000 is raised through registrations which becomes "Access Fees" and is used by NCA on non "professional" training matters.) The question was raised in the AGM as to whether training could be self financed and a motion was passed stating "AGM requires Council to instruct Training Committee to review the finances of the Training Schemes with a view to making them self financing". AGM deliberately included the phrase "with a view" so as to enable a paper proposing options, rather than one outcome. BM went on to note that the grants are not guaranteed for ever and could stop at the end of a year with limited notice. As a consequence, a reserve had been built up within NCA's finances to provide for a 2 to 3 month wind up contract with both service providers.

In thinking about undertaking the work to meet the resolution, BM proposed that the tasks being undertaken by every one associated with the two schemes should be listed and estimates of the time required to undertake them be put down. The analysis should also list who is doing what in terms of paid effort and voluntary effort from all sources both within and out with the schemes. One person has indicated an interest in undertaking the work, but he has yet to confirm. The aim would be to get the information ready for the Training Committee in September for them to go over the work to get a draft for the October NCA Council meeting. BM warned of potential implications from the Sports Councils picking up on this work and forcing the issue.

BM also noted the concern subsequently expressed by a representative of the South Wales Panel over the views of the NCA AGM and the way the schemes have been operated in the past. DM wished it to be minuted that he did not recognise any such expression of concern since in his view the previous Training Coordinator had improved the scheme. BM conceded that he was not referring to the work of the previous Training Coordinator, rather the recent intervening period.

A debate was held over alternative sources of income, the value of the schemes to society, the arguments used with Sports Councils and other to justify the schemes and their funding. The debate also covered tasks and effort provided by persons to maintain the operation of the scheme. Concern was also expressed about the nature of the perception of the schemes and their need amongst both cavers and other persons such as the government. The suggestion was made that the status of the schemes and award holders needed to be improved. Comment was also made about the schemes being undertaken by another body than NCA, but the status of NCA as the national governing body was recognised. It was agreed that the discussion could not be concluded in a single session. BM asked that any follow up comments be forwarded to him.

7 Matters relating to LCMLA Trainer Assessor Workshops

7.1 Organisation of a LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshop

A debate on the running and financing of Trainer Assessor Workshop took place. It was agreed that some agenda items should be decided by the NCP. The Technical Training Advisory Service Provider (DE&A) should attend part of the workshop to provide a session. The local Panel running the workshop should take up the other part of the agenda. It was anticipated that the LCMLA contract would provide a written process for running a workshop.

Following some debate, it was agreed that there should be a flat charge for attendees to any workshop. This would exclude any accommodation costs. The profit or loss of any workshop should be covered by NCA who would seek to break even over a longer term. The question of whether the course Director and other presenter(s) should be charged or be paid was not resolved. Areas running workshops would forward to NCA receipts from the work shop and also bill NCA for costs. Following discussion on registration costs, it was agreed that the cost should be incorporated into the annual registration fee. It was agreed to keep LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshops separate from other workshops (LCMLA & CIC 6 year revalidations and CIC Trainer / Assessor). It was agreed that BM would draft some proposals. Action BM to draft proposals for further consideration.

7.2 Records on LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshop

A debate was held on the status of attendance at LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshops. The state of records was debated. It appeared that some Trainer / Assessors had confused their attendance at LCMLA Trainer / Assessor and CIC revalidation workshops. It was expected that a short report would be prepared following each workshop which should as a minimum list the attendees which would clarify the situation. Comment was also made on the desirability of a summary sheet to go in the log book which would reflect the status of a LCMLA Trainer / Assessor.

7.3 Dates and Venues of next LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshops

Workshops were expected to take place in North Wales and Derbyshire before the end of the 2001. Action DP & D Baines to confirm. Dates were requested from Mendip and Northern in 2002. Action JCr & DM to advise.

The current list of Trainer / Assessors was requested. Action RAM BS to circulate on a routine basis a Trainer / Assessor list, including E Mail addresses where available to all ALOs.

A debate was held around whether the workshop could be undertaken during the week. No objection was foreseen and would probably be best answered by response to the advert. It was agreed to hold the general Trainer / Assessor letter until the dates were confirmed. BM also agreed to insure information was included in Speleoscene. Action BM to pass information on LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshop to Speleoscene.

7.4 Maintenance of status as LCMLA Trainer / Assessor

It was confirmed that Trainer / Assessors who failed to attend a LCMLA Trainer / Assessor Workshop or CIC revalidation workshop by the end of the year and who should have done so, should be suspended unless they appealed. In discussion over criteria, it was agreed that any appeal should be dealt with by correspondence outside of a NCP meeting. It was confirmed that the Trainer / Assessor agreement was sent out but there was no requirement to sign them so as to avoid any implication of a contract of employment. It was agreed that the Trainer / Assessor agreement should be reviewed to ensure that it was up to date

with references to new topics such as child protection. Action BM / JHC to review and update.

