



# **THE RED ROSE CAVE AND POTHOLE CLUB**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy for the Red Rose Cave and Pothole Club (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Club’) comprises of three main sections:-

- Statement of the Club’s commitment to health & safety and key policies adopted to achieve it.
- Definition of the duties and responsibilities for implementing Health and Safety within the Club, including the lines of communication for all health & safety matters.
- Policy procedures, including information and guidance for engaging in safe caving and potholing for compliance, as far as is reasonably practicable, with this Health & Safety Policy.

This Policy applies to all Club members, prospective members, members' guests or visitors where applicable.

### **2. Policy statement**

#### **Declaration of intent and Policy Statement**

*“Health and safety is everyone’s responsibility.”*

It is the stated intention of the Club to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable and within its control, a safe and healthy environment to engage in caving and potholing activity for all members, guests and visitors. The Policy seeks to ensure that the Club’s operations do not inadvertently affect the health and safety of any other cavers or members of the public.

To implement this primary objective the Club will endeavour to: -

- a) Comply with all legal & official guidance along with the requirements of this Policy and to encourage the support and co-operation of all our members, guests and visitors in order to achieve the objectives of this Policy.
- b) Ensure that sufficient financial and adequately trained human resources are made available wherever practicable to implement this Policy.
- c) Assess and mitigate risks related to the Club’s activities that may affect our members, guests, visitors, other cavers or members of the public.
- d) Consult with our members in matters concerning Health & Safety and relating to individual and collective responsibilities.
- e) Ensure that where required or deemed appropriate by the Club, its officers or our membership, relevant training is offered.



- f) Ensure that all equipment provided by the Club is maintained in a safe and usable condition for our members, guests or visitors.
- g) Where applicable, provide information that is necessary to undertake caving & potholing or other club activities safely.
- h) Co-operate fully with and request the full co-operation of other cavers, clubs and organisations as necessary to ensure health and safety for all.
- i) Review and amend this Policy annually or as necessary, ensuring that any revisions be notified to any persons who may be affected by the changes.

### **3. Organisation and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 All members and their guests (and where appropriate, visitors): -**

- a) Should report anything that could be a risk to themselves or others to those immediately present and, as soon as possible, to a committee member. Where appropriate and safe to do so, they should take immediate action to mitigate that risk.
- b) Have a duty to co-operate with this Club Policy and act responsibly in all matters of health and safety whilst on Club premises or engaging in Club activities.
- c) Should cave safely and be aware of and comply with all rules in force for any particular cave they are visiting. They should exercise all reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, other cavers or members of the public who may be affected by their caving activity.
- d) Will avoid taking unnecessary risks, improvisation with equipment or techniques or any other behaviour that would be detrimental to the health and safety of themselves or others.
- e) Have a responsibility to utilise protective clothing and safety equipment as required and appropriate to enable them and others to cave and pothole safely or to carry out other duties on behalf of the Club.
- f) Must not misuse any item of equipment, nor intentionally or recklessly interfere with any equipment provided in the interests of health & safety.
- g) Should report defects in Club equipment or other caver's equipment immediately to others present. Defective club equipment should be reported as soon as possible to an appropriate committee member (e.g. Tackle Master, Hut Engineer etc.)
- h) Must report all incidents involving personal injury during Club activities to a Committee member and should add an entry into the Club accident book at the earliest opportunity, logging any first aid equipment used.
- i) Will not engage in dangerous practices or be incapable of caving safely due to alcohol consumption, abuse of drugs or for any other reason. Such behaviour will not be tolerated.

#### **3.2 All committee members**

In addition to responsibilities for members and guests above, committee members have an additional duty to: -

- a) Comply with, enact, assess and review the Club's Health and Safety Policy as defined in the 'Declaration of intent and Policy statement'.



- b) Ensure that Committee members are adequately informed and trained to safely carry out their role.
- c) Be aware of legal and official health and safety considerations and take responsibility for the implementation of all health and safety aspects relevant to their role.
- d) Act as a point of contact for the membership, guests, visitors or others and pass on health and safety concerns brought to them by others to the full committee so they may agree and provide mitigations on behalf of those reporting any issue.
- e) Make the full committee aware of any member whose behaviour may be considered detrimental to the health and safety of themselves or others.
- f) Act to make safe or remove any defective equipment, made known to that committee member as soon as possible and report the defective equipment to the appropriate committee member (Tackle Master, Hut warden, Hut Engineer etc.).

