



British Caving Association

Minutes of the National Co-ordinating Panel meeting held on
6th February 2012 at Staffordshire Council Staff Club, Stafford

1. Present

Tom Peacock (TP)	Chair & ALO – South Wales Panel
Lee Paskin (LP)	ALO _ Northern Panel
Dave Baines (DB)	ALO – Derbyshire Panel
Mary Wilde (MW)	Training Administrator
Peter Knight (PK)	ACI Rep
John Cliffe	(for Tony Smith ALO Southern Panel)

The meeting commenced at 10.06

2. Apologies for Absence

Dena Proctor (DP)	ALO – North Wales Panel
Nigel Ball (NB)	Training Officer
Tony Smith	ALO Southern Panel

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 03/10/2011

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Action Register Updates.

The following actions were discharged.

029, 030, 032,033, 034,035, 037,038,039, 040, 041,045, 046, 046, 048, 049, 050, 051, 053, 054, 056.

Remaining action updates can be found on the action register.

4.2 Long Churn Incident (item 5.3 from the last minutes)

DB suggested that a document for Long Churn be drawn up on the same lines as that for the Manchester Hole system. He volunteered to do this with a local representative. **LP** agreed to raise this at the next Northern Panel meeting. It was noted that a document already exists called “Thunderstorm and flash flood at Alum Pot and Long churn caves” which would provide input to the proposed document.

5. Training Committee Report

TP proposed that as the minutes of the last TC meeting had only just been issued (not the fault of **MW**), that any issues be raised at the next NCP or directly with Nigel Ball (**NB**).

MW offered to send out NCP and TC minutes with the NCP agenda each time to ensure everyone had the opportunity of reading them.

6. **Technical Advisors Guidelines Review**

Having read the document through there was a discussion regarding the background to the item. **JC** outlined the history of the technical advisor role in relation to AALS. There was a feeling in the room that such a document was not required. **LP** said that producing this document was forward thinking in preparation for the demise of AALS and the implementation of a 'code of practice'.

MW recounted the action from the TC meeting on 01/10/2011 at which the issue was originally raised to try to clarify the focus of the discussion. **JC** questioned the original premise put forward by Graham Mollard at that meeting "some leaders avoid revalidating awards by obtaining long term site specific assessments and that the situation regarding AALS may serve to exacerbate this situation".

It became obvious that as not all the panels had been able to provide input, it would not be appropriate to attempt to carry out a document review at this meeting. After much further discussion regarding how and why to progress it was agreed to defer the item to the next NCP meeting. In the mean time all input should be sent to **DB** who along with **DP** will produce an updated document to be presented at the next NCP.

7. **Hot Topics from Trainer/Assessor Workshops**

The only TA workshop that had taken place since the last NCP was in North Wales but **TP** had not received the notes. After a quick scan over lunch he decided that more time was needed to pull out relevant topics and that he would do this for the next NCP meeting.

8. **Revalidations**

8.1 Should New TAs be allowed to deliver revalidations (**DB**)

DB explained that informal negative feedback had been received from one Head of Centre regarding a revalidation workshop run by a new TA. He therefore wished to discuss whether new TAs should be allowed to deliver revalidation workshops. **LP** and **TP** questioned whether there actually was a problem or was this proactive suggestion aimed at preventing a problem in the future. **DB** said that the feedback had not been formal so there was no actual complaint to address but it might highlight an issue waiting to happen.

A lively discussion followed. The key points and suggestions were:-

1. If TAs have to observe a revalidation workshop would this affect their position on the revalidation rota.
2. Would this mean observe or assist, noting that assisting attracts a fee.

3. Should probationary TAs have to observe at least one revalidation workshop as part of their "OBSERVATIONS & APPRENTICESHIP ASSESSMENTS" prior to gaining full TA status.
4. Should probationary TAs have to observe at least one revalidation workshop after gaining full TA status but before leading a revalidation workshop.

TP proposed that this issue be raised at panel meetings and discussed at the next NCP.

JC suggested that we should elicit feedback from all training courses, assessments and revalidation workshops. **TP** agreed to obtain a copy of the feedback form used by **DP** and produced a reformatted version for potential use for LCMLA and CIC. This would be presented at the next NCP.

8.2 Log Book Experience over 4 / 5 years (DB)

DB explained that there might be an issue regarding prerequisites for revalidation. If a leader applies to attend a revalidation workshop early (which may be up to 18 months before the certificate expires), that candidate will have had less than 5 years in which to fulfil the prerequisites. **TP** said he would expect that person to have fulfilled the prerequisites in less than 5 years if they had applied to revalidate early. It was the feeling of the meeting that no action was required on this issue.

