



MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2011 AT  
Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy  
The Mendip Caving Group is a registered Charity No. 270088  
**Chairman: Linda Milne**

Full Members present: 25

**Others present (non-voting) : 3 (2 probationary, 1 associate members)**

Attendance List:

Pete Bennett, Hayley Clarke, Karen Fendley, Tim Francis, Biff Frith, Joan Goddard, Doug Harris, Julie Hesketh, Fiona Kempston Roy Kempston, Tony Knibbs, Denise Knibbs, Keith Knight, Linda Milne, Brian Pittman, Jenny Plumb, Russ Porter, Bernard Reeves, Mike Richardson, Martin Rowe, Yvonne Rowe, Brian Snell, Kev Speight, Sue Speight, Bob Templeman, Pat Walsh, Ed Waters and Mark "Buddy" Williams.

**1. Apologies for absence**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Andrea Russe

1.2 No requests for postal votes had been received.

**2. 2.1 Minutes of the previous AGM held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

**2.2 Minutes of the Mendip Caving Group E.G.M. held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2010**

**3. Agreement that the minutes (above) are a true record of that meeting .**

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were examined and as there were no comments it was proposed by Roy Kempston and seconded by Kevin Speight to accept the AGM minutes as a true and accurate record and agreed unanimously.

3.2 The minutes of the E.G.M. were examined and as there were no comments it was proposed by Mike Richardson and seconded by Kevin Speight to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record. and carried unanimously.

**4. Matters arising .**

4.1 Item para 2, action completed.

4.2 Item 4.1 electric bills, completed.

4.3 Item 4.4 Gift Aid resolved at the following EGM.

4.4 Item 5.2 action completed

4.5 Item 5.5 action ongoing.

4.6 Item 6.2 action ongoing, Karen Fendley to liaise with Ben Cooper to ensure action is completed in a timely fashion, but before the 2012 AGM.

4.7 Item 12.03 action completed.

4.8 Item 12.04 Discussed and agreed not viable to proceed.

**4.8.1 Action: Bob Templeman to establish the legal requirement to deposit MCG publications with the British Library.**

4.9 Item 12.09 Committee subsequently decided not to have a stand.

4.10 Item 7 Ratified at the EGM held at Northdrach Cottage, on 3 July 2010.

4.11 Item 10 Ratified at the EGM held at Northdrach Cottage, on 3 July 2010.

## 5. Officers reports and matters arising from those reports.

### 5.1 Secretary's Report 2010 – 2011 *Mike Richardson*

Mike summarised his report, as previously circulated. In the absence of comment, Karen Fendley thanked the outgoing Secretary for his work during his tenure of office.

### 5.2 Treasurer's Report 2010 – 2011 *Karen Fendley*

Karen read out her report, which had not been circulated with the agenda. This year has been a little quieter for the accounts than last year! We started the year with £200 (approx) in the accounts from all the work done on the cottage and end the year with £2000 (approx) in the accounts. The Savings accounts are steady but the interest payments are obviously still down from previous years. The running of the accounts has moved from using the (Microsoft) Money software to using spreadsheets. This is still under development and is looking much easier to use and report on than the previous system. This year we have had a steady membership base and at the moment have 117 members with 17 having resigned at the start of the year (this compares with 14 who resigned last year). The cost of membership has stayed the same again this year as has the BCA portion. This year's focus will be on raising money for the extension and looking at cottage improvements such as Cavity wall Insulation and Heating. The Committee have already agreed a budget for the heating and Russ Porter is actively working on this. The Committee would also like to ask for any fund raising ideas and VOLUNTEERS (!) to help with this. There appear to be several options for possible Grants and, again, the Committee would like to ask members to help with this if they have any experience in Bid chasing. The subject of Day Fees was raised at the last AGM and it has been noted that this could still be an issue. Many people came only for an evening or come to the Cottage on a Saturday morning, use the gas and electricity cooking breakfast etc, have a shower and then go home having paid nothing except perhaps a few pence in the shower donation box. To try to help with this a bigger sign is to be put on the shower donation box and I would urge members to contribute to the club as best they can. Many thanks to Sue (and Kev!) who was co-opted to help with the membership renewal process. It is an arduous time (especially as most of the work is done in the lead up to Christmas) and frustrating as people take so long to send their forms back and pay. This year the forms were again sent out before Christmas and there were still people wanting to renew their membership in late February. Several members needed to be chased several times and even more needed forms resent as they had been lost. This costs the club unnecessary money and time. From next year, the Committee will be much stronger on the cut off time and those not renewing by the date on the form will need to reapply as provisional members. On the subject of subs renewal I would like to put in a request that more members pay their subs by telephone or electronic transfer. It has appeared to be a much easier system than sending in multitudes of cheques through the Post Office. It is a simple process and adding a note in the transfer to say who it's from makes it even clearer. Those members who do pay by direct transfer will, of course, still need to return their Information Martin Rowe responded by reminding the meeting that £5.00 of the annual membership subscription was set aside in the accounts as a contribution to day fees. In answer to what the annual running cost of the cottage was £3,800 to £4,000. The Committee was reminded that any increase for 1 Jan 2012 would require approval at an EGM