### **3.3 Club trip coordinators**

Will maintain a list of people interested in going on the advertised trip and then, close to the date of the planned trip, facilitate a discussion amongst the whole group of interested attendees to discuss and agree responsibilities and awareness for the following: -

- a) Familiarisation with the trip(s) to be undertaken, the specific hazards including appropriate weather conditions and flood risk, the skills and equipment required to safely navigate the cave and the potential need to alter plans or call the trip off should there be significant safety concerns.
- b) Confirmation that all interested participants are sufficiently fit and able, and have appropriate skills and personal equipment for the planned trip, and that where necessary, less experienced members can be mentored by more experienced members, to ensure their health and safety.
- c) Organisation of all interested parties into suitable groups (e.g. separate rigging and de-rigging parties), capable of caving safely both as individuals and together as a group.
- d) Ensuring that a proper callout is left with a responsible person or persons and being aware of the correct procedures to call out the Cave Rescue in the unlikely event it becomes necessary.
- e) Co-ordination of route finding above and below ground and ensuring that any rigging of equipment is carried out competently so as to enable the group to cave safely.
- f) Confirming the appropriate personal and group equipment required and that it is in good repair for the trip's participants' health and safety.
- g) Ensuring that Club equipment is correctly booked out and back into the tackle store by a Validated member and that all equipment is checked before use, transported safely to the cave and used safely for the duration of the trip.
- h) Ensuring that all Club equipment is returned in a clean, safe state as soon as is practicable. Any suspect or damaged equipment should be clearly marked and segregated to ensure it cannot be used for other trips. The Tackle Master and/or a Committee member should be informed of lost or damaged equipment as soon as possible.



### **3.4 Tackle Master**

Has a duty to: -

- a) Provide and maintain sufficient safe equipment, within reasonable budgetary constraints as decided by the Committee, in order for Club members to participate safely in such caving activities as required by the Club and its members.
- b) Co-ordinate a safety check of all club equipment at least twice a year.
- c) Maintain a list of Validated members who are trained and trusted to book, safely use, clean and check then return equipment to the Club tackle store.
- d) Act as a point of contact and investigate every report of lost or damaged equipment. Ensure that all equipment which may be deemed a safety risk is removed from the tackle store as soon as possible either for repair or safe disposal and replacement.
- e) Report any safety concerns to the Committee and to the wider membership as necessary.

### **3.5 Training and (caving) Safety Officer**

Has a duty to: -

- a) Act as a point of contact for the membership to advise and implement training on the safe use of equipment and caving techniques
- b) Ensure that training in the use of Club equipment and caving techniques is offered to the membership as often as necessary to ensure health and safety for all.
- c) Be available to arrange and supervise the training of new members or to provide training for the general membership as necessary.
- d) Advise and assist the Tackle Master in his duties and report to the Committee on a regular basis on the safety and use of all Club equipment.

### **3.6 Hut Wardens / Engineer**

Have a duty to: -

- a) Act as points of contact for any report of health and safety issues relating to the Club Headquarters and to act to mitigate any risk reported as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- b) Report to the Committee monthly or as often as necessary on the safety and use of the Headquarters building.
- c) Ensure the Headquarters building and contents are safe for members, guests and visitors and to co-ordinate and supervise maintenance works, as often as necessary to provide a safe environment for all users.
- d) To co-ordinate and maintain safe utilities and services (fire, gas, electricity, water & sewerage)
- e) Ensure in conjunction with the Committee that all equipment is safe and appropriate for its intended purpose and that any equipment that is deemed to be a safety risk is removed and either repaired or replaced.
- f) Provide relevant information and training to ensure any installed equipment can be operated safely.



## **4. Health & safety procedures and guidance**

### **4.1 General procedures: -**

- a) Everyone is responsible for the health and safety of themselves and the people around them and should act so as to minimise the risks associated with any hazards present.
- b) The Club through publications, communications and notices will make available such information, including this, and other Policies as is deemed necessary to encourage a safe and healthy environment for its members, guests and visitors.
- c) The Club commits to assessing requests for training received from the membership and the provision of any training identified as necessary and appropriate for the health and safety of members.
- d) Members should be aware of and make use of available information and training that benefits the health and safety to them and those around them. They should pass on such information to guests, visitors or any other person as appropriate to the situation.
- e) Anyone noting a risk to health and safety to any person should act immediately if safe to do so to mitigate that risk. They should report any issues as soon as possible to a Committee member, ideally the one responsible for assessing and mitigating that risk (e.g. Tackle Master, Training and Safety Officer, Hut Engineer etc.)
- f) Committee members or other designated responsible persons will be available as a point of contact for the reporting of health and safety issues and act to promptly inform the rest of the Committee of such reports. The appropriate Committee member will then proceed to assess and act to mitigate any reported hazards as soon as is reasonably possible.

