



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Open Council Meeting, 27th September 2021, Officers' Reports

6.1. DCA Chairman's Report

It's been a busy period since our last meeting back in June, you can see from the reports below, the extent of our activities. Thanks to our officers and volunteers for the work undertaken to date.

Angus and Pete have started the re-development of a new modern website for DCA. This is still working progress but on first impressions, its looking good. This will be discussed in AOB.

Pete has also started: "What do cavers know about us". This is a series of articles to be put out on our website, shared by social media. Each officer is to produce an article about their duties / function, as this is a way to let cavers out there know what each officer does.

Survey Scanning:

Jenny has been providing the lists of the surveys that have been catalogued by Martin and Shirley. I have been looking through the lists, borrowing selected tubes from the library and deciding which ones to scan. I only scan the ones that are of historical purpose, those that are not available electronically. I am finding original tracings and many copies of these tracings so the original tracings will only be scanned.

To date, I have scanned 53 surveys while 22 of them have been updated to the PDCi site. A list can be found at <https://www.peakdistrictcaving.info/home/news/new-resources>

I mentioned this before, these are being scanned as PDF and TIFF Files.

Eldon Hole Bones:

On the 11th July, a team of three scientists were successfully lowered down into Eldon Hole by DCRO and assisted by the Buttered Badgers to the dig site. Without going into detail in my report, the event has been written up in The Derbyshire Caver 174, see link:

<https://thedca.org.uk/publications/newsletters/send/3-derbyshire-caver/174-derbyshire-caver-155>

A donation of £250 has been made to DCRO.

Ash Dieback:

A small article was put in The Derbyshire Caver 174. In the meantime, I have started updating a spreadsheet that has all the cave / mine entrances from the Derbyshire Cave Registry, where there is potentially an Ash Dieback issue. The list has been sent around most of the officers and other parties with the knowledge of the catchments. This is still on-going, and eventually I will be asking the cavers from around the region to fill in the gaps.

SSSI Cave Monitoring:

I have been working alongside the conservation officer and John Gunn to get the cave monitoring scheme started again and we have introduced a competition. The rules for the cave monitoring price draw were put together by Victoria, with input by myself, John Gunn and Mike Higgins. An article has gone out in the last Derbyshire Caver and the website has been updated. We now intend to get something out now to the membership via email, Facebook, and UK Caving to get this moving.

Peak District Cave Exploration Price:

DCA are re-introducing the competition for most cave passage discovered in a calendar year within the Peak District, the winner will win 200 metres of rope. This competition will start in 2022. The competition was originally started by Hitch N Hike, Shaun Puckering is very happy for us to re-start it. Mike Higgins has adapted the old rules and will be discussed in agenda item 8.2, later in the meeting.

Action List Updates:

- Item 71 – see survey scanning above.
- Item 75 – see Eldon Hole Bones above.
- Item 92 – see SSSI Cave Monitoring above.
- Item 93 – see Peak District Cave Exploration Price.
- Item 95 – see Ash Dieback above.

Wayne Sheldon
15/09/2021

6.2.a. DCA Secretary Report

Since the last meeting, the minutes have been written up and issued to the member and put online. The action list has been updated. I have also checked the UCF meeting minutes that Victoria produced, and she has since issued them to the UCF attendees. The agenda, officer reports have been collated for this meeting.

Wayne Sheldon
15/09/2021

6.2.b. DCA Membership Secretary Report

Individual membership of DCA currently stands at 47 members plus 2 honorary members, an increase of 2 since the last Council meeting. One member has resigned, having retired from caving. One individual member's subscription for 2021 remains unpaid and in accordance with para 4.5 of the DCA Constitution they are deemed to have resigned.

Associate members are static at 8 and club members stand at 33, an increase of 3 since the last meeting. At the time of writing no new applications are pending for consideration. Over the 3 months since the last Council meeting, I have circulated information to members on

various matters, including the Agenda for this meeting, nominations to BCA for Council positions and on DCA training workshops.

Since the last DCA Meeting on 21st June I have scanned 12 further issues of The DCA Newsletter (as it then was, prior to renaming as The Derbyshire Caver) and these have been uploaded to the DCA website by Angus. This takes the available copies online back to 1987.

