

UK CAVE CONSERVATION EMERGENCY FUND
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 25/1/2003
at Cerberus Spelaeological Society HQ

1. The following committee members were present: A Jarrett, P Parker, G Price (Treasurer), J Whistler. E Little participated via a conference telephone call.
2. Apologies for absence were received from P Mellors.
3. GP welcomed JW to the meeting. Her appointment to the Committee was awaiting formal approval. GP outlined the present situation with respect to the Fund and meetings, and summarised the main points that BCRA had raised that required consideration/action.
4. Constitution. There was some discussion on the pending merger between NCA and BCRA. It was not clear when this would be going ahead but was likely to be sometime next year. It would be necessary to amend the constitution of the Fund to tie in with the revised structure.
5. Donations/Income. Currently the main income was derived from interest, with occasional small sums from the sale of the 'Lost Caves of Britain' video. It was generally agreed that some effort was required to raise additional funds and ideas were needed. In the past GP had personally funded the printing of the posters for Hidden Earth 2000 as a means of raising funds but these had not sold. AJ suggested that NCA might consider donating proceeds from the sale of the Cave Conservation Handbook. EL would raise the subject at next NCA meeting. Other ideas were needed.
6. Loans/Grants. There was some discussion on policy with respect to loans and grants. It was agreed that offering grants should be avoided unless there were extreme circumstances. This was necessary to avoid diminishing the assets. GP explained that this had been policy in the past, although on a couple of occasions loans had to be converted to grants as there seemed little hope of the funds being repaid.

The question of possible application for help with maintaining access to a dig was raised. Clause 2(c) of the constitution covers this ".....maintain access to....., but not solely to assist exploration." It was agreed that if the cave was a dig then generally funds could not be made available.

6. Publicity. There was some discussion on means of obtaining more publicity. Currently information on the Fund was available on the web site and through the publication of the annual reports in Caves & Caving and SpeleoScene. This could be supplemented with a press release following completion of a project. Reports also need to be published on the web site. It was agreed that it should be a condition that recipients of a loan or grant produce a report upon completion of the work and permission is given for use of this by the Fund. No reports had been produced for past projects. Agreed to try and obtain/produce these. EL/PM/AJ to sort out something for projects in their respective areas.

It was agreed that two posters should be produced - one A4 as a flyer for distribution to clubs etc, and one A3 for display at meetings. Design needed to be simple but eye catching. Ideally information that might be included would cover the purpose of the Fund, how to apply, and perhaps some quotes from past recipients. It was felt that the A4 flyer could be fairly basic and ideas for possible layouts should be sent to GP as soon as possible with a view to producing a draft by mid June. Help with producing the A3 poster would be needed and it was suggested that either Jerry Wooldridge or Gonzo could be approached. It was felt that the cost of production could legitimately be covered by the Fund if neither BCRA or NCA would contribute.

7. Procedures. The procedure for making an application to the Fund was that initial contact should be made through the Treasurer. It was agreed that a reasonable time for making an initial response was five days and it should be stated that if none was received within this time scale then an approach may be made to a committee member, accepting of course that correspondence can go astray. The web site already states that in the case of difficulty and approach may be made to someone else. This needs to be emphasised.

The official email address for the Fund is 'ukccef@speleology.org.uk'. When the Treasurer is away this can be diverted to another committee member. Similarly arrangements will also be made for diversion of any incoming post. There is an email link set up on the Fund's web site at 'www.ukccef.speleology.org.uk'.

8. The situation with respect to value of grants and loans was discussed. This was clearly defined in the constitution. If the committee wished to exceed this, approval from NCA Executive and BCRA Council was required. It was thought that this could take a long time and the process required clarification. GP would discuss this with NCA and BCRA.
9. JW asked about payment of expenses for attending meetings. She estimated her costs to be about £40 for travel. There was no facility in place for this, although constitutionally NCA covers postal and stationary costs. In the past NCA has also covered all other admin costs. EL thought she may be able to pay expenses from the NCA C&A budget. She would speak to R Mehew regarding this.

Graham Price
Hon Treasurer