

ULSA committee meeting
Held online via Zoom on 24th March 2022

Attendees

John Holloway	Meets & Minutes Secretary, CNCC Representative
Jon Haynes	
Lyndon Easterbrook	President, CNCC Representative
Mike Butcher	Training Coordinator
Dinny Davies	
Bradley Tyson	
Rose Wilson	Ordinary Member
Alice Shackley	
Larisa Onoufriadi	Vice President
Chris Williams	Treasurer
Rob Watson	
Nadia Raeburn-Cherradi	Editor
Sam Allshorn	

Apologies received from Ben Chaddock and Mike Fearn

Meeting started 20:08

Lyndon Easterbrook: This is more of a preliminary meeting, we'll come back the week after Easter.

CNCC AGM

Birks Fell access

Lyndon Easterbrook: The Birks Fell issue has been rumbling on for a while. The CNCC is looking at withdrawing from the access agreement.

John Holloway: Birks Fell would be better and safer if cavers could just turn up whenever is appropriate.

Jon Haynes: In the past, access was restricted for shooting purposes.

John Holloway: Access is now only restricted for lambing.

Sam Allshorn: I have caved there without a permit due to the weather. The lambing argument is spurious. The National Trust are unlikely to have a bee in their bonnet about CNCC withdrawing from the access agreement. The tenant farmer may be an issue due to any initial increase in visitors afterwards.

Lyndon Easterbrook: This is good feedback for the meeting.

Peak Caving Club

Lyndon Easterbrook: They wish to join the committee.

Sam Allshorn: They should wait a year before joining the committee.

John Holloway: They are not applying for the committee, only membership.

Conflict of Interest policy

Sam Allshorn: The training officer is paying himself to run courses. This is unfair to other CICs as there is no opportunity to bid for the work.

Lyndon Easterbrook: The CNCC has agreed to adopt a conflict of interest policy.

Alice Shackley: There is no open opportunity for others to bid for the work.

Sam Allshorn: This needs to be transparent and accessible to everybody. There should be a conflict of interest policy.

Jon Haynes: Is there a challenge mechanism in place in the policy?

Mike Butcher: There needs to be more transparency.

Sam Allshorn: The CNCC need to make difficult and contentious decisions. The representatives just vote for every proposal. This issue needs to be dealt with carefully to avoid the training officer standing down. There needs to be discussion and debate. This goes back a long time. The CNCC rigging guide gave Les Sykes' business email address as the point of contact. This sort of thing hasn't been dealt with and should have been. Perhaps propose that financial decision making is taken away from the training officer.

Alice Shackley: The issue is that this needs to be discussed rather than ignored. Can this be discussed with someone behind the scenes?

Sam Allshorn: Contact the chair and ask what the council will do about it.

Rob Watson: I'm willing to speak to Ian Patrick on behalf of CHECC.

ULSA dinnermeet

Lyndon Easterbrook: I have approached the Yorkshire Dales Guides looking at the 11th June. The feeling was to have one later in the year so more people can camp, and the meeting can be more outside. The venue is suitable for workshops. LUUSS/LUUCaS (formed in '57) is 65 years old and ULSA (formed in '65) is 57 years old. Could we get more old ULSA members involved?

Dinny Davies: There is a birthday party for the generation slightly older than me that weekend, so some people would not be available.

Mike Butcher: Alice and I will be at a festival then with Ann Barber.

Lyndon Easterbrook: The 7th May and 23rd April were also mooted.

Alice Shackley: People have lots of plans this year as they couldn't before, so there may be low turnout.

Nadia Raeburn-Cherradi: Would September be better?

Lyndon Easterbrook: I'm planning a Horsey weekend on the 23rd September.

Dinny Davies: That would be a bit far south for a dinnermeet.

Lyndon Easterbrook: That wouldn't be the dinnermeet. We could have a separate dinnermeet and September gathering. Traditionally we keep the dinnermeet in the Dales. An alternative venue is Settle Rugby Club.

