



DERBYSHIRE CAVING ASSOCIATION

Open Council Meeting, 21st May 2022, Officers' Reports

6.1. DCA Chairman's Report

You will see from the various reports below that the officers have very busy and thanks to all of you for the effort you put in.

This will be our first meeting in a meeting location for two years, it will be a hybrid meeting with hopefully online attendees as well. Our usual location in Monyash isn't possible at the moment due to no Wi-Fi so we have chosen the British Caving Library in Glutton Bridge, near Buxton. We have also offered a couple of events to follow the meeting, a group walk in the Upper Dove Catchment and SRT Training; both of these events have been advertised out. The latter hasn't had anybody come forward to take part while the walk is more popular and will happen anyway after the meeting.

PDC Updating.

Angus refers the dye tracing section of the PDC website in his report. This is awaiting me to test it and liaise with John Gunn on certain aspects of it.

In terms of updating the bibliography section of the website. I haven't done much on this either, again too many other projects taking up my time.

Rowter Hole.

Ann refers to the Rowter Hole Fencing in the access officer report. I approached Rowter Farm regarding a different issue a few months ago, when the farmer mentioned the fence and that it was falling down. I did mention that this was only ever temporary while we were capping the shaft, but they want it replacing. Thanks to Roy and Ann for taking a more detailed look and I intend to get a team together this summer to sort the fencing.

Action List Updates:

Item 96 – PDC Website. Dye Tracing Section. This is still pending.

Wayne Sheldon
08/05/2022

6.2.a. DCA Secretary Report

Since the AGM and Council Meeting in Feb 2022, 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
08/05/2022

6.2.b. DCA Membership Secretary Report

Individual membership of DCA currently stands at 50 members plus 2 honorary members, an increase of 2 since the last meeting. There are 4 new applications for individual membership on the agenda for this meeting. At the time of writing, 6 individual members are yet to pay their subscription for 2022 and under para 4.5 of the DCA Constitution they will be deemed to have resigned if they have not paid by the end of next month.

5 individual members are still paying their annual subscription by Standing Order into the old RBS account despite email and postal requests over the last 3 years or so to change to the Lloyds account. Telephone contact to try and resolve the issue is on my to-do list.

Associate members are static at 8 and club members stand at 34, an increase of 1 since the last Council meeting. There are 2 new applications for club membership to be considered at the meeting.

Since the last meeting I have circulated information to members on various issues, including the agenda for this meeting, a leaflet with details of the events on 21st May, the Minutes of the AGM and the following Council meeting, and the statements from the British Caving Association and the British Cave Research Association regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Since the DCA Meeting on 21st February 2022 I have scanned 4 further issues of The DCA Newsletter (as it then was, prior to renaming as The Derbyshire Caver) and these are awaiting upload to the DCA website. This takes us back to Issue 49 from October 1982.

Enquiries have been completed into the ownership of land containing Wapping Mine and land on which the shafts on the Gentlewomans workings are situated.

Mike Higgins
30/04/2022

6.3.a. Treasurer / Webmaster Report

Accounts as of 08/05/2022 provided. No exceptional items to note, other than that banking charges of £15 and custom and VAT charges of £160.10 were incurred with the purchase of the new BP anchors.

Web Issues:

Both DCA sites have been rehosted on the new BCA server (as has peakspeedwell.info), there are some issues remaining, but not user visible. The sites are now using current software versions and are more secure.

The new DCA site is nearing completion, although the rehosting delayed work, and I would encourage officers to review relevant site areas and provide feedback.

PDCi has been performing as expected, minor updates have been made to the public side including increased resolution Ordnance Survey maps, Environment Agency Lidar DTM maps, performance and cosmetic improvements and improved 'new resources' listings. The dye tracing work has been further refined.

