

CONSTITUTION

Date of Constitution: 1979 - amended 1993, 1995, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2019

- 1 **THE NAME** - The name of the Club shall be the Derbyshire Caving Club, hereinafter referred to as the Club.
- 2 **THE AIMS** - The aims of the Club are:-
 - 2.1 To provide the facilities (including information and records) and organisation to enable members safely to participate in caving and in mine exploration and, where appropriate, to pursue specialist interests.
 - 2.2 To encourage responsible exploration of caves and mines, the recording of discoveries and artefacts, and specialist activities including photography, surveying and historical research.
 - 2.3 To support through membership as a Club the activities of the British Caving Association and National Association of Mining History Organisations and to encourage adherence to relevant guidelines of these and other appropriate organisations.
 - 2.4 To lease the Alderley Edge Copper Mines from the National Trust and to manage the mines for the long term benefit of members, other caving and mining clubs, the National Trust, other organisations and the general public.
 - 2.5 To foster a general interest in caving by lectures, publications and exhibitions, and co-operation with other organisations and individuals and by any other means deemed fit by the Club.
- 3 **MEMBERSHIP TO THE CLUB** - Membership to the Club shall be open to any person who is interested in the aims of the Club, fulfils the conditions of membership and agrees to abide by the policies of the Club. The membership classes shall be as follows: Full Caving, Full Non-caving, Associate Non-caving, Junior and Honorary. An Honorary Member may be classed as Caving or Non-caving. A Junior member is classed as Caving. Any reference to Full Members includes Full Caving and Full Non-caving members.
 - 3.1 **Application for membership** - Any person wishing to become a Full Caving or Junior Member of the Club shall comply with the conditions in clause 3.2. Any person wishing to become a Full Non-caving or Associate Member of the club shall comply with the conditions in clause 3.3.

At General Meetings, all persons other than Full Members may be asked to leave the room whilst discussion and voting on all membership applications or changes is taking place. Where it is known by a Committee Member that a prospective member has information relevant to a membership application being considered then the Committee may allow that person to address the meeting.
 - 3.2 **Full Caving or Junior Membership** - shall be open to any person who is eligible for membership to the Club (section 3) and who fulfils the following conditions:
 - a) They must be nominated by an existing Full Caving member (ideally, they will be nominated by more than one member and for someone to class as nominator they must have been underground, either cave or mine (including Alderley), with the nominee). The nominee becomes a member (probationary) of the club once they have agreed a nominator, completed an application form and paid, a normal subscription including insurance (if required).
 - b) The nominator(s) are responsible for introducing the prospective member to the club and providing the opportunity for the nominee to meet the aims of the club, it is up to the nominator(s) to confirm to the membership secretary when they believes the nominee has reached the necessary level of capability, safety and common sense. The membership secretary will then recommend the member be accepted for full Caving Membership at the next general meeting.
 - c) The time lapse between a nomination and acceptance at a general meeting is not fixed. For some applicants where their experience is already known (e.g. caving with other clubs or re-joining), there may be no time lapse. In other cases, the nominator or the nominee may decide that adequate experience has not been gained between the date of nomination and a general meeting and confirmation of membership may be postponed.
 - d) At the meeting where confirmation is being considered, the member must be proposed and seconded by Full Caving members. The proposer may be the nominator. The nominator or the new member (or both) must be present. The nominator must state how and what experience the

nominee has gained while being a probationary member of the club. If the nominator is not present a written summary must be submitted to the secretary.

- e) The members present and who are eligible to vote for the nominee, decide whether the person becomes a full member. At least 75% of those present and voting must be in favour of the new member.
- f) If the applicant is a Junior (under-18) and the nominator is not a parent or guardian, then a parent or guardian must agree to the nomination and the nominator must agree to look after the nominee. This arrangement persists until the Junior member is 18.

3.3 Full Non-caving or Associate Non-Caving - shall be open to any person who is eligible for membership to the Club (section 3) and who fulfils the following conditions:

- a) They must be nominated by a Full Caving, Full Non-caving or Associate member of the Club.
- b) They must be proposed and seconded by Full Caving or Full Non-caving members.
- c) The members present and who are eligible to vote for the nominee, decide whether the person becomes a full member. At least 75% of those present and voting must be in favour of the new member.

3.4 Change of membership class - A Full Caving member or Junior member may apply in writing to the Secretary to change to Full Non-caving or Associate Non-caving membership. Such a change would automatically take place from the date of receipt of the application.

A Full Non-caving member, Associate Non-caving member or Junior member (reaching 18 years of age) may, after at least one year of membership, apply in writing to the Secretary to change to Full Caving membership. They must provide a suitable nominator as required by section 3.3(a) to propose their membership change at a General Meeting. The membership change must be accepted by 75% of the Full Caving and Full Non-caving members present and voting at a General Meeting at which they should attend or, if the nominator is not present a written summary of the nominees' activities since becoming a probationary member must be submitted to the secretary prior to the meeting as required by section 3.2(e).