### **4.2 Caving safety and training for members: -**

- a) Before undertaking a trip all members should familiarise themselves with the specific risks to health & safety associated the cave to be visited. Inexperienced members should seek advice from other, more experienced members whenever possible.
- b) If any member or other participant of a Club caving activity has any condition that may affect their ability to cave safely by themselves or with other people they should declare this in confidence to the trip co-ordinator such that appropriate precautions or accommodations can be agreed.
- c) All members should assure themselves and the trip co-ordinator that they are competent and have the personal equipment to cave to the specific standard that a trip may require. If they, or another member of the party, believe that they are not sufficiently competent or able to participate in all, or part, of the trip, then they should inform the Club trip co-ordinator beforehand.
- d) The Club recommends there be at least three people on any trip so that in the event of somebody becoming injured one can stay with them and one exit to hail the rescue.
- e) Any members requiring specific training should inform the Training Officer of their specific needs.
- f) The Club will, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide resources such that members are trained to a proficient standard for the trips they attend so that they can cave safely without causing risk to themselves or anyone else who might be affected by their acts or omissions.



- g) The Training Officer and/or other suitably appointed members shall organise training events as and when necessary to fulfil members' requirements.

#### **4.3 Validating members: -**

Members wishing to borrow Club caving equipment must be 'Validated', a process to ensure they are familiar and capable of following the procedures required to:

Sign out and check equipment is safe and suitable for their trip

Transport and use it safely

Return it in a timely manner, clean and ready for the next use

Sign it back in and hang it up in the appropriate places in the tackle stores.

Mark and place any damaged equipment away from possible reuse and inform the Tackle Master or Committee member.

- a) Members who wish to rig caves and potholes, using either Club ladders, or S.R.T. ropes, must be trained & validated by the Training Officer, Tackle Master, or other Validated members who should arrange a suitable training session and caving trip to assess and validate the member requesting Validation.
- b) Non validated members may only rig a cave or pothole under the supervision of a Validated member.

#### **4.4 Club equipment: -**

- a) The Club shall, through its Committee, governance, policies and procedures endeavour to provide sufficient finance, appropriate training and information to its Committee and membership so as to ensure its equipment used in the headquarters, or for any aspect of caving, is fit for purpose and maintained in a safe and usable condition.
- b) All members have a duty of care to look out for their own health and safety the safety of others when using any equipment whilst engaging in Club activities. Equipment should be checked both before and during use and should be cleaned & checked for damage before it is booked back into the respective equipment store.
- c) If loss or damage to equipment occurs or defective equipment is identified as being a risk to anyone's health and safety, action should be taken immediately to put that equipment beyond further use, providing it is safe to do so. Such equipment should be marked as being defective and if possible separated in a safe location for inspection, repair or disposal. An appropriate Committee member (Tackle master, Safety and Training officer, Hut Warden or Engineer) or other responsible member in, or appointed by, the Committee should be notified as soon as possible of the defect.
- d) Committee members notified of a defective piece of equipment will ensure actions are taken to make that equipment safe, if not already done so. They will inform, as appropriate, the rest of the committee, wider membership or any other parties that may incur harm as a result of attempting to use that defective equipment.
- e) The Tackle Master will keep themselves informed, and trained where appropriate, of all health & safety aspects pertaining to the specification and use of Club caving equipment, passing on such information as is deemed necessary to the wider



membership. They will recommend and purchase such equipment as is agreed by the Committee is required to safely support the activities of the Club and its members.

- f) The Tackle Master should collect and maintain records of equipment and its use. Check by way of an audit at least twice a year with the assistance and supervision of the Training and Safety officer that all caving equipment is in good order and produce a written report annually to the Annual General Meeting.
- g) The Tackle Master will record and investigate every report made to them of any defective and unsafe caving equipment including that found to be defective in their routine checks or retired due to excessive wear or aged beyond manufacturer's or governing bodies use recommendations. They will ensure such equipment is taken out of use as soon as possible and quarantined for inspection, repair (if possible) or safe disposal.
- h) All items of equipment identified as hazardous to anyone's health & safety and subsequently withdrawn from current use must either be repaired to their original safe and working condition by a competent person or removed and rendered permanently unusable.