Angus Sawyer

08/05/2022

Derbyshire Caving Association Profit & Loss For Period Covering 01/01/2022 to 08/05/2022

Revenues		Expenses	
Income	£1,432.00	Expenses	£2,204.10
Other	£12.00	General Admin	£15.84
Subscriptions & Entry Fees	£430.00	Post	£15.84
Publications	£320.00	Conservation, Access etc.	£431.75
CoPD	£260.00	Travel	£168.75
News Letters	£60.00	Post, telephone, email etc.	£11.00
Donations	£90.00	Other	£252.00
General Fund	£90.00	Equipment	£831.51
Caver Training	£580.00	Travel	£49.50
Total Revenue	£1,432.00	Materials	£782.01
		Training	£807.00
		Travel	£67.50
		Training events, Instruction etc.	£739.50
		Bank Charges	£15.00
		Donations	£100.00
		Exceptional Items	£3.00
		Total Expenses	£2,204.10
		Net loss for Period	£772.10

Derbyshire Caving Association Balance Sheet 08/05/2022

Assets

Assets		£28,992.59
Current Assets		£28,992.59
RBS Current Account	£172.24	
RBS Deposit Account	£0.01	
Lloyds Current Account	£28,820.34	
Total Assets		£28,992.59

Liabilities

Total Liabilities		£0.00
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Equity		£18,898.14
Opening Balances	£18,898.14	
Retained Earnings		£10,094.45
Total Liabilities & Equity		£28,992.59

6.3.b. Publication Sales

There haven't been any publications sales, other than Caves of the Peak District, since my last report to the AGM. We were paid for 10 copies of CoPD in March and another 5 in May. (We haven't produced a Newsletter so I can't yet collect any money on sale-or-return for the previous issue.)

Jenny Potts
08/05/2022

6.4. Conservation Officer Report

Underground Caving Forum. The DCA UCF meeting was held online 30/03/22. This meeting was open to all DCA and interested cavers. Due to our meetings usually incorporating a lot of talk around specific caving topics it was decided not to invite any Statutory Bodies. We decided to find out what agencies will be interested in attending a meeting and to streamline one based on their expertise. An email has been sent and I am trying to compile a list of those interested. The notes for the meeting were sent out to all Officers.

Owl Hole. I have received a few emails regarding Owl Hole. Someone has informed the DCA that there have been appliances dumped at the site and that Orpheus Caving Club has been made aware. Also, that there is a large boulder at the lower entrance that is very unstable. There are also some features that may be of interest in the upper entrance that should be looked at. This is on the table as an action.

Mountbatten Pot. Emails from a group that would like to continue with a dig on the site were sent through. I contacted NE and they advised what can be done with the shake hole entrance. NE advised that the shake hole entrance cannot be changed and that any spoils will have to be stacked inside or removed.

Giants Hole. An educational sign has been placed at the Trespass box shelter at Giants. This sign will hopefully educate the novice cavers as to the protection and risks involved with entering the cave. Since the lockdown we have seen an increase of visitors to the cave and an increase in vandalism. Hopefully we will see this decrease so that it can be enjoyed in a safe and respectful manner. An action that still needs to be completed is a post placed at the cave entrance with an additional sign.

Batemans Adit. I took a look at the state of the gate at Batemans Adit in Lathkill Dale for NE. The gate is secure.

Conservation Talk. The DCC has asked me to speak to their club on the topic of conservation. I am open to any suggestions from Officers of hot topics that they would like me to bring up. At this time, we are looking for dates. I am going to speak about the Cave Monitoring Forms and have contacted Jess Eades who has happily said she will accompany me to speak about bats. Jess has noticed lids/doors at several cave entrances now that have not taken into account bat access.

Victoria Kocher
07/05/2022

6.5. Access Officer Report

Ashford Black Marble Mine. Still awaiting finalisation of access agreements before we can progress the new stainless-steel plaques which Victoria and Pete have researched. The price of new plaques are estimated to cost around £60.00 to £70.00 for an A5 sized brass or stainless-steel plaque for the access details/safety warnings on ABMM & GP. I have obtained a photograph of the current plaque so that we are aware of the current wording.