Mike Higgins
14/09/2021

6.3.a. Treasurer / Webmaster Report

Finance:

Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet to date are attached. There have been no exceptional events since the last meeting.

Derbyshire Caving Association Profit & Loss For Period Covering 01/01/2021 to 14/09/2021

Revenues		Expenses	
Income		Expenses	
Subscriptions & Entry Fees	£486.00	General Admin	
Publications		Materials, printing, copying etc	£30.10
CoPD	£489.60	Total General Admin	£30.10
News Letters	£130.00	Conservation, Access etc.	
Total Publications	£619.60	Travel	£226.40
Donations		Other	£116.40
General Fund	£27.00	Total Conservation, Access etc.	£342.80
Total Donations	£27.00	Equipment	
BCA Grants		Travel	£27.70
Training	£220.00	Materials	£186.05
Total BCA Grants	£220.00	Total Equipment	£213.75
Caver Training	£200.00	Publications	
Total Income	£1,552.60	Newsletter	£204.00
Total Revenue	£1,552.60	Caves of the Peak District	£2.48
		Total Publications	£206.48
		Training	
		Training events, Instruction etc.	£380.00
		Total Training	£380.00
		Donations	£250.00
		Total Expenses	£1,423.13
		Total Expenses	£1,423.13
		Net income for Period	£129.47

Derbyshire Caving Association Balance Sheet 14/09/2021

Assets

Assets

Current Assets

RBS Current Account £128.24

RBS Deposit Account £0.01

Lloyds Current Account £24,489.81

Total Assets **£24,618.06**

Equity

Equity

Opening Balances £18,898.14

Retained Earnings **£5,619.92**

Total Equity **£24,518.06**

Liabilities

Liabilities

Peak Hydrology Fund £100.00

Total Liabilities **£100.00**

Total Liabilities & Equity **£24,618.06**

Web Issues:

DCA Web Site:

As informally discussed elsewhere, I and Pete Knight have started work on a replacement for the existing DCA web site, which will have a more modern look and also be more user friendly for officers to maintain. It is intended to transfer all relevant content from the existing site as time allows.

I have also continued updating the current site with material promoting the work of the DCA and also the back issues of the DCA Newsletter being scanned by Mike Higgins.

Peak District Caving

The water tracing database section has been refined further and I have entered the details for all but one result from Cave Science Vol 18, No 1. Some more work is required on the schematic diagram of the Castleton Catchment, but the majority of the development work is complete.

Angus Sawyer

DCA Treasurer

17/09/2021

6.3.b. Publication Sales

Caves of the Peak District.

So far this year we have sold 37 copies of Caves of the Peak District, all except one to traders, so we have taken a total of **£488.00** in sales and currently have around 460 copies remaining. As yet we do not have a downloadable “updates booklet” on the website but this is planned so that we can continue to sell the existing printed copy for longer.

The Derbyshire Caver.

No copies of nos. 153 or 154 of the DCA Newsletter, “The Derbyshire Caver” were taken to shops during the pandemic as our two outlets (Old Smithy Cafe in Monyash and the Peak Mining Museum in Matlock) were closed. These have now re-opened so I have delivered the usual sale-or-return copies of no. 155 to both.

Printed surveys.

We have some printed copies of two surveys which we could sell to anyone interested: the 1968 Eldon Survey of Giants/Oxlow and John Beck’s survey compilation of the Devil’s Arse/Speedwell Cavern. Although both are now being re-surveyed, the older surveys are still attractive for display and people still ask for them. It is suggested they could be sold for £3.00 each (folded), including postage, making us around £1.80 per copy.

Jenny Potts
16/09/21

6.4. Conservation Officer Report

The DCA has relaunched the SSSI Cave Monitoring Scheme. This scheme is important to promote Cave Conservation within the Peak District caving community. This relaunch is meant to encourage cavers to complete a Cave Monitoring Form and accompanying photographs for each feature on the form, upon completion of their trips. Photographs will allow us to compare the feature over a period of time. We can then update our files to protect and preserve these special areas for future reference. The DCA decided to promote the relaunch with a prize drawing.

Conservation forms from previous years have been found from the old website thanks to the work of Angus Sawyer. Karen Slatcher worked on converting forms. Let’s hope moving forward that we can keep this scheme going.

