

# CAMBRIAN CAVING COUNCIL CYNGOR OGEFEYDD CYMREIG

Affiliated to the British Caving Association

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Gloucester Cave Rescue Group HQ March 12<sup>th</sup> 2017

### Present

Martyn Farr (MF)	Chairman	*	Cave Diving Group
Dave Tyson (DT)	Secretary/Newsletter	*	Wirral Caving Group
Ian Adams (IA)			United Cavers Exploration Team
Robin Jones (RJ)		*	United Cavers Exploration Team
Roy Fellows (RF)	Legal/Insurance	*	Cambrian Mines Trust
Stuart France (SF)	Access/Conservation		Chelsea Speleological Society
Steve Holding (SH)		*	Shropshire Caving & Mining Club
Matt Terry (MT)	Treasurer	*	Grwp Ogofeydd Garimperios
Martin Laverty (ML)	Cave Registry	*	Grwp Ogofeydd Garimperios
Barry Hill (BH)	Webmaster	*	Hereford Caving Club
Richard Hill (RH)	Training Officer	*	Gagendor Caving Club
Vince Alkins (VA)	Equipment & Techniques	*	South Wales Caving Club
John Hine (JH)		*	RFDCC
Joe Duxbury (JD)		*	Gloucester Speleological Society
Neil Culross (NC)		*	Welsh Mines Society
Dave Glover (DG)		*	Morgannwg Caving Club
Adrian Fawcett (AF)		*	Chelsea Speleological Society
Jenny Lawrence (JL)		*	Hades Caving Club
Chris Gibbs (CG)		*	Cwmbran Caving Club
Chris Crowley (CC)		*	Croyden Caving Club

\* Club representatives. The meeting was quorate with 17 out of 51 member clubs present.

### 1. Chairperson's Opening Remarks

Welcome everyone. It's my first time at this venue and I think it's essential that we move the meeting around the regions and certainly the Forest of Dean is very accessible to cavers from the whole length and breadth of Britain. The meetings offer a chance to see new faces, have real communication and certainly, if nothing else, foster our relationship with the mining bodies in this area. I think it would be useful if we could go around the table and people say who they are and who they represent.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

**DT** apologies for absence were received from Mary Albury (WCMS), Mike Moore (SCMC), Alistair Garman (Morgannwg), Jan Karvik (RFDCC), Paul Taylor (GCRG), Peter Cloughton (Observer), David Hardwick (Hades)

### 3a. Minutes of the 2016 AGM

**MF** opened discussion on the minutes of the 2016 AGM. **DT** noted he had spare copies of these if people need to refer to them. **MF** asked about for comments on the accuracy on the minutes. **JH** noted that his absence apology was noted later on in the document, but wasn't in 'apologies for absence'. **RF** noted later in the meeting that the spelling of Cwmystwyth was wrong in the 'chairperson's opening remarks'. **DT** agreed to correct the final copy.

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## 3b. Matters arising from 2015 minutes

**DG** (representing Morgannwg) I haven't attended this meeting before, and we didn't send a representative last year, but I have been asked to query the report from the Access & Conservation officer as people who pay attention to these things were not aware that that post existed in the Cambrian Caving Council. **DT** noted that technically the post was 'Conservation Officer' and this is what appears in the constitution, however previous incumbents like Bernie Woodley and Elsie Little had used that title. Historically the conservation officer has always been responsible for access. **SF** noted that conservation and access go together and Ogof Govan was a case in point where a nervous landowner has taken 2-3 years to come up with a permanent access agreement and he had regular meeting with the landowners staff to organise archaeological visits etc. Looking back to Elsie's and Bernie's period as access officers, with the little Neath caves there have been ups and downs in relationships with the landowner and also conservation problems like pollution incidents. There is a tension between conservation and access and if we are not careful then access may allow conservation to be undermined, so when making access provision care must be taken to consider the impact on conservation and the BCA has published 'minimal impact caving guidelines' to help crystallise this. **VA** is this something we can address at this meeting and ratify that Stuart wants to be known as access and conservation officer? **DT** this could be changed in the constitution and while this meeting is quorate such amendments need to be advertised in advance and so would have to be left till next year. **SF** it probably just needs the meeting to recognise that conservation and access go together and myself and my predecessors have adopted that strategy. **IA** in the interim the committee could mandate the conservation officer to do access pending a change to the constitution.

**DT** reported that the problem with a hole in the Alyn Gorge had been resolved with NRW and a grille had been fitted with a modified 'Derbyshire key' arrangement.