Bincliffe Mines. Action point 94 –We are still awaiting a response from Chatsworth in regard to continuing our current ‘no restriction’ access to the adits. Ed Carr contacted me as the tenant farmer Mr Johnathan Potts was worried that he may get in trouble with Chatsworth for allowing us access. Mr Potts has the fields above Bincliffe and allows cavers to park. Roy contacted the farmer and explained that there were no known restrictions to access but we would contact him if this changed in the future.

Covid-19 Restrictions. No current access restrictions in place.

Devonshire Mine. We had a report that the padlock on Devonshire Upper Entrance was broken so Roy and I went along with a replacement. We also had a look at a method of converting the gate to a Derbyshire Key.

Devonshire Estate Reports. The reports for ABMM, Garden Path and Upper Lathkill were all completed and sent off to Chatsworth. PICA have kindly offered to share the result on their yearly Mine Inspection report for ABMM, to underpin the safety aspect.

Devonshire Estates Access Agreements. I have seen the first draft of the new combined agreement and I have forwarded some suggested amendments to Chatsworth. The majority of the amendments were accepted apart from: -

1. We were concerned that the plan to Lathkill Upper Entrance did not explain that the last two fields were over private land not public footpaths to which Chatsworth replied as footpaths are not mentioned throughout the document, not added here.

2. We commented that we have a limit of 6 persons in Garden Path to which Chatsworth replied the limit of 15 persons is our limit, you can of course set your own limit and include in your access instructions.

The document is in the process of being posted to Wayne for signing.

Eldon Quarry. The signing in book, pens and survey are still in the box on the main Slitherstones Lane gate however it appears that this is very rarely completed. Either covers are not aware of the procedure, or the quarry is not in regular use. Roy and I were asked to get permissions for Derbyshire Cave Rescue to use the quarry as a conference venue and during the course of this we have found out that the contact is in fact Chatsworth not Maurice Gregory. Maurice is the tenant farmer.

Garden Path. The new keys that were cut have been checked and one sent to DCRO. I am now in possession of the spare DCA copy.

Lathkill Head Upper Entrance. Pete Knight is hoping to check the cracks in Lathkill Head Upper entrance, reported by Pete Wagstaff. He will combine this visit with the check of the spare keys that we have just had cut. Pete Wagstaff has since been back to complete this year's check. He reported that the cracks had not changed since last year.

Long Rake Bradwell Moor. Action Point 80 – At the last meeting we agreed that the next step was to contact the Mine Owners regarding trying to negotiate access to some of the sites on Long Rake. Is it possible to approach them independently as this appears to be dragging on?

Masson. Action point - 59/60 – Gentlewoman's shaft - It has been reported that Gentlewoman's Shaft which was blocked by a boulder is currently free of obstruction. Mike Higgins has located the owner but suspects that he takes little interest in this particular field of grass. It was suggested that as the rocks have been removed that we no longer have an immediate access problem. Mike has also found out that the owners of Upper Close / Overseer shaft is Heights of Abraham. When Gentlewoman's Shaft was blocked it was suggested that we contact the owners of this shaft to discuss the possibility of re-capping. As we don't currently have a problem, I have recorded details of the owners on my spreadsheet in case we need this information in the future.

At the last meeting Nigel Berry of Peak Caving Club offered the clubs services to remove the blockage in the low section of the mine just beyond the coffin level. Nigel reports that they are 3 evenings into the blockage stacking and tidying up as they go. They estimate another 3 trips to complete but are hoping for a dry spell as the water is backing up. They are also looking at installing some piping to stop it happening in the future.

Owl Hole. Roy and I ventured over to Owl Hole in response to a report that the gate was tied with a piece of wire rather than needing two spanners as per the guide. We completed a temporary repair using a bolt and a chain. Unfortunately, the screw and nuts we took were 10mm and the holes are much bigger than that, so the nut partly disappears into the hole and could jam. It could do with a more permanent fix or replacing the 10mm nuts with 12 or 14mm. The access spits need replacing by something better as soon as possible. Maybe the person who does this could take along the replacement nuts.

