



MINUTES OF THE MENDIP CAVING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2010 AT NORDRACH COTTAGE

The Mendip Caving Group is a registered charity No. 270088

Chairman: Tim Francis

Full Members present: 33

Others present (non-voting) : 8 (4 probationary, 1 associate and 3 non members)

Attendance list: Hayley Clark, Mark (Buddy)Williams, Bill Chadwick, Ed Waters, Russ Porter, Mark Ward, Pete Bennett, Linda Milne, Keith Knight, Denise Knibbs, Tony Knibbs, Mary Templeman, Richard Woollacott. Bernard Reeves, Martin Rowe, Julie Hesketh, Jenny Williams, Angela Clulow, Ryan Gilson, Sue Speight, Yvonne Rowe, Brian Pitman, Joan Goddard, Roy Kempston, Fiona Kempston, Steve Porter, Allan Wicks, John Evans, Doug Harris, Brian Snell, Karen Fendley, Mike Richardson, Mike Lovell, Jeremy Gilson, Tim Francis, Bob Templeman, Jenny Plumb, Lewis (Biff) Frith, Richard Carey, Miguel Tome and Pat Walsh

1. Apologies for Absence: Adrian Bell, Ben Cooper, Steve Eddy, Mike Haselden, William Morris, Mick Norton, Geoff Rodwell, Kevin Speight, Keith Thomas and Evert Wilbreninck.

2. Opening of Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting with a proposition that as the meeting was unconstitutional, as the required paperwork had not been issued to the membership in a timely manner, to carry on with the meeting with a view for Committee to convene an EGM to ratify all the decisions made and deal separately with the election of Honorary Officers and the proposed constitutional rule changes. Mike Richardson apologised and acknowledged that it was the Secretary's role to convene the AGM in accordance with the Constitution. Agreed to proceed accordingly with 32 votes for and one against. Carried

Action: The Secretary

3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on the 28th March 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting were examined and as there were no comments it was proposed by Roy Kempston and seconded by Denise Knibbs to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record. Unanimously agreed.

4. Matters arising from the 2009 AGM minutes

4.1 Roy Kempston – Questioned how estimated electric bills were reconciled with the actual readings. It was established that this had not been done in the last 12 months.

Action: The Committee to resolve.

4.2 Roy Kempston – Requested clarity regarding the insurance value of the cottage. Martin Rowe confirmed that this is the rebuilding value as given by the insurance company. Value

stated at this time as £275,000. Martin added that the cottage is fully insured to be rebuilt and it is not tied to this value.

4.3 Printing of the Newsletter. The facility of printing the newsletter free of charge is no longer available, though the requirement to print copies for both exchange purpose and some members continues.

Comment: This is now co-ordinated by Ed Waters.

4.4 Gift Aid - This post remains unfilled. Martin Rowe clarified that he did not attend the 2009 AGM.

Action: The Committee to resolve.

4.5 Election of Examiners – Roy Kempston confirmed the 2008-9 accounts have now been audited.

4.6 Newsgroup – It was confirmed that there are no moderators of the news group but was currently administered by both Martin Rowe and Jeremy Gilson. Julie Hesketh queried the ownership of the news group. Martin Rowe replied that it belongs to the MCG though Yahoo has his name as owner.

4.7 Shower cubicles – has now been subsumed by the Cottage Extension proposal.

5. Officers Reports

5.1. Secretary's report 2009-10 Mike Richardson

Mike summarised his report, as circulated. Julie Hesketh asked what the current membership was. Mike confirmed that it was 130.

5.2 Treasurer's report 2009-10 Karen Fendley

Karen summarised her report and highlighted a number of items. All current projects were paid from the current account and at the end of January it contained £3,517. She further outlined the follow up to the theft of the wheelie bin saga. As the replacement value of £150.00 plus vat was below the threshold that could be claimed on the group's insurance policy, we were forced to pay for a replacement from the contractor as he would not permit us to replace from another source. Doug Harris, Cottage Warden said he was actively sourcing an alternative contractor.

Direct electronic payments for both membership subscriptions and cottage fees was working well, provided payees used the "comment box" to enter either "subs" or "cottage fees" or as appropriate. With regard to cash payment of cottage fees Roy Kempston, examiner asked members not to subtract petty cash payments due to them. Karen further stated that the accounts still required auditing and whilst a trial balance had been achieved £27.00 or so could not be identified due to the vagaries of the software package used. Martin Rowe offered his congratulations to Karen for her efforts. Julie Hesketh offered to take on the role of both gift aid and Charterhouse permit administrator.