**DT** asked if everyone was happy with the minutes, subject to the minor edits. There were no dissenters and so they were accepted unanimously as a true record.

## 4. Applications for Membership

**DT** reported that he had received an application from Gwent Caving Club and they were meant to be sending a representative to this meeting. No-one had appeared so far and so it was decided to deal with the application later. **MF** stated he had talked to them and their club was probably the fastest growing of the new clubs in the south and they had a strong interest in mining as well as caving. They were meant to be down in Mendip over Easter. They were very active and organised several caving trips each week.

## 5. Officers Reports

### 5.a Chairman's Report

**MF** 2016 had been another challenging year, change seems to be taking place at an ever increasing pace. We are all passionate about our interest in the underground world and we must keep abreast with developments to ensure our spectacular world is enhanced and not stifled. Access is above all is a priority and the debate surrounding CRoW rumbles on – everyone has a view and 2016 was a bumpy road. Having attended meetings instigated, for example, by ABIS (Association of British and Irish Show caves) it is apparent that the access issue remains a raw as ever and we need to consider very carefully our path ahead. That aside, we can see in the following reports that excellent progress has been achieved in all aspects of underground activity in 2016. The newsletter, despite being only a quarterly publication, is a highly creditable production essential in an age where more than ever we need to stand up for our sport. The cave registry continues to move forward and Martin Laverty's work deserves a mention. I believe the committee has acquitted itself well, no-one has put in more work behind the scenes than the access and conservation officer. I would also like to thank Ian Adams who stood down as treasurer for his sterling work.

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## 5.b Secretary's Report

**DT** I have put a copy of my report on the web. There is nothing really controversial. We have had some successes – we managed to persuade NRW that having a fairly open access to the Alyn Gorge 'hole' is sensible. I have been in contact with the North Wales Wildlife Trust who are trying to buy the Minera quarry off Tarmac however they don't want to discuss any issues about access until the sale has been completed. A few cavers attended at a meeting to discuss the quarry and came away with mixed views. Bats may be more of a problem in the future in dictating access, but nothing has been resolved yet. There are a few quarry walls with bolted areas for climbing which might also cause bird nesting issues and it might be worthwhile working with the BMC on any access issues. **SF** mentioned he had attended a recent National Access Forum for Wales meeting and it was the first one where he saw observers rather than just the committee members. One of the attendees was the chair of the Wrexham Local Area Forum (LAF's are statutory committees, one per county council or national park. were established as part of CRoW act) and he was very interested in Minera quarry as its part of his patch. It probably would be worthwhile making contact with him. In general it would be good to have representation on some of the LAF's, although it is may not be straightforward as some councils and national parks choose the membership directly.

## 5.c Treasurer's Report

**MT** (copy of the treasurers report and scrutinised accounts are on the web) I took over as treasurer from Ian Adams around September. I can report we have a small surplus for the year. There were a couple of expenditure claims which I couldn't get in before the end of the year and so the surplus now stands at £60.62. The current balance is £5529.26 and the accounts been signed off by the scrutineer.

**DT** proposed the accounts be accepted. **IA** seconded the motion. There were no objections and the accounts were unanimously accepted by the meeting.

## 5.d Access and Conservation officers report

**SF** I am just going to pick up on a few topics in the report. The first deals with the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. Lesley Griffiths, cabinet secretary for Environment & Rural Affairs (AM for Wrexham) states "Wales needs a better and fairer approach to public access for outdoor recreation which is less burdensome to administer, provides for the wide range of activities people want to participate in, with sensible safeguards for land management activities. I intend to develop proposals for consultation on how the current laws could be improved. Following a broad-based review of the legislative framework for access and outdoor recreation the Welsh Government undertook a consultation in 2015 on improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation. The consultation paper examined the current legislative framework for access to the outdoors and encouraged discussion on a sliding scale of the potential options including making improvements and removing some of the restrictions in place under current access legislation, extending the definition of access land to include other areas and implementing a new legislative framework"

It is possible that the review will lead to new legislation and possibly a change in the law so that, for example, Wales could follow Scotland in allowing freer access while England is stuck with the CRoW act. I should point out that Bob Mehew from the BCA who also attended the national forum meeting came away with the opposite view and thought Wales would not change the law.