Rowter Hole. Roy and I went over to Rowter to take photographs and estimate the requirements for replacing the fence. This is quite a large job that will need a small team to complete.

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.

Wapping Mine. Action point 86 – Whilst trying to obtain permission from the Parish Council for the installation of a gate it was discovered that the Parish Council do not own the land. Mike Higgins has researched the landowner. Roy and I will be contacting the landowner to ask about gating the entrance.

Waterways Swallet. Next inspection due In November.

Water Icicle Close Cavern. All running smoothly at the moment.

Ann Soulsby
29/04/22

6.6. Project Officer Report

Snelslow Swallet. Still awaiting a quote for a lid – Hal has been extremely busy and the last time we spoke had suggested that he might struggle to make the lid but could give us the plans. I've not chased him about the plans again as I don't want to push. I am however mindful that the lid has now been ongoing for around 2 years. I'd like the okay to concrete and new surround and install a twin lid version of the Pindale shafts design with 1x1m walkway mesh on hinges. A scaffold bar belay can be installed, and the lid can remain closed when the shaft is rigged. The 2 sections of walkway are about £100 each and then there is the cost of the concrete and fixings. I would like to think that the job could be done for around £350-400 if we go down this road. Alternatively, we can wait for the no doubt awesome design from Hal and get that made up by Twiggs or someone else. I do not however know how much longer we will need to wait for him to complete it. I'd rather not

waste his time or effort, but I'm aware we have had new BP anchors in the shaft for a year now and have not released the rigging guide or told cavers it is bolted.

New stile still pending approval from landowner.

Pindale End Mine. The plan for capping these shafts has been on hold due to my workload. A provisional date has been set of the end of May and I hope to complete the work here before the next DCA meeting.

Lathkill Checks. After having to go and secure the Mandale Mine adit gates for the hundredth time, I have a small group of people now regularly taking a look at the gates for me. Between us we should be able to sort any problems quickly. Adam Russell was considering how to modify the gate, but in the meantime the new chain and bolt system seems to be okay.

Devonshire upper gate. There is a problem with vandalism here and the gate has been slightly bent and the lock broken. Myself and Roy are planning on measuring up each panel of the structure and fitting sections of walkway grill to it, bolted through, to effectively close the large gaps and add significant rigidity to the structure. This is a recently formed plan and will take time to action.

Holme Bank and Holme Hall Mine. Holme Hall is up for sale. We should watch the situation here as it may allow access to Adit 1 again in future.

The top quarry lock in Holme Bank has been vandalised again. I asked Fabian to drop a new lock on for us a few days ago, so it is secure again for at least a few more days. Of more concern is the Fan Entrance. Vandals have ripped the door frame out of the wall, and it now cannot be secured. Joe Oldfield called me to ask if DCA would be willing to help with the cost of new doors/gates throughout the mine and secure it properly once and for all. I wish for us to discuss this at the coming meeting, and I will be proposing to provide funding for any reasonable costs. I expect the cost of 2 new doors and a modification to the existing one to be in the thousands of pounds bracket. I hope to have a figure for you by the time we meet.

Action Register Items.

48 – Container. Ongoing. Roy has identified a hauler and we have secured the new site immediately next to the old Hitch n Hike building. The container cannot be moved until the roadworks are completed in the early summer. They currently prevent a large vehicle being able to turn in from the road. We should begin paying for the plot from the 1st of June to make sure we do not lose it. We still need to arrange a day to scrub and paint the container green.