8.3 Revalidations. Should the frequency of L1 and L2 revalidations be the same? At present both are 5 years but should we consider making L2 every 3 years? (NB, TP)

TP said that since the revalidation process changed from a paper based three-year system to a practical five-year workshop, was this period too long at Level 2?

DB said that **DP** felt that changing it would be belittling for leaders who also held an MLT. **LP** said that differentiating between the two on grounds of risk and skills fade was not appropriate, as all leaders have to manage high profile risks such as flooding.

After initially proposing that level 1 be left at 5 years and level 2 changed to 3 years, a discussion led **TP** to propose that no change was made at this point in time. There was a vote which was passed unanimously.

8.4 What are the exact prerequisites for L2 assessment; how many days experience should the candidate have? (see N Eng panel minutes 7.3) (DB)

The Northern Panel had suggested that the prerequisites for progressing to L2 assessment were too extensive. This led to a discussion about precisely what was currently specified and whether 30 additional trips were required **between** L1 and L2 assessment or could the leader have at least 60 trips in total from the start of his or her logbook experience.

The Handbook states: -

- For Level 2 an additional 30 underground trips all of which should be in vertical cave systems. 5 of these should be quality days”

DB proposed that of the total 60 trips required to undergo L2 assessment, the 30 vertical trips could come from experience prior to achieving level 1.

A vote was taken and passed nem con.

9. Should the L1/L2 syllabus be split into 2 categories?

NB had asked for this item to be discussed, although he was not present at the meeting. He had asked for each element of the L1 and L2 syllabus to be categorised as either

- a. Technical skills and knowledge or
- b. Leadership skills and coaching

NB was intending to identify any commonality between the LCMLA and CIC syllabi.

It was decided to defer this item until the next meeting.

10. Should we lower the age at which candidates may enter the training scheme to 16?.

NB put this item forward prior to the meeting and it led to a lively discussion. **DB** raised concerns that had been highlighted at the recent Derbyshire panel meeting. He said that until someone is 18 they are not legally competent to make their own decisions. He also said that it would not be possible to take under 18s into mines, but **JC** said that this was not so. The Derbyshire Panel had concluded that the NCP should ‘tread carefully’ with regard to this suggestion’. The meeting was rather unclear as to why this idea had been put forward. As the panels had not all had the opportunity to consider it, **TP** and **JC** could only assume their respective panels would be against it. Derbyshire, North Wales and Northern England were against it.

11. Regional Panel reports

11.1 JC - Southern Panel. Tony Smith (**TS**) has been asked to be technical advisor for the Scouts. As **NB** is the caving advisor for the Scouts it was suggested that **TS** should discuss this with him.

TS had received feedback from an L2 leader who had trained in Derbyshire and been told to rig all pitches in hauling mode. **DB** expressed surprise and suggested that this may simply have been a misunderstanding on the part of the candidate.

The panel members expressed a willingness to attend revalidations on other regions on an unpaid basis, to help achieve standardisation. **TP** said this was a really positive offer and again raises the topic of standardisation.

Rhino rift has lost bolts on one pitch and is a little loose. Leaders should also be cautious in the entrance to Swildons, which is also a little loose.

11.2 DB - North Wales Panel.

Dave Carlisle (**DC**) is commissioned by the Rhos y Gwaliau centre to do mines reports. Recently three reports had not been paid for leaving the centre out of pocket. **DC** and Steve Pope may carry out inspections together for a year before Steve takes over completely.

Talks on access to Forestry Commission mines have taken place with reps from the Cambrian Caving Council and the South Wales Outdoor Activities Providers Group. Gary Evans is involved with this initiative and the outcome has been positive.

Tyroleans have been covered on L2 courses, as there is a need for them in certain slate mines. **TP** asked that the Training Officer be made aware, as Tyroleans are not currently covered by the LCMLA scheme. .

Des Marshal left the panel but has applied to return. He has been set certain tasks to complete before regaining his full TA status. **MW** is to send him a form for probationary fees 2012.

11.3 LP – Northern Panel.

Phil Woodyer has resigned.

Lights were discussed but no firm conclusions reached.

The guidelines for Site Specific Assessment have not yet been discussed.

A discussion took place regarding whether logbook experience should be assessed by a small group rather than by an individual TA prior to acceptance on a revalidation.

TP was against this and felt that if the level of experience was in a doubt a 2nd opinion should be sought.