In answer to a question regarding a scope for Wales to change the law, Stuart reported that the Government of Wales Act devolved the countryside and recreation completely to Wales. It was unlikely that the CRoW act would be replaced wholesale, but rather extra bits "bolted on" using a statutory order or similar. There may be interest, for example, in providing a more democratic process for members of Local Access Forums.

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National Resources Wales seem to be trying to come up with strategies for measuring how good Wales is at managing its natural resources, not just for recreation, but in the broadest possible sense. They promulgated a document "A summary of the state of Natural Resources report, an assessment of the sustainable management of Natural Resources" at the November National Access Forum. They are looking at sustainable recreation, tourism and energy etc. and are trying to develop mathematical models to measure how successful they are in managing the resources in the most responsible and productive way. Numbers of mountain bikers and car park occupancy are typical statistics which might be gathered as part of the strategy which aims to get a quantitative view of use rather than rely on the older qualitative views.

**JL** What is the view on the use of motorised vehicles on forestry and other land? **SF** Well they're not allowed to, its against the law and so they are against it. There is a representative on the National Access forum from the 4x4 brigade and the FC does allow events on its land on certain weekends, but these are strictly controlled to avoid danger to other users. **JH** Basically it's against Forestry bye-laws. **JL** I am just aware that there is a lot of motorcycle activity and it does conflict with riders and a walkers on bridleways. **SF** Motor bikes and other vehicle are also outlawed by the CRoW act.

There followed a general discussion on monitoring cavers numbers, **SF** reported that the only counters he has installed at present were in Ogor Govan to monitor the agreement with the landowner,

**SF** went on to talk about the judicial review of NRW's interpretation of the law. There are two laws to consider: the CRoW act and the law of property act 1925. The latter deals with common land in 'urban' areas such as the valleys, Merthyr Tydfil, Brecon etc. A key difference between the two pieces of legislation is that the CRoW act talks of 'open-air recreation' whereas the 1925 talks of 'air and exercise' and this subtle difference has considerable repercussions. A challenge by DEFRA against the 1925 act in 1998 to prevent horse-riding on urban commons failed in the high court. NRW's position is that the term 'open-air recreation' is highly specific and caving is excluded as there are physical confines, although they have admitted that descending a pothole while daylight is visible would be a grey area since it could be seen to be climbing, which is permitted under CRoW. They have decided that open-air extends as far as the daylight penetrates, but there is no legal basis for this. I independently consulted two barristers who were of the opinion that CRoW does apply to caving, but this would have to be tested in the courts. Looking back at the parliamentary debates over the CRoW act it is clear that they wanted the term 'open-air recreation' to be broad ranging in the same way as the legislators who drew up the 1925 act and the term was deliberately left vague to encompass as many sports as possible. So I am of the opinion if a case did go to the high court then we would be very unlucky to lose. Regardless, NRW doesn't want a court case as in the case of bat access at Pwll Du they deemed the application had been withdrawn and so there were no grounds to proceed with a judicial review and so the idea that open-air recreation include caving couldn't be tested.

**SF** Taking the recent ministers announcement there seems to be little point pursuing the CRoW access campaign in Wales because if they are going to change the law then we will be arguing for something which will become historic. If the ministers proposals to broad the access definition are to be enacted then we should just let it happen. As I noted earlier this will then put England at a disadvantage compared to Scotland and Wales. There have been two FOI requests and a one legal discover process because of the judicial review; the first FOI request I asked for in August 2015 concerned Ogor Draenan and PDCMG, the second FOI was issued by David Rose in November 2016 for the same material. One thing which is clear is the NRW do not want the CRoW act to apply to caving, they are not on the side of better access and are prepared to throw considerable resource at it to prevent that happening, There are over 40 people involved in the discussions regarding Ogor Draenan, the CRoW act and Dwrs Cefn.

**DG** I represent Morgannwg and there is concern that the apparently litigious nature is putting peoples backs up at NRW and this might impinge in other areas – as you note there are a large number of people you have been in contact with at NRW. The concern which has been raised is that you personally or CCC shouldn't be seen to be an irritant.