Pete Knight
07/05/2022

6.7.A. Equipment Officer Report

A relatively quiet period for the E&T side, notable events are summarised below:

- The surplus 306 bolts originally supplied in error by BP to BCA (and subsequently stored by Nick W) have now transitioned to Steve Gray, with the intention for these to be utilised for expeditions and Ghar Parau. As of 15th March, these are no longer with BCA and will now only be permitted for use outside of the UK.
- DCA received 198 bolts (to the correct grade of 316!) This was concluded during March when they finally arrived, subject to a hefty VAT and Import Tax bill of £169.10. These are now stored within the TSG with a reserve volume of bolts remaining with Pete Knight.
- We have received an application to support the bolting team from Martin Grayson in mid-March which will be processed ASAP - currently we just require a supervised installation and the usual procedures which either myself or more likely, Pete Knight will undertake ASAP.
- We have a healthy number of sites still awaiting bolting including Hungerhill, Oxlow and various others. Unfortunately, we have struggled with volunteers and so the inclusion of additional bolters is appreciated.
- Oxlow has two deviations which are proposed to be completed over the weekend of May 28th, Phil has offered to undertake this but requires a lift to site, it currently looks like I cannot offer this lift so we will close this out nearer the time unless we have any volunteers!
- It has been raised by Roy Rodgers that there are a number of spits which need replacing, this was raised on the 30th of March and so remains on the list. This is likely a larger project as a number of additional bolts within the venue also appear to be due renewal - volunteers greatly appreciated.
- Peak Caving Club met with volunteers from DCA and DCRO on the 3rd of March to receive a donation from funds raised from their members. The donation made to the DCA was specifically identified as to be used for the bolt fund. Apologies, but I can't confirm the exact amount and so will check with Angus as to what has been received. I would like to minute record a message of thanks for the PCC for this generous consideration.

Scott Bradley

09/05/2022

6.7.B. Cave Atmosphere Monitoring Report.

Nothing on the bad air front has been reported.

Pete Dell

07/05/2022

6.8. Training Officer Report.

Assistant DCA Training Officer. Since the last meeting, I am pleased to invite Fabian Ehlers as the newly appointed assistant DCA training Officer who will be involved with all in DCA training in the future.

ACI workshop 'Good' Practice Guidelines for CIC holders

The DCA Training Officer will be running an SRT workshop later this year looking at the teaching of the training guideline modules and current SRT standards in the CIC scheme.

SRT Workshop on May 21st. I was asked to run a free afternoon of training after the meeting on Saturday May 21st, however I have had no enquiries for this. I have since been asked to help with a fund-raising event in aid of Ukraine which I now intend to do as we have no takers for the 21st. I will of course run another SRT masterclass later in the year.

DCA Caver Training Workshops. There won't be much happening over the next couple of months due to the summer breaks, however training events will resume from September onwards. We have run a few workshops over the last couple of Months that have all been well attended which were:-

- **Weather and Cave Flooding Workshop** - Run by Dave Baines
- **SRT Introduction** - Run by myself
- **Cave Formation and Development Workshop** - Run by Jo White and Andy Farrant from the BCRA.
- **Exploring Abandoned Mines** - Run by Dave Baines
- **SRT masterclass** - Run by myself

I have been available as the DCA training officer to club cavers and training officers/coaches to help with their events and I have run a few workshops at my surface training area rather than underground practical. 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 standard. DCA has been a very active 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 caver training workshops provide these people valuable opportunities and I encourage everyone to support them in any way they can.

DCA Training. 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.

Report from BCA Training. There was a meeting for the newly set up BCA Training and Equipment working group –nothing to report.

Caving Coaching Guidelines. We are now looking at helping club coaches with competency for delivering their own training for club members. Coaching Guidelines from my last report are enclosed as an attachment to this report.

Caving Coaching Guidelines. When I took over as the National BCA training officer in 2018, I reworked the DCA club training scheme with those involved during lock down to try fit in with techniques and terms used all over the UK. Whilst many clubs offer training, how are standards set, reached and maintained? There are also many cavers who do not belong to a club and seek out other opportunities for training. It made sense at the time for the BCA training officer to bring together many of its outstanding, dedicated and enthusiastic cavers

within the BCA training committee to share the skills and experience with other cavers at nationally. I worked very hard to help promote and support training needs to recreational cavers not just to Derbyshire but elsewhere in the UK.