Note was made of the few Trainer / Assessors who did not hold CIC qualification. It was agreed that any person who wished to become a Trainer / Assessor must accept the need to revalidate their basic qualification (CIC or LCMLA), otherwise they would not be acceptable to become a Trainer / Assessor. In response to a query, no person was known to the meeting who held a "honouree" status as Trainer / Assessor. A debate was held on the additional demands for an LCMLA holder, given that the award did not deal with an individual's ability to instruct. The previous Training Coordinator had proposed that such persons should update their Trainer / Assessor status by participate in a training or assessment session and be assessed for their skills. It was accepted that their competence to instruct had been determined when they first achieved Trainer / Assessor status. It was agreed that the proposal was not required.

8 Matters from RAM Business Services

8.1 Method of calculating "Valid until" Dates

BM described the understanding of the previous system and the change brought in by the last Training Committee's decision to permit "resetting the clock" following passing a practical based Section 7 assessment, c.f. Day 4, 5 & 6. Emphasis was made on the need for a practical element being present in the Day. Various points were discussed. BM referred to an E Mail which provided detail on the process sent on 29 June and sought clarification on several points. It was agreed that period of grace should be given for some time to permit the system to bed in and for the reminders to take effect. Following some discussion, it was agreed that BM would readdress the process for subsequent debate. It was agreed to permit revalidation how ever early Action BM to readdress how to deal with late revalidations.

8.2 R Jefferies Valid Until Date Appeal

BM described the details of Mr Jefferies issued Section 5 and the grounds for his appeal for shifting the valid until date to reflect the new reset the clock approach. The appeal was allowed. Action RAM BS / BM to reissue Section 5. It was further agreed that appeals for resetting the clock would be permitted back to 1 January 2001.

8.3 6 Year Revalidation Workshop

A query was raised about keeping RAM BS informed of running 6 Year Revalidation Workshops, cancelling them and the role of the ALO. A discussion was held about pre organising workshops. It was accepted that Areas could either offer fixed and hence pre advertised workshops or else organise workshops in response to demand or both.

It was agreed that a person taking a 6 Year Revalidation Workshop, must take it in their area or in cases where the person has sites of more than one area, in one of those areas. This was based on a need to ensure local knowledge was covered.

Following discussion, it was agreed that BM should write to S Baggs as the caving representative for the Association for Heads of Outdoor Education Centres, to draw to his attention the fact that we now have a large number of Section 5s which appear to be beyond their valid until dates and that Heads of

Outdoor centres are reminded that Sections 5s are no longer valid beyond that date. Action BM write to S Baggs.

9 Minimum Age for Entering the LCMLA Scheme

A query had been raised over a person aged 17 registering on the LCMLA scheme and attending a training course before they become 18. Following discussion, it was agreed that the view from first principles was that a person of any age could register and could record experience. However, they must be beyond their 18th birthday before undertaking a training course or be granted exemption from training or assessment. The principles were accepted.

10 Correspondence

10.1 D Gallivan

Mr Gallivan wished to apply for LCMLA Trainer / Assessor status (presumably in the Northern Area). It was agreed that any such request be passed to the relevant ALO for the ALO to deal with.

10.2 S Baggs

As previous noted, S Baggs had written indicating he was now the caving representative for the Association for Heads of Outdoor Education Centres. He requested briefing for onward transmission to the Association. It was agreed that he should be provided with appropriate material.

10.3 A Pearce

Mr Pearce had E Mailed with a problem about his inability to find a 6 year revalidation course. It was noted that it had already been agreed that enforcement of revalidation course would not start until 2002. Thus he was clear to continue to undertake training and assessment work. Action BM to advise A Pearce.

10.4 Downgrading from CIC to LCMLA status

A request had been received from a CIC holder on down grading. The view of the NCP was sought. Following discussion, it was agreed that the 6 year LCMLA revalidation process should form the basis of the assessment using a suitable trainer / assessor. Action JHC to sort out.

11 Review of the LCMLA Scheme

It was announced that J Crowsley had made a bid for undertaking the contract.

12 Applications for exemption and combining assessment days

DM raised a problem over a record which indicated that a candidate had received a course from a non approved trainer, although the date of the course preceded the requirement for approved trainers. The application was discussed and it was agreed that the candidate should apply for an exemption with a copy of the log book plus a £25 fee. It was agreed that the application could be dealt with by correspondence outside the meeting. Action DM to advise candidate to apply for an exemption. The more general question was raised as to whether there was a time limit between attending a training course and taking assessment. No agreed position was achieved.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The date was set for 9 November 2001. Members were requested to remember to bring their diaries to the next meeting so that dates for next year could be set. It was indicated that the following meeting should be in February and thereafter should follow a pre-agreed pattern.

The meeting was closed at 2.45 pm.