#### **4.5 Members' personal equipment: -**

- a) All members are responsible for the maintenance and safe usage of their own equipment and should assure themselves of the safety of their guests equipment and their ability to use it safely when preparing for a particular trip.
- b) All participants on a Club trip should monitor the safety and integrity of their own and others equipment throughout the trip and report any defects immediately to anyone at risk as a result and to other group members as soon as possible.
- c) The Club expects that all members and participants on Club trips will assess and carry personal emergency equipment appropriate to the trip. E.g. survival bag and spare light and for SRT trips a knife & whistle.
- d) The Club commits to providing such resources, information and training as necessary to enable members to procure safe and appropriate personal equipment and to look after and maintain it safely.
- e) The Training & Safety Officer will be available to assess and provide training and advice to members regarding their personal equipment, its suitability, safety and correct maintenance.
- f) Where a defect in any personal equipment may pose a risk to the member or to other cavers, or cause damage to Club or others' equipment this should be reported immediately to those present if this occurs during a trip. Otherwise it should be reported to the Training & Safety Officer who, in conjunction with the Tackle Master, will investigate, assess the risk and act to mitigate the issues, warning members as appropriate.

#### **4.6 First aid equipment: -**

- a) The Club commits to providing and maintaining a first aid kit, accident report book and a rescue 'grab bag' at its Club Headquarters.
- b) Whenever an accident resulting in injury occurs on club premises or during a club activity, an accident report should be written at the time detailing any first aid



equipment used so that this can be replenished at the earliest opportunity. The incident should be reported to the Committee and the Committee will also monitor and review accident reports at every Committee Meeting.

- c) The Club recommends and encourages all members, trip coordinators and expedition leaders to assess and take appropriate first aid equipment with them on all Club trips or activities.

#### **4.7 Accident and emergency procedures: -**

Despite taking all reasonable precautions, the Club accepts that accidents can still occur during caving or other Club activities. These guidelines are designed to protect members or any others involved if an accident does occur.

- a) Immediate first aid should be undertaken to establish the extent of any injuries and appropriate steps taken to safeguard the immediate health and welfare of the casualty until professional medical help can attend.
- b) Ensure the casualty is in a safe and comfortable position without risking them further harm and ensure critical information is passed on to whichever fellow member or other person is best suited to raise a call with the emergency services.
- c) In a cave or fell rescue situation ensure those exiting the cave are sure of the route and have access to vehicles and means to call the rescue services, for any remaining with the casualty ensure they will be safe and as comfortable as possible in the event of a long wait.
- d) As a rule, the Police (999) must be called in the first instance, asking for Cave or mountain rescue, calling friends or other persons, even if they may be directly involved in the rescue service, could delay or hinder the callout and progress of the rescue.

**4.8** Cases have occurred where relatives have been contacted first by the media rather than the police following serious accidents. This is obviously an unacceptable situation which should be avoided. Unofficial statements may also affect proceedings if any legal action occurs against a member or fellow caver.

In the event of a death or serious injury the Club advises the following procedure should be adopted concerning the disclosure of information:

- a) At the earliest opportunity contact the person in charge of the Police and/or Cave Rescue service attending and inform them of the casualty's name, and if known the name and address of the next of kin.
- b) Having informed attending services either ask them, or if the means are available make a call yourself as soon as possible to the Club's Chairman or President. Brief them of the casualty's name and the circumstances of the incident, the Committee member initially contacted should then inform the rest of the committee.
- c) On no account should any member speak to, or brief the press without first contacting and consulting with the Club chairman or President, or if they are unavailable, another senior Committee member who is appraised of the situation.
- d) All members present at an incident, if safe and able to do so, should make themselves available to offer assistance if required by the emergency services attending.



#### 4.9 Public liability insurance & the Club's duty of care

- a) The Club shall ensure that it is covered by any specific insurance as required by law, and that that insurance is adequate, valid and up to date.
- b) The Club chooses to subscribe to the public liability insurance scheme provided through and administered by the UK's national caving body the British Cave Association (B.C.A.). **As a B.C.A. insured club it is a condition of Club membership that all members be individually insured through this scheme.** The Club will have processes in place to ensure that every member has been registered with that Public liability insurance scheme as a "caver" or as a "non-caver" and has paid the appropriate premium.
- c) For foreign expeditions and foreign trips organized by the Club suitable accident insurance will be a requirement.
- d) The Club will make available and publicise, so far as is reasonably practicable, information and training such that every member can be aware of their own duty of care to other members, fellow cavers or others and accepts the hazards to their own health & safety whilst partaking in Club caving activities.