#### 5.2.1 *Actions:*

- a. *Treasurer to publish the "examined" accounts in due course ;*
- b. *the Committee to review the cottage fees and membership fees and submit their findings and or proposals to an EGM or a Half Yearly meeting in the Autumn.*

### **5.3 Caving Secretary's Report 2010 – 2011 *Kevin Speight***

Kevin summarised his report, as previously circulated in the agenda.

### **5.4 Cottage Warden's Report 2010 – 2011 *Doug Harris***

Doug summarised his report, as previously circulated in the agenda.

### **5.5 Tackle master's Report 2010 – 2011 *Brian Snell***

Brian summarised his report, as previously circulated in the agenda.

### **5.7 Recorder/ Librarian's Report 2010 – 2011 *Bob Templeman***

Bob summarised his report, as previously circulated in the agenda.

### **5.8 Social Secretary's Report 2010 – 2011 *Jenny Plumb***

I see a large part of my role as representing the MCG socially and spreading the word that we are an active club full of decent people. So as part of this (and because its fun) I have been networking across Mendip and working hard to amend some of the ancient myths and folk lore that have surrounded the group and work on our relationships to neighbouring clubs, encouraging others to do the same. As part of this I opened up our Summer BBQ and invited the neighbours. We hosted a very well attended BBQ which saw cavers from across many clubs at the cottage. There was high jinx as one of the BEC on crutches was locked in the Cellar dig in the garden and we found stickers around the cottage. Good humour and camaraderie were displayed on all sides. September saw the MCG heading off to Spain on expedition, and in November we had a 'Spanish Firework Fiesta' to celebrate their achievements. Club members prepared and served bucket loads of traditional Paella and we were treated to video and photographic presentations. For a Grand finale the 'spectacular' fireworks were as amusing as they were awe inspiring. The MCG Christmas meal was again this year was a buffet from the Castle of Comfort, and though the food was of very high quality and a good time was had I feel that the general vibe is that we should look and going back to doing our own catering next year so I will be looking for volunteers to take that project on! Part of the reason for outsourcing food was the reduced need for preparation and the high numbers of people wanting to attend. The later part of last year and the beginning of this year I have not been able to get to Mendip a frequently as I would have liked but there has still been a flurry of activity. Tucked away in Berkshire I have remotely been organising the 2011 AGM Dinner. Numbers are slightly less than last year, 2010 saw 77 attendees and this year we have 56 with far less using the coach. This does pose problems when estimating coach costs, meal prices and beer in the lead up but is still a good turn out. Bringing it home for 2011 this year its all about us, as well as our guest speaker Andy Sparrow there will short presentations from group members about our group. Dig updates and a bit of history. And for those who missed it, The Spanish Expedition presentation. I look forward to an action packed 2011, I've already been approached by club members who are keen and full of ideas, keep it coming and we'll stick it in the diary!