The Long Churn incident had highlighted the issue of 5 year revalidation periods (discussed already). This led to a further discussion regarding 'supervision' for L1 and L2 leaders. **JC** stated that all leaders should be operating within a framework even those who were freelance. Such a framework would need to be produced were any accident to occur. **JC** added that leaders should never advertise training in skills for which they are not qualified.

11.4 TP – South Wales Panel

Juliet Parker-Smith had become aware of an occurrence at Porth yr Ogof that did not result in an incident but had had the potential to do so. Water levels rose fast in the afternoon and all groups came together to ensure everyone left the cave safely. Apparently the weather forecast was clear about this risk but further details are not known. **LP** noted that since the Long Churn incident Ingleborough Hall have set up a procedure whereby the weather forecast is printed off before any trip, which would be beneficial in the event of an incident investigation.

There have been some reports of damage to caves including Eglwys Faen.

Bridge cave has suffered a rock fall and change of conditions at a sink. .

The Clearwell Cave manager has requested some assistance with bolting.

CIC panel and Petzl has alerted leaders regarding mini-tractions, which should not be used for belaying (according to Petzl, see Petzl's site).

11.5 DB - Derbyshire Panel

The LCMLA syllabus states that the candidate will select a cave and group for their group day assessment. The panel had raised a possible issue with this. If the leader selects a cave that is of a lower technical level than others that they aspire to have on their certificate, is this

appropriate. Should they choose a site at the top technical level of their proposed site list?
After some discussion on this at the NCP it was felt that no action was required.

Caving Supplies are still marketing load bearing belts although these are no longer actually manufactured by them.

The revalidation rota was discussed and it was decided that if a TA was called on to assist he or she would not lose their slot on the rota.

The radon levels in Bagshaw Cavern are reported to be high. A maximum of 5 hrs exposure per month is suggested for a leader's safety.

Jugholes has been reclassified as a mine only, no longer a cave and mine.

12. **AOB**

MW raised a question on behalf of a TA, who wish to know that if a revalidation workshop was run from private premises, could expenses be claimed. After a long discussion **TP** should discuss this matter with **NB**.

LP highlighted that the Manual Of Operations, which was being drawn up by the BCA, includes a disciplinary procedure, which could lead to the removal of a leaders award. **LP** accepted that a policy was required but highlighted the impact that the removal of an award could have for a leader.

13 **Date of next meeting**

Mon 14th May

Mon 1st Oct

Feb 4th 2013

NCP Action Register

No	Action	By	Deadline	Done
	04/10/2010			
043	MW to check that all lists of local mining terms have been received and collate.	MW	ASAP	
044	DB to check if there are any safety implications were Dave Carlisle's reports 'pirated'. Update 06/02/2012 JC said everyone was encouraged to purchase original mines reports. All leaders are responsible for reporting potential problems in specific mines to Dena Proctor and failing to do so represents a safety issue. TP questioned if it was possible to identify an original. DB agreed to check with PICA and Dave Simpson about the feedback process. JC is to write a short note for ALO's highlighting the issues, to be circulated by MW. .	DB JC MW	By next meeting	
	03/10/2011			
052	MW will send updated copies of the L2 core skills checklists to TP for checking.	MW	ASAP	
055	NB to send a copy of the CIC mines module to SP	NB	ASAP	
057	TP is to find out who is placing the bolts in The Black Hole	TP	ASAP	
	06/02/2012			
058	LP to raise "Long Churn document" suggestion at the next Northern Panel meeting and identify someone to work with DB on it.	LP	Next N Panel Meeting	
059	All to raise any issues with the TC mins from 01/10/2011 at the next NCP or direct with NB	ALL	Next NCP	
060	MW to send out NCP and TC minutes with the NCP agenda.	MW	Ongoing	
061	ALL to send comment regarding the Technical advisors document to DB	ALL	ASAP	
062	TP to ensure hot topics from the NW TA workshop notes be raised at the next NCP	TP	Next NCP	
063	All to raise the issue of new TA's running revalidation workshops at respective panel meetings and TP to bring back at the next NCP	ALL TP	Next NCP	
064	TP to formulate a course feedback form	TP	Next NCP	
065	JC to ask TS to discuss the advisor role	JC	Next NCP	

	with NB			
066	TP to ensure NB is made aware of Tyroleans being covered in NW	TP	ASAP	
067	MW to send a TA fees form to Des Marshall	MW	ASAP	
068	TP to raise issue of expenses for TA's using own premises with NB	TP	ASAP	