The DCA club training scheme has been run by the Derbyshire Caving Association (DCA) for over 20 years. It was designed, written and delivered by 2 current LC/MLA level 2 assessors for SRT for leader and a current and long-standing CIC trainer and assessor. There is no higher qualification in the UK than this and ensures that the guidelines are current with training in all the BCA awards schemes. The DCA club training scheme changed to Club Coaching Guidelines in 2018 following feedback from BCA that the scheme looked like an accreditation award for recreational cavers. These guidelines changed to Caving Coaching Guidelines in 2021 by the BCA Training Officer, now forms a full set of training modules ready to roll out to all UK caving clubs in other regions so that BCA has a clear set of working guidelines to help continuity across the UK where regional training officers can help inform and update clubs in their area. However, 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 the Caving Coaching Guidelines, the trainers use the terms 'best and good' practice, and I would be happy to receive any feedback from DCA members about this. The current BCA Training Officer has been involved in workshops in Northern England and is in possession of these Caving Coaching Guidelines that were reworked by the previous BCA Training Officer in early 2021.

The Training Modules

The training modules are divided into four modules and delivered by club coaches. Basic Caving, Vertical (non-SRT), Vertical (SRT), SRT Pitch Rigging & Self Rescue. Each module is completed before progressing to the next module. The guidelines offer caving clubs the means to achieve a high standard of competence entirely relevant to the club caver and which can be kept up to date by active club coaches. It can additionally be used by the caving clubs as a means of motivating and monitoring individual club cavers.

I have been constantly monitoring the 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.

The Future of the Caving Coaching Guidelines

As the BCA Training Officer from 2018 to 2021, I spoke at Hidden Earth twice, attended training workshops and ran specialist 'Evenings with the BCA Training Officer' around the UK to introduce guidelines for the benefit of all caving clubs. I did this for expenses only and I really enjoyed it, especially when regional club trainers adopted the modules for their own progressive training. These club trainers are still in contact with me and helping to feedback ideas for the future.

The current BCA training officer is very supportive, has been involved with the guidelines in Northern England and has assisted in the running of some workshops including underground navigation. It will be good to see BCA more active with this in the future. Until then, due to

interest outside the DCA, the DCA Training Officer will look to expand the Caving Coaching Guidelines Panel (*the DCA Training Officer and the 5 current trainers*) to include: - The BCA Training Officer, The 'Assistant' DCA Training Officer and the 4 other regional training officers in BCA training committee.

Nige Atkins

08/05/2022

6.9. Newsletter Editor

So far, I've not had any further submissions from anyone since the AGM, despite one being promised on the 'TSG AGM Far Sump dive incident' – I am chasing that one up, but it's not exactly a magazine's worth. I was hoping that we might get something on the Stoney Master Cave, but it all seems to be going to Descent so far – I can ask again. Other than minor upcoming repair and project work, there's very little else to report for Derbyshire at the moment. I'm always ready to put one together but don't have the time (or projects) to write much myself, sadly.

A summary of the last UCF meeting would be pertinent for sure but would only occupy half a page or so.

Phil Wolstenholme

08/05/2022

6.10. Cave Registry Secretary

The Cave Registry is up-to-date and working fine, with some new sites and entrance photos recently added. Angus is still improving the back end, and the mapping section now features greater zoom depths and LIDAR DTM models are also now included as a background layer – very handy indeed.

I've updated the Peak Cavern - Victoria Aven micro-guide, which will be published once the new ropes are rigged – this is under Peak Keyholder control, but it is imminent.

I've also updated the 'Youd's Level' SSSI monitoring form to better reflect the situation and add another inspection site – namely the phreatic caverns and intact sediment deposits at the top end of the system, below the entrance shaft. These aren't mentioned in the Great Masson document either. The map provided for the Youd's Level document doesn't show this portion of the survey, however, so it would need updating to be properly inclusive – I'm happy to do that but may have to use a different survey if the current one is no longer available.

As an additional point, I suspect that most forms still state they should be sent to Dave Webb upon completion – presumably this line needs removing now and replacing with Victoria?

Phil Wolstenholme

08/05/2022

7.1. DCA Report on BCA Council Meetings

Report to be provided verbally at the meeting.