3.5 Honorary Membership - shall be open to any person who has done exceptional service to the Club or to speleology (including mining history) as deemed and voted by at least 75% of the committee. The member shall become an Honorary member of the club upon a presentation at the annual club dinner; if no dinner is held within the year a member is put forward for Honorary member, that member shall become an Honorary member once voted in favour by the committee. The Committee will decide whether the Honorary member will be considered as Caving or Non-caving for the purposes of BCA membership and insurance. Whereupon they will become an Honorary member of the Club for life.

3.9 Temporary Membership - shall be open to any person. Temporary Members will normally be either:

- a) Potential new members who want to partake in Club activities prior to joining the Club (including those who partake in digs at Alderley Edge but are not members of the Club); or
- b) Guests of the Club who are sharing in a specific activity, who want the benefit of Club insurance but who do not want to continue to full membership.

Temporary Members shall complete a Temporary Membership Form and hand this with their non-refundable subscription to the Full Member who is hosting the Guest. The host must record the trips undertaken by the Guest (date and cave/mine). The form and subscription shall be sent to the Honorary Treasurer who shall record the Temporary Member and submit the details and insurance fee (if any) annually to the members' insurer. Temporary Members may accompany Club members on a maximum of four visits in one insurance year (1 January to 31 December). If the Temporary Member wishes to accompany Club members on more than four visits in the current insurance year, the Temporary Member shall apply to become a Full or Associate Member.

The rights of a Temporary Member are to take part in caving, mining and digging activities of the Club on the dates shown on their application form. Temporary Members are entitled to use Club equipment but are not entitled to draw Club equipment from stores, to lead Club digs or trips, to vote at meetings, to draw items from the Club records or library or to receive member-only publications. Temporary Members must abide by all the duties of a Full or Associate Member regarding safety to themselves and to others, care of equipment and respect to landowners and others with responsibility for the sites visited.

Temporary membership meets the requirements of the BCA Insurance rules and is not to be considered as Probationary membership.

3.10 Rights and privileges of membership - An Associate Non-caving member may:

- a) use the Club library and records;
- b) take part in discussion at General Meetings;
- c) receive a copy of the Club Newsletter;
- d) nominate Full Non-caving, Associate Non-caving and Junior members.
- e) take part in visits to the Alderley Mines

A Full Non-caving member has the rights and privileges of an Associate Non-caving member and in addition may:

- f) vote at General Meetings;
- g) serve on the Committee;
- h) propose new Non-caving members;

A Full Caving member has the rights and privileges of a Full Non-caving and Associate Non-caving member and in addition may:

- i) nominate Full Caving members;
- j) propose Full Caving members;
- k) draw Club caving tackle;
- l) lead Club organised meets;
- m) take part in Club organised meets to caves and mines and digs in the Alderley Mines.

3.11 Termination of membership

A Full, Associate or Junior member may terminate membership by non-payment of the annual subscription. Members should advise the Secretary if they intend to terminate their membership but their membership will end automatically if the subscription is not paid in accordance with Clause 4. Honorary members may terminate their Honorary Membership by notifying the Secretary in writing.

- 4 SUBSCRIPTIONS - The subscription rates will be shown on the Club website and can be changed by a simple majority vote. The first subscription shall be due from the date a person starts caving with the Club, less 25% for each complete 3 months that have elapsed since the beginning of the Club's financial year. Members must pay for BCA membership and insurance (if applicable) at the same time as they pay the Club subscription. For the purposes of Club subscriptions, the financial year shall commence on the 1st January and members have till the 31st January to pay in full, or in quarterly instalments, or risk termination of membership of the club. Any member who is more than three months in arrears shall be informed of this and warned by the Treasurer that unless they pay up within 14 days, their membership shall be terminated. In cases of exceptional hardship, the Treasurer or Committee may use discretion to allow arrears to continue for a longer period.

- 5 ADMINISTRATION - All major policy shall be decided at General Meetings. The day-to-day affairs of the Club shall be managed by a Committee consisting of a minimum nine members with a maximum twelve members.

- 5.1 Formation of the Committee - The Committee members who must all be Full members of the Club must be elected to their posts at the Annual General Meeting by a majority vote of the Full members present; they shall resign automatically at the A.G.M. following. The maximum term in any one post will normally be three years.

If in exceptional circumstances, a Committee member is voted by the A.G.M. into a post which the member has held continuously for a term of three years ending at that A.G.M., any paid-up member of the Club not present at the A.G.M. may object in writing to the Secretary within 14 days of the A.G.M. If any objection is received in the required way, the Committee member will remain in the post until the next Q.G.M. at which the objector, in person, must put his case. The Committee member will then resign and the post will be filled by a new election in which the ex-Committee member will be eligible. If no objections are received following the A.G.M. in the required way, or if the objector does not attend the Q.G.M. following the A.G.M. or if the Committee member is re-elected into the same post, the Committee member will be considered to have started a new term of three years. If a new Committee member is elected into the post, the term of office will be considered to have started at the A.G.M. preceding the Q.G.M.

