

**Minutes of an Emergency General Meeting  
and the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Mendip Caving Group held on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
October 2020 at Nordrach Cottage and by Zoom**

**MCG is registered charity number 270088**

**Present:**

**In person**

Tim Francis, Tom Harrison, Jason Kirby, Dave Lossel, Nicola Pearce, Christopher Pearce, Mark Edwards, Bill Chadwick, Dan Matthews, Ben Cooper (not EGM).

**Virtually Present**

Bob Templeton, Ed Waters, Wilf Harrison, Joan Goddard, Andy Horeckji, Brian Snell, Denise Knibbs, Jonathan Roberts, Andrea Carey, Richard Carey, Michael Perryman, Nick Thorne (probationary, non-voting), James Major, Fiona Kempston (associate, non-voting), Linda Milne, Russell Porter, Graham Price, Glen (?) Roy Kempston, Hayley Clark, Michael Perryman,

**Apologies**

Steve porter, Keith knight, James Hazell, Keri Smallwood

**EGM**

Tim opened the meeting, welcoming those present both in person and virtually. We must start with an EGM to facilitate a small change to our constitution. Due to the Covid Pandemic we had to delay the AGM planned for April 2020. Because of the requirements of the Charity Commission, it was decided to allow the AGM to go ahead in this pandemic through a combination of both virtual and in person attendance.

Proposed by BC and DL To make a change to the constitution to allow for a mixture of physical and virtual presence, as well as being able to vote virtually and in person.

Proposal to amend the 2010 constitution para 9 (f) which currently reads

“(f) Votes at General Meetings shall be counted by two tellers appointed at the meeting.”

To read

“(f) Votes at General Meetings from both physical and virtual attendees shall be counted by teller(s) appointed at the meeting.”

Vote unanimous acceptance amongst those physically present at Nordrach (required 4/5ths majority exceeded)

EGM closed and AGM opened.

## **AGM**

### **2019 minutes**

No comments or corrections were advised, agreement that they were a true representation of the meeting.

Vote: 19 for, 0 against and 4 abstentions

### **Previous AGM Actions**

| 64 from 2018, 65 from 2019 | Action   | Who       | 2020 Comments   |
|----------------------------|--|-----------|---|
| 64.3.2.1                   | More detail required to be able to reimburse GP for Pearl Mine lid, MCG needs invoice to pay                               | GP to TH  | Not yet, by end of 2020   |
| 64.5.2                     | GDPR, consent asked at 2020 renewals   | BC        | Complete  |
| 64.5.8                     | Committee action to establish which older members might like a printed newsletter and how printing costs might be reduced. | AH        | AH identified the cost though felt there was no need to reduce costs as there are regular reports by other means. RC disagreed. |
| 64.10.4                    | Website archive needs case sensitivity fixing.   | DL        | To try again  |
| 65 5.2                     | Committee to consider rising fuel costs and consider if a break-down of donations could be included in finance reporting.  | TH        | Completed and ongoing   |
| 65 10.1                    | Work to continue on the CIO constitution to bring it up to date and answer questions.                                      | Various   | Halted by Covid, will resume through virtual conversation. Aim to be ready for 2021 AGM   |
| 65 10.2                    | Electronic archiving of old documents.   | Librarian | Some newsletters have been redacted for online public   |

|         |   |           |   |
|---------|---|-----------|---|
|         |   |           | viewing, completion is being held by identifying cheap hosting and storage methods. |
| 65.10.3 | Ongoing communications-due to various preferences of social media, communication have used Yahoo, Facebook, Mail chimp- still not perfect | Committee | Yahoo Group is closing, Committee reviewing new options.                            |

### Officers reports

The officer's 2019/2020 reports are available separately to these minutes.

#### Secretary-

- In March due to Covid and therefore delayed AGM, Jason Kirby was co-opted as cottage warden and Tanya Sparey as Librarian, both have worked hard with the committee to get the cottage ready and open post lockdown and to manage bookings.
- Initially the committee was concerned about the financial projections due to Covid, we then received a grant £25,000, this has bought us time.
- There was a focus of effort to ensure the fire safety of the building, with the buying of new mattresses, 2 types, new Lounge seating, which are easy to move and costing £1500 for 15 seats. There are further plans to paint the lounge and to use the Grant money to replace the windows, and back doors.
- At Manor Farm a new hole was discovered, explored and secured.
- Last summer (2019) we had a successful visit from the Belgium caving group who had invited us to a return match.