### **5.9 Other Officers' Reports**

#### **a. Trustees' Report Year ending 31st December 2010 *Ben Cooper***

In the absence of Ben, Roy Kempston read out a summary his report, which follows in full:

Our funds have recovered again this year and are close to the 2007 peak. Overall performance this year was 13.9%, down on last years massive 16%. Income from stocks was very good, with an average return of 4.3%, far better than our COIF investment account which returned only 0.5%.

#### **Investment Valuation and historic comparison**

	31-12-2007	31-12-2008	31-12-2009	31-12-2010
Henderson Global Care	£3,498.90	£2,267.33	£2,719.43	£3,124.22
Henderson (New Star)	£3,104.74	£1,591.02	£1,900.60	£2,168.09
IFDS Brown-Shipley (Solus)	£2,004.97	£1,239.35	£1,767.82	£1,969.49
M&G Charifund Acc	£10,166.48	£7,358.47	£8,514.74	£9,633.19
M&G Charifund Inc	£5,086.69	£3,446.45	£3,752.70	£4,027.63
Premier (Credit Suisse)	£2,455.49	£1,699.78	£1,920.96	£2,050.89
Rathbone Income Fund	£2,870.39	£1,860.13	£2,289.42	£2,717.08
Schroders US	£2,897.18	£2,542.69	£3,151.67	£3,955.22
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>£32,084.84</b>	<b>£22,005.22</b>	<b>£26,017.34</b>	<b>£29,645.81</b>
COIF	£5,101.38	£5,380.60	£5,439.31	£5,474.62
<b>Total investment value</b>	<b>£37,186.22</b>	<b>£27,385.82</b>	<b>£31,456.66</b>	<b>£35,120.43</b>

### Unit Prices and historic comparison

Investment	Unit Price 31/12/2009	Unit Price	Unit Price Growth
Henderson Global Care ...	£0.7824	£0.8669	11%
IFDS Brown-Shipley (Solus)	£1.2597*	£0.3851	9%
M&G Charifund Acc ...	£110.0266	£1.4034	11%
M&G Charifund Income	£10.7220	£124.4791	13%
New Star Higher Income...	£0.3520	£11.5075	7%
Premier (Credit Suisse)	£1.4400	£1.5374	7%
Rathbone Income Fund	£5.6547	£6.4226	14%
Schroder US Smaller Co...	£9.8330	£12.3400	25%
<b>TOTAL Investments</b>			<b>13.5%</b>

#### b. Gift Aid Report 2010 *Julie Hesketh*

Having taken on the role of claiming Gift Aid (GA) a year ago, it has been a much harder task than I anticipated. There are a number of elements to the task:

##### **1. Reviewing which members wish to claim GA and those who either don't wish to claim or aren't eligible as they pay no UK tax**

This task was completed last autumn. A list of members who haven't filled in a GA form was sent to the Committee. The Committee can now ask those on the list to complete a (new-style) form and also issue the form new members joining the MCG. This will ensure that as many people as possible have declared their intentions and that the club will no longer 'chase' those who either do not pay UK tax or chose to opt out of GA.

##### **2. Reviewing and updating the MCG Gift Aid form for Members to complete**

On receipt of the paperwork, it was clear, through my knowledge of members of the club,

that many members (including myself!) had completed the GA form incorrectly. Some members hadn't completed and filled in a form at all. This might have been because they do not pay UK tax or because they wished to opt out of GA. I have now updated the form, with the Committee's agreement and will ensure that it appears on the MCG website soon.

### **3. Registering with HMRC to nominate myself as the responsible person for the MCG to claim GA**

To reclaim Gift Aid, the club has to nominate me to make a claim on its behalf. It has taken a whole year for us to unpick precisely what information HMRC needs to process my application. The form is fiendishly complicated and written in a language only HMRC officials understand!

After much head-scratching, my application was sent off early in 2011 with the Treasurer's assistance and only this week (late March 2011), I received a letter from HMRC stating that it requires additional information. Frustratingly HMRC has the additional information it needs (a HMRC Reference Number not a Charity Commission Number) but its' letter is clear that the onus is on the MCG to fill the form in correctly. I am working on how to obtain the correct reference number from HMRC.