Martin Rowe proposed a vote of thanks, seconded by Jeremy Gilson. Carried unanimously.

Action. The Treasurer to publish the "examined" accounts in due course.

Noted. Julie Hesketh's offer to take on the role of both gift aid and Charterhouse permit administrator.

5.3. Caving secretary's report 2009-10 Jeremy Gilson

Jeremy summarised his report and reminded members that he was standing down at the end of the meeting. Linda Milne asked that the Caving Secretary post, remains the single point of contact for all enquiries and that novices are appointed a mentor.

Action: Caving Secretary/Committee

5.4. Cottage warden's report 2009-10 Doug Harris

Doug summarised his report and highlighted that the new access system was up and running, replacement windows had been fitted as had the installation of the new hut fees box. He concluded that the proposed cottage extension has his support. Joan Goddard asked when the windows would be finished off, and was advised that this was in hand.

5.5. Tackle master's report 2009-10 Brian Snell

Brian summarised his report and highlighted the fact that one dynamic rope had not been used for two years and that one static rope had been recently cut into two equal lengths. Additionally, a purpose built ladder complete with spreader for use on the 20ft pitch in Swildon's hole had been purchased. New tackle sheets are being introduced to include a column to report damaged kit taken out of use to enable the Tackle master to take appropriate action. Additionally, the entrance to Pinetree pot was blocked with mud and the anchor points require reviewing and that the ladder at the back of Neverland, in Upper Flood needs replacing. Jeremy Gilson asked what plans were in place to replace ropes which were now over five years old. Pete Bennett asked that a fixed aid list be issued. Both requests to be considered.

Action: Tackle Master/Committee

5.6. Editor's report 2008-9 Vacant

Comment. Whilst the post was vacant, a number of newsletters had been published by guest editors.

5.7. Recorder/librarian's report 2009-10 Bob Templeman

Bob summarised his report and initiated a discussion to be taken forward to the 2010-11 AGM regarding use of electronic communication for all purposes to all members unless they opt out and request letter post notification. This was the case with most comparable organisations and would hopefully assist with both speedier and compliant communication in respect of convening both AGMs and EGMs. He hoped to write an explanatory article for the newsletter.

5.8. Social secretary's report 2009-10 Jenny Plumb

Jenny summarised her report. When questioned on her plans for the Summer, she replied that the usual events including a BBQ were at the planning stage. Karen Fendley, on behalf of the Committee thanked Jenny for her work since joining the Committee.

6. Other Officers Reports

6.1 Trustee's Report - Ben Cooper

Whilst Ben's statement of accounts had been circulated he was not present to answer questions. However, it was confirmed that they were still to be examined.

6.2 Gift Aid Report vacant

Martin Rowe said that he would be happy to help anyone who took this role on. The six year deadline on back claims was coming up and approx £6,000 of tax relief was at stake. He made

the point that when members were asked to fill in forms all members should complete and return. Martin additionally asked whether the deeds of the cottage was in the names of the existing Trustees or Malcolm Cotter.

Action. To be verified, by Trustees/Committee

6.3 Rescue Warden's Report – Keith Knight

Keith summarised his report and highlighted the need to replace the rescue drums, 1 and 2 in Upper Flood as the food contents have an expiry date of Dec 2010. He also announced the planned rescue exercise at Gough's cave on the 17th April. Lastly he asked whether a local member would be prepared to take on the role. Miguel Tome offered to take this on.

6.4 Conservation & Access Report Mike Richardson

Mike Richardson outlined, as clarified by Mark Williams (Buddy), BCAs new policy on placements and reported that the CSSC had declined to agree it as they were not allowed to see it.

6.4.1 Upper Flood Access Update

In response to the rumour that Les Williams (Les Williams is both a member of Wessex and is access officer for the CSCC) has been speaking with Somerset CC re access to Upper Flood, Mike Richardson said that he too had been attempting to do so in order to clarify the position. Mike also said that he had agreed to arrange trips for 25 BEC members but the offer has yet to be taken up. Julie Hesketh suggested posting details of UF trips in the Hunters Lodge. Linda Milne asked whether the revised Upper Flood conservation document had been approved. To be reviewed. Ed Waters suggested that the MCG appoint 5 non MCG as guest leaders. Tony Knibbs agreed. Tim Francis confirmed that MCG were speaking with Trevor Wall at SCC after initial correspondence with Andy Mallander.