A grant application was submitted in July to the EuroSpeleo Protection. The grant was written to obtain funds for conservation work to be done at Giant’s Cave. Mostly an informational sign and equipment to help with removal of graffiti. Unfortunately, the grant was unsuccessful. The EuroSpeleo foundation wrote “The project addresses a very localized issue involving concrete actions, but wrestles with its wider relevance to caving communities across Europe. Funding for the project could be obtained from the local community or municipality”

It is my intention to continue to look for funding for conservation projects that can be supported.

On August 8th I went with members of the Orpheus Caving Club and the Eldon Pothole Club to monitor the gated section of Water Icicle. It was a great trip, and the cave remains a protected site. It has been brought up that a reasonable scheme of escorted caving trips every three months might be possible. This would give cavers a chance to see this unique cave without disturbing the features.

The owners of Peakshill Farm have been contacted via mail to ask about permission for an A3 sized sign at Giant's cave. This sign would promote the conservation of the area as well as link to the DCA website for maps and information. The sign would also give the number for the Derbyshire Cave Rescue. During the pandemic of 2020-2021 more ill-informed cavers have been accessing this area and it has led to some vandalism as well as fixing ropes without permission. We hope to provide information that would assist in the preservation of the cave. This is still an ongoing matter.

Victoria Kocher
08/09/2021

6.5. Access Officer Report

Please find my written report for September 2021. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend due to holidays. I am happy to report that things have been ticking along nicely since the initial flurry of queries immediately following lockdown.

Ashford Black Marble Mine. Just a couple of more bookings over the past 3 Months. As the documentation provided to the shop was in a very tatty condition, I have replaced this with a new book and the old one will be archived at the British Caving Library at Glutton Bridge. New keys have been issued to Chatsworth, Peak District National Park Authority and DCRO. Victoria and Pete have researched the price of new plaques and it looks like we're going to be looking at around £60.00 to £70.00 for an A5 sized brass or stainless-steel plaque for the access details/safety warnings on ABMM & GP. Of course, this cannot be moved forward until we finalise the access agreements.

Ash Tree Cave. Andrew Chamberlain contacted me regarding access restrictions to Ash Tree Cave as he had encountered a gate. Whilst I was making enquiries, he visited the site and reported that although the gate was shut it was not locked, so they were able to access the cave. He said that the cave is actually on private land, but the owners (the Blagg family who live at Highwood Farm) were very helpful, they do not restrict access, but it is courteous to ask at the farm before making a visit. Phil has updated the cave registry accordingly.

Bincliffe Mines. Martin Long has been very helpful in providing grid references for the various adits and shafts at this site. He has also provided information regarding the tenant farmers. Roy and I would like to visit the site in person to give us an idea of what would be required in any access agreement that is set up.

Action point 94 – I am still researching the area with Roy.

Covid-19 Restrictions. Peak Cavern has recently lifted lockdown restrictions on through trips from Titan / JH however they still want cavers in the cavern before they open in the morning. Holme Bank Chert Mine is now open. This means that as far as I am aware access is at pre covid levels.

Cussey Pot. Mark Noble contacted me to tell me that he is currently in the process of trying to arrange access to Cussey Pot in Eyam and wanted a draft access agreement that he could print out and let the landowner read through. I have sent him a copy of the Caving, Land Managers and Liability booklet. Still awaiting a reply.

Devonshire Estate Reports. Not due until March 2022.

Devonshire Estates Access Agreements. The Access Agreements for Lathkillhead Upper Entrance and Garden Path are still out of date due to Ben Garstang wanting to sort out an amalgamated agreement for Lathkillhead Upper Entrance, Garden Path and Bincliffe. We need to determine the level of access that we actually require.

Eldon Hole. Following the recent exercise to lower archaeologists down Eldon Hole it was reported that the gripples had failed on the fence and that sheep had been inside the enclosure. The person reporting made a temporary repair leaving Roy and I time to obtain the required parts. We visited the site on the 2nd of August and completed a permanent repair.

Eldon Quarry. Need to check that the book, pens, and survey are still in the box on the main Slitherstones Lane gate.

Eyam Dale House Cave. Martyn and Jess have offered to sort out the path which has overgrown.

