



**MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 28th MARCH 2009 AT
NORDRACH COTTAGE**

The Mendip Caving Group is a registered Charity No. 270088

Chairman: Tim Francis

Full members present: 27

Others present (non-voting): 10 (8 probationary, 1 associate and 1 non-members)

Attendance list: Tim Francis, Doug Harris, Bob Templeman, Linda Milne, Mike Richardson, Brian Snell, Jeremy Gilson, Keith Knight, John Evans, Roy Kempston, Fiona Kempston, Hayley Clark, Ed Waters, Mike Moxon, Joan Goddard, Giles Martin, Richard Woollacott, Angela Clulow, Adrian Bell, Karen Fendley, Mary Templeman, Allan Wicks, Tony Knibbs, Denise Knibbs, Lewis (Biff) Frith, Bill Chadwick, Miguel Tome, Jon Williams, Julie Hesketh, Arthur Spain, Ben Cooper, Mark Ward, Jenny Plumb, Pat Walsh, Russell Porter.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Martin & Yvonne Rowe, and Mick Norton.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 5th April 2008.

The minutes of the previous meeting were examined and the following points were questioned.

Section 5.2 – The transfer of the group's assets from Malcolm Cotter to Ben Cooper. 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.

Roy Kempston asked what the current status was on this action.

The committee said that there had been some delay in this action being completed but it was almost complete. Although it had taken a considerable amount of time at least progress was being made.

Section 5.2 – The year's electricity bill was almost twice that of the year before. Action – The committee will review the electricity supplier to ensure that we are keeping the costs as low as possible.

The question was asked about the committee's review of our electricity supplier. The reply was that various quotes had been received from alternative suppliers but none were sufficiently lower to warrant transferring to a new supplier.

Section 5.4 – Problems with cold showers. Action – It was proposed that Ben Cooper's idea of altering the action of the shower boost relay should be followed through and the committee will investigate a new hot water system.

Ben Cooper's action had been a complete success so it was deemed that this was completed.

Section 5.4 – Doug Harris to look into cutting down on drafts through the doors.

A draft excluder had been fitted to the back door.

Section 5.4 – Doug Harris to look into cleaning up the gas store and fit an official safety note on the outside of the door.

The gas store was cleaned up but a sign was still required to be fitted.

Section 5.5 – Oversuits in the shed should be used for beginner trips.

The suits were checked out and repaired where necessary and had been used on various beginner's weekends.

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 Mike Richardson. All agreed.

4. Matters arising

No questions were raised.

5. Officers reports and matters arising from those reports.

5.1. Secretary's report 2008-9 Mike Richardson

Mike highlighted the progress that had been made in Upper Flood and considerable progress in Stainsby's. He also thanked Linda for her excellent work as Social Secretary over that past number of years, and Martin and Yvonne Rowe for their excellent work done for many years as Treasurer and Editor respectively. All were unanimous in praise for these three committee members who were now standing down.

5.2. Treasurer's report 2008-9 Martin Rowe

As Martin was not present the floor was asked for any questions arising from his report.

Arthur Spain asked about the individual cost of having new keys cut. Doug Harris explained that the committee was now committed to having a new access system installed to replace the old COTAG system. This would remove the need for the current G/M/X keys which were expensive to replace.

Roy Kempston asked why the insurance value of the cottage had gone up from £25K in 2007 to £27.5K for the 2008 year.

Action - Martin Rowe to be asked why there was a raise.

The problem of the recent theft of hut fees from the wall box was raised by Tim Francis.

Jeremy Gilson mentioned the change made by Brian Snell to the box to reduce the size of the slot and also motioned the requirement for a second key, held by the hut warden say, to allow the box to be emptied more frequently. Long term the committee will provide a more secure solution in the near future.

5.3. Caving secretary's report 2008-9 Bob Templeman

Bob went over his report and mentioned the need for more leaders which need to be available to take beginners down. He said that he had originally filled the vacant slot as Caving Secretary because nobody else was forthcoming but now there was a need for someone more dynamic to take over the role of Caving Secretary. He also mentioned how beneficial the newsgroup had been in organising ad hoc meets.

5.4. Cottage warden's report 2008-9 Doug Harris

Doug went over the various projects which required to be done on the cottage. Arthur Spain asked what had been decided on the windows issue. Brian Snell said that the committee had looked into the costs and pros and cons of UPVC vs wood windows. He said that the decision had been made to replace 5 windows which were in the most need of attention with hard wood. These were the main dormer windows upstairs in all bedrooms and the library window. Arthur asked why we were not then replacing them all. Brian said that the remaining windows were either in good condition or easily repairable. Jeremy added that we have other projects to consider and funds were limited. Keith Knight asked who was going to project manage the fitting of the new windows. Biff Frith volunteered. Ben Cooper said that the saving made when changing windows from an insulation point of view was about £40 p.a. so why change them. He stated that double glazing does not pay for itself in the short term. Mike Richardson proposed that the 5 windows mention should be replaced with hard wood. Linda seconded. This was put to the vote. 24 agreed, 1 against, 1 abstain. Vote carried.

5.5. Tacklemaster's report 2008-9 Jeremy Gilson

Jeremy summarised the main points of his report. There were no questions. Linda said that Jeremy had done a good job in his first year on the committee. All agreed.

5.6. Editor's report 2008-9 Yvonne Rowe

Linda thanked Yvonne for her sterling work. There was unanimous agreement. There followed some discussion about printed copies of newsletters which would eventually become an issue when we could no longer get them printed for free.

Action the committee will look into the options.

5.7. Recorder/librarian's report 2008-9 Brian Snell

Brian Snell stated that he had originally stepped into this post because nobody else was available. He was happy to serve in the running of the group as a member of the committee but said that he felt that he had not fulfilled the role completely and was therefore the wrong person to continue in the post and hence was stepping down. There were no comments.