Lastly, Julie made the point that the Committee review their interaction with all local landowners.

6.5 Cottage Projects Report Lewis Frith (Biff)

Biff summarised his report and highlighted the installation of the windows which now required finishing off, requiring a dry weekend to both oil and complete the silicone sealant. The cottage extension would be dealt under item 11.

7. Election of Honorary Officers

Post	Nominee	Proposer	Secunder
Secretary	M Richardson	Bob Templeman	Doug Harris
Treasurer	Karen Fendley	Jeremy Gilson	Bob Templeman
Caving Secretary	Richard Carey	<i>Comment: withdrawn post 27th March</i>	
Cottage Warden	D Harris	Bob Templeman	Karen Fendley
Tackle master	Brian Snell	Bob Templeman	Jenny Plumb
Editor	Ed Waters	Mike Richardson	Lewis Frith (Biff)
Recorder Librarian	Bob Templeman	Karen Fendley	Doug Harris
Social Secretary	Jenny Plumb	Jeremy Gilson	Bob Templeman

Action. To be voted on at the EGM

8. Election of non-committee posts

The following were elected

Rescue Warden: Miguel Tome

Gift Aid: Julie Hesketh

Conservation & Access officer: Mike Richardson

Projects Manager: Biff Frith

9. Election of examiners

Roy Kempston & Linda Milne

10. Amendments to Constitution and rules

Bob Templeman on behalf of the committee, seconded by Karen Fendley, proposed raising the age of the membership to 18. After discussion it was clear that the simple substitution of “16” by “18” needed further clarification as indeed the original text did not give clarity. It was further proposed by Mike Richardson and seconded by Linda Milne that the sentence should be changed to read “Anyone aged 18 years and over”. Additionally, it was proposed to replace the semi colon after ‘parent(s)’ with a comma to correct the grammar. As a result, it was proposed by Bob Templeman and Seconded by Ed Waters, to proceed with the revised proposed constitutional change.

To be ratified at the EGM

11. Any other Motions.

11.1 The Cottage Extension

Biff's proposals together with plans and photographs had been previously circulated. His proposals covered extra accommodation, a drying room, larger kitchen, tackle store and a lavatory. It also addressed parking and a new source of heating. An initial assessment indicated that materials would cost £20,000 and overall £30,000. A long discussion ensued and in short it was agreed by 30 votes for with three abstentions that the next stage would be to seek pre-application advice (that is a preliminary discussion with planning officers) so that a full proposal could be presented to an EGM.

12. Any Other Business

12.01 Roy Kempston suggested that the Committee review bed night charges as he felt there was an inequality between those arriving on a Friday night and those Saturday morning and both doing two days caving using the showers and cooking, the major cost, and paying £5.00 against £2.50. It was agreed with two abstentions to leave matters as they were.

12.02 Roy Kempston asked the outcome of the missing Cottage Fees. Martin Rowe responded that it had been reported to the police and a crime reference number obtained. It is now believed that the money went missing during the period the cottage had been left unlocked.

12.03 Miguel told the meeting that the Spanish expedition has received a grant of £200 from the Ghar Parau Foundation and asked the committee if other equipment could be funded by the MCG. This was discussed and it was agreed that the Tacklemaster would discuss the rope required for the trip and the committee would decide what should be purchased and used as club rope on return from the expedition. Other personal equipment should be funded either from the Ghar Parau monies or funded by those attending.

Action. Tackle Master/Miguel

12.04 Martin Rowe reported that the British Library had approached the MCG with a request to archive the website.

Action. The Committee to discuss, in view of third party copyright.

12.05 Mike Lovell, asked that due to the parking limitations at the cottage, subsequent meetings of this size be held in larger premises. Comment. Noted.

12.06 Ed Waters said there was scope to produce a publication covering Upper Flood; the Rakes; Velvet Bottom. He would produce an outline for an appropriate next meeting. Martin Rowe said that a new edition of Mendip Underground was in preparation.

12.07 Martin Rowe asked that details of new members needs to be published in the newsletter.

Action. Editor/The Secretary.

12.08 It was confirmed that Mendip Fair was to be held on the same weekend as the Families Weekend

12.09 It was asked whether the Group will have a stand at Hidden Earth, 2010.

Action. The Committee

13. 1 Annual General Meeting

After discussion, it was agreed that it be held on the 26th March 2011, at 10am in the Hunters Lodge. This was put to the vote. 26 agreed, 4 against, 3 abstentions. Carried.

Action. Secretary to make the arrangements.