Garden Path. I am in the process of trying to find out who holds the keys. Jenny has been most helpful digging out historical information to try and help out.

JH. Roy and Phil have modified the lid so that it can be secured with a Derbyshire Key. Also, two long eyebolts have been inserted into the concrete cap so that a backup can be rigged before rigging the main hang. A great improvement!

Lathkill Head Upper Entrance. Pete Wagstaff has been keeping an eye on some cracks in Lathkill Head Upper entrance and sent me this report *'Attached is a photo of the Right Hand (RH) wall as you approach the first pitch. Normally there is no reason to touch this wall when descending. The cracks have always existed but over the last 12 months have become more noticeable. Difficult to know how deep the rock is here and the cracks would not be an issue if the top slabs were deep. So, do we look at a stabilising plan in the next 12 months (small St/St mesh with bolts and then hidden with postcrete)? A second opinion would be welcome.'*

I have forwarded this onto Roy and Pete, and they hope to go out and have a look shortly.

Long Rake Bradwell Moor. No current access to this site owing to a carbon monoxide poisoning incident in 2008. Following discussions with DCRO, the team are still intending to try to assess the atmosphere in the mine using some new equipment they now have which

allows for remote sampling, but this will probably need to wait until pandemic measures allow. Any thoughts of re-opening access negotiations should be deferred until DCRO have concluded their work. No update on this at the moment.

Action point 80 – Access to Long Rake Mine – Probably needs a discussion on the best way to approach the new landowner. DCRO? Phil?

Masson. Wayne and Phil have been surveying and prospecting the shafts etc. in Masson Quarry and have reported that the main passage above **Old Jant Mine (after the two low squeezes if heading downhill) has been completely blocked by a substantial collapse of sediment, rocks, and gravel. They report that the choke will be inspected shortly with a view to clearing the route. The website has been updated accordingly. Awaiting further updates.**

Action point - 59/60 – Gentlewoman's shaft – awaiting response from owner regarding re-capping.

Odin Mine. We received a report of a loose bolt in the entrance of Odin. This was passed onto Scott for attention. Subsequently this has been repaired by James Blake.

Thistle Pot. Phil Reports that the entrance is in danger of being buried in some new earthworks. He tells me that Sue Smith is aware of this and is investigating. Still waiting for an update from Sue via Phil.

Waterfall Hole – Foolow. In May I received a report that Waterfall Hole had been sealed off with a lot of notices saying that it is private land and there is no access. Roy went out to check and he found out that the notices are there to deter tourists and Cavers should continue to use the dedicated car park along the track to the right-hand side of Waterfall Hole. It was determined that the car parking area does not need any attention at the moment.

Waterways Swallet. Crewe have scheduled 13th & 14th November in their meets calendar to inspect the car park, the ground drains, and the gate.

Water Icicle Close Cavern. Karen Slatcher is looking after access. At present there is no access to the gated section because of lack of air movement.

Ann Soulsby
16/09/21

6.6. Project Officer Report

Snelslow Swallet

Still awaiting a quote for a lid. New stile still pending approval from landowner.

Intake Dale Mine

PK & PW completed the walling around the new lid in July. A problem has arisen with the lid since but EPC will address that.

Wapping Mine

No progress since last meeting. Awaiting official request from landowner.

Patio Shaft

Tony Marsden asked DCA to assist with the capping of a climbing shaft in the middle of a patio in Bradwell. This was found following research by Tony. Both PK and PW had been involved with this dig already. Digging is ongoing and access will be possible once a connection is made to the sough which must lay a short way below. Exact location not published at this time due to sensitive location in garden, but they are PDMHS people and caver friendly. That may be an understatement as we've had a dig running in their garden for over a year, so they are very caver friendly.

Since the shaft's discovery, a new patio has been laid, so PW and PK made an extra special effort to make this shaft look tidy and neat when completing the lid in August. We're happy with our work and so is the landowner. Total cost to DCA was around £50 in travel expenses. All materials used came from the DCA container and were surplus from other projects.





Note the removable belay bar under the grill.

Pindale End Mine & Reseats Vein

Please see my additional proposal for shaft caps on 3 sites near Pindale Farm. I am applying for up to £500 to cap the 3 shafts. I would like to have a vote on whether to proceed at this meeting.