### **4. Claiming the GA**

*Introducing a Gift Aid small donations scheme. This will allow charities to claim Gift Aid on up to £5,000 of small donations per year without the need for Gift Aid declarations'. I doubt that this will help us for the immediate claim but hopefully in future years the process of claiming will be sped up considerably. It should also allow the MCG to claim GA on cash donations e.g. the box in the shower room, donations made from raffles and other fund-raisers and potentially other physical (non-cash) donations such as equipment and expendable items for the cottage (furniture, cleaning equipment etc. etc.).*

### **c. Conservation and Access Officer's Report *Mike Richardson***

I have not been to all of the CSCC meetings, they have an unfortunate tendency to fall on MCG club weekends. However, two issues stand out. The first was an attempt to impose a national anchor placement policy which required those placing anchors to be competent in SRT, which is rather excessive on Mendip. Also, it seemed the BCA wanted the regional bodies to vote while withholding information about the policy. This was duly seen off, and CSCC has its own more appropriate policy. The second issue, which has some effect on MCG, has been repeated attempts to break the grill over Stainsby's Shaft, including use of the impact of rocks lobbed onto the grill. To date the grill remains secure; it is not obvious who is doing this.

### **d. Rescue Wardens Report 2010 - 2011 *Miguell***

In the absence of Miguell, Kevin Speight reported that in liaison with the MRC, he was arranging a rescue practice. Details of which would be announced later.

## **6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2011 - 2012**

It was unanimously agreed to take the vote on block and all were subsequently unanimously elected in a vote. It was announced that the new secretary had agreed take on the role of hut bookings.

## **7. Election of non-Committee Posts**

**7.1 Rescue Warden:** As no nominee received in advance, Kevin Speight offered to take on the role. Following nomination by Mike Richardson and seconded by Tim Francis. He was elected by 24 votes for and none against.

**7.2 Gift Aid:** As no nominee received in advance, Julie Hesketh agreed to carry on and following nomination by Tim Francis and seconded by Martin Rowe, Julie was unanimously elected.

**7.2 Conservation Officer.** *Note: The role of Conservation Officer is vested with the Secretary.*

**8. Election of Examiners 2011 – 2012**

Both Roy Kempston and Linda Milne agreed to stand and were both appointed by the meeting.

**9. Motions**

None received

**10. Any other business**

**10.1 Upper Flood**

After discussion it was agreed that the Committee and Upper Flood leaders should develop a strategy paper of what the Group wishes to achieve with emphasis on conservation and that we are a registered charity etc and redefine the requirements of becoming a Upper Flood leader (both group and guest based on the Cuthbert's guest leader system) before approaching SCC to formalise the current access agreement.

**10.2 Cottage Extension**

Biff Frith, updated the meeting as to the current stage of the extension, which still awaits a preliminary enquiry with the local planning department.

**10.3 Central Heating**

It was announced that the Committee had sanctioned a gas fired central heating installation in the cottage with a budget of £5,000.00 Progress of the project will be announced in the newsletter.

**10.4 Web Site**

The password protected area of the website is to be activated, which, amongst other things, will enable the Newsletter to be downloaded by the members. The practice of e-mailing such documents will then cease.

***10.4.1 Action: Martin Rowe***

**10.5 Grants etc**

The J Rat legacy of £97.00 had yet to be spent and the meeting agreed that this should be spent, on an appropriate Memorial Prize Trophy, to be made in titanium and to awarded annually, in accordance with the terms of J Rat's will.

***10.5.1 Action: The Committee.***

**10.6 Honorary Membership**

On behalf of the Committee, Karen Fendley announced that Martin and Yvonne Rowe, had been awarded Honorary Membership who have both given exceptional service to the group over a large number of years.

**11. Date and venue of next Annual General Meeting.**

Saturday 24th March 2012, Time: 10:00am Venue: Hunters Lodge Inn, Priddy

***11.1 Action. Secretary to make the arrangements***