Thanks was recorded from the Chair, EW, BS and BT for BC work; in a time when most caving clubs have kept shut and took the easy option. The committee under Bill's leadership have been very proactive

#### Treasurer-

Tom- apologies, he had sent the original figures for the April AGM, not for this one.

- Broad overview varied on receipts / increased subs, £1500 up, guest bed down 22%, expenditure down.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> report £2000 member/ 2000 bed visit- all down. Gentle reminder if you do come in for the day, to give a donation. For Covid, money was spent on getting the cottage getting ready. TH thanked JK for his work. Mattress/ grant £25,000 received, if things continue, we are losing £2000, a year we have some cash in the bank so can weather the storm for now. We are also looking to get a £150 rebate a month.

- - to rationalise, electronic payment TH has been authorised to spend up to £100

ME how much have we spent on COVID-19? TH - £300-400 presently.

There was a discussion on how much money is being spent on Covid and to how to use the grant money. It was agreed that TH would record how the grant money had been spent. **ACTION 66.1** TH to record the figures and a narrative beside them.

**Motion Proposed** “The Treasurer to record payments made from the £25,000 grant and their purpose.” Proposed BC/NP.

Vote for:23 against:0 abstentions:0

Further recommendation from the floor was about several bank accounts to rationalise them from 5 to 2, one easy and one difficult to access. **ACTION 66.2** committee to simplify and further secure banking arrangements.

We will need to submit more extensive accounts to the charity commission in 2021 as our income will exceed £25,000. RK offered to supply a proforma used in the past. **ACTION 66.3** treasurer.

#### **Cave Secretary-**

David Loss- cave sec. identified that we did not have a formal system to teach ‘newbies’ about the club, where to find items and expected cave competences, As the Tuesday group would spend less time in the hut, so DL created a form which has been tested and the feedback has been good. This needs to be completed before being signed off as a full member.

WH- felt it was a lot to complete though not onerous and was seen as positive and to have access to the resources is a small price to pay. It helps new members and dispels the feeling that it could be an old member’s club. Then as all newbie’s have got the knowledge/skills they should feel part of the club.

A reminder to all members. Previously there was no formal training undertaken for Upper Flood training wardens, just a log, this has changed to a proforma which needs some tweaking. It was agreed that the conservation of the cave came first and foremost. **ACTION 66.4** for the committee to consider.

#### **Cottage Warden-**

JK, has made the hut compliant with fire regulations, by replacing furniture and completing a fire risk assessment. JK has spent time getting the hut Covid secure and is looking to replace downstairs failing windows / doors. Then focus will then be on the shower, painting etc.

#### **Tackle Master-**

DM, has replaced ropes, all static; there are new lights, 6 tackle bags; rope slings to support the ability to isolate tackle for Covid reasons. Unfortunately, tackle is going missing pulley/ helmets and due to a lack of using the tackle log it is difficult

to trace who may have them. A suggestion going forward is to have a tag system in the new tackle store.

There was a discussion on who should have access to SRT gear and as it is difficult to decide who is competent and the resulting liability it was agreed that SRT gear should be accessible to all.

EW as a club/charity we should not be assessing the competency of our peers. It is the responsibility of an individual to conduct themselves safely and use club equipment properly. SRT has been practised in the UK since the 1970's without serious rope failure issues, so there is very little risk.

MP- on how to get access to SRT rope. There is now no lock. SRT ropes are available to all full members.

NP- The full membership application should perhaps cover an understanding of SRT etc.

BC- Mendip is not a big playground for SRT, hence why we had a 2 tier system as it was easy for members to go caving without ever needing to undertake caves that require SRT.

DL New form misses competency purposely to change the emphasis from competency to how to look after equipment.

BC It is reasonable to ask that people look after club equipment properly and for MCG to recommend training for those who are interested.

EW- Ladder + line and SRT techniques both require competency, there is no need to separate the two for access to club equipment. BCA has a training budget which MCG could access to support training where required.

#### **Librarian-**

**No report librarian and not present at AGM.**

TS efforts during the Covid time was noted and thanked.