**SF** I think that is a very good point and at the last National Access Forum I asked the BCA to attend and

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support me. Bob Mehew attended as Tim Allen and Andy Eavis were abroad. The BCA shared the fears that it had become rather personal, but wanted to make it clear what I had been doing personally with the support of the CCC was to explore as far as the law would allow caving to take place was something which got national backing from the referendum and was BCA policy. The BCA's statement was basically that they are the national body for caving and CCC is a member region and the BCA has a policy of pursuing a CRoW access campaign for recognition of the law. CCC is the regional body for Wales and it's doing the same thing and that the BCA endorses it. I have only been dealing with a small number of people in NRW, most of the 40 people on the list I have never met and still have to find out who they are. **IA** Can I just add that last year at the AGM, CCC voted and agreed we would not be involved with the access arrangements at Draenan and anything happening there was with you and not CCC, so the points you are raising shouldn't be directed at the CCC. **DG** Indeed, they are not directed at the CCC. I am sorry to say they are directed at Stuart in effect insofar as its impossible to separate himself into two separate bodies.

**SF** it is abundantly clear in the NRW emails that they do not see this as a CCC issue and put it down entirely to me. I have dealt with NRW over a long period and it is clear that NRW staff themselves are split on the issue or at least find it incomprehensible. I have a good working relationship with many of them and they know its not a personal battle against NRW and I am just asking for recognition of access rights for caving. It was very helpful that the BCA attended the last meeting and we have been asked to make a 15 minute presentation at a future local access forum on caving and we need good publicity and self promotion material. This is a chance to spread the word to other sports bodies in Wales, Countryside Landowners Association, National Trust etc. about what we do, why its good and why we should be allowed to more of because we are so responsible, Another meeting has been offered between the BCA, CCC and NRW to explore the CRoW act and our belief that it applies. I think NRW will avoid any decisions which could lead to any litigation, but the whole issue of access also depends on what the Welsh Government decides in the next three years. I would like to see the CRoW act to recognise caving and the existing statutory safeguards to be used. NRW already uses section 26 to protect high value sites such as Cwm Dwr and could use bye-laws to protect other sites.

**RF** The forestry land and mines in the CAL agreement was signed by the Welsh Government (WG) and not NRW and that means the land belongs to WG rather than NRW and that may have a bearing on this discussion. **SF** All forestry land is dedicated as access land, but the forestry bye-laws still applied. In the case of Dinas the mineral owner has other rights and these override the forestry bye-laws, however the general public still have to respect them. To clarify, all the land in the CAL agreement is owned by WG except the Rheidol site which is owned by NRW. CAL signed two separate agreements with the respective bodies.

**DT** I have had a criticism directed at CAL regarding the Draethen Lead mines as some groups made unofficial visits to the mines and CAL's intervention had raised the access profile. The mine was put on the original list by John Hine for Elsie Little and CAL have tried to get official access for all. There was no access and anyone visiting unofficially breached forestry bye-laws and could be prosecuted as happened in North Wales over the Penmachno mine. **DG** But nobody 'did' us!

**DT** That may be the case but what we were trying to achieve was a level playing field where anyone can have access – we have managed that at all the other sites. In the past covert trips into the North Wales mine took place and people kept a low profile, **DG** noted that they had encountered officialdom and a blind eye was turned. **SF** You are running a risk as the forestry bye-laws are not theoretical and as noted above an outdoor pursuits instructor was prosecuted. The problem with the Draethen mines is the large number of greater horseshoe bats which use it and this is probably why NRW are loathe to come to any agreement despite evidence that the bats only use it as a winter roost. We still hope eventually to reach some kind of agreement. **DG** noted that privateers wouldn't be bothered with the CAL agreement anyway. **SF** noted that NRW would be worried about them and maybe thought that there may be more issues if the CAL agreement became public knowledge with more of the fringe element venturing it, but he had caver counters in the mines in the past and hadn't seen large numbers of visitors. The counters showed that the pattern of visits were generally short trips, maybe bat groups. NRW has got a genuine concern over greater horseshoe bats

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but at the same time it is not being sensible by refusing to respond to correspondence.

**CC** mentioned some friction on Pant Mawr between a digger and cave diver over a large scaffolded hole. **SF** noted he had walked around the area but had not ventured in any. The topic of digs prompted a general discussion including the old digs mentioned at DYO at the last AGM. **SF** noted that he had recent email from the national park asking what CCC had done regarding advice for diggers and he was able to point them at the January 2016 newsletter article and the minutes of the AGM which said it was down to clubs to police this and not CCC. There was an inconclusive discussion of historical permits issued by Elsie Little from SWCC who had some agreement with the Cnewr estate.

**SF** Ogor Carno negotiations has not seen any progress and nothing will happen because of the health and safety concerns. Previous access was clearly down to local agreement with Welsh Water staff and there was no formal agreed access. Attempts to open negotiation on access have hit a brick wall and any access will require a dig on the hill to create a new access point.