Mike Butcher: A change would be nice. We have been there twice already.

Lyndon Easterbrook: What should it be? A sit down meal or less formal?

Sam Allshorn: Organise something! Some people will always be unhappy. Advertise it and get on with it.

Watty archive

Lyndon Easterbrook: This is the stuff in Tonk's garage. Watty didn't want it in the library. Could it be made into a digital archive?

John Holloway: The BCA could digitally archive it.

Lyndon Easterbrook: It could go to the BCA or the Edward Boyle library.

Chris Williams: There is lots of stuff in my roof. We can pool the lot together and try to work out what to do with it all. I have a big folder of Watty stuff as well.

Sam Allshorn: The original survey materials need to be digitised as soon as possible. One place charges £15 for up to A0 width and any length, which would be really useful. The logbooks should be digitised, indexed and available online. The archive needs to be looked after. We should respect Watty's wishes for it not to go to the Edward Boyle.

Chris Williams: How much stuff does Tonk have? If it's a small amount, we can add it to the rest. I can scan some stuff at work.

Sam Allshorn: How long has that been in your attic? You're a busy man. It would be better for it to be given to a collection with a professional archivist, such as the BCA. I'm going to leave the meeting so it will go much faster.

Sam Allshorn left the meeting.

Chris Williams: The stuff is mixed up and dispersed. The BCA wouldn't know what to do with it. It needs a bit of a sort first.

Rose Wilson: We should find out what the BCA's facilities are.

Lyndon Easterbrook: I'll contact the BCA to find out.

Chris Williams: I will take one survey to work to see if it can be scanned. Some are already starting to fall apart.

Jon Haynes: We should do a stock take first.

Chris Williams: I have three or four boxes of random mixed up stuff. It needs going through.

Lyndon Easterbrook: I'm happy to liaise with Tonk and do a stock take. Are you happy to do the same with yours, Chris?

Chris Williams: I'll start ploughing through it. Most of it is surveys. Five or six boxes need sorting. There is a survey stock take somewhere.

Horse memorial trip

Lyndon Easterbrook: We're going to the mines of the North Downs on the weekend of the 23rd September. Tonk and Linda are happy for that weekend. I will contact the guys at Wealden and get the ball rolling.

Alice Shackley: The 23rd is a Friday.

Lyndon Easterbrook: 23rd - 24th - 25th.

Rose Wilson: I stress that we need to tell people about it now.

ULSA constitution and committee roles

Lyndon Easterbrook: There doesn't seem to be anywhere on the website where you can bring up the constitution. Kristian did a good job pulling amendments from AGMs together to cobble a constitution together.

Chris Williams: I have the Kristian version somewhere.

Lyndon Easterbrook: I'll do a rewrite and bring it back to the next meeting.

Chris Williams: Kristian's version incorporates the various amendments.

Dinny Davies: It needs to be taken to an AGM.

Lyndon Easterbrook: The change from Training Officer to Training Coordinator is one amendment. Should the President's role be time-limited? We should also define roles and whether particular roles need to be filled. Historically, the student president is Vice-President and the student Secretary is ULSA secretary. Should the Meets and Minutes Secretary do the Secretary job instead?

Chris Williams: The Secretary is a main role and a signatory on the account, so should probably be separate, but whether a student should be Secretary is another matter.

Nadia Raeburn-Cherradi: The roles seem very specific.

Lyndon Easterbrook: We should define the roles.

Dinny Davies: We could change roles. For example, make the Secretary ULSA, not LUUCaS, and make Meets and Minutes Secretary a LUUCaS role.

Nadia: It seems a lot for a President to be organising a dinnermeet themselves.

Lyndon Easterbrook: I was enjoying running about organising the Horton dinnermeet.

Dinny Davies: Most ULSA cavers don't want to pay £30 for a sit down meal. It would be much better as a less formal event.