The Committee shall include a Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and also additional officers and committee members as shall be deemed appropriate by members present at the Annual General Meeting. In the period between Annual General Meetings the Committee may co-opt

up to three members in one year to fill vacancies or to undertake additional duties, and all members shall be informed of such co-option by the method laid down in section 8.3.

Resignation mid-term from the Committee must be submitted via letter (or email) to the Secretary and be accepted by the Committee.

- 5.2 Committee Meetings – The Committee shall meet at least two times between Annual General Meetings. Any Committee member may call a Committee meeting through the Chairman; the Secretary shall then give at least 7 days written notice of the proposed meeting and agenda to all Committee members. The quorum at meetings shall be five including a Chairman who shall have the casting vote in the event of a tie. In the absence of the Club Chairman, the Committee shall elect a temporary Chairman from its number.

- 6 Policies – Any policies adopted by the Club are recorded in the minutes of General Meetings and full copies of individual policies referenced below can be found within the Members' pages on the Club website. Policies may be made, amended or revoked at any General Meeting. All alterations to the Policies must be proposed and seconded by Full members at the meeting but advanced notice of alterations is not required. Copies of the list of Policies shall be displayed at the regular meeting places of the Club and will be available to any member on request.

- 7 CLUB FINANCE - Proper books of account shall be kept by the Honorary Treasurer and shall be available for inspection by any member at any reasonable time. The Club will maintain a current bank account, savings account and PayPal account as required. The accounts need a single signature. The Honorary Treasurer and Directors are eligible to be signatories. Examined accounts must be submitted to the Club at the Annual General Meeting. A percentage of Club funds may be invested in such a manner as the Committee shall decide.

- 8 MEETINGS - There shall be two types of General Meetings: Ordinary (Bi-monthly or Annual) and Extraordinary.
 - 8.1 Ordinary General Meetings - shall be held six times annually and shall include the Annual General Meeting. Notice of a General Meeting shall be given 28 days in advance of the meeting by the method laid down in section 9.3.
 - 8.2 Extraordinary General Meetings - may be called at 28 days notice with the publicity of the agenda 7 days in advance of the meeting. An E.G.M. may only be called at the request of five or more Full members addressed to the Chairman. Only business relevant to the items on the agenda may be discussed.
 - 8.3 Notification of meetings etc - will be:
 - a) displayed at the regular meeting places of the Club
 - b) sent to any member on the postal or email notification roll, and
 - c) posted on the Club website and newsgroup/forum.

Any member who does not frequent the regular meeting places of the Club may instruct the Secretary to include his name on the postal or email notification roll; only those persons on this roll will receive postal or email notification.
 - 8.4 Conduct of General Meetings - The Chairman of the Club shall preside at General Meetings but in his absence, a Chairman may be elected from the Full members present at the meeting by a simple majority vote. The Chairman will not take part in a vote at a General Meeting but on the occasion of a tied result may use a casting vote. Voting at General Meetings is restricted to Full members only and will normally be by show of hands unless three or more full members demand a secret ballot on the invitation of the Chairman, in which case their demand shall be met.

A General Meeting shall not open, and may be postponed to a date announced in the usual way unless a quorum of 25% of the paid up membership or 10 Full members (whichever is the lesser figure) is present. If at any time during the meeting it is no longer quorate, the Chairman of the meeting may, at his discretion, declare the meeting closed.

A General Meeting may not be called unconstitutional due to some members not being informed unless some deliberate attempt to conceal the venue and time of the meeting is evident.

- 9 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS - Members wishing to propose constitutional amendments must submit the proposals to the Secretary at least 21 days before any General Meetings. These proposals must be in writing and signed by the proposer and a seconder who must be Full members. The proposals shall be

notified to members 7 days in advance of the meeting by the method laid down in section 8.3. Constitutional amendments must be accepted by 75% of the Full members present at the meeting. Any amendment so accepted shall be added immediately to the Constitution by the Secretary.

A review of this constitution to ensure it is still relevant to the clubs aims and objectives should be undertaken by the Committee every 5 years.

- 10 EXPULSION - Any member acting deliberately against the Constitution or Policies of the Club may be expelled from the Club by a vote of 75% of Full members present and voting at a General Meeting. The member concerned must be notified in person by the Committee 28 days before the meeting so that the member may answer any allegations made.
- 11 RESPONSIBILITY - The Club shall accept no responsibility whatsoever for any accident or loss of life or loss of any kind that may occur to any person, either member or non-member attending any of the Club meets or expeditions.
- 12 DISSOLUTION - In the event of dissolution of the Club which shall only take place by unanimous vote of all Full Members, the funds, assets, etc. of the Club (after paying off all debts and liabilities) shall be donated to a suitable body of kindred interest.
- 13 INTERPRETATION - The sole interpreters of this Constitution shall be the Committee of the Derbyshire Caving Club.

Passed by General Meeting on 9th December 2019