

MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2004 AT THE HUNTERS LODGE INN

The Mendip Caving group is a Registered Charity No. 270088

Chairman: Jonathan Roberts

Present: 23 Full members

Others present (non voting): 2 probationary, 4 associate, 4 guests

1. Apologies for absence

Geoff Beale, Ben Cooper, Lyn Furneaux, Pete Goddard, Doug Harris, Bill Richards and Dave Tooke.

2. Minutes of the AGM held 5th April 2003

No matters arising. Accepted *nem con* as a true record of the meeting. Signed by the chairman.

3. Officers' Reports

These were circulated in advance of the meeting with the newsletter except for the Tacklemaster's and Recorder / Librarian' report. The latter was presented at the meeting. Each officer gave a brief summary of his or her report.

Secretary

Discussions were centred on the current status of the Public Liability Scheme. Members were reminded that all members must pay insurance, whether the caving or non-caving option, as well as their subscription fee for the club to be insured. Some members were still being chased for their insurance fee. The fee was based upon a BCA 'guestimate' of the number of active cavers. At the time of the meeting 2000+ individual insurance policies have been paid with non-cavers making up 25% of the total. Some large clubs are still in the process of paying up so the total should rise further. It is considered that the national scheme in its first year will probably meet its objectives.

Concern was expressed that we could lose members over the issue. The Hon. Sec. reminded the meeting that subs had in fact been cut last year to £25.00 so the net increase for a non-caver is actually only £1.00 over the previous year. It was briefly discussed whether subs should include or exclude the minimum insurance element.

Action: Subscription rates and insurance to be raised at an EGM to be held instead of the traditional half yearly meeting.

Treasurer

A good year in terms of expenses but a quieter year for guest bookings. General discussion ensued on whether there were any underlying reasons. It was mentioned that the £2.50 guest fee might make us seem 'too cheap/low quality'.

Action: Committee to take into consideration the sentiment of the meeting.

The Treasurer clarified the position on day fees and the Cottage fund.

Action: The split between cottage fund and general fund to be re-included in future Treasurer's reports

Examiners

The role has changed a bit over the years as a result of changing Charity Commission rules. The examiners mentioned that it was sometimes difficult to track the cottage booking sheets and hence it was suggested that each sheet should be numbered. For next year (2004/05) accounts it was requested that the

investments details and Custodian Trustees reports should be included with the Treasurers reports.

Action: Examiners, Treasurer and Custodian Trustees to discuss further

Editor

40 members are now being sent newsletters via email. The meeting thanked the Editor for producing such a well laid out and colourful newsletter. A discussion followed as to whether ex-members could be sent a copy to help keep in touch. Concern was expressed that one of the privileges of membership is free publications. It was pointed out that the website does have links to Committee members contact details if old members wanted to get in touch.

Action: Editor to update Mike Lovell on how many copies he needs to print. The recorder needs a minimum of 50 copies for the exchange newsletters.

The club also has a Yahoo site, which is controlled by a moderator (Martin Rowe). The newsletter might be more suitable for publication on this type of site as the newsletter has personal information not suitable for a normal web site. Discussion followed on the possibility of a report of electronic communication channels at the next AGM.

Cottage Warden

The Cottage Warden stated that this post would be much more suitable for someone with more time. It was also noted that the work weekend was attended by the same old faces. The lounge floor is now starting to rot by the kitchen.

Library extension. A few things still need finishing off including the roof gully.

Action: Cottage Warden to put a list on the notice board and in the newsletter of the remaining tasks.

Tackle Master

No report provided and the tackle master was not present at the meeting. New lifeline and spreaders have been ordered. The SRT rope will be taken to Slovenia for the 50th expedition – do we have sufficient stock.

Action: Tackle Master to provide a report for publication in the newsletter. The meeting felt that this is an important aspect of the clubs records.

Recorder

It was mentioned that we are not receiving all the exchange newsletters that we should be.

Action: Recorder to chase up other clubs newsletters.

Caving Secretary

It was highlighted that the Slovenia 50th anniversary trip is intended as a mixed ability trip suitable for all members of the club. There will be flyers available at Nordrach Cottage.

Social Secretary

The social calendar for the 50th anniversary year was briefly outlined.

Other officers

Conservation and Access: the Upper Flood lock needs looking at and volunteers needed for the Bone Hole lid.

Rescue Warden: nothing extra to report.

Custodian Trustees

The financial position has improved on the previous year. Yields are fine.

Gift Aid

Note that we can no longer claim on dividends after April 2004. Gift Aid covers the tax year so we are still entitled to claim April 2003-2004.

A discussion followed surrounding the 25% rule on Gift Aid and the benefits of membership. What is the effect of the additional insurance payment on our Gift Aid claim? Where is insurance as a benefit of membership derived - the BCA or MCG? The club now needs to have insurance to meet its objectives. This was discussed at length without resolution.

Action: Fiona Kempston to obtain advice and report back to the Committee and Custodian Trustees.

4. Election of Honorary Officers

The following officers were elected unopposed and unanimously:

Secretary: Lee Hawkswell
Treasurer: Jacky Ankerman
Editor: Yvonne Rowe
Recorder/Librarian: Tim Francis
Social Secretary: Linda Milne

The following have agreed to be considered for co-option at the next Committee meeting:

Cottage Warden: Wayne Hiscox
Tackle Master: Dave Tooke
Caving Secretary: Richard Carey

5. Election of other officers

The following were elected unopposed and unanimously:

Rescue Warden: Keith Knight
Conservation and Access Officer: Peat Bennett
Gift Aid: Malcolm Cotter

6. Election of examiners 2004/2005

It proved difficult to find volunteers for the examiners posts but eventually the following were elected unopposed and unanimously:

Mike Lovell and Ben Cooper

7. Amendments to the Constitution and Rules

- A) In section 9 General Meetings, point (ii) should have the word 'audited' replaced by the word 'examined' and point (iv) should have the word 'auditors' replaced by the word 'examiners'.

(Proposed: Jacky Ankerman, Seconder: Tim Francis)

The Hon Treasurer explained to the meeting that this text should have been replaced several years ago when 'auditors' were redefined as 'examiners'. The proposed amendment was passed *nem con*.

- B) Proposed addition to paragraph 2. OBJECT. "The object of the Group, is for the benefit of the public, the furtherance of all aspects of the **exploration**, scientific study and conservation of caves **and their features**".

(Proposed Malcolm Cotter, Seconder Norma Cotter)

It was felt that a revised definition would better encompass the activities and objectives of the Group. After discussion of the wording was amended and passed *nem con* as follows:

2. OBJECT. "The object of the Group, is for the benefit of the public, the furtherance of all aspects of the exploration, scientific study and conservation of caves and related features".

Action: Malcolm Cotter to contact the Charity Commission to find out what the procedure is for changing the objectives of the Group.

8. Motions

No other motions were proposed.

9. Any other business

- Cottage keys for new members. More cotags are now required. The Cottage Warden will order some more
- Cottage expenses. The Committee requested that members check with the Committee before making potential purchases for cottage that they wish to be reimbursed for.
- Upper Flood. A request was made for another 'active' local leader to help share the burden of guest trips.
- It was agreed that the half yearly would be on the October member's weekend

10. Date and venue of next Annual General Meeting

This was agreed as being on the 9th April 2005 at 10.30am in the Back Room of the Hunters Lodge Inn.