**Guidance for the St Cuthbert’s Confirmation Trip**

We are a caving club, and we do this as a pastime so the confirmation trip should not be seen as an exam to be feared or be too harsh; it should be an opportunity for the candidate to enjoy running their first warden trip in the cave. The assumption is that after fulfilling the application requirements the applicant is ready to be a warden, so the confirmation trip is just that. Overall, some misunderstandings are acceptable, if they are outweighed by the overall knowledge of the items covered on the application form and their route-finding and knowledge of the cave.

The warden should allow the candidate to take the lead in finalising the trip arrangements, completing the logbook, briefing the group, taking fees and briefing the group on the cave. Wardens are there to protect the cave and provide navigation around the system, but the candidate should show some awareness of safety and the abilities of the group. This may become more apparent during the trip, so if a party member is struggling or there are concerns over how long the entrance dam will hold the candidate should be ready to change their plans to ensure the safety of the group.

Before going underground the warden should ask the candidate some general questions to ensure they are aware of the following:

* The cave’s conservation plan.
* Knowledge of the cave’s rules and guidelines.
* The location of the First Aid and Rescue Kits.
* Knowledge of the surface dam control system and the time constraints on parties in wet conditions.
* The need to limit water contamination from sediments in the cave, which contain high levels of Lead (Pb) from ancient mining activities.
* The need to advise all visitors to the cave to wash **ALL** caving gear thoroughly after each caving trip in Cuthberts due to high levels of lead in the cave.

Once the trip has commenced the candidate should lead the trip. The warden can be treated as an extra member of the group, so this need not limit numbers on the intended trip. The candidate should be reassured that any warden will be mindful of the limited number of trips a candidate has been able to lead, so minor navigational errors will be excused.

During the trip, the warden will ask the candidate some questions about potential ways of shortening the trip if a group member is struggling. This is the opportunity to show some knowledge of short cuts. Questions may also be asked about places and routes the candidate should be aware of from the application form, but the warden will be mindful that the application guidance only states that some parts of the cave must have been visited once and candidates need to be aware of and ideally have visited other sites.

Candidates who can navigate around the chosen route, understand the rules, and are not likely to pose a significant risk to the safety of cavers, or the conservation of the cave should be approved for wardenship.