**SF** Ogor Gofan and Castlemartin - There is an article in MOD Sanctuary magazine and we hope to get a permanent access agreement in place. I am taking some archaeologists down to check there is no possibility of cavers disturbing old deposits and hopefully after that we will get a long term agreement.

**SF** NRW are funding some scaffolding, rope and conservation tape to remedial work on the chokes in Craig a Ffynnon.

**MF** Thank you Stuart, that's a phenomenal amount of work and we all very appreciative.

## 5.e Training Officers Report

**RH** The main thing is that the BCA training committee has changed its composition over the last year so that it is purely dealing with recreational cavers now and I have emailed every club in CCC that grants are there for any training and if you want training contact me or the BCA training committee. **SH** At the last BCA committee meeting I felt it was clear as mud as to whether it had changed or not. **RH** So the training committee definitely has changed, what was the MCP is now the QMC (Qualifications Management Committee) and that hasn't been officially ratified yet. **DT** I have had some very positive feedback from the training sessions in North Wales. **RH** there are two more sessions this year; the Llangorse on in April and another in North Wales in autumn,

## 5.f Equipment and Techniques Officers Report

**VA** Another reasonably quiet year on the E & T front. Just want to make it clear that I am not the fixed aids officer,. The E & T committee have been again dealing with anchor issues and been aware of equipment recalls and concerns of durability and wear rates of items for rope ascent. We are currently revising the advice on anchor inspection for cavers, but the details are not yet finalised. Once the wording been agreed that the advice will be widely distributed together with a reminder of details of how cavers in the region can request anchor replacement under the BCA scheme.

There was a general discussion on bolt types and the need to be able to replace them easily to aid conservation, Bolting in Slate was also discussed with a note that expansion bolts were unsatisfactory due to powdering of the slate. Stuart asked about the anchors in Bryneglwys slate mine – it was thought these were placed by Gethin Thomas and were not part of the BCA scheme.

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## 5.g Legal and Insurance Officers Report

**RF** I have not had any enquiries this year and have just had some discussions with Bob Mehew

## 5.h Cambrian Cave Registry

**ML** I haven't got anything to add to my written report, it's been a quiet year, no major discoveries that I am aware of. Just a few additions of references which I have found or have been pointed out to me. A couple of changes to the map interface and that's about it.

## 5.i Website

**BH** The website is still getting a reasonable number of page hits/month. The most popular pages are the latest news, cave access and the newsletters. I haven't had any reported downtime so everything seems to be working OK.

## 5.j Newsletter Editor

**DT** noted that he had very little stuff for the next newsletter and asked for people to provide news and articles as the cupboard was currently bare. **SF** suggested an article on the WG ministers comments and **RF** suggested the proposed work at Craig y Dinas would also form an article. **JL** mentioned that an obituary hadn't appeared about Elsie Little. **DT** remarked that there articles in Descent and the SWCC newsletter, but no-one who knew her well had volunteered to write one article for the CCC newsletter.

## 6. Other Cambrian Representative Reports

### 6.a FODCCAG

**JH** reported that they had got their annual permit signed for this year. I have copies here of the original permit in 1966 which only allowed access to RFDCC, but our new permit allows any BCA members. The permit system working well and easily done via the internet. Robin Hood is still closed for access but we may have permission to winch that for NAMHO.

### 6.b Welsh Mines Society

**NC** I don't have much to report. John stepped down as chair at the Hallfest last year, passing it to me and we also have a new newsletter editor as well. Everything seems to be going OK.

### 6.c NWCRO

No report

### 6.d SMWCRT

**VA** gave a brief update. Its been a quiet year, there was a medical issue in DYO which we worked with a hazardous area response team. This was good as we could see how their kit could interact with our kit. We may see these people a bit more on rescues. Most of the other incidents have been lost or overdue. We are hosting a rescue conference in June with more details being released in due course.

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**6.e OFD**

No Report

**6.f DYOCAP**

No report

**6.g PDCMG**

No report.

**7. BCA Matters**

**DT** I have asked by Bob Mehew to bring the subject of the BCA constitutional changes. There is detailed information on the BCA website. The first change is to alter the wording on the rights of landowners to match the change made to the CCC constitution two years ago. Tim Allen has suggested removing that section altogether and I guess this will be discussed at the council meeting in two weeks time. There are several other changes proposed including permitting proxy voting and allowing the BCA to ballot electronically rather than suffer the expense of a postal ballot. The important thing is people should take an interest in the AGM and also take the effort to vote when the ballot forms drop through their letterbox.