## 5. APPENDICES:

Club Officer duties and responsibilities relating to health and safety.

### **President:**

Overall responsibility for all aspects of health and safety

Health and Safety Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Child Protection Policy

Youth Membership Policy

Data Protection and Member's Privacy Policy

Guidance for Committee Members Document

Together with the Chair, liaison with the media in all serious matters affecting the Club and its members.

### **Chair:**

Liaison with landlord.

Liaison with legal representatives.



Together with the President, liaison with the media in all serious matters affecting the Club and its members.

**Secretary:**

Minutes of meetings.

Annual / Extraordinary General Meeting minutes

Club correspondence

**Treasurer:**

Insurance payments

Ensuring funds are budgeted and available for health and safety needs

**Membership secretary:**

Club and Members Public Liability Insurance

Provide health & safety information for new members

**Social secretary:**

Health & safety aspects relating to social events (e.g. food hygiene)

**Librarian:**

Maintenance and storage of written Club records and any health & safety related literature or documentation.

**Conservation / Easegill project officers:**

In association with the Easegill project officer investigate reports of hazards relating to caves or surface features in and around the systems surrounding the Club headquarters. Co-ordinate and take responsibility for health and safety relating to any remedial conservation works.

Inform and update membership of any such hazards reported.

**Bookings officer:**

Managing headquarters bookings and safe visitor numbers.

Provide relevant health and safety information for visitors to Club accommodation.

**Website Administrator:**

Make available health and safety information on the Club's website

**Council for the Northern Caving Community (C.N.C.C.) Representative:**



Attend C.N.C.C. meetings and update Committee and membership of any issues discussed relating to safe caving.

Report issues raised by the membership back to the C.N.C.C. where a wider knowledge and involvement of the caving community is warranted.

**Newsheet / Newsletter Editors:**

Disseminate information as necessary to the Membership.

**Meets and Permits Coordinator:**

Where required, obtain proper permissions for access to caves assuring safe passage and access for trip participants.

Appointment of appropriate trip co-ordinators.

Advise trip coordinators of safe caving practice and specific warnings or hazards associated with planned trips.

Inform members of trip difficulty and hazards.

**Training officer:**

Safe use and maintenance of all caving equipment

Assist in safety inspections of Club or personal caving equipment

Arrange health & safety related caver training as required.

Develop and disseminate caving and equipment safety advice to the membership as necessary

**Tackle master:**

Purchase and maintenance all Club caving equipment

Safety inspections of caving equipment at least twice a year

Maintain an up to date list of Validated members.

Develop and disseminate equipment safety advice to the membership as necessary

**H.Q. Warden / Engineer:**

All aspects of health and safety issues associated with the Club headquarters

Compliance with all relevant legislation pertaining to the Club headquarters

Ensuring safety and compliance with regulations of services (gas, oil, electricity, fire, water and sewerage)

Arranging regular maintenance for the Club headquarters and assuring the health and safety of members or third parties doing work on the building.




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Develop and provide information to members, guests and visitors for safe use of the Club Headquarters and its facilities.

**Journal Editor:**

Publish any articles of interest with health & safety content.

**6. Signed on behalf of the committee:**

*Steve Gray*

*12/10/2013*

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Chairman

Date

**7. Revisions and approval history**

- 01/03/1996 - 1st issue.
- 23/02/2009 - Revised
- 01/10/2011 - Approved, no changes.
- 03/11/2012 - Reviewed & approved.
- 12/10/2013 - Reviewed & signed. (Not minuted)
- 06/12/2014 - Reviewed and approved, no changes.
- 07/07/2018 - Reviewed and approved, no changes.
- 01/02/2023 - Reviewed, substantially updated and reworded – Draft. S.Lieberman
- 14/02/2023 - Reviewed, updated and reworded – Draft v2.1 Dinny Davies
- 15/03/2023 - Reviewed & updated – Draft v2.2 S.Lieberman
- 23/12/2025 -Reviewed & updated – Draft v2.3 G.Tawy (minuted)