#### **Social Secretary-**

NP-Last year's events included the hilarious assault course with the competitive Belgium's; the very well attended veteran weekend and treasure hunt, the exceptionally well attended Christmas do- managed to squeeze in 33 people into the room, with the laugh a minute secret Santa presents - Graham's T Shirt " I can keep going all night", was one such highlight, as well as the various themed evenings.

In recognition that most of our new members are coming through the Tuesday nights at the moment, this year's intention was to hold 2 Christmas dinners, one on members weekend and one on the Tuesday evening. Other

events had been organised like foraging weekend and Charterhouse fest, though due to Corvid-19 virus, these were put on hold. So we have undertaken Zoom socials with guest speakers.

#### **Editor-**

AH- spent time redacting old newsletters. Had focused on a quality journal when stories come in.

#### **Trustee-report,**

BC, initially a lot of time was spent on the constitution, though due to Covid this has been on hold.

#### **Election of officers**

Secretary Bill Chadwick (BS/DM)  
Treasurer TH (BS/DM)  
Caving sec ME (MM/BC)  
Cottage warden JK- (BC/NP)  
Tackle master DM (NP/BC)  
Librarian DL (BC/JK)  
Social Sec NP (DM/BC)

TF Proposal that the above uncontended candidates be accepted by block vote.

Vote: 22 for, 0 against and 5 abstentions

Editor -

Election between AH and RC

RC 15 votes, AH 5 votes, 4 abstentions.  
RC duly elected.

#### **Non Committee Roles**

**Conservation & Access Officer-**  
Election between HC and CP

HC=12 votes, CP=7 votes, 2 abstentions.  
HC duly elected.

**Rescue Warden**

MM elected unanimously

**Financial auditor**

LM (BC and BC propose/second) unanimous and the second auditor will be co-opted when needed.

TF- recorded our thanks for all the work done by the Committee for last year.

#### **Other business**

- Scaffold Tower  
There was a suggestion that we needed a scaffold tower for SRT training and practice as it is difficult to use the tree, especially when there are cars parked underneath. Also, it would be a good resource to train newbies on how to use and rig ladders. DM had researched the cost and if we did it in compliance with BCA rules, they will insure it for free.  
BS raised concerns about it not being able to be attached to the building.  
EW raised concerns that this would be unsightly and could be a planning concern.
- RC raised that you could use WESSEX tower.
- It was decided to continue to use the tree.

#### **Awards**

**Trip reports** as the number of entries had dropped, ED and TH suggested a Trip report award for both quality and quantity

Tanya Sparey- winner

#### **Knibbs Award for Literature**

Christopher Pearce for his trip reports write up.

#### **Digging Award**

Mike Moxon for the most metres discovered.

#### **AOB**

If CROW comes in then we may require a Section26 application for certain caves, Committee to Action (66.5)

| Action   |  | Who      | result  |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| 64 3.2.1 | More detail required to be able to reimburse, like receipts to pay | GP to TH | Not yet, by end of 2020   |
| 64 5.8   | The cost of printing a newsletter                                  | AH       | Identified the cost though felt there was not such a need as there was the regular reports and mail chimp- RC disagreed |
| 64 10.4  | Website-old site that host, tried to contact them, no success.     | DL       | To try again  |

|           |  |           |  |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 65 10.1   | Work to continue on the constitution to bring up to date and answer questions.   | Various   | Halted by Covid, will resume through digital conversation                        |
| 65 10.2   | Electronic archiving of old documents.   | Librarian | Some have been redacted, completion is being held by identifying a cheap method. |
| 65 10.3 a | Ongoing communications- due to various preferences of social media, communication have used Yahoo, Facebook, Mail chimp- still not perfect |           | Yahoo Group is closing, Committee reviewing new options.                         |

#### New Actions

| Action |   |          |
|--------|---|----------|
| 66.1   | Treasurer to record how COVID grant money is spent.   | TH       |
| 66.2   | Further recommendation from the floor was to rationalise bank accounts from 5 to 2, one easy and one difficult to access. | TH       |
| 66.3   | We will need to file fuller accounts next year with charity commission. Previous used proforma to be supplied             | TH<br>RK |
| 66.4   | To tweak a proforma for a sign off for Upper Flood Wardens.   | DL       |
| 66.5   | If CROW comes in then we may require a Section26 for certain caves  | BC/NP    |

Nicola Pearce and Bill Chadwick October / November 2020.