

SMWCRT Constitutional Amendments for AGM on 21st January 2018

During 2017, SMWCRT have been asked to provide clarity on some aspects of its constitution, particularly in relation to the difference between Associate Members and Associate Clubs. In looking at this issue, the SMWCRT Executive have concluded that these similar terms are causing confusion and that the term 'Associate Club', which has been in the Constitution since 2000, is not the correct term to describe the relationship between Caving Clubs and SMWCRT.

After taking advice on how best approach to improve the clarity here, it is recommended that we change the term from 'Associate Club' to 'Affiliate Club'. The notes below provide more clarity on the types of membership that would be available within SMWCRT and these would be listed in the Constitution. The role of Wardens is also clarified here.

Please note that we have also taken the opportunity to tidy up and improve some of the grammatical aspects of the constitution as we are reviewing this for the first time in some years.

Member

This is a caver who is a full member of the Team and is listed on the SMWCRT Call Out list as willing to be deployed either underground or overground on a rescue. All Members will receive directly each and every communication that is made available to the whole team (providing email address changes have been notified to the Team). These will include, but are not limited to: Rescue reports, notice of the AGM and any EGM's, equipment deals, news of training, practices and social events.

Team Members will be encouraged to attend rescue training events, rescue practices and team events. A Member is expected to make themselves aware of the Team's policies and operating procedures and to support the running of the Team when they can. A Member has full voting rights at the SMWCRT AGM and any EGM's.

Associate Member

This is a person who wishes to be formally associated with the Team but does not want to be listed on the SMWCRT Call Out list or be deployed either underground or overground on a rescue. Selected, relevant communication will be provided to an SMWCRT Associate Member and they will be notified of any equipment deals or offers that are available from suppliers, as and when they arise. An Associate Member has full voting rights at the SMWCRT AGM and any EGM's.

Affiliate Club

An Affiliate Club is a Caving Club which wishes to have close links with SMWCRT. As many SMWCRT Team members are members of caving clubs, it is important to the Team that there is a close relationship with those clubs that operate in the Team's area of responsibility.

The category of Affiliate Club is a means by which SMWCRT can create a more formal way for Caving Clubs active in South & Mid Wales to interact with the Team. Different Caving Clubs (and other types of club) wish to interact with SMWCRT in different ways, so keeping the statements relating to Affiliate Clubs in the constitution simple allows each Club to decide for itself how it wants to work with SMWCRT. Some Clubs elect a representative to come to SMWCRT Executive meetings, some are passive bystanders, happy to just to receive updates and others are more actively involved, encouraging its members to join SMWCRT as members of the Team.

SMWCRT seeks to communicate with each Affiliate Club in the way that best suits each Club, whether through a representative of the Club attending SMWCRT Executive meetings or through distribution of minutes and team communications electronically to agreed representatives of each Club.

The benefit of this arrangement for SMWCRT is that it is able to communicate more effectively with a greater audience of cavers, seeking to gain their interest and involvement and encouraging them to join them. In particular, it enables SMWCRT to have an effective relationship with the caving clubs that generously provide working bases for the Team. The benefit for the Affiliate Clubs is that they have a direct route to both communicate with and when appropriate, to influence the Team for the benefit of their caving club members.

Being a member of a club that is affiliated to SMWCRT awards no 'membership' benefits (there is no right to vote at the AGM, and no right to receive team communications directly), however, Cavers who are members of Affiliate Clubs are encouraged to apply to become Members of SMWCRT in their own right, if they have not yet done so.

Affiliate Clubs will be notified of any equipment deals or offers that are available from suppliers that can be shared with their club members, only when suppliers have agreed that their offer can be shared beyond Members of a Cave (or Mountain) Rescue Team.

Associate Clubs in 2017 that would be called Affiliate Clubs in 2018 if this change is agreed:

- Aberystwyth University Caving Club
- Cardiff University Caving Club
- Cave Diving Group Welsh Section
- Chelsea Speleological Society
- Croydon Caving Club
- Hereford Caving Club
- South Wales Caving Club
- Swindon Speleological Society
- Westminster Speleological Group

Wardens

The primary role of the SMWCRT Wardens is to decide the initial response for a cave rescue and coordinate the opening stages, whether initiated by the Police or direct from cavers. Wardens are expected to be regularly involved in all aspects of the Team and its organisation and are members of the Exec. The key elements of the Warden role are:

- To respond to a call from the Police, or other source, requesting cave rescue assistance
- To gather sufficient information to decide what immediate response is required
- To coordinate the initial callout process, passing control to a Surface Controller as soon as possible
- To act as the point of contact between the Police and the Team until a Surface Controller takes over
- In the absence of anyone more suitable, to act as the Surface Controller
- To play a part in maintaining the operational readiness of the Team by participating in practice exercises
- To attend occasional Warden meetings to discuss operational matters and then make recommendations to the Exec. for any resulting changes to processes or arrangements. Decisions made in a Warden meeting are ratified by the Exec.

Warden Selection

When a Warden retires, stands down or is removed from post, they may be replaced using the following process:

1. The Exec. will ask the Wardens to consider whether a replacement is necessary or whether there sufficient Wardens in post and in a suitable spread of geographic areas
2. If a new Warden is required, the Wardens will bring suggestions for the role to a meeting convened for this purpose. Candidates are usually suggested by Wardens, but on occasion, individuals put themselves forward for the role
3. Candidates are considered against the following Warden Attributes:
 - Contactable by phone at all times
 - Living and working within one hour of key sites within the SMWCRT area of operation
 - Calm and reliable personality, able to inspire confidence in others
 - Ability to make an informed decision as to the level of Callout required and then co-ordinate the Callout
 - Willingness to participate in Practices
 - Full driving license and use of a car
 - Good knowledge of Caves and/or Mines in the SMWCRT area of operation
 - Be in touch with the local caving scene, knowing and being known by active cavers in local clubs and the local area
 - Ability to act as Surface Controller in the initial stages of a Rescue – to co-ordinate and control the Rescue for the first few hours
4. The successful candidate will be the one that most closely match the attributes. This doesn't mean that those not chosen are always unsuitable, as for any selection process,

it is the role of the decision makers to choose the person they believe most suitable for the role

5. The Wardens will take their decision to the next Exec. meeting to state the decision that they have come to and to ask the Exec. to ratify that decision. Members of the Exec. may ask for an explanation of the how the decision was arrived at and/or challenge the decision.
6. The Warden will not be appointed to role until after the Exec. approves the appointment