Action Register Items

48 – Container. Ongoing. Checked during August and in good order and secure at current site.

79 – HBCM. Can we drop this? Until we're approached by Chatsworth, I don't think we need to be concerned.

Pete Knight

13/09/2021

6.7.A. Equipment Officer Report

Nothing major to report at this time, thankfully the list of jobs is getting shorter as volunteers are actively planning ahead and delivering various smaller projects. My thanks as always to Pete and Phil who always seem to get the lions share of dirty work but also, to James Blake whom has proactively taken on a number of jobs on the long-term list and tackled them. One of these was the collection of around two dozen bolts through caver post

via Tony Seddon. These were the last of the bolts we could pinch from other regions.

We still have an outstanding procurement exercise for the new bolts from Bolt Products. I will be making a call shortly and likely will reduce our order to around half the amount agreed as I think this large order is putting some strain on their ability to deliver. I can't think of anything else which is a cause for concern at this stage but look forwards to catching up at the meeting where I'm sure I'll remember something I've forgotten!

Scott Bradley
20/09/21

6.7.B. Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Report.

Nothing on the bad air front has been reported.

Pete Dell
18/09/21

6.8. Training Officer Report.

DCA Caver Training Workshops

DCA has up to lockdown, run successful training workshops in conjunction with BCA. Continuity in techniques is important so that cavers don't get confused with differing opinions about things. This is where the workshops are so valuable to be able to help keep techniques to a high and approved standard.

*The DCA workshop details and dates are enclosed together with this report. To book a place, please email me first for availability as these always sell out.
nigel@pennineorganisation.com*

DCA has always been the flagship region for running lots of successful caver training workshops in various topics such as SRT training, SRT rigging, rescue and specialist subjects such as photography etc. Sometimes, individual cavers are not able to attend organised club events or clubs themselves do not have anyone at the appropriate level to run training in certain topics. The DCA training workshops for these people provide valuable opportunities and I encourage everyone to support them in any way they can.

Club Training

Most clubs have a training officer or a training rep whose duties include setting up and maybe even running training events for their members. Many University caving clubs have training officers that have attended our DCA workshops and we have been proud to help them in the setting up of their own training schemes based on the DCA guidelines. If you need any help or assistance with your club training events, the DCA can offer you many years of experience and current caving 'good practice. For your more experienced members, it may be useful to get them involved with our coaching guidelines and workshops as these will help 'train the trainers' of your club.

DCA 'Good' Practice Guidelines for Cavers

The DCA coaching guidelines have been reworked during lock down to try fit in with terms used all over the UK. There was an objection in BCA to the use of the word 'best' practice which seemed to put a halt to the work being done. In DCA I use the terms 'good' practice and I would be happy to receive any feedback from DCA members about this.

DCA Coaching Guidelines

I have been constantly monitoring the DCA coaching guidelines with input from club coaches/training officers and practical workshops run for DCA clubs and university caving clubs. We will now be running out workshops for the guidelines and welcome all those involved with looking at or currently delivering training for their club members.

Coaching Workshops

The coaching guidelines have now been reworked during lock down to fit in with terms used all over the UK. There was an objection in BCA to the use of the word 'best' practice which seemed to put a halt to the work being done. In DCA I use the term 'good' practice. The coaching workshops are designed to introduce the skills of coaching and look at the teaching of the training modules. These are essential workshops for experienced cavers considering registering for the Coaching Scheme. Please contact me for the criteria to attend these workshops.

Coaching Workshop - (Level 1 of the Coaching Scheme)

We have one of these running on Sunday November 28th 2021.

This is THE essential workshop for anyone teaching caving in their club and the first step on your coaching journey. This introduction to coaching will look at all 3 modules of the DCA coaching guidelines to help you to set up and run the 4 training modules to your club members and is run by one of the original writers and designers of these guidelines. £20

Vertical Cave Leader Coaching Workshop - Derbyshire (Level 2 of the Coaching Scheme)

A practical workshop ideal for cavers already or are thinking about taking others on simple vertical (Non SRT) caving trips.

SRT Coaching Workshop - Derbyshire (Level 3 of the Coaching Scheme)

A practical workshop ideal for cavers already or are thinking about teaching others SRT.