5.8. Social secretary's report 2008-9 Linda Milne

Linda said that there was currently a lot going on in the club. She thanked everyone who helped on social events and hoped her successor would receive similar support. She also mentioned that Les Davis and guest would be attending the Annual Dinner.

5.9. Other Reports

a. Custodian Trustees report 2008-9 Ben Cooper

Ben mentioned that the current return on investments was about 7%. He expected this to reduce slightly. All assets have now been transferred just leaving SOLUS which was in the post. Biff suggested that we don't make any further investments until critical cottage works have been completed.

b. Gift Aid Report 2008-9 Martin Rowe

There was some discussion about gift aid of £2000.

c. Conservation & access report 2008-9 Mick Norton

A report was not submitted. There was some discussion about Blackmoor access agreements.

d. Rescue Warden's report 2008-9 Keith Knight

Keith said that the rescue group held regular meetings on Thursday nights which he could not attend. He felt that the post was better suited to someone local asked if anyone else would like to take on the post. However he was happy to continue if nobody was interested.

e. Guest Bookings report 2008-9 Mike Richardson

Mike said that things were positive and bookings were continuing to come in. Keith Knight asked if there had been any feedback on the raising of guest fees. Mike said that at least 2 groups had put extra in because they felt they were underpaying for the facilities.

6. Election of Honorary Officers for 2009/10

	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Secretary	M Richardson	T Francis	B Chadwick
Treasurer vacant			
Caving Sec.	J Gilson	R Porter	M Richardson
Cott.Warden	D Harris	J Gilson	M Norton
Tacklemaster vacant			
Editor vacant			
Rec.Librarian	B Templeman	M Rowe	Y Rowe
Soc.Secretary	G Martin	L Milne	J Gilson

(Where posts remain unfilled, volunteers for co-option by the Committee will be sought at, or subsequent to, the meeting.)

Tim Francis asked if everyone was happy with the block voting of the existing posts. All agreed.

Karen Fendley was co-opted as Treasurer; proposed by Mike Richardson, seconded by Jeremy Gilson.

Brian Snell will be co-opted as Tackle Master.

The Editor post remained vacant.

7. Election of non-committee posts

The following were elected:

Rescue Warden: Keith Knight

Gift Aid: Martin Rowe

Conservation & Access Officer: Mike Richardson said the proposal was to remove the post as the circumstances had changed from its original conception. Mike would attend the local meetings this coming year. Julie Hesketh asked why Mike didn't stand for the post. Ben Cooper proposed, Biff seconded followed by a unanimous agreement vote.

8. Election of Examiners 2009/10

Roy Kempston said that they had not been able to audit the accounts because they had not received them. Roy and Fiona said that they would do this for one more year. There was a unanimous agreement vote.

9. Motions

9.01 Replace Librarian/Editor post with Project Manager Post

Jeremy talked about the background to this motion. He had put forward the motion to get attention for an issue he felt strongly about. Biff stated that he wanted to get some of the important work on the cottage moved on so would like the opportunity to be on the committee. Joan said that the Recorder's job went beyond just minute taking. It was a role which maintained the history of the club. Mike Richardson proposed the option to have a 9th committee member. Julie said that the committee should think carefully about changing the committee structure. Arthur asked whether this should not be part of the Cottage Warden's role. Doug replied saying that there was a lot to manage with the cottage without taking on an additional role of project manager. Joan proposed that Biff be co-opted as cottage projects manager but as a none committee member. A vote was held for the original proposal of removing the Recorder/Librarian post and replacing it with a Projects Manager. 19 against, 4 abstained.

Joan's proposal was considered and everyone agreed that this was a good compromise.

9.02 Membership donations to boost club funds

Ben Cooper felt that his suggestion of donations should be considered. Bob Templeman said that we should review this at the end of a year with the Project Manager. Arthur said that we still have a lot invested why try for more income. Linda said that we have a reasonable buffer in finances and this needed to be maintained. Ben said that we have financial stability and should idea at the end of the year.

10. Any other business

The Newsgroup

Tony Knibbs said he wasn't happy with the way the newsgroup was being used and that some rules needed to be established. One suggestion was that we could have more that 1 moderator.

Action - committee to look into how the newsgroup should be moderated.

There followed a lot of discussion about the pros and cons of newsgroups and forums. Bob suggested that we maintain a status quo, and discuss this next year if appropriate.

Heating

Mike Richardson talked about the background to the discussion on heating. His personal opinion was to use a multi fuel stove. There followed a lot of discussion on the topic. Linda said that the multi fuel re-burnt the fumes. The priority order of the projects was discussed. It was agreed that the committee should manage these appropriately.

Shower cubicles

Karen Fendley asked if this could be considered. Roy said that we need an opportunity for the membership to comment on decisions made on projects.

Action - committee to discuss this

Easing the squeezes in Upper Flood

Biff has asked that the squeezes should be eased in the boulder choke. There were a number of responses to this suggestion. Rescue was deemed a red herring. Roy said that the original crew banged it open to get to Midnight Chamber. Julie said that the cave was widened for the original dig crew and if Biff had been part of that team it would have been made larger by default. A vote was held for the squeezes to be eased through to the Departure Lounge to allow someone of Biff's girth to get through. Vote was carried with 1 against and a few abstainations.

Child Protection

Linda said she had distributed the Child Protection Policy document for members to view.

Books donated by Tony Knibbs

Linda mentioned the books were to be auctioned. Tony asked that a reserve of £50 be placed on the book by Herbert Balch.

12. Date & venue of next Annual General Meeting

Date: Saturday 27th March 2010

Time: 10:00am

Venue: Nordrach Cottage