Chris Williams: Helwith Bridge worked well in the past.

Alice Shackley: Can we have the rewritten constitution in time before the next meeting, so we have time to read through it first?

Lyndon Easterbrook: I will think the constitution through before I put it together in time. I want to get back to steering the ship. Rose and Chris handle membership, but I have no idea who the members are. I'd like a list of the members. In 2019, virtually all the older ULSA members left the room as the AGM was due to start. Going forward, I think the AGM shouldn't be part of the dinnermeet.

Dinny Davies: The AGM became part of the dinnermeet to encourage people to attend.

Lyndon Easterbrook: We have Zoom now. We would need to tweak the GDPR statement to produce a list of members.

Rose Wilson: We wouldn't. We can just send you the list when we send it to the BCA.

Lyndon Easterbrook: Who looks after the ULSA Gmail account?

Chris Williams: Did Brendan set it up? That's when we got rid of the individual email accounts. It changed when Brendan set up the new website.

ULSA website

Lyndon Easterbrook: Can Jon explain the problem with the website?

Jon Haynes:

I used to run the ULSA website for about twenty years. I handed over to Brendan, who used WordPress, with the site hosted on my server.

Before Christmas, I noticed the server was under much load. I took it offline and found automated bots were attacking the WordPress ULSA site. Brendan wasn't around. I turned the website off.

The problem is multiplied by the use of WordPress, which gets updated a lot and needs to be kept on top of with security patches. Some plugins were obsolete and couldn't be updated. The commercial theme plugin was used on a trial licence, which expired, so the plugin and site can't be updated.

I'm in a difficult position hosting unlicensed software on my server. We need to devise a strategy based on what we want the website to do. The web is a nasty place nowadays. You need to spend more time maintaining the site. We need to balance the functionality of the site (versus other channels) and the cost of keeping the site secure.

Dinny Davies: What was the original site done with?

Jon Haynes: Bespoke development, with no third party libraries. The ULSA archive site is still there. It wasn't the most secure code, but isn't attacked because it isn't a target. We might decide there is no need for an ULSA website, or decide on a much smaller one. I am happy to help in any way I can.

Alice Shackley: It's worth having a website. I don't have Facebook and that's a growing trend. Email chains become tiresome. A website would be a good place to keep archived documents.

Dinny Davies: It is not a lot of work to maintain something static.

Lyndon Easterbrook: What are the plugins? Do they link to external sites?

Jon Haynes: Some of them do. I tried stripping some away but stopped after a while. The contents are still there. I don't want to lose anything. I can poke around to see what to rescue. If some thought was put in to making something simpler, it would be a better long term solution. This site demands more technical know-how than it should.

Dinny Davies: What did the new website have that the old one didn't?

Mike Butcher: You could tag people in rants and have profiles.

Alice Shackley: Could we replace just the theme?

Jon Haynes: I did some work. The first thing was to remove the theme. I did some upgrades, and I thought I won't try to touch it before Christmas as I don't have time to deal with more attacks. It's an option we could try, but if I find myself spending more than a week prodding it, I'll say let's try something else.

Dinny Davies: Could we bring the old one back?

Jon Haynes: It's really old. The web's a nastier place now. I think picking up the old site and bringing it into the 21st century would be more work than using, for example, WordPress. Not many sites from twenty years ago are still on the web.

Lyndon Easterbrook: It was a combination of the site needing a revamp and Brendan willing to build a new site, but we're left with this problem. My question is wouldn't it be easier to start again?

Jon Haynes: It's a thought.

Nadia Raeburn-Cherradi showed a countdown timer showing two and a half minutes.

Lyndon Easterbrook: Any volunteers?

Dinny Davies: It sounds like someone needs to get Brendan's help to strip out plugins.

Jon Haynes: Is it worth having a splinter group meeting with technical, interested people?

Dinny Davies: I'm not dialling in from Majorca.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 20th April

Meeting ended 22:01