SRT Pitch Rigging Coaching Workshop - Derbyshire (Level 4 of the DCA Coaching Scheme)

A practical workshop ideal for cavers already or are thinking about teaching others SRT Pitch Rigging.

Nige Atkins
17/09/2021

6.9. Newsletter Editor

The Derbyshire Caver No. 155 was finally published on August 20th, and despite the initial struggles to get material together, it turned out to be a really good issue, thanks to some good contributions and the timely and very successful Eldon Hole bones recovery trip, which gave us a great boost for our reputation - for both projects and publications. A follow-up article will be in the next Descent. The next issue should be able to fully launch the new DCA website and will hopefully update on the various digs in the neighbourhood too.

Phil Wolstenholme
17/09/21

6.10. Cave Registry Secretary

No significant updates to the Registry since the last report, and no significant problems to report. I've updated a few sites with new info and added a few new sites too – mostly mines. I've had an offer from a caver to supply us with as many cave entrance photos as he can manage from the list of sites that have none – hopefully I should receive a batch soon.

A news item describing the history and current status of the Registry is in development and will be posted on the DCA website and Facebook page when complete.

Phil Wolstenholme
17/09/2021

7.1. DCA Report on BCA Council Meetings

Two BCA Council Meetings have taken place (online) since my appointment as DCA's rep to BCA. Given the large amount of business discussed at these meetings I am just listing bullet points highlighting what I consider to be the important issues and I will be happy to enlarge on any of these matters as required by members. However, the Minutes of the 15th July Council Meeting are available on the BCA website, although at the time of writing the 27th July Minutes are yet to be posted.

The BCA AGM takes place, again online, at 12.00 noon on Sunday 10th October 2021. There are some issues on which a vote will be required. Further details on this in the AGM section below.

15th July 2021

- Chair's report contained a record of Nigel Atkins' contribution to BCA upon his stepping down as Training Officer.

- Treasurer's report advised that bank balance was £258,000. Income from membership subscriptions for 2021 estimated to be down by £13,000. It was agreed to increase the BCA membership fee from £17 to £20 from 1/1/2022.
- BCA's public liability insurance has been extended at no additional cost.
- Wendy Williams, BCA's Membership Administrator, has been discharged from hospital following her stroke but will be off work for the foreseeable future.
- The Constitution Working Group presented three sets of proposals for the 2021 AGM regarding (a) Section 10.1 of the BCA Constitution, (b) reorganisation of CBA Committees and Working Groups, (c) amendments to the wording of Section 8 of the BCA Constitution. It was agreed that these proposals go forward to the AGM. As constitutional changes these proposals will be subject to an online vote after the AGM – 70% is the threshold for them to pass. See AGM section below.
- Data from the final round of Radon sampling is coming in and data on the BCA website will be updated along with an accessible summary for cavers.

27th July 2021

- It was agreed that BCA adopts similar arrangements for the 2021 AGM as used for the 2020 AGM;
- The posts of Chair and Secretary are subject to re-election at the AGM, as are 1 Group Representative and 2 Individual Representatives.

BCA AGM

- I attach as appendix A to this report a copy of pages 3 to 10 of the Agenda for the BCA AGM detailing the various issues on which a vote will be required.
- There are two candidates for Chair – Russell Myers, current Acting Chair, and Rostam Namaghi, current Publications and Information Working Party Convenor. You can find Russell's election statement on pages 4-9 of Appendix A and as at the time of writing Rostam's hasn't appeared in the Agenda I have lifted it from UKCaving.com and it is reproduced as appendix B.
- There are 5 proposed Constitutional changes on which a vote will be required and details of these can be found on pages 6 to 10 of Appendix A.
- Attention is drawn particularly to Proposal 3. This reduces the democratic structure of BCA by replacing Standing Committees with Working Groups. Currently Chairs of Standing Committees are elected at the AGM and are members of and have a vote at BCA Council. Working Group Convenors will not have a vote and will not be elected. Personally, I find the final sentence of the report on this proposal extremely concerning.
- There is also a non-constitutional proposal regarding the updating of the Equality and Diversity Policy, details of which are on page 10 of Appendix A.

Mike Higgins

16/09/2021