



**MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 5th APRIL 2008 AT
NORDRACH COTTAGE**

The Mendip Caving Group is a registered Charity No. 270088

Chairman: Tim Francis

Full members present: 22

Others present (non-voting): 8 (7 probationary and 1 non-members)

Attendance list: Charlie Alison, Adrian Bell, Peat Bennett, Bill Chadwick, John Evans, Karen Fendley, Tim Francis, Lewis (Biff) Frith, Jeremy Gilson, Joan Goddard, Doug Harris, Russ Hunt, Fiona Kempston, Roy Kempston, Tony Knibbs, Linda Milne, Louisa Minahan, Michael Norton, Bryan Pittman, Gary Porter, Russell Porter, Steve Porter, Bernard Reeves, Martin Rowe, Yvonne Rowe, Bob Templeman, Mary Templeman, Don Vosper, Pat Walsh, Allan Wicks.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from 17 members.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 23/03/07.

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

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Roy Kempston. Seconded by Martin Rowe. All agreed.

4. Matters arising

Conservation and Access report 2006. Roy asked whether the letter to Kate Lawrence at Somerset Wildlife Trust had been sent regarding Charnel Shaft investigations. This had been done but the shaft in question proved not to be Charnel. It has been renamed ICBINCS (I Can't Believe It's not Charnel Shaft).

Radio Location of Upper Flood. This exercise is to be re-arranged following an unsuccessful attempt in 2006.

MCG Charitable Status. Roy asked if we had checked our charitable status. Tony had raised this last year as some organisations were losing their charitable status. Ron Saunders has informed the committee that Pete Mathews had drafted the original words in the constitution and that he (Ron) was not aware of any challenge to our charitable status.

5. Officers reports and matters arising from those reports.

5.1. Secretary's report 2007-8 Mike Richardson

Mike re-iterated his written report. Roy asked what the ideal membership level is and do we

have a maximum. The answer was no as it very much depends how active the membership is. We have peaked at about 135 people.

Today's AGM clashed with the CCC AGM which Charlie Alison was attending on behalf of the MCG. Charlie would be able to advise the date for next years meeting later today so that we can avoid the same clash occurring next year. Charlie reported later that the meeting date for next year's CCC AGM is 4th April 2009.

5.2. Treasurer's report 2007-8 Martin Rowe

Martin explained that the reason for the increase in 'general' expenditure over 'general' income by some £2747 was mostly due to purchases for Hidden Earth stand (display boards, tables), Upper Flood T-shirts, occasional publication and a new computer. Martin did not feel that there was any need to increase subs.

Investments are not doing very well at the moment but since our investment strategy is long term this is not an issue at the present time.

Martin expressed his concern regarding the length of time it was taking to transfer of Group assets from Malcolm to Ben Cooper. Fiona stated that from an auditors point of view it makes her job difficult and it must be very upsetting for Norma. The whole process has been a steep learning curve. Ben was not present at the meeting so the issue could not be concluded. It was however proposed that the committee take action to conclude the matter within the next 3 months. This was voted on with most in favour, 2 abstentions and 1 against.

Action: *the committee will take this up with the Trustees as a matter of urgency in order to complete the transfer within the next 3 months.*

This year's electricity bill will be nearly twice as much as last year once the underestimated bill has been corrected. Roy made the point that we should review our tariff regularly.

Action: *The committee will review the electricity supplier to ensure we are keeping our costs as low as possible.*

5.3. Caving secretary's report 2007-8 Bob Templeman

Bob went over his report and added that we have been donated a waterproof camera for general use underground. It requires film and is kept in the library. Please feel free to use on trips underground. Thanks were given to Tony Knibbs for his kind donation.

5.4. Cottage warden's report 2007-8 Doug Harris

Doug stated that the issue of showers is being looked into and we have a couple of members of the club who are professionals and have been involved in this exercise. Russ Porter has looked into a system which can deliver 8 litres per minutes to 3 showers and costs about £2000 plus VAT to supply and fit. Biff suggested supplementing hot water with a back boiler. Joan suggested charging for showers. Most people in the room indicated that they would be prepared to pay for a hot shower. Martin advised that there are, in theory enough funds to pay for this amount of expenditure. The meeting expressed general agreement in the principle to spend this sort of amount on decent showers.

Action: *It was proposed to do Ben Coopers short term fix on the shower booster and the committee will investigate a new hot water system in the mean time and report back in 3 months with a recommendation.* Voting took place. There were 2 abstentions, none voted against.

Russ Porter had researched the legal requirements for hot water systems and he explained that temperatures at the tap need to be a maximum of 43°C for safety reasons and the water temperature in the tank needs to be a minimum of 60°C to protect against Legionella.

The subject of installing wood burning stove was raised. It was felt that it would heat up the cottage quicker than the current open fire does. The committee explained that this has been mentioned before and was being looked at but was currently not a priority.

Joan mentioned that there is a significant draft coming through the front door which had been

temporarily been solved with draft excluder. It needs a proper solution.

Action: *Doug will look into both these issues.*

It was noted that the gas store should be kept free of any clutter and a gap maintained at the bottom of the door in case of any leakage.