**SH** Can I raise something which was raised at BCA regarding mines. The mines inspectorate (MI) seem to have become more active in the last year or so. NAMHO has guidelines for exploring abandoned mines and these are being updated. One of the mines inspectorate has agreed to help us. MI have visited several show mines and they have closed access to one mine and also visited another mine which people were opening up to look at artefacts. It is clear that the inspectorate scan websites looking for minerals for sale and try to determine where they have come from. If it is clear that minerals are coming out of a mine then they think they should be involved as this is now a working mine. Tourist mines are being visited and some requests for changes (e.g. 4 hourly safety inspections) have been requested. It is clear that there may be more changes in this area and there have been changes in the mining regulations so that the mine operator is the responsible entity.

**8. Election of Officers**

**DT** asked if Martyn was happy to continue to stand as chairperson and he affirmed. No-one else offered to take over the post and so Martyn was unopposed and carries on. The secretary noted he was stepping down from the post at the end of the meeting and Rob Jones offered to take over responsibility. **JH** proposed, **DT** seconded and there being no other candidates Rob Jones was elected unopposed. The rest of the existing officers were happy to continue in their respective posts and as there were no alternative candidates proposed they remain in their posts. **DT** noted that he would be happy to carry on as newsletter editor provided he got a bit more support in the way of articles.

**9 Any Other Business**

**DT** regarding the application of Gwent Caving Club to join the CCC, this is generally a formality as they just need to put CCC as their regional council on the BCA application form. Martyn has had a phone conversation with them and they are very active. **JH** noted they had been to the Forest of Dean. They were accepted as members without further discussion.

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There was some discussion about a missing ore truck from Aberdare level No. 1 (more correctly No. 4 or the Nicholas Griggs level) near Pontypool. Several people had seen it in place a few weeks ago but Gwent reported it missing recently. It appeared to have been dragged out with scratch marks left in the ground.

**RF** Cwmystwyth safety work phase 1 has been completed – a sagging stull which threatened the skipway has been reinforced so it no longer is a problem. The reworking blends into the existing surroundings and ensures that access to other important areas will be maintained. The second phase of work to remove the second plastic tube and replace it with a steel roadway will happen later this year. The steelwork has been fabricated and awaiting delivery to the site.

David James's project to re-open the Hen Barc adit in South Cwmystwyth has started and the entrance cutting has been cleared out. Because of the SSSI status this work has had to be done by hand. The next phase will be done by cut and cover in short sections where its collapsed.

Fron Goch - access to the engine shaft has been restored, it's not walking passage, there is a bit of scramble up, but a lot better than it was. The 14 fathom level which was accessed by fixed ladder last year has an ongoing dig which may well allow access beyond engine shaft. If the above water sections of the mine were accessible then it is potentially one of the largest mines in the country.

Natural Amenities Limited has been looking at getting the original abandonment plans for Craig Y Dinas and digitizing them to put on-line. These will be of great help for divers as the current water level matches that on the abandonment plans. I have been looking at improving access to the mine and have circulated a leaflet with details of a suggested walkway. Currently the short route in involves a steep scramble which is would be unsuitable for taking heavy loads like dive cylinders. A possibility is to put a pedestrian walkway in along the route of the original 2' tramway. An on-site meeting a couple of weeks ago with mine explorer society, Brecon Beacons national park, CADW seemed positive, but NRW didn't send a representative. The area is an SSSI and have a meeting scheduled with the NRW area manager to discuss the proposal. If I can get approval then I will organise a meeting of the stakeholders to look at funding.

**SF** One thing the committee needs to consider is how to get rid of CCC members clubs if they have been naughty or if they haven't been seen for years. The more clubs we accumulate then the higher the quorum needed for an AGM. **DT** if CCC member clubs leave the BCA and don't opt to be associate members then they do drop off the list. **SH** part of the problem is the BCA's who need to look the wider issue of club membership; as it stands any club can decide which regional council it wants to represent it.

There was a short discussion on council rates on caving cottages where most seem to avoid high rates but Swindon is classed as a holiday cottage and pays a significant sum. SWCC has a rescue post which helps their status. **SF** suggested looking at what the BMC do as they have a lot of club huts and more experience.

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed to hold next year's AGM on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 12.00 noon at a location in South Wales to be decided – possibly Penderyn Community Hall.

The meeting finished at 15.15