Action: *An official safety note is required on the outside of the door.*

5.5. Tacklemaster's report 2007-8 Peat Bennett

Peat gave his report verbally. He reported that we now have 2 sets of beginners helmet/light and belt in secure container in the tackle store. These can be loaned out via a committee member. The lifeline rope is out of date and will need replacing. The SRT rope needs to be cut to size.

There are oversuits hanging up in the shed which have been there for quite some time and it is proposed to lend these out to beginners. Anyone owning any of these suits who does not want them lent out should contact the committee. The rest will be repaired and made available to beginners for their first trip.

Action: *Yvonne will put a note in the Newsletter to let everyone know.*

5.6. Editor's report 2007-8 Yvonne Rowe

Yvonne summarised her written report. She asked the meeting how they felt about the News Group replacing the Newsletter as means for communication within the club. Roy said he felt that the Newsletter was more lasting. Tony agreed and added that the Newsletter was good for posterity. Tony asked if it was possible to have an electronic log book. Martin replied that this had been tried with a club 'Blog' but it was not used by any one and was dropped.

Mick Lovell was not at the meeting but he had previously indicated that although he was happy to continue he warned that it will become increasingly difficult for him to go in to work to copy the newsletter now that he has retired. He recommended that we set up an alternative arrangement. We need a print run of about 60.

5.7. Recorder/librarian's report 2007-8 Brian Snell

Brian Snell was not present at the meeting. His report had been distributed with the agenda and there were no issues raised.

5.8. Social secretary's report 2007-8 Linda Milne

Linda explained that a significant amount of her time was spent responding to enquiries about the club and about caving. This has led to the idea of creating a role of 'Membership Secretary'. This role would deal with club enquiries and follow them through, organising beginners trips, application forms etc. Just as importantly they would also look after new members to the club and check that they are being included in club activities. We risk losing keen new members if we don't get them involved. It was left with the meeting to mull over and if anyone was interested in the role for them to contact Linda.

5.9. Other Reports

a. Custodian Trustees report 2007-8 Ben Cooper

Ben was not present at the meeting but his report had been issued with the agenda. Discussion had taken place earlier in the meeting regarding the transfer of assets from Malcolm to Ben. See paragraph 5.2. above. No other issues were raised.

b. Gift Aid Report 2007-8 Martin Rowe

Martin had not been able to complete this task yet but would try to do it as soon as possible. Martin said he would welcome a volunteer to take it on. No offers were received at the meeting.

c. Conservation & access report 2007-8 Mick Norton

Mike reported that Biff had constructed and fitted a stunningly good lid to Upper Flood and he

Biff were planning to fit the new Upper Flood lock today. The lid for MM mine had also been refitted (on behalf of SWT). A problem exists with Pinetree Pot entrance - cows trample the area causing the hole to fill with soil, covering the padlock. This will need further thought to try and find a solution.

Joan mentioned that the notice on the back of the tackle door regarding the access arrangements for Mendip caves is significantly out of date. It has not been updated since she did it ages ago.

Action: Mick will replace the Access Arrangements Notice with an up to date one.

d. Rescue Warden's report 2007-8 Keith Knight

Keith was not present at the meeting. His report was included with the AGM agenda. No specific issues were raised by the meeting.

Charlie had just returned from the CCC meeting and informed the meeting that the next rescue practice will be on 17th May 2008 in GB cave.

e. Guest Bookings report 2007-8 Joan Goddard

Joan's report contained statistics on guest bookings. Mick had previously raised an issue with large groups being at the cottage at the same time as he wanted to stay. Joan asked Mick whether it was more to do with unavailable beds or space in the cottage itself. Mick explained that his issue was to do with having the cottage full of children. Joan explained the importance of guest group bookings to the club (income, charitable status, possible source of new members) and the committee supported this view. Linda said that it was very regrettable that Mick was not happy with the situation but it was inevitable that there would be times when there would be a clash of needs. However, Joan will in future try not to book out successive weekends to large groups and will not take last minute bookings from university groups. Mick suggested that to boost club activity and members bed nights that we organise extra members weekends e.g. for SRT practice. This was thought a good idea and these dates would be added to the meets list.

6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2008/9

The following were elected:

Caving Secretary:	Bob Templeman
Cottage Warden:	Doug Harris
Treasurer:	Martin Rowe
Editor:	Yvonne Rowe
Secretary:	Mike Richardson
Social secretary:	Linda Milne
Recorder/librarian:	Brian Snell

The following agreed to be co-opted by the committee:

Tacklemaster:	Jeremy Gilson
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7. Election of non-committee posts

The following were elected:

Rescue Warden:	Keith Knight
Conservation & Access:	Mick Norton
Gift Aid:	Martin Rowe

8. Election of Examiners 2007/8

Fiona Kempston and Roy Kempston were elected.

9. Motions

There were no motions raised.

10. Any other business

The committee announced that Tony Knibbs is to be made an Honorary Member in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the Group.

Roy Kempston advised that there was an orienteering course for beginners and further information was on the notice board.

The committee announced that the stretch of Upper Flood currently known as '550m Way' is to be renamed in honour of Malcolm Cotter. Following consultation with Norma and family the new name for the passage is 'Malcolm's Way'.

12. Date & venue of next Annual General Meeting

Date: Saturday 28th March 2009

Time: 10:30am

Venue: Nordrach Cottage